

Dreamweaver CS3: Animation Behaviors with the Timeline

Introduction to Timelines

Timelines use dynamic HTML also known as DHTML to change the position of an AP DIV or the source of an image over time, or to call behavior actions automatically after the page has loaded. You cannot have animation in Dreamweaver without using the Timeline, unless you import an animated GIF or Flash animation. Since it uses DHTML it does not require the use of plug-ins, Active X controls, or Java Applets.

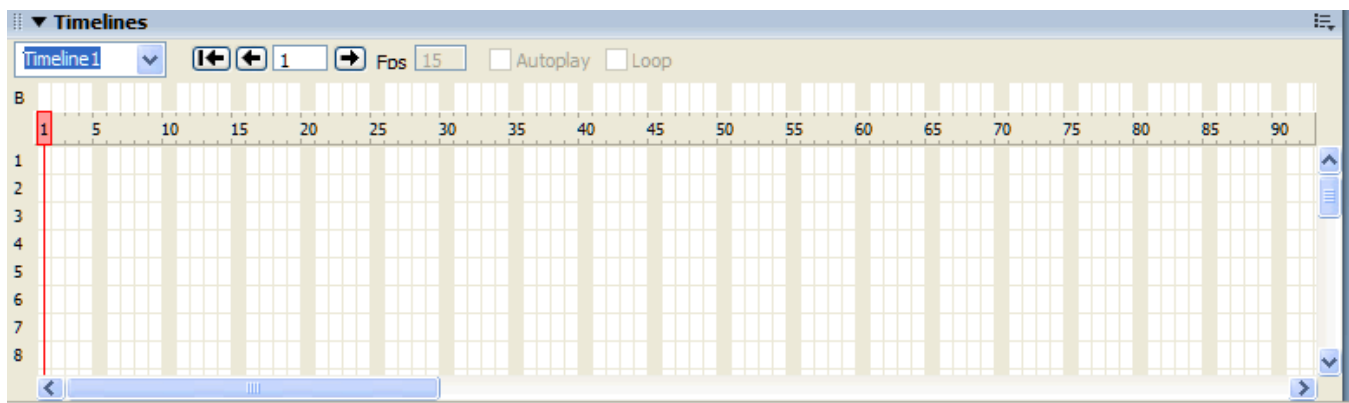
Timeline Features

A timeline is composed of a series of frames. A frame is one cell or one point of time in a timeline. The more frames you use on the timeline the longer the animation lasts. You can have multiple animations on a Web page, but I wouldn't suggest that since it might tax someone's operating system resources.

Animation moves through the timeline frames with the use of keyframes. Keyframes hold information, images, just about anything you plan on moving through time.

Timeline Panel

The Timeline is accessed through **the Modify > Timeline** menu. There are several choices once utilized. The best way to talk about the Timeline is to use a visual representation of it as below. It is similar to the Flash Timeline.



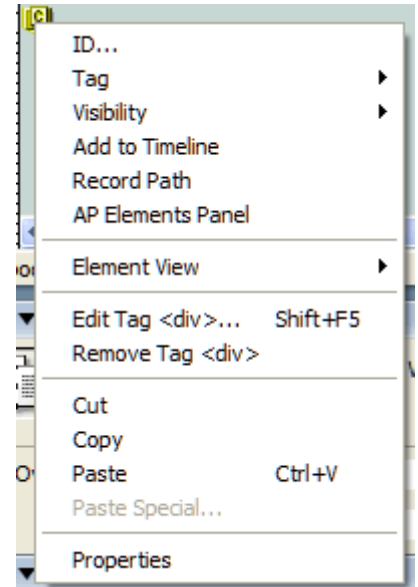
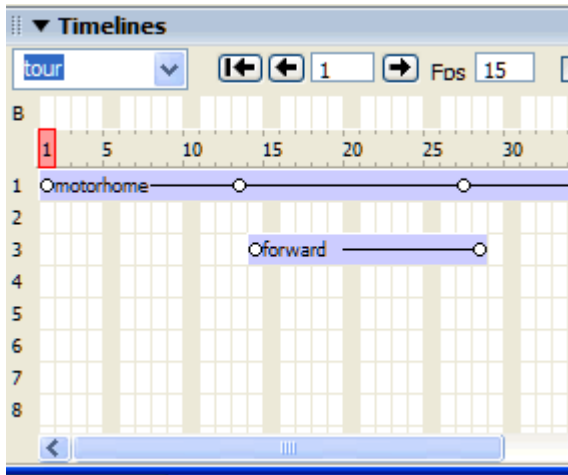
There are a few important items to identify on the timeline

- The numbered rows are individual timeline rows; you can have several items all living in the timeline, each on its own row.
- The single row at the top with a "B" on the row marker is where you install behaviors, such as timeline controls that start and stop a timeline from action.
- The numbers across horizontally counting by 5 are the Frame numbers; each individual white frame is a cell that can hold something.
- The red line and Frame highlighter is the Playback head; you can "scrub" the Timeline by dragging it left to right and then see what is happening in the document by time.
- By default, Dreamweaver uses 15 frames per second, seen above in a grayed out box; you can make the time line advance slower or faster by changing the FPS in the box.
- The two checkboxes, Autoplay and Loop are used to start the animation at the loading of the Web page, and also Loop the animation continuously if desired.
- Rewind, Back and Play/Forward buttons work as you expect, by advancing or returning the Playback head.

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Placing Objects on the Timeline

An item to be placed on the Timeline must be inside of an AP DIV. It's the DIV container that is placed on the timeline to receive a behavior. There are several ways to get placement on the timeline; I personally like to drag the DIV marker from the Design view of the page directly to the Timeline. You may also right-click on a DIV marker to place it on the timeline.

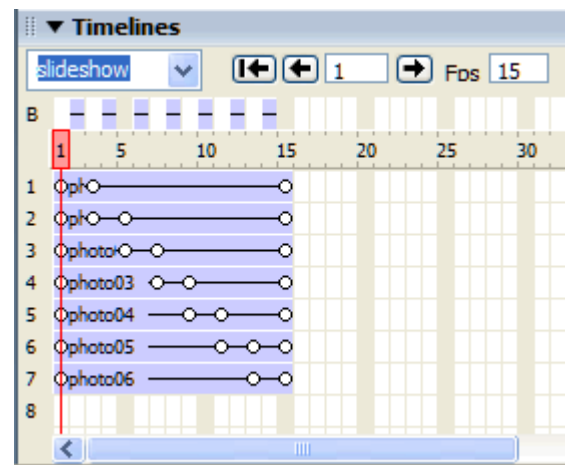


Nonlinear Animation

A common style of animation is called **nonlinear**, it usually involves moving an object from one point of the screen to another part, this can involve buttons that can start and stop the animation. It is possible to record the path of an object, such as the project showing a motor home traveling across a map, a butterfly touching parts of a flower, or a bi-plane moving across the page. The possibilities are as endless as your imagination. Just don't put too many on one page!

Linear, or Straight-Line, Path Animation

This type of animation utilizes the timeline not for time passing as much as object placing. Place an AP DIV on the timeline, and use the Visibility and Hidden features available for DIVs and you can create a Slideshow of photos, drawings, or whatever you can imagine, perhaps several DIVs containing text to be seen by clicking a button. Notice the image to the right that was taken from a slideshow presentation, this Timeline advances by clicking a button on the page to see the next image. The "B" or behavior row holds a behavior every two frames. The behavior stops the slideshow from advancing until the user clicks a button.



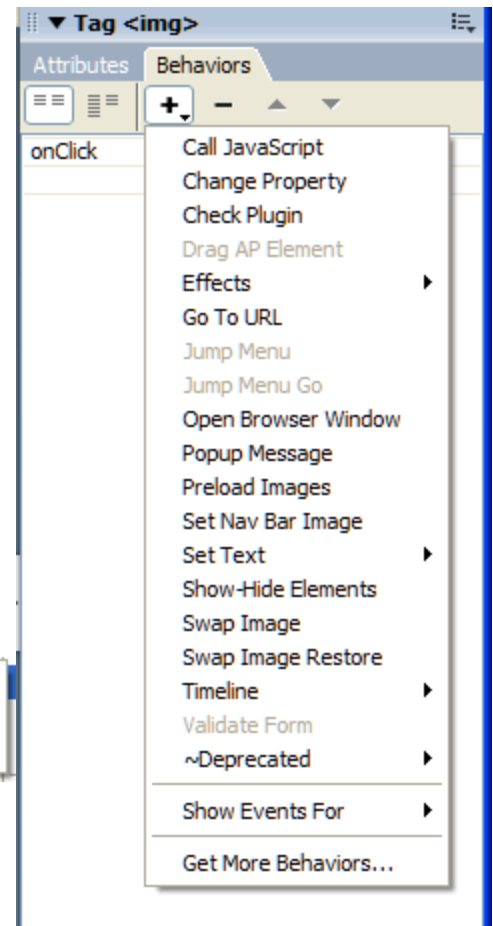
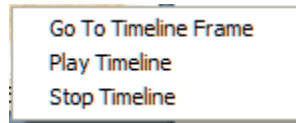
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Using Behaviors with the Timeline and Button Objects

Behaviors can be added to the Timeline to start and stop, show and hide elements on the Timeline. These behaviors might be added to the BODY tag of the Web page so it starts when the page is loaded or only when the object behavior is called by the user, usually by pressing a button.

The image shown on the right became available once I clicked on a button in the document, by choosing the Timeline selection I was given the following options to choose from; **Go To Timeline Frame**; **Play Timeline**; and **Stop Timeline**.

Since you are using AP DIVs to create the Timeline events, instead of outside programs such as Flash, you are using elements that can be accessible to all. Consider the size and placement of buttons that will be used to navigate the timeline, or how the timeline is used on the page. The best approach is to develop your idea and then test it for accessibility. Did it pass the test, if not; can you make it pass by altering the project in some way? Can you create an alternative page to link to so you can be accessible?



Examples of Timelines in Action

[Non-Linear Record Timeline Behavior - Tour](#)

[Non-Linear Record Timeline Behavior - Butterfly](#)

[Non-Linear Record Timeline Behavior – Flying](#)

[Linear Timeline Behavior - Slideshow](#)