

Working with Video in Flash - pt 1

MMDE 5002 Interactive Media Project Major 2

Lecturer: Ryszard Dabek

Creating FLV files

There are two main ways of using video within Flash both have distinct advantages and disadvantages.

Embedded

This method is where the video is contained in the SWF file. The video is imported directly into the library using the Flash import wizard. The imported FLV resides in the library and plays off a timeline (either the main timeline or a the timeline of a movieclip into which it is placed.) The major disadvantage with this method is that embedded video greatly increases the size of the SWF file into which it is placed. Problems also arise in the image/sound synchronisation for longer clips. For these reasons it is recommended that embedded video is only used for shorter video clips (2 mins and less). However, embedded video does offer the advantage of allowing you to work with timeline-based interactivity so the method is well suited to some forms of experimental interactivity techniques involving looping etc.

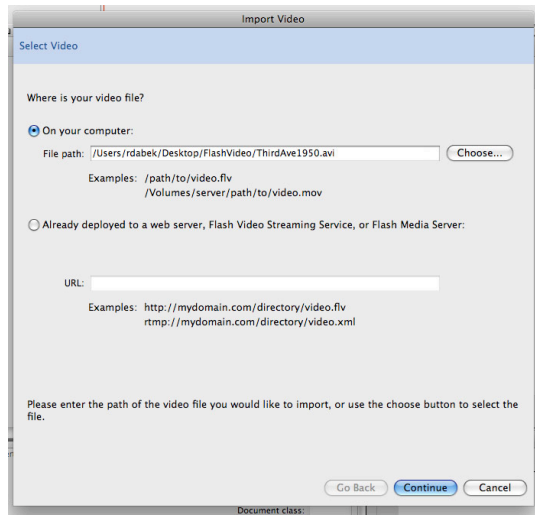
Progressive Download and Streaming

Within this method the video file is converted to an FLV using the Flash Video Encoder. The FLV file is then kept on a server as a separate entity to the SWF file that plays it. True streaming of an FLV file requires the use of a dedicated Flash Media or Video Streaming Server and allows for the video file to be delivered almost instantaneously. The FLV file can also be delivered across a network from a standard web server. This method is referred to as Progressive Download and differs slightly from true streaming in that a small delay can be experienced before the video begins to play. This delay is caused by the download process itself, this requires that enough media is downloaded to ensure that smooth playback can take place. The use of dynamically delivered streaming FLV has many advantages over the use of embedded video, most notably the reduced file size for the SWF file that "plays" the video. Another advantage is the ease of updating video files without having to edit the SWF files. Through the use of ActionScript and Meta Tags a wide range of approaches to using external FLV files are available

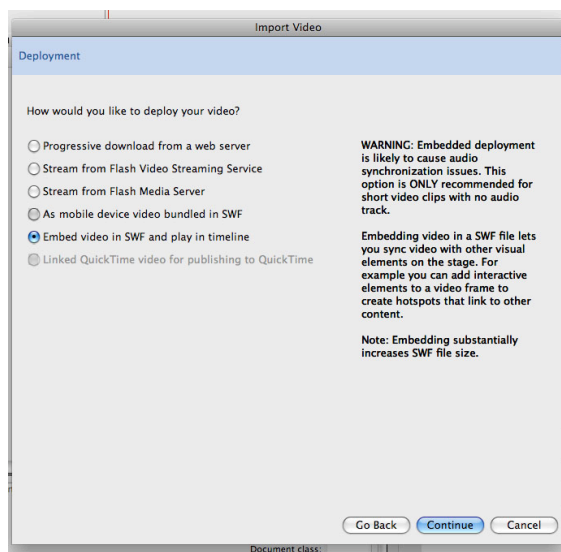
To Import an embedded video file:

1 File > Import > Import Video

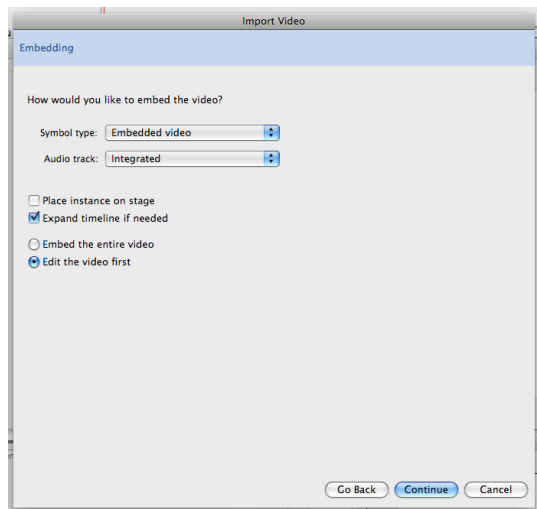
2 Select file to import



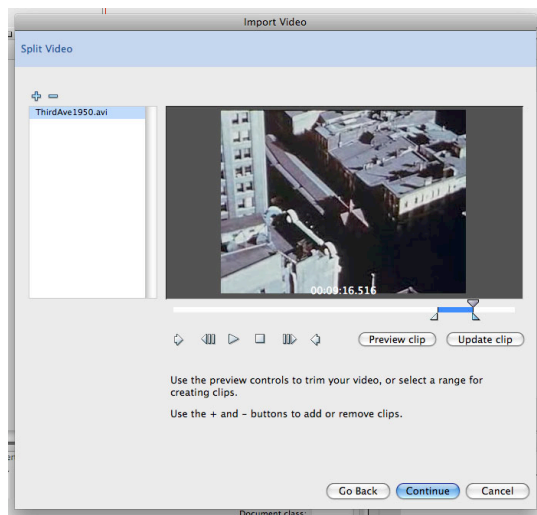
3 Choose import method



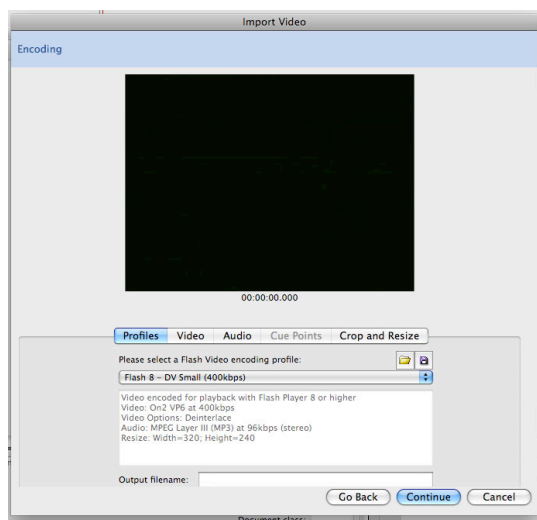
4 Choose the embed settings



5 Edit the video sequence (optional)



6 Choose the FLV encoding settings

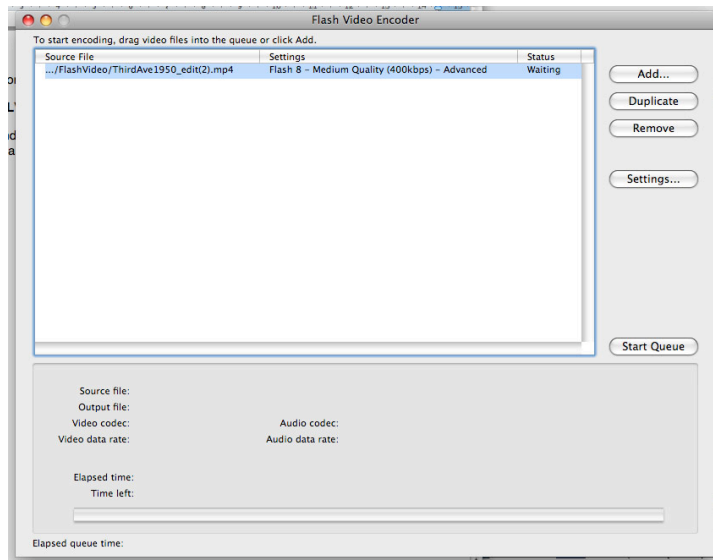


7 Finalise the import

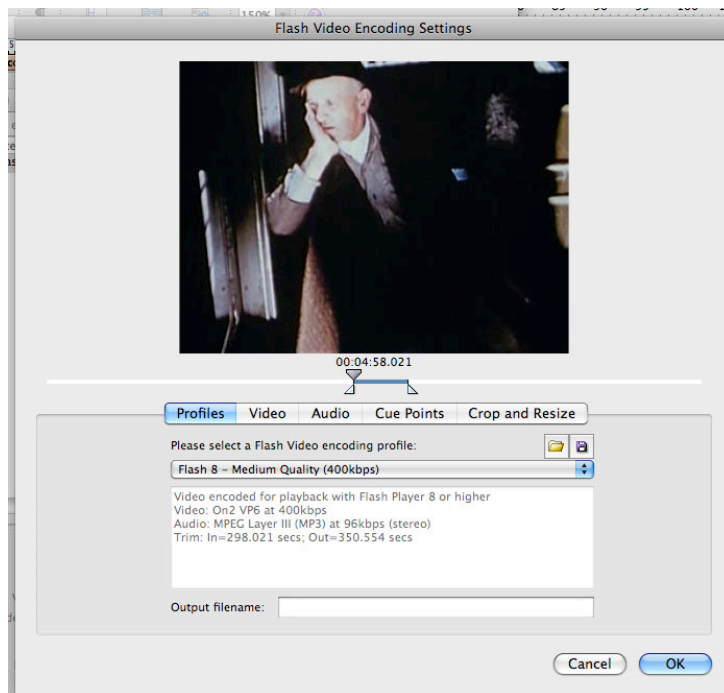
To Encode an FLV file for Streaming/Progressive Download

To encode a standalone FLV video file for use on a server you can either use the Flash Import Video Wizard or the Flash Video encoder. For this example we will use the Flash Video Encoder.

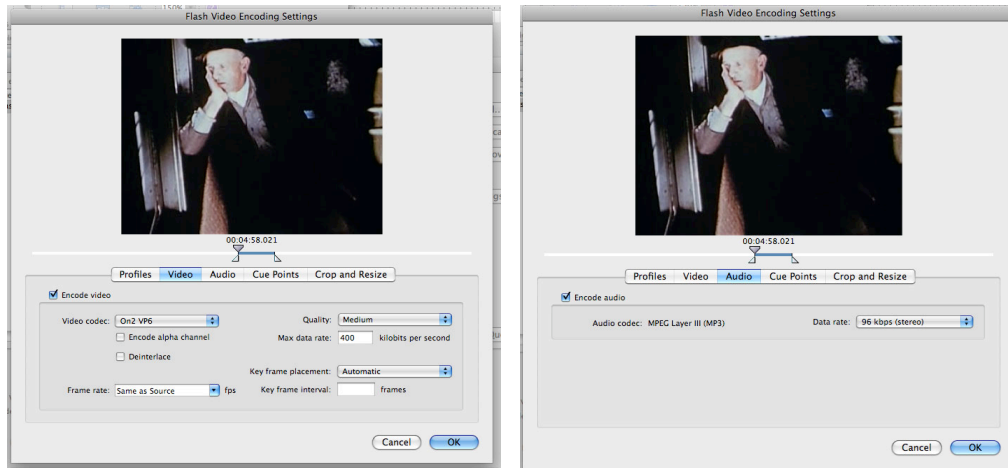
1 Select files to be encoded



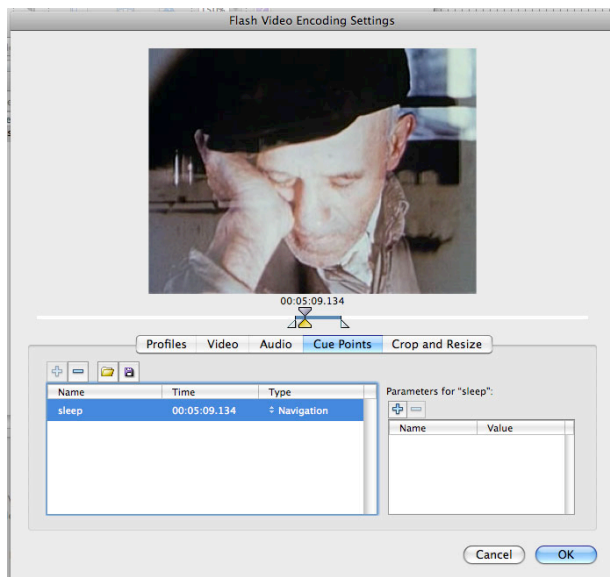
2 Adjust encode settings either by choosing a preset profile:



Alternatively, you can set the video and audio settings individually:



3 At this point of the process you can also insert cue points which mark significant points of time in the video. With cue points you can trigger other events in Flash or navigate to other sections of the video. In fact there are two distinct types of cue points you can embed in an FLV files for these purposes: Navigation and Event.



4 Start Queue – you will then be given visual feedback of the encode process via the progress bar and the video thumbnail.

