

Uploading and downloading files with Flash 8

One of the great new features of Flash is its ability to let you work with file uploads and downloads. However, let me say right at the beginning of this article that Flash 8 CAN'T upload files on its own - it needs some help from the server. The topic of this article is how we can use Flash to communicate the information about uploaded and downloaded files with the server.

On HTML pages, one of the form controls that is included is an input control with a type of **File**.

```
<input type="file" />
```

This creates a field with a **Browse** button that looks something like the image shown below.



When the user clicks the Browse button, they can select a file from their computer. The HTML page doesn't upload the file, instead it relies on a file written in a server-side language - for example, ASP.NET, PHP, ColdFusion. The same applies with Flash. If you want to upload a file, you'll still need a server-side file to do the uploading.

Macromedia has tested the file uploading and downloading up to a size 100MB. The help documents say that this is the limit, however, they really indicate that larger file sizes haven't been tested. You can only upload and download from the swf file's domain or those that provide permission with a cross-domain policy file.

You'll need Flash 8 to work with the files in this article. You can download a trial copy from the Macromedia Web site. Note that the code samples within the article all use AS2.0.

You can download the files referred to in the tutorial from the blue Properties box that contains the article PDF. There's a heading titled Code Download and you can click the Details link next to it to get the zip file.

Note: If you have difficulties downloading the source files or PDF, you might have a problem with your cookies. Delete the cookies from your machine and try again. In Internet Explorer, you can do this by choosing **Tools > Internet Options...** and clicking the **Delete Cookies...** button on the **General** tab.

The FileReference class

Flash 8 includes a two new classes within the **flash.net** package - the FileReference and FileReferenceList classes. The FileReferenceList class works with arrays of FileReference objects.

Let's start by looking at how you can create a new FileReference object. That's not too hard - you use the following code:

```
var FileRef:FileReference = new FileReference();
```

When you use this code, Flash brings up a file picker so that you can choose a file.

You can use the **browse** method to refine the process by passing in a **typelist**, although this is optional.

```
FileRef.browse(typelist);
```

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