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Adobe Edge Animate

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The book that should have been in the box[®]



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Chris Grover

Adobe Edge Animate: The Missing Manual

Chris Grover

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About the Author



Chris Grover is a veteran of the San Francisco Bay Area advertising and design community, having worked for over 25 years in print, video, and electronic media. He has been using and writing about computers from the day he first fired up his Kaypro II. Chris is the owner of Bolinas Road Creative (www.BolinasRoad.com), an agency that helps small businesses promote their products and services. He's also the author of Office 2011 for Macintosh: The Missing Manual, Premiere Elements 8: The Missing Manual, Google SketchUp: The Missing Manual, Flash CS6: The Missing Manual, and Word 2007: The Missing Manual. Email: chris@BolinasRoad.com.

About the Creative Team

Nan Barber (editor) has been working on the Missing Manual series since its inception. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and various Apple products. Email: nanbarber@oreilly.com.

Carla Spoon (proofreader) is a freelance writer and copy editor. An avid runner, she works and feeds her tech gadget addiction from her home office in the shadow of Mount Rainier. Email: carla_spoon@comcast.net.

Melanie Yarbrough (production editor) lives, works, and does pretty much everything else in Cambridge, MA. When not ushering books through production, she's baking and writing up whatever she can imagine. Email: myarbrough@oreilly.com.

Bob Pfahler (indexer) is a freelance indexer who indexed this book on behalf of Potomac Indexing, LLC, an international indexing partnership at www.potomacindexing.com. Besides the subject of computer software, he specializes in business, management, biography, and history. He can be reached at bobpfahler@hotmail.com.

Jacques Surveyer (technical reviewer) is a long-time Flash developer of the Air, Swift3D, and SwishMax variety who finds Adobe's move to HTML5 animation via Edge of keen interest. See more coverage at www.theopensource.com/keepopen or ask for more at jbsurv@thephotofinishes.com.

Darrell Heath (technical reviewer) is a freelance designer and web developer from Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada with a background in Information Technology and visual arts. He also authors weekly tutorial content for NAPP and in his spare time is offering design related tips through his blog at www.heathrowe.com/blog. Email: darrell@heathrowe.com.

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—Chris Grover

The Missing Manual Series

Missing Manuals are witty, superbly written guides to computer products that don't come with printed manuals (which is just about all of them). Each book features a handcrafted index and cross-references to specific pages (not just chapters). Recent and upcoming

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Introduction

It may be hard to imagine, but once upon a time, pages on the World Wide Web didn't have pictures, let alone animations, videos, and interactive graphics. All these elements were added through trial, error, debate, and debunk. Changes came when brave souls (like you) forged ahead and made things work with the tools at hand. If a commercial product worked well and was widely adopted, it became the de facto standard. Adobe's PDF (portable document files) and Flash animation player are well-known examples. However, there's always been a problem with proprietary and patent-encumbered technologies on the Internet. They're like a toll road in the center of a major city. On the other hand, authorities and standards-writing groups have been known to create "standards" that few browser and web developers follow. Strictly structured XHTML pages fall into this category. The solution is to create standards for the Internet that are practical, usable, and don't stifle creativity. Of course, that's easier said than done.

With HTML5, the standards-writing crowd (also known as the W3C) is working hard to give the Internet community a roadmap that takes into account where we've been and where we're heading. There are a number of exciting new features in HTML5, but perhaps most visible are the new ways to present and animate graphics. If you're thinking, "That sounds a lot like Adobe Flash," you're right. One shiny new feature of HTML5 provides a non-proprietary, standard way to change graphics, color, size, shape, and position over time. The technique uses newly defined HTML tags, the power of JavaScript, and its jQuery companion library. These open-source technologies are available to everyone, whether they're designing web pages or building the next great web browser.

Why Use Adobe Edge Animate?

If you need a compelling reason to learn yet another animation technology, here are three good ones: iPhone, iPod, and iPad. In fact, if you're a Flash designer or developer, you're probably already dialed in to the famous debate between Apple and Adobe regarding Flash. As a web designer and developer, more important than the debate is the fact that Flash content on web pages can't be viewed by the most popular mobile devices on the planet. However, if you use HTML5 and JavaScript, you can capture that Apple audience and more.

So why should you use an Adobe product to create HTML5 web content? It's an understatement to say that most graphic artists view the world differently from computer programmers. If you're an artist, you may not be entirely comfortable describing each circle, color, and line in your artwork by typing out JavaScript code, even though it's theoretically possible. You're probably more inclined to use a tool that reminds you of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, or Flash. That's exactly where Animate fits in. Animate

has a timeline like the ones in Flash and After Effects. The Elements and Properties panels will remind you of your favorite drawing and photo tools. If you use Animate to develop HTML5 graphics, then you can concentrate on creating and fine-tuning your artwork. Animate will generate the HTML5 and JavaScript/jQuery code that's needed for your web pages.

NOTE

Although “Adobe Edge Animate” is the program’s formal name, in this book you’ll often see “Animate” for short.

Where to Find Adobe Edge Animate

If you don't already have Adobe Edge Animate on your computer, you can get Version 1.0 from Adobe as part of a free Adobe Cloud membership. Go to <http://html.adobe.com/edge/animate/>. Click the Get Started button. You know the drill. Provide your name, email address and a password and you're signed up. If you want more details on how to install Animate on your computer, check out [Appendix A](#).

About This Book

Despite the many improvements in software over the years, one feature has grown consistently worse: documentation. With the purchase of most software programs these days, you don't get a single page of printed instructions. To learn about the hundreds of features in a program you're expected to use online electronic help, but with a brand new product, like Adobe Edge Animate, the help files are minimal.

But even if you're comfortable reading a help screen in one window as you try to work in another, something is still missing. At times, the terse electronic help screens assume that you already understand the discussion at hand and hurriedly skip over important topics that require an in-depth presentation. In addition, you don't always get an objective evaluation of the program's features. (Engineers often add technically sophisticated features to a program because they can, not because you need them.) You shouldn't have to waste your time learning features that don't help you get your work done.

The purpose of this book, then, is to serve as the manual that should have been in the box. In this book's pages, you'll find step-by-step instructions for using every Animate feature, including those you may not even have quite understood, let alone mastered, such as moving the HTML5 and JavaScript code into your web pages or making changes to existing pages using Animate. In addition, you'll find clear evaluations of each feature that help you determine which ones are useful to you, as well as how and when to use them.

NOTE

This book periodically recommends other books, covering topics that are too specialized or tangential for a manual about Animate. Careful readers may notice that not every one of these titles is published by Missing Manual-parent O'Reilly Media. While we're happy to mention other Missing Manuals and books in the O'Reilly family, if there's a great book out there that doesn't happen to be published by O'Reilly, we'll still let you know about it.

Adobe Edge Animate: The Missing Manual is designed to accommodate readers at every technical level. The primary discussions are written for advanced-beginner or intermediate computer users. But if you're a first-timer, special sidebar articles called Up to Speed provide the introductory information you need to understand the topic at hand. If you're an advanced user, on the other hand, keep your eye out for similar shaded boxes called Coders' Clinic and Designer's Toolbox. They offer more technical tips, tricks, and shortcuts for the experienced computer fan.

Macintosh and Windows

Animate works almost precisely the same in its Macintosh and Windows versions. Every button in every dialog box is exactly the same; the software response to every command is identical. In this book, the illustrations have been given even-handed treatment, rotating between the two operating systems where Animate is at home (Windows 7 and Mac OS X).

One of the biggest differences between the Mac and Windows versions is the keystrokes, because the Ctrl key in Windows is the equivalent of the ⌘ key on the Mac.

Whenever this book refers to a key combination, you'll see the Windows keystroke listed first (with + symbols, as is customary in Windows documentation); the Macintosh keystroke follows in parentheses (with - symbols, in time-honored Mac fashion). In other words, you might read, "The keyboard shortcut for saving a file is Ctrl+S (⌘-S)."

About the Outline

Adobe Edge Animate: The Missing Manual is divided into three parts, each containing several chapters:

- **Part 1** starts off with an introduction to the Animate workspace. You'll learn some more details about how Animate performs its magic by creating HTML, JavaScript, and CSS code. Then you'll roll up your sleeves and create graphics within Animate and import artwork from other programs. Along the way, you'll begin to work with Animate's Timeline and Properties panel to make things move. **Chapter 3** is devoted to working with text and you'll see how easy it is to make text elements change size, shape, and color.
- **Part 2** is all about animating the elements on the stage. You'll learn advanced techniques for working efficiently in Animate. Animation is time-consuming work, but you can save lots of time by reusing and recycling your previous work with

symbols. You'll learn to manage and edit the timeline and the transitions you create. One chapter in this section is devoted to triggers and actions. You use these tools to automate your animation and give interactive control to your web pages. The last chapter is devoted to Animate symbols, a handy tool for grouping elements and reusing art and code. Symbols speed up the development process and add consistency to your compositions.

- **Part 3** gets into the nitty-gritty details of working with code. This book doesn't attempt to be an advanced JavaScript programmer's manual. Instead, you'll learn how to selectively tweak bits of code to make some animation magic. Some of the most interesting projects are covered in this chapter, where all the skills learned in the previous chapters come in to play.
- **Part 4** helps you deliver your Animate masterpiece to an audience—that's done by publishing your composition. In this section, you learn how to develop responsive designs that look good whether they're viewed on a desktop computer, a smartphone, or a high-def TV. You'll also learn how to accommodate browsers that aren't up to date with HTML5 capabilities.

Appendix A explains how to install Animate on both Windows and Mac computers. You'll also find tips on where to look for discussions and additional Animate resources.

Appendix B: Menu by Menu briefly describes each menu command and its function.

The Very Basics

You'll find very little jargon or nerd terminology in this book. You will, however, come across a few terms and concepts that you'll encounter frequently in your computing life:

To use this book (and indeed to use Adobe Edge Animate), you need to know a few basics. This book assumes that you're familiar with a few terms and concepts:

- **Clicking.** This book includes instructions that require you to use your computer's mouse or trackpad. To click means to point your cursor (the arrow pointer) at something on the screen and then—without moving the cursor at all—press and release the left button on the mouse (or laptop trackpad). To right-click means the same thing, but pressing the right mouse button instead. (Usually, clicking selects an onscreen element or presses an onscreen button, whereas right-clicking typically reveals a shortcut menu, which lists some common tasks specific to whatever you're right-clicking.) To double-click, of course, means to click twice in rapid succession, again without moving the pointer at all. And to drag means to move the cursor while holding down the (left) mouse button the entire time. To right-drag means to do the same thing but holding down the right mouse button.

When you're told to Shift-click something, you click while pressing the Shift key. Related procedures, like Ctrl-clicking, work the same way—just click while pressing the corresponding key.

- **Menus.** The menus are the words at the top of your screen: File, Edit, and so on. Click one to make a list of commands appear, as though they're written on a window shade you've just pulled down. Some people click to open a menu and then release the mouse button; after reading the menu command choices, they click the command they want. Other people like to press the mouse button continuously as they click the menu title and drag down the list to the desired command; only then do they release the mouse button. Both methods work, so use whichever one you prefer.
- **Keyboard shortcuts.** Nothing is faster than keeping your fingers on your keyboard to enter data, choose names, trigger commands, and so on—without losing time by grabbing the mouse, carefully positioning it, and then choosing a command or list entry. That's why many people prefer to trigger commands by pressing combinations of keys on the keyboard. For example, in most word processors, you can press Ctrl+B to produce a boldface word. In this book, when you read an instruction like “Press Ctrl+L to insert a label,” start by pressing the Ctrl key; while it's down, type the letter L; and then release both keys.

About→These→Arrows

Throughout this book, and throughout the Missing Manual series, you'll find sentences like this one: “Open the System Folder→Preferences→Remote Access folder.” That's shorthand for a much longer instruction that directs you to open three nested folders in sequence, like this: “On your hard drive, you'll find a folder called System Folder. Open that. Inside the System Folder window is a folder called Preferences; double-click it to open it. Inside that folder is yet another one called Remote Access. Double-click to open it, too.” Similarly, this kind of arrow shorthand helps to simplify the business of choosing commands in menus, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

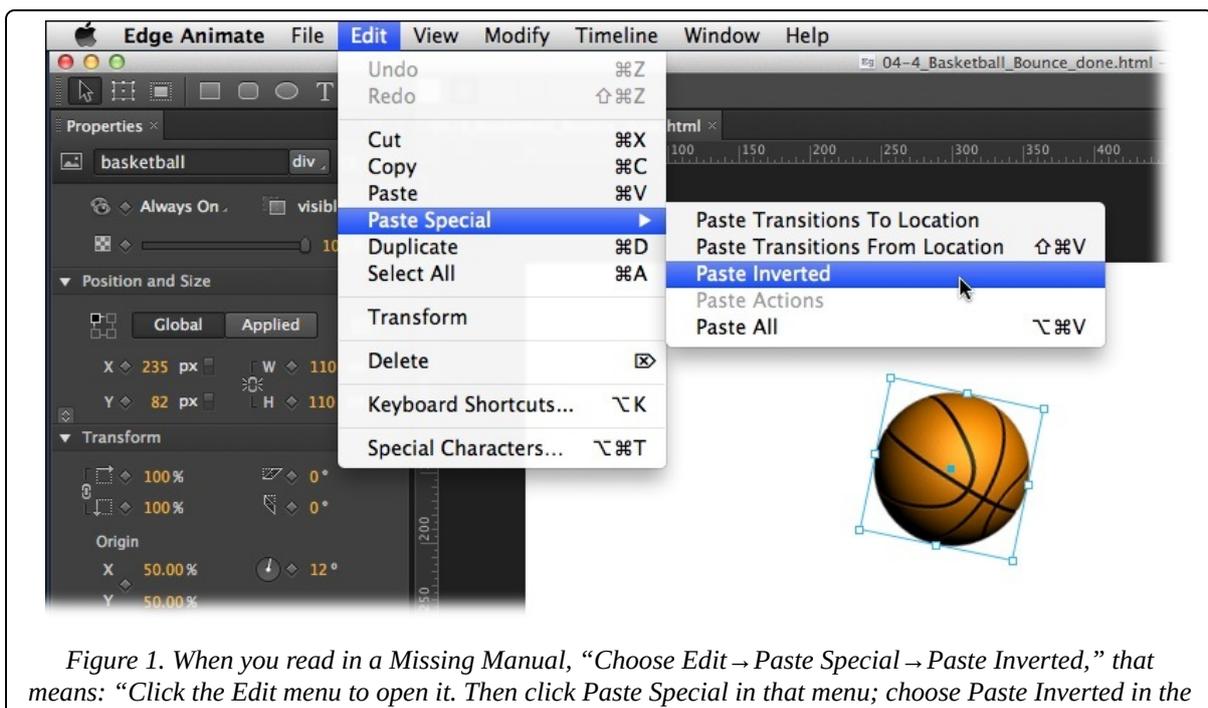


Figure 1. When you read in a Missing Manual, “Choose Edit→Paste Special→Paste Inverted,” that means: “Click the Edit menu to open it. Then click Paste Special in that menu; choose Paste Inverted in the

About the Online Resources

As the owner of a Missing Manual, you’ve got more than just a book to read. Online, you’ll find example files so you can get some hands-on experience, as well as tips, articles, and maybe even a video or two. You can also communicate with the Missing Manual team and tell us what you love (or hate) about the book. Head over to www.missingmanuals.com, or go directly to one of the following sections.

Missing CD

This book doesn’t have a CD pasted inside the back cover, but you’re not missing out on anything. Go to www.missingmanuals.com/cds/animatemm to download all the examples and exercises that are covered in this book. You can download all the files in one big ZIP file or you can download the files chapter by chapter. Most examples are made up of several files, which might include a web page (.html), images (.jpg), JavaScript code (.js), and style sheets (.css), so it’s important to keep the files and their folders together or the examples may not work. Example and exercise folders and files are numbered, so when you see 03_2-MyExample, you’ll know that this example is from **Chapter 3** and it’s the second folder for the chapter.

For many of the exercises, there are completed examples that you can use to check your own work. A completed example includes the word done in the filename as in 03-3_MyExample_done.

Finally, so you don’t wear down your fingers typing long web addresses, the Missing CD page also offers a list of clickable links to the websites mentioned in this book.

Registration

If you register this book at oreilly.com, you’ll be eligible for special offers—like discounts on future editions of Adobe Edge Animate: The Missing Manual. Registering takes only a few clicks. To get started, type <http://oreilly.com/register> into your browser to hop directly to the Registration page.

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Part 1. Working with the Stage

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 1. Introducing Adobe Edge Animate

Travelers on the World Wide Web expect strong graphics. They appreciate animation that contributes to the subject as long as it doesn't waste their time. Done well, animation draws attention to important details, shows how things work, and helps site navigation. But, graphics certainly weren't first and foremost when the Web was created. The language used to display web pages is called HTML—short for HyperText Markup Language. Like any language, HTML has evolved and continues to adapt to current needs and new ideas. The latest step in that evolution is HTML5, which combined with other technologies like CSS3, JavaScript, and jQuery, presents the beautiful interactive pages you visit today.

Instead of creating graphics and visual effects manually by writing code, artists can use Adobe Edge Animate—a tool that's a much better fit for designers. This chapter starts off by explaining how Animate works to write HTML code that a web browser can read. Then it offers a quick introduction to the main parts of the Animate workspace. Finally, you'll take Animate for a test drive, where you'll make an image move and create text that fades in and out. Your first hands-on experience will be quick and easy. Consider this first adventure an overview—the following chapters will reveal the details.

Creating and Saving Edge Animate Projects

Animate's role in life is to help you make web pages that come alive with motion. You design the graphics using familiar visual tools, while Animate writes the underlying code. It's as if you hired an HTML/CSS/JavaScript/jQuery coder for your design team. One good way to understand what goes on behind the scenes is to create and save an empty Animate project. Fire up Edge Animate as you would any other application on your computer. That means the process is slightly different for Windows and Mac computers. If you plan on using Animate a lot (and why wouldn't you?) you can use any of the familiar tricks to create handy shortcuts. In Windows, you can pin an Animate shortcut to your Start menu or the taskbar. On a Mac, you can add Animate to the Dock.

When you first start Animate, you're greeted by a splash screen. On the right side of the screen, you see links to lessons and other Adobe resources. On the left are links to create a new file or open previously created files. Click Create New and then, once Animate is running, you reach a workspace with a number of panels and more links to Adobe lessons. Don't worry about those details now; you'll explore them later in this chapter. Create a new folder on your computer desktop and call it Edge Barebones. Next, do the project creation two-step. Go to File→New and then File→Save As. Find the Edge Barebones folder on your desktop and save your project with any name you want. Now,

examine the contents of the folder. You'll find five files and a folder like the ones in **Figure 1-1**. If you've spent time developing web pages, you'll see some of the usual suspects and maybe a newcomer or two:

- The **.an** file is used by Animate to keep track of your project.
- The **.html** file describes a web page using HTML code, like any of the gazillion web pages on the Internet.
- The **.js** files hold JavaScript code that's specific to your project. Right now your project is barebones, but the code defines the empty animation stage and performs other tasks that are necessary for all Edge Animate projects.

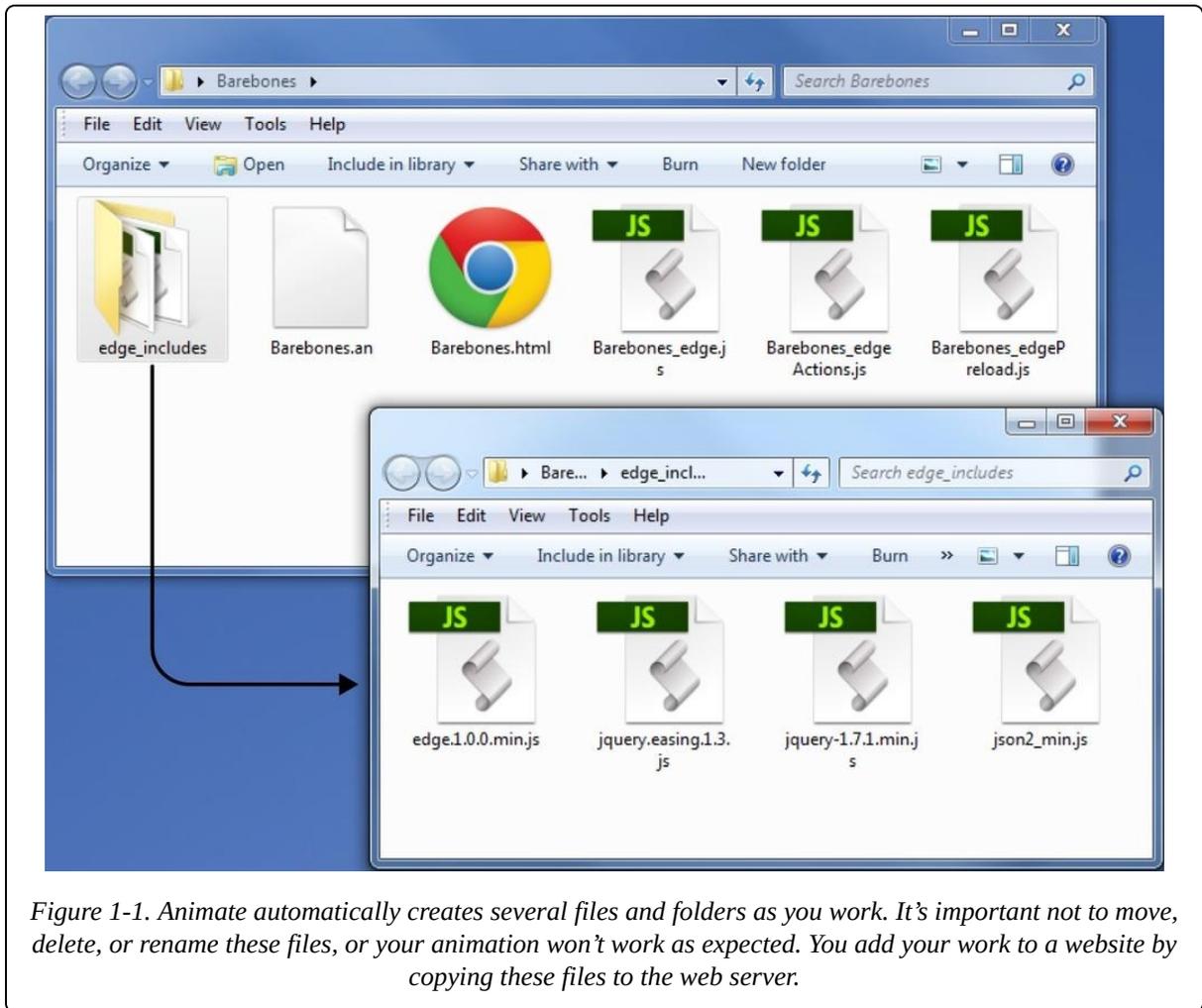
Open the folder that's named `edge_includes`, and you'll find more JavaScript files. These are libraries of JavaScript code. One is specific to Animate; the others are standard JavaScript libraries. These libraries are referenced by the code in the HTML page that Animate created. They serve as the engine behind your Animate project. In short, they make things move.

Unlike a word processor or a spreadsheet, which create single files, Animate creates several files, and it needs those files to build the project and to display your masterfully designed page in a browser. If you delete or move one of these files, chances are you'll confuse Animate and anyone who views the web page. So one thing to learn from this bare-bones exercise is proper folder and file management:

- Create separate folders for each project you tackle, including the exercises in this book. (You may want to put them all in a main Animate project folder.)
- Don't delete, move, or rename the files and folders that Animate creates until you fully understand their relationships.

NOTE

Actually, all your projects could share the files in the `edge_includes` folder. For now, it's easiest to let Animate create new files for each project. They don't take up that much storage space on your computer.



A Tour of the Animate Workspace

Once you've gone past the splash screen by creating a new file or opening an old one, you see a workspace with several panels and a small toolbar, as shown in Figure 1-2. The name for each panel appears on a tab at the top. The Elements, Properties, and Timeline panels and the Tools toolbar all hold tools and widgets you use to create your animation masterpieces. The largest panel is the stage, where you build your animation. Its tab displays the name of your project.

- The **stage** is where you display and animate the graphics and text for your web page audience. When you save your project, Animate records the text and graphics and saves the description as a web page in HTML code. Open the page in a browser, and it plays back just as it appeared on the Animate stage. The stage has defined boundaries, and it's possible to hide or position elements so that they are offstage.
- **Elements** are objects that you add to the stage, and as a result they appear on your finished web page. Elements may be artwork, photographs, or text.
- Elements have **properties** that affect their position and appearance on the stage. You manage those properties using the Properties panel.

- The **Timeline** keeps track of elements and their properties over the course of time. When an element’s properties change, that may change its position on the stage and its appearance.
- The **Library** keeps track of images that you import into your project. It provides easy access to the symbols that you create in Animate.
- **Tools** appear at the top of the main workspace. You use these to create, select, and modify elements on the stage. It’s a small toolbox, but you may be surprised at how much it can do.
- The **Lessons** panel at right provides links to Adobe’s introductory lessons, which can be helpful when you’re starting out. The right panel gives you step-by-step instructions, with the results appearing in a sample file on the stage. After you’ve checked out the lessons, click the X on the Lessons tab to hide it and recover some valuable workspace.

TIP

You may think of these workspace boxes as panels or palettes, but Adobe lists them all under the Window menu, where you can show or hide each with a mouse click.

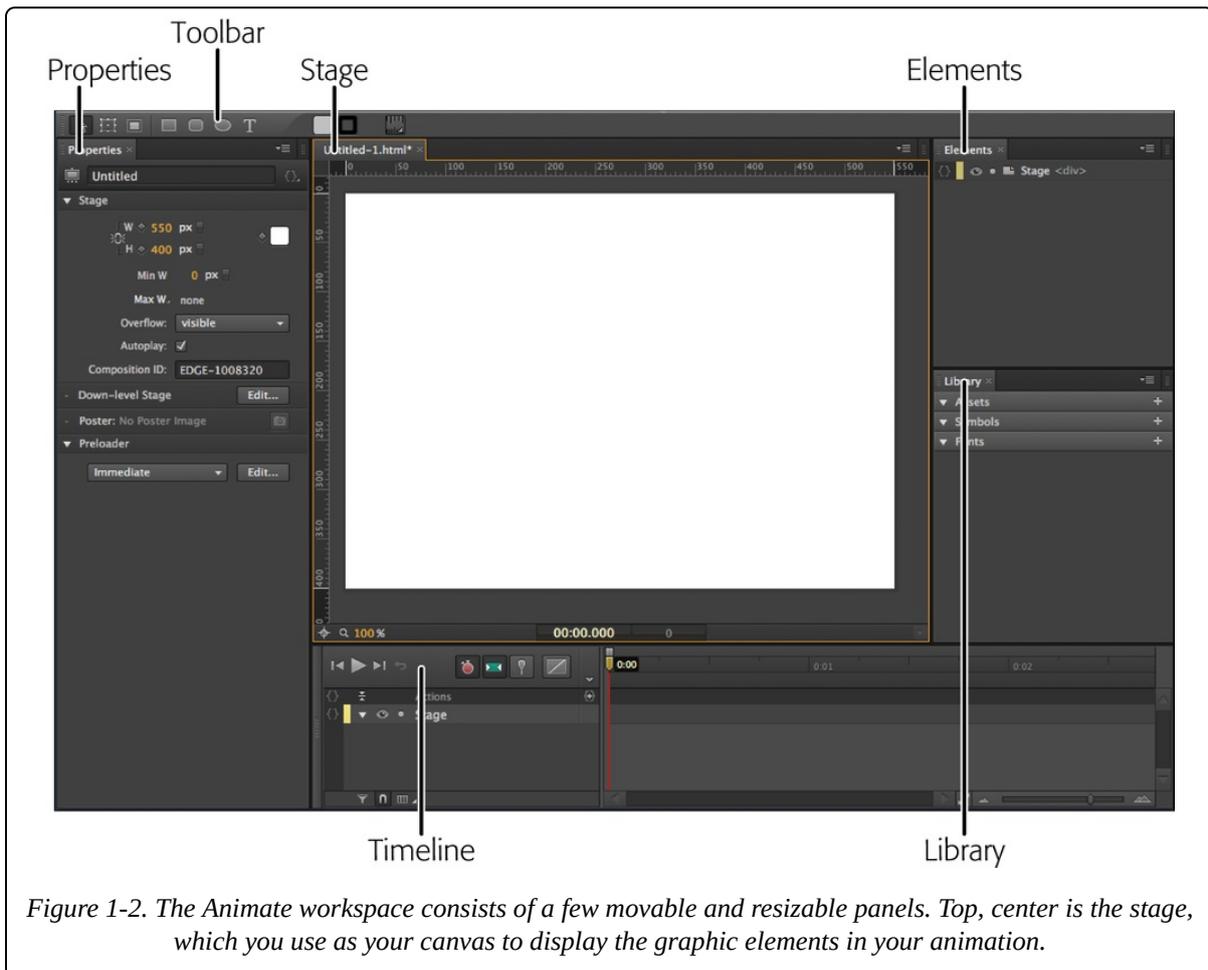


Figure 1-2. The Animate workspace consists of a few movable and resizable panels. Top, center is the stage, which you use as your canvas to display the graphic elements in your animation.