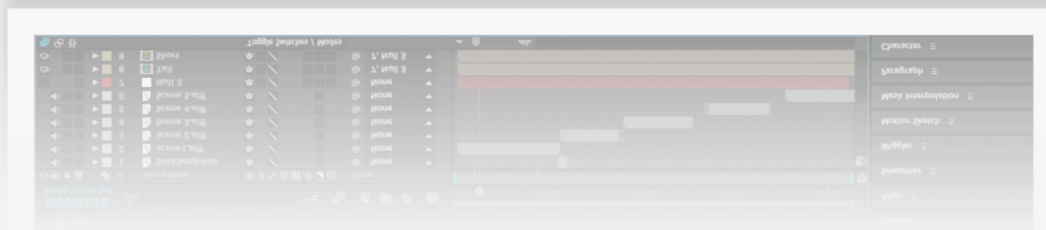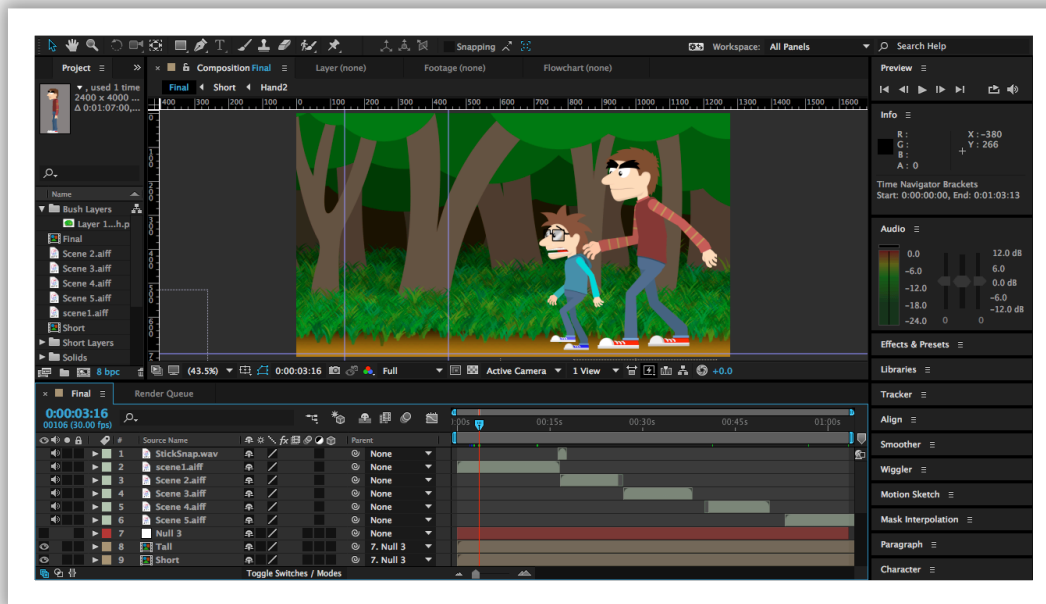# Replacing Flash Professional
Author: Jason Shannon

Prof. Phillip Snyder, DIGM 3374

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Literature Review

Introduction

Adobe Flash Professional once dominated the industry of two-dimensional animation for years. Despite this software's success, consumers, and even the program's developers, have complained about the software, ultimately resulting in its fatal loss of posterity. With Adobe Flash Professional no longer being in the picture, **which animation program(s) best enable designers to efficiently develop 2D animated projects?**

Before any investigation can be done to answer this question, it is important to know what motion designers should look for in an animation program, the reasons why consumers disliked Adobe Flash Professional (and Adobe's response), and finally, what are the current suggestions for alternative options to Adobe Flash Professional.

Considerations

There are many factors to consider when choosing an animation program. First of all, animation is a process, which requires no small amount of detail. This means that the entire process can be very time-consuming. Therefore, motion designers require software options in order to **get the most out of their time and the program's capabilities**. Toptenreviews.com provides software reviews for designers searching for these options. This site also provides insight on what to look for when choosing a particular program. The factors that affect this decision will vary depending on the complexity of the project; however, according to a review on some of the best two-dimensional animation software, motion designers should **take into consideration the "end result"** of their projects,

including both the duration and complexity. Motion designers should also consider **whether or not the artwork would be designed within that program**, or in another creative program such as Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator. The software in consideration should have a fairly **easy to navigate interface, as well as a variety of useful tools, versatile importing and accessible exporting capabilities.**[1]

There are an almost infinite number of animation programs available, with varying costs, experience levels and capabilities. The purpose of the following paragraphs will be to divulge what a majority of designers are saying about some of the current software options offered for two-dimensional animation creation.
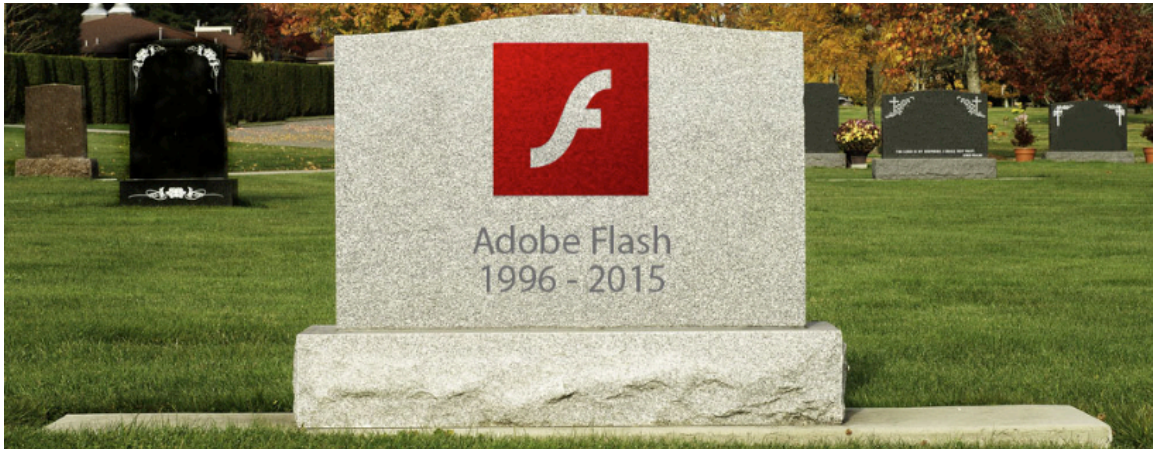
Flash Professional/Animate

Image Source [2]

Despite Adobe's success with Flash Professional between 1995 and 2015, professional and amateur designers voice a common discontent with the software. In his article, "*Adobe Flash is Finally Dead",* Zach Epstein makes it known that even the

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[1] 2D Animation Software Reviews. (2014, January). Retrieved March 14, 2016, from http://2d-animation-software-review.toptenreviews.com/

[2] Williams, O. (2015, September 1). Adobe Flash is Finally Dead [Flash Gravestone]. Retrieved March 18, 2016, from http://thenextweb.com/apps/2015/09/01/adobe-flash-just-took-another-step-towards-death-thanks-to-google/#gref

program's developers despised Flash Professional, finding it to be **riddled with instability**, and vulnerable to hacking. Additionally, Epstein reports that Flash did not **support the use of HTML5**, which is a common format for animated web content. The software also failed to **meet today's web standards** for web-optimized animation. Adobe responded to this criticism by completely doing away with the "Flash Professional" name and replacing it with Adobe Animate.[3]

Several people speculate that Adobe is merely hiding Flash Professional behind the new face of Animate. However, according to Mike Roush of Titmouse Inc., Adobe Animate is much better than Flash in several ways. First, Adobe Animate is a much faster operating software than Flash. Because animating characters and their environments is a very time consuming task, motion designers are always **looking for a more efficient way to create animations without sacrificing the quality of the content**. Secondly, Adobe Animate now **uses the Cloud to allow for quicker sharing of information** and access to Adobe's other creative programs. Thirdly, Adobe Animate comes with a brand new set of tools, which have greatly improved the **versatility** of the program and allows designers to have **more freedom in their work**. Adobe has also designed Adobe Animate to have more improved **exporting capabilities** in comparison to Flash, producing high quality media in a variety of file formats. Lastly, the developers of Adobe Animate have tied the program into the rest of Adobe's creative suite, making it possible to import media from other adobe products into Animate.[4]

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[3] Epstein, Z. (2015, December 01). Adobe Flash is finally dead. Retrieved March 18, 2016, from https://bgr.com/2015/12/01/adobe-flash-rip-adobe-animate/
[4] REVIEW: Adobe Animate CC from a Flash Veteran's Point of View. (2016, February 29). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from http://www.awn.com/animationworld/review-adobe-animate-cc-flash-veteran-s-point-view

After Effects/DuIK

Image Source [5]

  For those people who still find that Adobe Animate does not meet their needs, there is an almost infinite amount of options for both professional and amateur designers to choose from when it comes to animation software. Some of these options include Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop and Toon Boom.

  Adobe After Effects is often the program of choice for many motion designers in the industry. While this software is well known for its variety of custom special effects, it is also highly useful for character animation. While the pin tool can be used to animate characters and objects, Adobe After Effects does not support **character rigging**. This particular flaw makes Adobe After Effects seem like an unlikely option for two-dimensional animation; however, there are **plugins** for Adobe After Effects. Caleb Ward, author of "*8 After Effects Plugins Every Motion Designer Should Have*", indicates that there are several useful plugins for improving the versatility of Adobe After Effects. DuIK is specifically designed to work in Adobe After Effects, and incorporates character rigging and inverse kinematics. The tools, effects and plugins available for Adobe After Effects enables the motion designer to create, rig and animate characters with more

[5] Rigging DUIK Animation [Logo]. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2016, from http://duduf.net/index.php/products/after-effects/duik/

realistic motion. In addition to DuIK, Ward also recommends several other plug-ins such as Newton 2, which makes animated movements more realistic by adding physics to two-dimensional animation.[6]
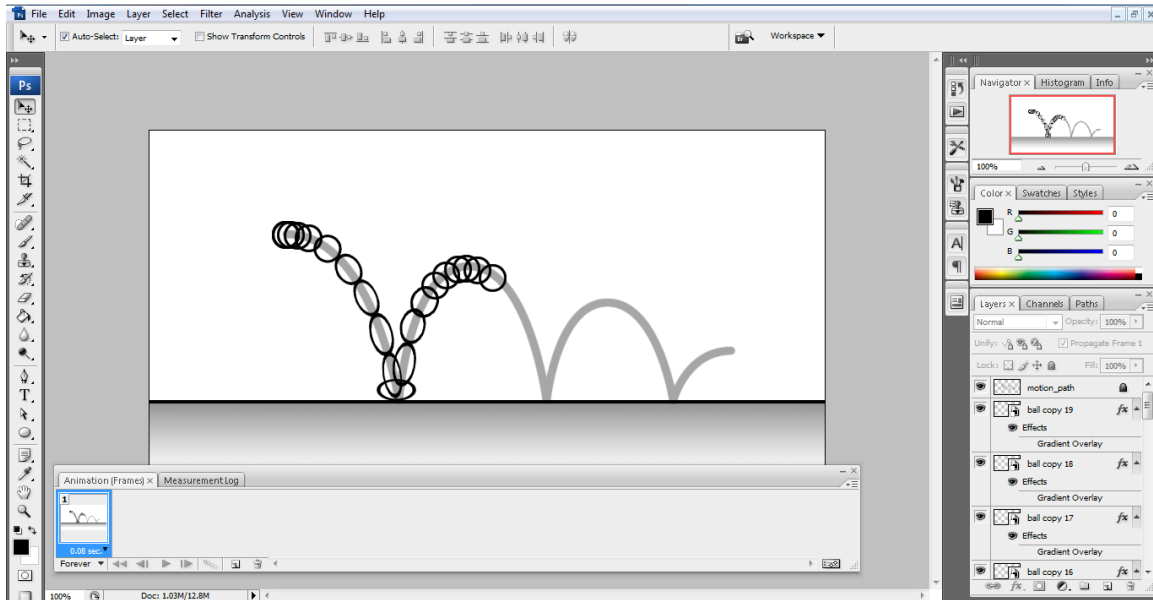
Photoshop

Image Source [7]

      Adobe Photoshop is another potential option for two-dimensional animation. While Adobe Photoshop is primarily used for creating raster images, it can also be used for animation. In his article, *"Creating Advanced Animations in Photoshop",* Stephen Petrany talks about Adobe Photoshop's animation capabilities. The timeline panel, for instance, allows motion designers to create traditional frame-by-frame animations or key-frame animation. This panel is similar to the layout of the Layers Panel. Motion designers

[6] Ward, C. (2014, December 04). 8 After Effects Plugins Every Motion Designer Should Have. Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/after-effects-plugins/

[7] 2D Ball Animation Tutorial [Digital image]. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2016, from https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse459/12au/assignments/assignment_1/2d_ball_animation_tutorial/

can animate shapes, text, masks and smart object layers as well as video and three-dimensional layers. The properties of layers can also be animated as needed. [8]

While Petrany admits Adobe Photoshop pales in comparison to Adobe After Effects, he seems to think it cannot be ruled out as a resource to motion designers. Adobe Photoshop, as well as Adobe Illustrator, are also highly useful for creating and preparing characters for rigging in Adobe After Effects.
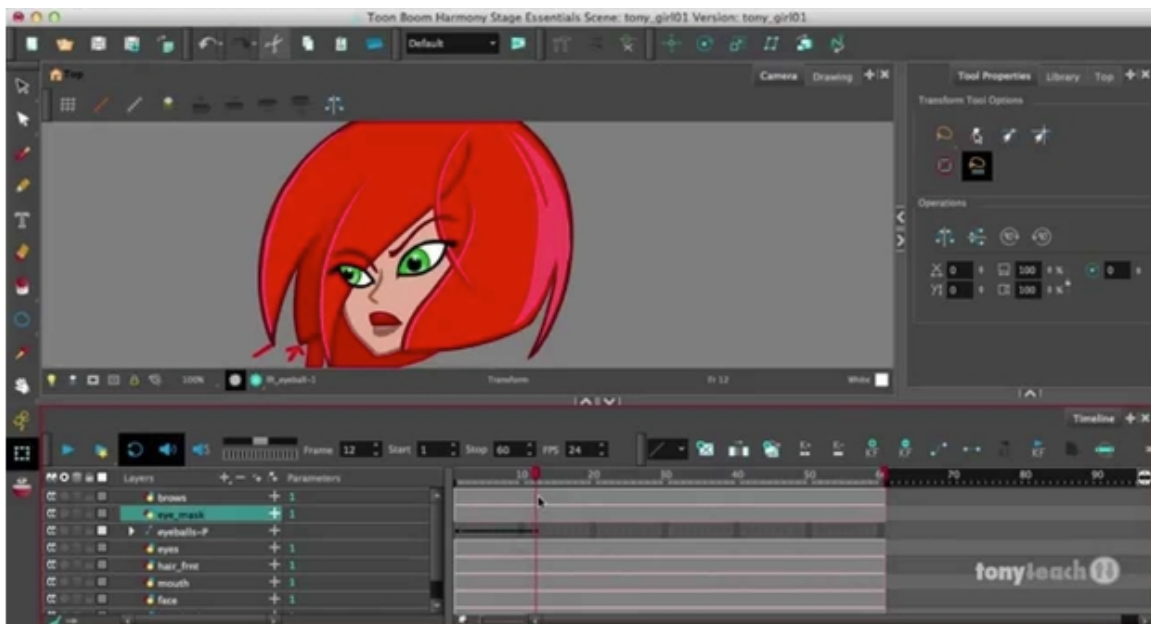
Toon Boom

Image Source [9]

Returning to Toptenreviews.com, the site recommends Toon Boom as another highly useful animation program. Toon Boom is one of the easier-to-use animation programs, and is also known for its excellent character rigging and automatic lip-syncing

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[8] Petrany, S. (2015, June 19). Creating Advanced Animations In Photoshop. Retrieved March 15, 2016, from https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2015/06/creating-advanced-animations-in-photoshop/

[9] Wolfe, J. (2015, September 24). Learn 2D Character Rigging in Toon Boom Harmony [Tutorial Screen Shot]. Retrieved March 17, 2016, from http://www.awn.com/news/learn-2d-character-rigging-toon-boom-harmony

capabilities. According to the website, "… Some of the most successful animation studios such as Disney, Cartoon Network, Warner Bros. and Nickelodeon, use Toon Boom's professional-grade animation software to create their shows and feature films." Toon Boom also offers a variety of animation styles ranging from traditional to digital animations. The tools, and features that Toon Boom offers makes it an excellent option for creating 2D animations for amateurs and professionals alike.[10]

Conclusion

Based on the findings in the resources mentioned above, there are many resources for producing high quality animated content. Much like a painter being equipped with the right paintbrushes to create a masterpiece, a motion designer must have the necessary tools to create attractive, high-quality animated content. This means having the right program(s) with the right tools for the right job. There are so many resources and plugins to choose from, should motion designers need additional tools other than the default options.

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[10] Toon Boom Studio 8 Review. (2014, January). Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://2d-animation-software-review.toptenreviews.com/toon-boom-studio-review.html

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Wolfe, J. (2015, September 24). Learn 2D Character Rigging in Toon Boom Harmony [Tutorial Screen Shot]. Retrieved March 17, 2016, from http://www.awn.com/news/learn-2d-character-rigging-toon-boom-harmony