

How to import images

Although Adobe Flash Professional provides great drawing tools of its own, you will often want to use images from other sources. In Flash, you can import photographs, vector drawings created in other applications, existing graphics such as company logos, and so on. As a designer you need to decide when it's best to create images in Flash and when you need to import images. You make these decisions based on design requirements, file size requirements, and available resources.

Image formats supported by Flash

Flash supports a range of images for import. Generally, you want to get these to their desired size and form by using an image-editing program before you import them into Flash.

Some of the most commonly used image formats are:

- *PNG*: This is the file format Adobe Fireworks uses, and Flash supports roundtrip editing between Flash and Fireworks. This means you can open a PNG in Fireworks from within Flash, edit it in Fireworks, and view these changes in Flash immediately. Any layers in the Fireworks document can be preserved in Flash.
- *JPEG*: This is the standard file format for web photos. JPEGs can be compressed. Use Adobe Photoshop to perform necessary compression before importing. You can also open a JPEG from within Flash, edit it in Photoshop and view these changes in Flash immediately.
- *GIF* and *BMP*: These should be optimized for file size prior to import, using Photoshop.
- *Adobe Photoshop files*: When importing a Photoshop (PSD) file, Flash can preserve many of the attributes that were applied in Photoshop, and provides options for maintaining the visual fidelity of the image and further modifying the image.
- *Adobe Illustrator vector files*: You can import Illustrator (AI) files into Flash, complete with vectors, layers, frames, and symbols.

Bitmap and vector images

Bitmap images are composed of different-colored pixels that combine to make an image. Graphics and photographs saved as GIFs or JPEGs are both bitmapped formats. When you create bitmaps, you essentially decide the color for each pixel.

Bitmap images are resolution dependent. This means the size and quality of the image depends on the number of pixels per inch in the image. Images saved for onscreen display have a resolution of 72 pixels per inch because that's all most monitors can handle, whereas images saved for print can require 300 pixels per inch (or more).

In contrast to bitmaps, vector graphics are not created pixel-by-pixel. Instead, vector graphics use a series of commands to determine a line's shape, location, thickness, and color. The actual shape is rendered (or drawn) on the screen at view time.

Flash's native format is vector, because vector images produce smaller file sizes. However, as the previous list indicates, you can import bitmapped images into Flash when you need them.

Importing images to the Stage

When you import an image to the Stage, it is also placed in the document's library.

1. Start Flash and open the document into which you want to import an image.
2. Select the keyframe where the image should appear.
3. Select File > Import > Import To Stage.
The Import dialog box appears (**Figure 1**).
4. Browse to the folder with the desired image and select the image.
5. Click Open.

The image appears on the Stage. The image has also been added to the library.

Note: To edit the image in another application, right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac OS) the image in the Library panel to open the context menu. The context menu includes two Edit With commands (**Figure 2**). One targets the most recent application you used for round-trip editing, such as Adobe Photoshop. The other lets you navigate to a different bitmap editing application. When you open the image for editing in another application, the changes you make are reflected in Flash.

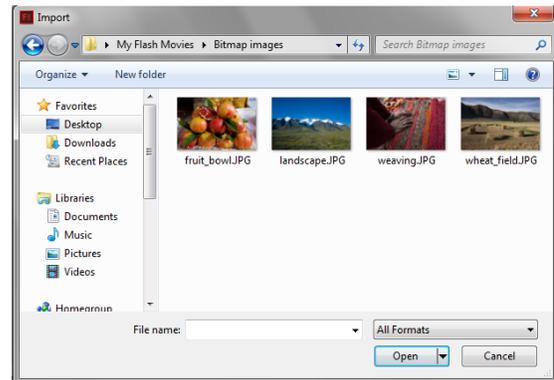


Figure 1 Import dialog box

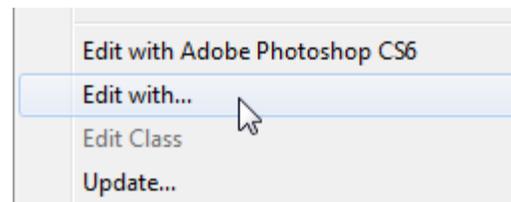


Figure 2 Context menu

Importing images into the library

When you import an image into the library, the image is ready for use but not immediately added to the Stage.

To import an image into the library:

1. Start Flash and open the document into which you want to import an image.
2. Select File > Import > Import To Library.
The Import dialog box (Windows) or Import To Library dialog box (Mac OS) appears.
3. Browse to the folder with the desired image and select the image.
4. Click Open.
5. If the Library panel is not open, select Window > Library.
The image appears in the Library panel (**Figure 3**).
6. Select the image to preview it in the Library panel.

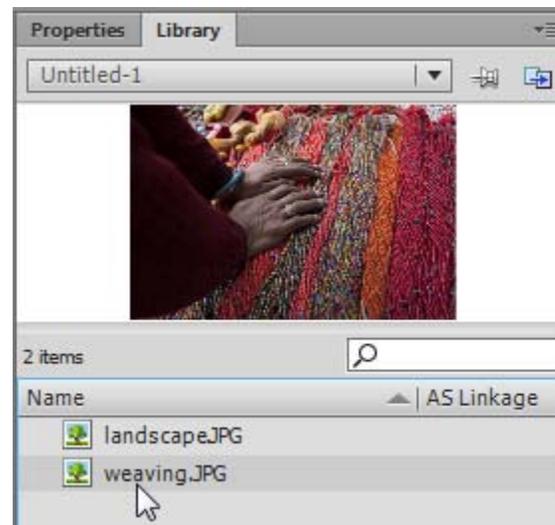


Figure 3 Library with imported image

Importing Photoshop and Illustrator images

Because programs such as Illustrator and Photoshop support layers, Flash lets you preserve these characteristics during import. The instructions below describe how to import an Illustrator source image—importing a Photoshop image is very similar.

To import an Illustrator image:

1. Start Flash and open the document into which you want to import the Illustrator source image

Note: While there are no known issues about importing AI files created in earlier versions of Illustrator, Adobe recommends importing AI files created by using Illustrator. If you encounter issues importing AI files created in earlier version of Illustrator, open the file in Illustrator, and save the AI file as a compatible file and re-import it into Flash.

2. Select the keyframe where the vector file should appear.
3. Select File > Import > Import To Stage.

The Import dialog box opens.

4. Browse to the folder with the desired vector file and select it.
5. Click Open.

The Import Illustrator Document To Stage dialog box opens (**Figure 4**).

You can select which layers to import. You can choose whether to import layers in the source image as layers or as separate frames. Select each layer to set various import options for that layer.

Note: If there is an Incompatibility Report button before the Convert Layers To menu, click it. Make changes as required to the Illustrator image and start the import process again.

6. Click OK.

Flash imports the Illustrator image, which appears on the Stage.

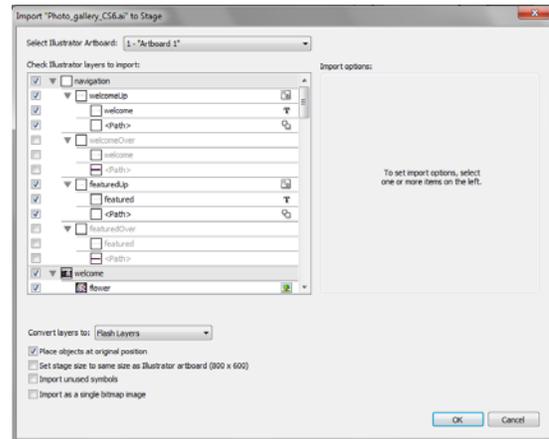


Figure 4 Import Illustrator Document To Stage dialog box

Importing an XFL document

An XFL file is a type of Flash file that stores the same information as a FLA file, but in XML format. Other Adobe applications, such as Adobe After Effects, can export files in XFL format. This allows you to work on a project in a separate application first and then continue working with it in Flash.

You can open and work with XFL files in Flash in the same way you would open an FLA file. When you open an XFL file in Flash, you can then save the file as a FLA file. For more information on XFL files, see Flash Help.

To import an XFL file:

1. In another Adobe application, such as After Effects, export your work as an XFL file.

The application preserves all of the layers and objects of the original file in the XFL file.

2. In Flash, choose File > Open and navigate to the XFL file. Click Open.

The XFL file opens in Flash in the same way as an FLA file. All of the layers of the original file appear in the timeline and the original objects appear in the Library panel.

You can now work with the file normally.

3. To save the file, choose File > Save.