

OPUS v 7 - New Features and Revisions

Overview

In addition to a range of smaller improvements and bug fixes the new version of Opus Pro includes over 50 major new features, over 400 new transitions and animations and numerous smaller improvements.

We have updated the Help file and the support resources to make the program even easier so you can become cost-effective even more quickly.

The new QuickScripts let you do complex effects and actions with a simple line of script.

Many of the improvements have been made in direct response to customer requests and feedback. The SCORM features have been tested on real world projects for almost two years and we like to thank all those customers who took part so actively in these developments.

Together we have ensured we have the best and most robust product possible with a range of features unsurpassed in any other single application.

General New Features

Tween Animation	<p>Our most exciting new feature is the tween animation object. This means you can now create tween animations simply by setting a start and end to an animation. Opus will then create the frames in between. You set an object's position, colour, rotation and transforms at two or more keyframes and Opus generates a smooth animation between.</p> <p>A new timeline interface is provided to let you tweak the position of keyframes and control the length of the animation. You can have multiple objects in a tween frame and even nest tweens inside other tweens or the whole tween frame can be animated as well.</p>
Node Tweening	<p>The tween function also includes support for node tweening meaning you can morph the shape of an object by editing its nodes at each of its keyframes to create fluid and sophisticated animation.</p>
Pause/Resume Audio	<p>You can now set an action to pause an audio file or to pause all audio on the page. There is a corresponding Resume Audio action.</p>
Blur Effect	<p>Apply a blur to an object with control of horizontal and vertical strength and quality.</p>
Blur Transition	<p>You can now create a range of stylish checkboxes and radio buttons quickly and simply by applying a new range of special borders to the default/mouseover/mousedown states of buttons.</p>
Enable/Disable multiple objects	<p>The enable and disable actions now use a multiselect checkbox list so that you can select a variety of objects to enable or disable with a single action.</p>
Play/Stop Multiframe	<p>You can now program a trigger to play or stop a multiframe.</p>
Quick Publish	<p>Publishes uses the settings and location you used last and therefore avoids going through the Publish Wizard when you do not need to change any of the settings. Saves significant amounts of time when testing your publication.</p>
Quick Publish and Test	<p>Quickly publishes in the same way as Quick Publish and then immediately tests the publication as though you clicked the Test button at the end of the Publish Wizard.</p>
Reverse Score	<p>You can now reverse a mark which has already been registered with the inbuilt Opus scoring variables making it much easier for a student to revise a question they have already taken.</p>
Drag Select Zoom	<p>You can now zoom into a specific area of your page by dragging a selection rectangle around an area. Click and drag the zoom tool to create a selection bounding box around the area and Opus will zoom in to the appropriate magnification level (up to the maximum zoom level of 1600%).</p>
QuickBuild Rename	<p>When adding numbers to objects renamed using QuickBuild you can set reverse object order.</p>
QuickBuild Insert Placeholder text	<p>Designers familiar with the need to illustrate blocks of text without having the final text available will love this quick build option which</p>

allows you to quickly fill a text box with faux latin in the time-honoured fashion of Lorem ipsum dolor.

Vista Program Data Variable

System Variable support for Vista Program Data Directory. You can now specify file locations for launch file action to the Vista Program Data Directory using a dedicated system variable.

Direct Flash Player support

Opus now uses the Adobe Flash player directly to replay Flash movies. Keeps your Flash playback capability up to date and there's no need for Quicktime.

FLV support

Opus now supports FLV both in Flash output and other publication types.

Border Line Styles

The Opus line styles can now be used as borders for objects.

Report Encryption

The files created by the report action can now be encrypted so the results can be used for student test reports and remain secure.

Windows Theme Support

Buttons can now use the Windows theme allowing use of Vista style buttons automatically.

Flash New Features and Improvements

In response to customer requests we have greatly improved the sophistication of our output to Adobe Flash format via the Opus Flex publication type. There are a range of performance improvements provided by direct support of the Flash player. Where appropriate all the general new features listed elsewhere are supported including the new Tween Animation object. In addition, we have added the following new features and improvements...

Movie Resizing and Scale to Fit	Flex will now use the Chapter Properties to set whether the resulting Flash movie will be scaled to fit the window or a fixed size as it did with previous versions.
Right Mouse Triggers	You don't even get this in Flash itself! Many training simulations use right mouse triggers but Flash commandeers them Flex gives you that crucial functionality back (subject to browser support).
Blend, Blur & Flare Effects	Flex publications can now use the Flare and Blend effects available in standard Opus publications, as well as the new Blur effect.
Line Styles and Caps	Flex publications can now use the custom line styles and the end caps available in standard Opus publications, including their use as border styles.
Print Action	You can now set Flash actions to print the current page and/or objects on it.
Extended Variable support	We've extended and improved the support for Opus System variables in Flex publications including Page Title and Publication Title.
Multiframe Support	Multiframes can now be used in Flash output
Version Targetting	Flex now allows you to publish to specific versions of Flash. Target up to v10 including Lite versions for mobile platforms.
Support for Flash Type	A huge improvement in the way text displayed in Flash files is now provided via support for FlashType with a new optional setting on the text dialog.
Improved Text Control	The new kerning functions and other text improvements are also now supported in Flash output. Combined with FlashType support the text output is our best ever.
Text Output Type	You can now specify individual pieces of text as static or dynamic to ensure text containing variables is updateable.
ActionScript Pass-through	Flash Actionscript up to v2 can be typed in an Opus script object and will be actioned when published to Flash. Note that for obvious reasons Actionscript cannot access Opus objects.
Direct Flash Player support	Opus now uses the Adobe Flash player directly to replay Flash movies. Keeps your Flash playback capability up to date and there's no need for Quicktime.
FLV support	Opus now supports FLV both in Flash output and other publication types.

Shared Object support	The new Flash Shared Object can be access and used using an Actionscript template allowing much greater communication between the Flash movie and other applications or functions on the site.
Script Console	To help debug Flash movies you can include the Opus Script Console to watch variables and so on.
Password Masking	The option to mask text input for the input of passwords is now supported in Flex publications

SCORM New Features and Improvements

Opus support for SCORM is now vastly improved and has been developed and tested with real world projects with real world customers for over two years to ensure all possible wrinkles are ironed out. Opus now offers built-in functionality greater than any comparable product. There is full control of the SCORM manifest and you can build the complete final SCORM package directly from within the publishing process.

SCORM publications can be created using both Plexus and Flex. With many of the limitations of Flex now removed you can be confident of creating SCORM-conformant material in industry-standard Flash format with greater power and sophistication than is provided even in Flash itself.

Both SCORM v1.2 and SCORM 2004 are supported and there is a dedicated introduction to SCORM in the Help and a special Opus publication to learn and test SCORM support and provide debug information.

We also know from our experience developing the support that some LMS systems have specific non-SCORM requirements and so we also provide a SCORM compatibility support service. If you have problems getting your publication to run in an LMS because there are specific non-standard requirements we can provide extended guidance and even write custom HTML wrappers.

SCORM Additions

SCORM identifiers	You can now set the identifiers and titles for your publication from within the Publish Wizard or Opus can set them for you automatically.
SCORM Manifest	Opus builds and writes the SCORM manifest for you.
SCORM Content Aggregation	Opus will now build the SCORM content package for you and create the appropriate zip file so your publication is ready to simply import into the LMS. You can even incorporate additional files which the training may refer to such as external PDFs.

SCORM Improvements

Improved API code	The fundamental functions required to find the SCORM API is now improved and more robust.
Key Functions	The essential functions to initialize and end communication with the LMS have been rewritten to be more direct and robust.
HTML Wrapper	The HTML wrapper used to launch your publication has been overhauled to improve performance.
Ready made variables	For speed of development and ease-of-use convenience, additional ready made variables are now included providing Opus versions of commonly-used SCORM data models

Text and Printing New Features

Text Enhancements

Unicode Support	Opus now supports Unicode enabling you to display the full character sets and support all language scripts including Cyrillic, Korean etc. Supported by animations and Flex.
Kerning	The version allows full control over the kerning between particular characters. A default setting is provided suitable for improving all everyday text but where designers want to make specific design choices the setting can be edited via text files allowing you to create multiple files for custom sets of kerning pairs. Supported in Flex.
Character Spacing	In addition to kerning you can set the overall spacing between characters to tighten text.
Text Layout Dialog	The dialog to change font, paragraph and tabs settings is now tabbed so changes can be made to all aspects and applied without closing and reopening dialog.

Print Action

Set Default Page Orientation	You can now set the default page orientation for Opus print output. Allows you to default to Landscape – a better fit for printing full pages. As before you can allow users access to the Print Setup dialog to change this.
Print Resolution	You can now set the resolution used for creating images of pages to be printed.
Print Variable	You can now print the contents of a variable. Ideal for creating a record of long text answers and scores.
Scale to Fit and/or Centre on Page	When printing you can set objects to scale to fit the page and/or to be Centred on the page.
Margins	You now have the option to set the margins for your print out and improved file printing now calculates page margins to ensure text fills the page without getting cut off when printing large files across multiple pages. All the above are also supported in the Script version of the print action.

Opus Script Additions

We have added scripting support for the new features and we have also added some new additions to Opus Script itself. In addition there have been a number of scripting errors fixed and other improvements including an overhaul of the Help.

OpusScript Additions

Switch Case	Support for the Switch statement now allows you to perform case selection functions in OpusScript and thereby adds significant functionality and efficiency.
Strict Equality [===]	OpusScript now offers a strict equality comparison to check the object type as well as the content.
FindText() and FindTextInSelection parameter	An additional parameter has been added to the FindText() and FindTextInSelection() function to allow you to ignore the case of the text – no more duplication of code to check for different cases or to convert test to a consistent case.
Script Console	The script console has been improved and is now supported in Flex publications to allow proper debugging of Flash output

OpusScript support for New Features

PrintPage	New parameters to support the new printing features
PrintObject	New parameters to support the new printing features
Pause() - sound	Pause a WAV sound file
Resume() - sound	Resumes a WAV sound file previously paused
Play() - multiframe	Play a multiframe
Stop() - multiframe	Stop a multiframe
SetBlur(<i>h,v,q</i>)	Allows script to set the values for the new Blur effect being horizontal amount, vertical amount and quality.
RemoveBlur()	OpusScript now offers a strict equality comparison to check the object type as well as the content.
tween.Play()	Play a tween animation from the current frame
tween.Stop()	Stop a tween animation from the current frame
tween.GotoFrame(<i>frame</i>)	Go to a specific frame in a tween animation
tween.GotoAndPlay(<i>frame</i>)	Go to a specific frame in a tween animation and start playing the tween
tween.GotoAndStop(<i>frame</i>)	Go to a specific frame in a tween animation and stop playing the tween

QuickScript Functions - Overview

To access the power of OpusScript without doing any programming yourself we have provided a series of ready-made functions to add to your publication via the QuickScript option on the QuickBuild menu. Further functions will be available to download from the website or will be available from third party suppliers.

Functions supplied with the program include Orbit, ColourCycle, Pulsar and more. Further details are provided via the links below. Any functions included with the program which are not detailed here or those added from the website should have instructions and comments included in the scripts themselves.

Orbit

Orbit causes an object to orbit around any objects in its orbit by circling behind and then in front of them.

Shuffle

Randomly shuffles the frames within a master frame – ideal for displaying multiple choice answers in a different order each time the page is viewed. The idea is that you place the

Pulsar

Creates a ghost pulse of a vector object.

Split Name

This script will divide a name up into the first and last name and place them in the ready-made Opus variables USER_FIRSTNAME and USER_SURNAME respectively. This is particularly useful in SCORM publications because a SCORM-conformant Learning Management System provides the learner's name in a specific format – *last name* then *first name* separated by a *comma*.

Colour Cycle

Cycles the colours of the polygons in a vector object through a palette of colours from a set of your choosing.

Other Cycle Scripts

There are also a set of scripts which cycle an effect through the objects in a frame. Each works in a similar way but applying a different effect.

Fade Cycle - will fade each object in a frame to a particular level and back. Varying the trail setting allows you to set the phasing of the effect across the objects allowing you to create effects similar to the fade cycles often used for flash preloaders.

Flare Cycle – cycles a flare effect through the objects in a frame. Set the colour of the flare and the phasing.

Scale Cycle – cycles a scaling effect through the objects in a frame. Set the minimum and maximum amount of scale and the phasing.

Spin Cycle – cycles a 360-degree rotation through the objects in a frame.

Overhauled Animations and Transitions

We have completely overhauled, revised and expanded the range of transitions and text animations provided with Opus to give the widest range of preset effects. We've included plenty of extravagant effects for the attention seekers but unlike some of our competitors we have also focused on effects which are subtle enough to be used time and again in real world applications and we have provided enough of a range to allow you to design material which is fresh and interesting without appearing ostentatious.

Combined with some of the new QuickScript animation effects Opus now has the most extensive range of inbuilt effects of any similar program.

Transitions

Blur

The new blur effect is also available as a transition and we've provided

- A simple blur
- Blurred reveals from different directions
- Blurred effects such as strips and splits

Scrolling

Scrolling an object into position is one of the most commonly-used transitions so we have...

- Split object scroll and page scroll to let you have more control of where the object scrolls from.
- Added extra angles for both Show and Hide.
- Combined Scroll with Fade and Blur
- Created special scroll effects such as Flock, Crossover and Implode.

Multishapes

We've added a range of multishape transitions which offer

- Grids of circles, squares or stars which appear in different directions.
- Random explosions of shapes.

Page Curl and Page Flip

Simulating the turn of a page is always popular and we've extended the options:

- Page curl has extra angles
- 3D Flip now offers edge transitions to simulate a stiff page opening up, down, left, right, in or out – another regular request from customers.
- 3D Flip effects provides doors opening and closing and a book falling open.

Text Animations

The range of text animations has now vastly increased to over 200 and many now have an accompanying Hide animations where there were none before. We've extended the support

for line and word animations and you can now even apply some animations on a paragraph-wide basis.

The range is now so extensive that we have provided a drop down list box to choose whether you wish to apply animations to letter, word, line or paragraph.