

Counting Time in Seconds

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This is the easiest way to create time loops for timing people on activities within Flash. This tutorial uses a loop which increments time by 1 second on every loop. The variable time occurs in the script, and as the variable for the dynamic text box, therefore we are asking to print out the variable as the movie progresses.

In this movie we will work on the main timeline. If you put this in a movie clip you will have a nice exportable movie clip for other movies.

1. Create a new movie.

2. Click anywhere on the movie stage and open your properties panel. You will need to make sure you are set to a frame rate of 12 fps (frames per second) so the timing is correct in counting time. This means that your movie will progress at 12 frames each second, click ok.

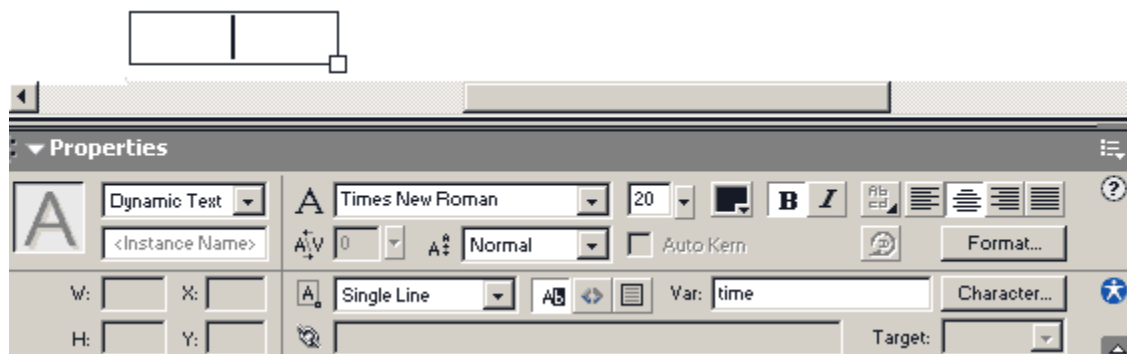


3. Insert new layer by right clicking on layer one and selecting insert layer. Click on the name to activate the edit box and Name it Actions. Rename Layer 1 to "Counter".



4. Select your text tool and click on frame 1 of counter. Click on your stage to plant a text box. On the properties panel make sure it is totally open by clicking the small carrot in the lower right corner of the properties panel. Set the set box as follows:

- dynamic text
- Single line
- variable = time

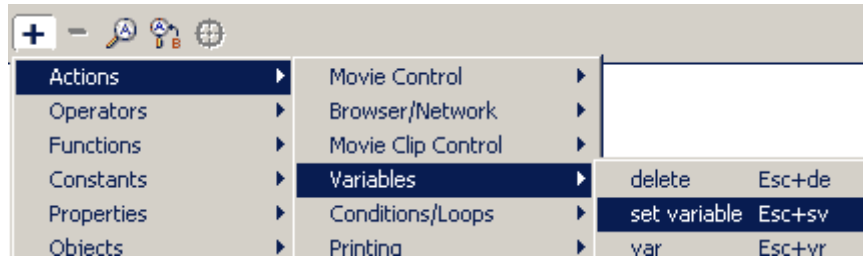


5. Resize your text box on the stage to the size you want your text to fill. On the character panel, select the size of font. On the paragraph select the orientation of the text. In this example I set it to center the text. (Any additional text must be in a separate text box as static text.)

6. Click on the layer counter frame 13 and hit F5 to extend out to that frame.

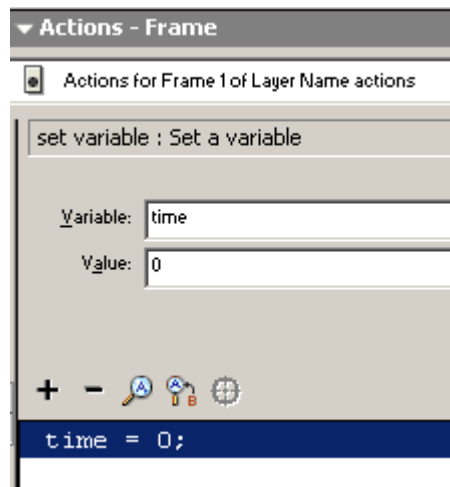
7. Insert a keyframe on the actions layer frame 2 by clicking in frame 2 of the actions layer and hitting the F6 key. Highlight frame 1 of the actions layer and Open your action panel.

8. Setting up a variable: Click + => actions => variables=> set variable.



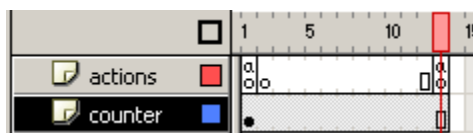
Type in the following:

- variable name is Time
- the value is 0
- check expression box.

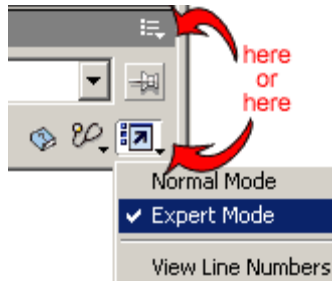


So the action in frame 1 looks like this: time = 0;

9. Click on frame 13 on the actions layer and hit F6 to insert keyframe. What we will do on frame thirteen is set an action that will increment the variable time by 1 every twelve frames.



On the actions panel click the right arrow and select expert mode that will allow you to type in any command that is not listed as we want it in the presets.

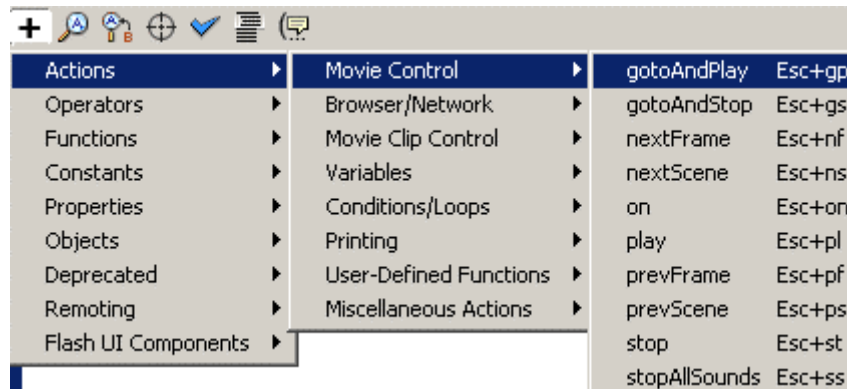


Type in the Following: `time ++;`

This will increase time by a value of 1 each time this frame is played. (If you were starting with a high number and wanted to count down by one you might type in: `time -- ;`)

Check your syntax by clicking the right hand arrow on the actions panel and select Check syntax. When you see that you have typed it in correctly, return to normal mode by clicking the right arrow and select normal mode.

10. After you have added the increment on the 13th frame you will need to tell flash to replay the loop of 12 frames. While you are still on frame 13 select `+ =>` basic actions => goto. Then select frame number 2.



This sends the movie back to play frame number 2-13, or 12 frames before it increases time by a value of 1. Remember 12 frames is a second on a movie that is 12fps. 16 frames would be a second on a movie that is 16 fps. Your resulting script on frame 13 should look like this:

```
time++;
gotoAndPlay (2)
```

You might ask why we do not send the movie back to frame 1. This is because it would reset the value of time to 0, since frame 1 has the action script `time=0;` in it.

If you build this movie in a movie clip, you will have an automatic timer that you can use in any movie.