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Macromedia Fireworks - Creating a Basic Animation

*This is a beginner's Fireworks tutorial. Basic knowledge of Fireworks vector shape tools is assumed.*

States, Layers, and File Size

**General Information**

* Animation uses **states** – each state has the same amount of layers (some layers may be blank)
* States play in numerical order
	+ Shows movement on the computer screen
	+ Control speed of animation by editing the timing (approximate – differs depending on browser used and system)
* File Size – Animated GIF files are larger than ordinary ones
	+ Optimize Tools – controls how many colors are used – makes the file size smaller
	+ Photo? Try blurring it slightly to reduce the physical size
	+ Blocks of solid color and horizontal lines are best to keep size small
	+ Goal is to keep each animation under 20kb

**Shining Sun Animation**

1. Create a new canvas in Fireworks - **300x200** - blue canvas color.

2. Create a **circle shape** on the canvas. **85x85**. On the Property Inspector, the precise dimensions can be set.

**Fill** with a bright yellow with a **feather** edge of 2. No stroke.

3. View the **Layers panel** (Window>Layers). Rename Layer 1 "Sun circle" – **Right Click** on layer and choose “Share Layer To States”

Tip: Rename a layer by double-clicking on the layer name and typing in a new name.

A little icon will appear next to the layer name.

* Layer is shared among all your states – even if you add more states
* If you move or edit the circle, the changes will also be made to all the states.
* Use when you want the same image (unchanged - static) to be seen at all times

4. Click on the **New/Duplicate Layer** icon at the bottom of the panel - **rename** the layer "rays" (note: we are still only working with one state at this point)

5. On the "rays" layer, use the **Line Tool** to create matching bright yellow lines for the rays of light coming from the sun object. I used a **hard rounded** line.

6. View the **States panel** (Window>States) - there should be just one state in the panel.

Click the Options menu found at the top of the panel, and select **Add States**.

When the Dialog box appears, choose **3** for number of states and insert them **after the current state**.

You will now have a total of four states in the panel at this point. Click on each state. Notice that each one has 2 layers. The "sun circle" layer (which is shared among all states) and the rays layer (which will have no objects on it as of yet)

7. Activate State 1, and click on the "rays" layer in the **Layer panel**. All path objects on that layer will be **selected**.

8. While all the ray paths are selected, choose **Edit>Copy**.

9. Activate **State 2**, on the "rays" layer, choose **Edit>Paste**. The ray paths will be placed in the exact position as they were in state 1.

**Paste** the ray paths to the next two states as well.

Note: You might wonder why you couldn't just "share" the rays layer as with the sun layer. The sun is going to stay the same throughout the whole animation, but the rays are going to change.

10. Starting with State 2, activate the "rays" layer. Using the **Sub-Selection tool**, edit the length of each ray by moving the vector points. Drag the point to lengthen or shorten the path. (The sub-selection tool is the white arrow tool next to the black arrow selection tool.)

This can also be accomplished by using the scale tool as well.

Edit the ray lines on each of the other two states as well. You don't have to edit each and every ray path, but try to change each state differently so it will work as an animation.

11. To check your animation progress, you can play the animation using the **VCR controls** on the image window.

Tip: If the VCR controls are not viewable, you probably have your image window maximized or out of view. The controls are at the bottom of the image window, so if the window is too large, the controls might be under the workspace toolbars.

12. Let's slow the animation down a little bit.

By default the animation timing is **7/100** of a second. You will see this timing number on the state panel next to each state name. Each state's property can be edited separately, or if you want the same changes for more than one state, those states can be selected together and edited together.

Click to select State 1. While holding down the **Shift** key, click on State 4.

State 4 plus all states in between are selected. This comes in handy when you have many states to select at once. You can also use the Ctrl key to select multiple states not in succession.

13. While all states are selected, click the State panel **Options Menu **. Choose **Properties**.

Type in a new timing delay of **20**, then hit the **Enter** key. All four states now should have the timing delay of 20. Use the VCR controls to test the movie again. Satisfied? Too slow? Change the properties for all the states again, or you may also opt to set a different timing value for each state. To change only one state's properties, double-click on the state delay number (on state panel.)

14. Add your name to the left of your sun – share across all states.

15. Okay, time to optimize and export.

View the **Optimize panel** (Window>Optimize)

Choose "**Animated Gif**" as the File Format. **Reduce** your colors to the lowest amount without compromising quality.

Choose **Rebuild** button after you choose the number of colors that you want

Play your animated gif to make sure that it still looks good.

Make changes as needed.

16. Choose **File>Export** and browse to the folder you would like your animated gif saved into. Make sure you are choosing "**Images Only**" as Type.

Here is my final animated graphic - I added a block of vertical text – share across states so that it always shows!



I hope you have enjoyed this tutorial.

Thanks!
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