

What's New in ActionScript in Flash 8

If you've been reading through the first two articles in this series, you'll have seen the new features and changes to Flash Basic 8 and Flash Professional 8. In this article, I want to show you some of the changes to ActionScript in Flash 8. These include changes to the editor as well as changes to the language itself.

I'm going to cover the following areas:

- Changes to the ActionScript editor
- Changes to the Actions panel
- Changes to the ActionScript language
- Miscellaneous changes

This article doesn't include example files but you may want to read it with Flash 8 open so you can familiarise yourself with the new features. If you haven't yet bought Flash 8, you can download a trial version from the Macromedia web site.

We'll start by looking at changes to the ActionScript editor panel.

ActionScript editor

The ActionScript editor is used by both the Actions panel and the Script window when working with ActionScript. The Script window opens standalone ActionScript files.

The ActionScript editor controls the way that your code is coloured and provides options for working with code. In Flash 8, some additional options have been added including:

- Display of hidden characters
- Debug options in external .as files
- Preference to reload modified script files

Displaying hidden characters

You can now view hidden characters in your code. This is an incredibly useful feature as it can help you track down problems that prevent your code from running. Many times, I've copied code from other places, only to find that it didn't work correctly when tested the movie. There was no apparent reason but I'd accidentally copied hidden characters from the other location.

Open the Actions panel and choose the menu options button at the right. You'll see the **Hidden Characters** option. You can also use the **Ctrl-Shift-8** shortcut to turn on this option. The following screen shot shows the location of this option.

Thanks for your interest in the "What's New in ActionScript in Flash 8" article by Sas Jacobs. To purchase the full article [click here](#)