

DIGIT

Ikivo Animator

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platform Mac OS X 10.2/3/4, Windows 2000/XP

price £205 plus VAT (€295)

company [Ikivo](#)

pros Full Illustrator SVG file support and import. Timeline and object browser interface is simple, and offers precise control of objects. Previews of popular smart phones.

cons Relatively expensive, and requires SVG creation tool and XHTML publisher or SMIL editor to complete workflow and provide content deployment.

rating ★★★★★

Thanks to the new Live Trace feature in Adobe Illustrator CS 2, it's now a lot easier to translate bitmapped and vector images into SVG content.

Ikivo Animator takes this one stage further, enabling SVG files to be further converted to the SVG Tiny 1.1 mobile content format. An object library is provided for content management, allowing Animator and Adobe Illustrator to interact and access static SVG for animation via an Object Browser panel. You then create animated content by adjusting attributes in the usual multimedia-authoring manner and export the resulting content to GoLive CS 2 or a similarly SVG Tiny enabled Web design package.



Animator uses a Flash-style workspace, with a Stage for animation viewing and editing. The Treeview is a hierarchical view of the stacking order of the objects on the Stage, conforming to the naming conventions of XML and to layers in Illustrator. In the Treeview, it's also simple to reorder the elements or to group them, as well as apply hyperlinks to each one.

There's a timeline for viewing and adjusting the various layers of attributes for the SVG content over time. These comprise visibility, stroke colour, fill colour, position, rotation, and scale. There's a dedicated palette to control, animate and adjust the colour and opacity attributes, while the transform palette allows precise control over adjustments of position, rotation and scale.



Mobile life

As with other applications of this type, you animate each attribute by changing it at a point in time, while the application adds corresponding key points to the timeline. You can just drag and scale objects from the browser to do this, or precisely adjust the attributes in the various palettes. Animator will automatically tween between keypoints, but you can turn this off to make the change instantaneous. A pacing palette is on hand to let you adjust animation timing as well as to save customized motion curves for export to other projects.

Once you have your animation sorted, it's just a case of saving and previewing the animation. This can take place in the built-in player, or on any one of the supplied SVG Tiny players that replicate those found on models of smart phones. Since Ikivo provides mobile companies with the same software to view content, you can ensure that anything created with Animator will play, but you'll need to use something like GoLive CS 2 to deploy it.

It's obvious that you'll require most of Creative Suite 2 to do anything with it, but if you're already set up, Animator is an ideal way to join the mobile content revolution.

Michael Burns



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