

HOME

BITMAPS, .JPEGS AND .GIFS IN FLASH

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This section will not contain any tutorials. It is for information purposes only.

How & when to use Bitmaps, .Jpegs & .Gifs in Flash

Flash is *NOT* a bitmap program. That's the first thing to remember. There have been case where people have tried to animate a movie by having sequences of bitmaps & .jpegs. BIG no-no :) So *try* not use any imported bitmaps, .jpeg's or .gif's if at all possible. If you need to use any of these files -- try use a bitmap, as it seems they are the easiest to work with in Flash.

Use bitmaps/jpegs when:

- You need to have photos or lifelike images
- You need to have screen shots
- You need to have pictures of drawings or artwork
- You can use bitmaps as fills for shapes
- Or you can you them as a template to trace
- And things along this nature...

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- To import any of these files simply use ' File > Import ' from the menu
- When you import an image it automatically adds it to your personal library of symbols.
Not sure about libraries?... [click here](#)
- .GIF's will *not* import transparency
- You can scale, rotate, and edit Bitmaps.

Using Bitmaps as Fills

When you use a Bitmap to fill it tiles it in the shape, just like an HTML page does with backgrounds.

To do this you need to:

- Make sure the image is broken apart. Click the image and go to the menu ' Modify > Break Apart '
- Use the dropper tool and click on the broken apart Bitmap and it should show a small preview under the Fill Tool of the picture.



- The you can use the Fill tool to apply the bitmap to shapes.
- You can also edit the fill like gradients. Not sure about gradients? [click here](#)

Bitmap fills can be rotated, scaled, & scewed:



Tracing Bitmaps

Flash has a built in feature that will automatically trace a bitmap image for you.

Be forewarned, that the trace tool is not always the best way to go. MANY times you will have to manually trace a bitmap by hand (place the bitmap on one layer, lock it, then trace over it with the pencil tool and fills) to optimize the file size. This is true in many cases with 3D in Flash.

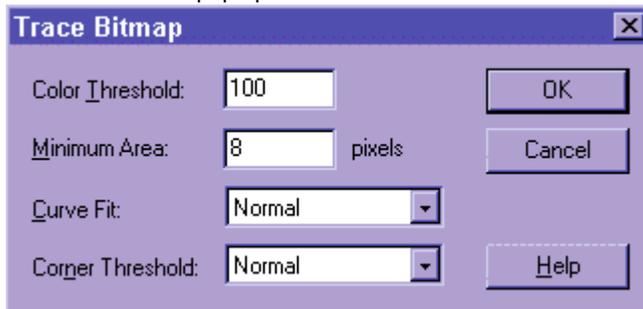
To be honest, I have never once used the Trace Bitmap feature. I always find it satisfying to trace by hand. I get exactly what I want the first time around!

Why trace a bitmap?

- Well, because when you scale a bitmap it looks VERY bad because you can see all the pixels. Well Flash uses vector format. You can scale and shrink and your image it gonna look great :)
- Not only this, but on a general basis vector art is lower in file size than a bitmap.

To trace a bitmap:

- Select the bitmap. DO NOT break it apart.
- Go to 'Modify > Trace Bitmap' on the menu.
- Flash should then pop up a window that looks similar to this one:



Color Threshold - Can range from 0 -500. It compares colors that are next to each other. So, the larger the number the fewer shapes you will have because Flash won't work as hard to compare them. Where as, if you set the number to 3 then Flash will work a lot harder to compare colors, thus giving you more shapes.

Minimum Area - Smaller the nubmer .. smaller the shapes, or more detail.

Curve Fit - Controls how well the shapes will follow the bitmap image.

Corner Threshold - Controls how far a shape must bend to create a corner.

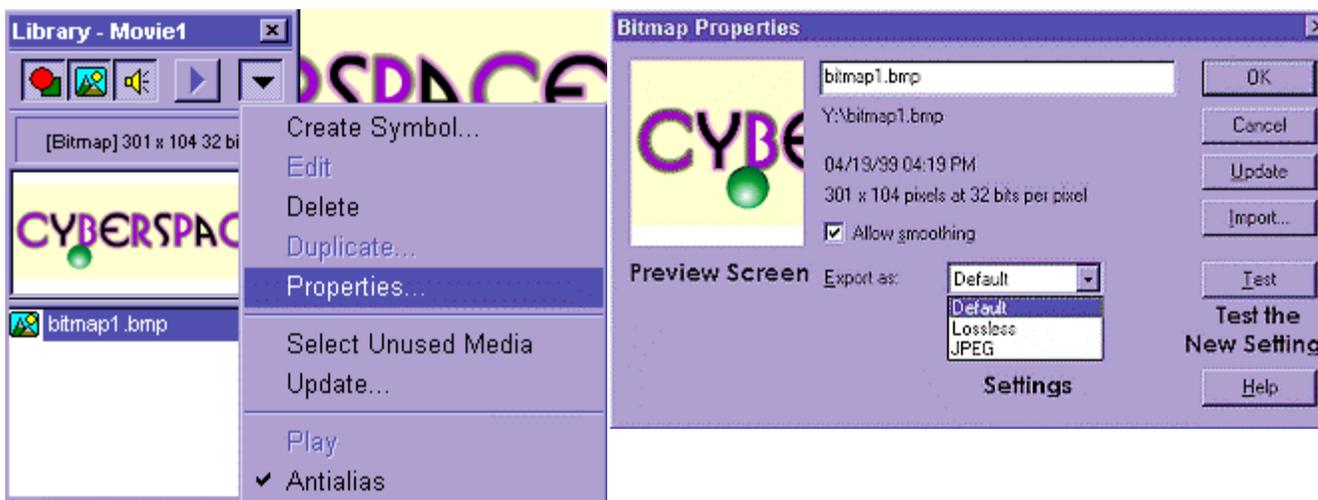
- Choose your options and hit OK and Flash should trace the object for you.

Compressing Images

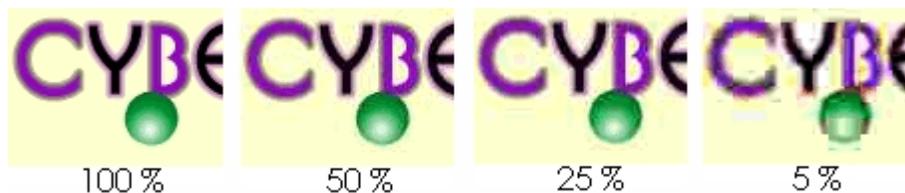
Anytime you import an image it is automatically added to your personal library of symbols. There are two ways to compress bitmap (or .jpeg) images in Flash.

- **The symbol itself:**

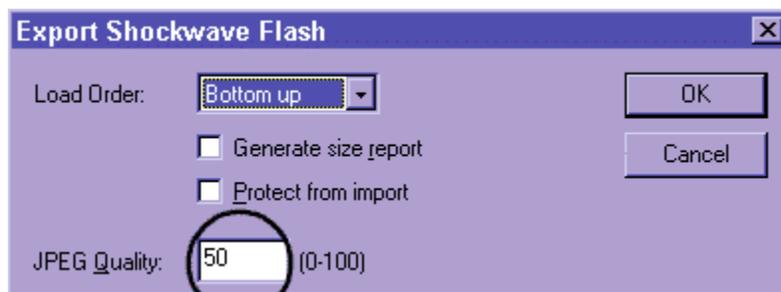
If you go into your personal library of symbols you will see your bitmap/.jpeg/.gif in the list. If you open its properties (see pic below) it should bring up a screen like this:



- On the Bitmap Properties screen you will have a drop down menu that will have the choices of Default, Lossless, and .JPEG. *Default* will leave the bitmap as the same quality as when you imported it. *Lossless* will automatically compress the file size. And setting it to *.jpeg* will allow you to manually adjust the setting of the image quality. Here are some settings below with export quality as .jpeg:



- When you **export the movie** to .swf you will notice a .jpeg quality field default set to 50%. If you raise it 100% you will have better quality images in the overall movie.



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