



Motion Tween Effects in Flash CS3

By: [Tom Green](#) , [David Stiller](#) ,

A common question on the Adobe support forums is how to fade in an imported photo, and then fade it out again. People are comfortable enough importing a BMP or PNG file, but when they drag it to the stage, there doesn't seem to be a way to adjust its transparency at all, much less over time. The trick here is to convert the photo into a symbol. The type of symbol depends on what effects you want to apply. Both graphics and movieclips support color effects such as Brightness, Tint, Alpha, and Advanced, but only movieclips support filters. Let's try it.

Bringing in the photo

The following steps will work with any imported photo, but a PNG file has been provided for you in the files that accompany this article.

1. Create a new Flash document and save it as **TronGuy.fla**. Using the Property inspector, set the document's dimensions to 550 X 400 and its background color to black.
2. Select *File > Import to Stage* to import the **tronguy.png** graphic file from the exercises folder for this chapter. Use the Align panel (*Window > Align*) to center the image.

Who is this debonair futuristic fellow? Ladies and gentleman, we present to you Jay Maynard, better known on the Internet as [Tron Guy](http://www.tronguy.net/) (<http://www.tronguy.net/>). Jay has made numerous appearances on "Jimmy Kimmel Live" in his homemade costume inspired by the 1982 Disney film *Tron* and was good enough to let us use his likeness for *Foundation Flash CS3 for Designers*.

3. There is doubtless no better way to demonstrate a tweened Glow filter than to apply it to Tron Guy, but first, let's tween an alpha transition. Select the imported PNG and note the absence of color styling properties. With the PNG selected, go to *Modify > Convert to Symbol* and choose **Graphic**, as shown in Image 1. Name the symbol **tron guy** and click **OK**. Select the symbol and note the **Color** drop-down menu in the **Property inspector**.

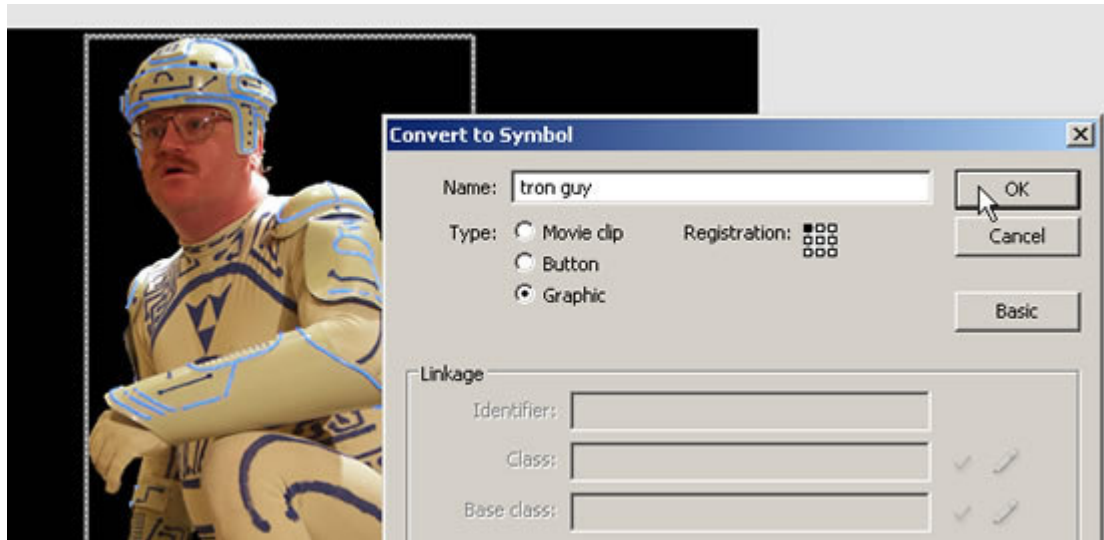


Image 1. Converting an imported image to a symbol allows for color and alpha tweens.

4. Insert a keyframe at frame 10. Select frame 1 and choose **Alpha** from the **Color** drop-down menu. A slider will appear. Drag this down to zero, and then apply a motion tween between the two keyframes. How? There are two ways to do it: either a) right-click (PC) / Command+click (Mac) the span of frames between the two keyframes and choose **Apply Motion Tween** from the context menu or b) select the span of frames and choose **Motion** from the **Tween** setting in the **Property inspector**. Suddenly Tron Guy's entrance is visually more interesting.
5. To make it even more dramatic, choose the **Advanced** option, which makes a **Settings** button appear. Select the symbol at frame 10 and click the **Settings** button. In the **Advanced Effect** dialog box, drag the right-hand red and green sliders down to **-225**, and then click **OK**. Select the symbol at frame 1 and click the **Settings** button again. Drag the left-hand **Alpha** slider up to **100%**. Drag the right-hand red, green, and blue sliders down to **-225**. Click **OK** and scrub the timeline to see the results. Save your file, if you like, and close it.
6. For the final touch, let's add some glow to Tron Guy's costume. Open the **TronGuyGlow.fla** file for this one, because we've outlined some of his circuits for you. Insert a keyframe in the costume layer at frame 20. Select the costume symbol at this frame and flip the **Property inspector** to the **Filters** tab. Add a **Glow** filter with the following settings:
 - Color: #0099FF
 - Blur X: 8
 - Blur Y: 8
 - Strength: 330%
7. Insert a keyframe in the circuits layer at frame 20 and add a Glow filter to the symbol on that layer. Use the same settings, except make the color **#FFFFFF (white)**. Apply a motion tween between the keyframes in both layers. A single line of ActionScript in the scripts layer — `gotoAndPlay(10)` — loops the movie between frames 10 and 20. Test the movie to see your handiwork (see Image 2).



Image 2. *Say, that looks just like the movie!*

The reason the costume layer's glow follows the contours of the costume is because this image is a PNG with a *transparent background*. If the photo had a solid background, the glow would outline a rectangle around the photo itself.

One Last Tid-bit

If you motion tween the **Alpha** property of nested vector art, you may be in for a surprise. Semi-transparent graphic and movieclip symbols that are made up of other symbols don't fade out cleanly as a whole, like the photo above. Instead, each piece fades individually, as shown in Image 3.

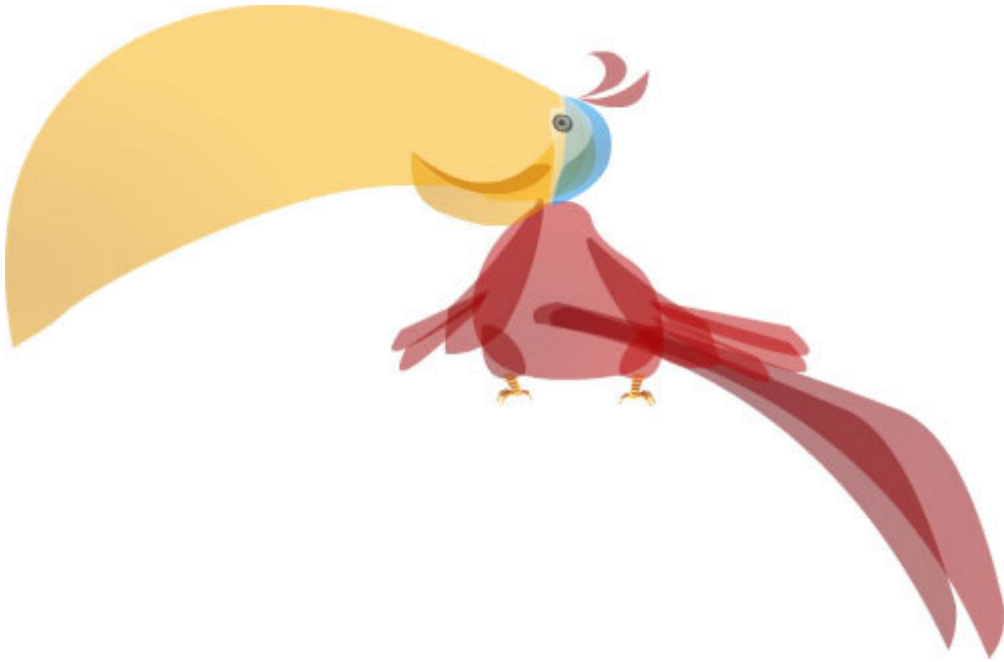


Image 3. *Unintentional X-ray effect caused by alpha reduction to nested symbol*

There are two ways to avoid this phenomenon. On solid backgrounds, replace the Alpha tween with a Tint tween set to the same color as the background. In the case of movieclips, you may alternately leave the Alpha tween as is, but set the blend mode to **Layer**, a choice you'll see in the **Property inspector**. These solutions are demonstrated in the **FadingParrot.fla** file that accompanies this article.

Conclusion

Remember, if you're working with imported photos, chances are good you'll want to convert those images into symbols in order to tween them. Symbols are what allow you to apply affects such as Alpha, Tint, and the like, and either graphic or movieclip symbols will do. If you want to apply filters (Glow, Drop Shadow, Blur, etc.) or blend modes, you'll have to use movieclips.

Keywords

Flash CS3, Filters, Glow Filter, Filter Tweening

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