

Adding Joystick support to Flash 5

Flash 5 does not include joystick support but don't despair.

There are a couple of companies that I know of that provide a SDK to convert SWF files into EXEs (www.multidmedia.com and www.northcode.com). These SDKs include joystick support. However, if you are a hobbyist like me then you probably can't justify going down that route. Besides, there is an alternative method which I discovered when trying to get my quiz game to work with Sony's playstation Buzz controller.

Joy2Key

Joy2Key is a great application that maps keyboard presses to buttons on the joystick. And it is free. So, if you know how to process key strokes in Flash, then you can add joystick support in no time at all.

Which joysticks can I use?

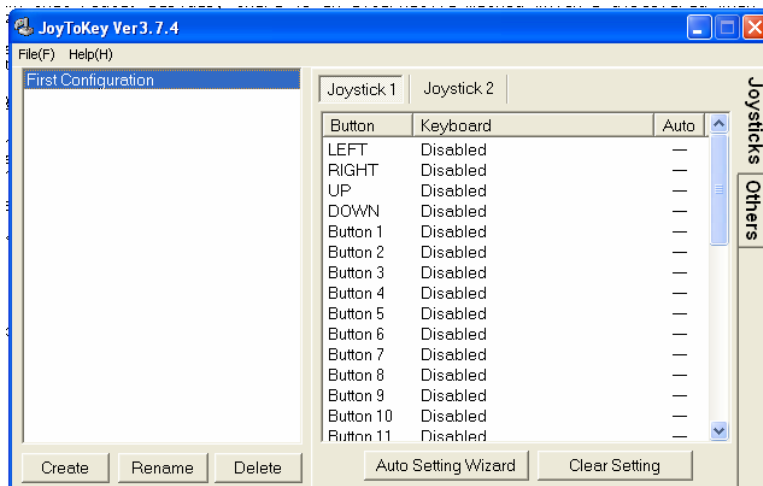
I have only tried this out with two types of games controller, both of which are USB. If you are thinking of purchasing a joystick for use with flash, then try searching in google (**joy2key**) for other users' experiences before going ahead. However, if you are interested in this kind of flash development then I suspect you are a keen games player and already have suitable joysticks.

Mostly I have used joy2key with the Sony Playstation Buzz controller. This is a USB controller for four players. And Windows XP recognises it! This has worked well and has been fun. However, I can't say for sure whether or not one player ends up with an advantage over another using this method.

I have also used joy2key with a more traditional joystick. The joystick I have been using is a 'PC Line tournament'. I picked it up for a few pounds on ebay. The instructions that follow are based around this joystick.

Enabling your USB joystick for flash

1. Download joy2key.zip and unzip its contents into a separate folder.
2. Plug the joystick into a USB port and wait for the 'found new hardware' bubble to appear.
3. Run joy2key. You should see a window like this come up:



4. Click on help in the menu and read the readme file.
5. Play around with the application, assign some buttons and test your assignments in notepad.

An example

The example consists of a simple flash application which guides a circle around a screen using four buttons on a PC Line Tournament joystick. If you have this joystick then everything you need is contained in the zip file (including joy2key). Otherwise you will need to change the joy2key configuration to match four of your buttons to the following keys:

Up arrow
Down arrow
Left arrow
Right arrow

Have fun!

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