Chapter 2

Creating Timeline Animations: Part 1

When you really think about it, animation is nothing more than simply getting things to move from here to there. Prior to Edge Animate, motion graphics using CSS3 required mastering a lot of rather complex code and spending an inordinate amount of time testing to see if the object really did move from here to where you wanted it . . . over there. Edge Animate makes this process transparent by giving you a visual approach—you can actually see things move—to web animation.

In the previous chapter, we gave you a faint whiff of how the timeline creates animation in Edge Animate. In this chapter, the process gets quite a bit more complex because Edge Animate has a lot of tools and features aimed precisely at animation. In fact, if you are a Flash or After Effects user, you are going to feel right at home because the Edge Animate tweening model is pretty darn close to that used in those two applications.

Although animation is a pretty complex subject, we are going to deal with it in much the same way we always deal with complexity: from a starting point of simplicity. As you progress through the chapter, you will learn a variety of new animation workflows that you can mix and match to create some pretty neat timeline animations.

Here is what we will cover in this chapter:

- Auto-Keyframing
- Manual keyframing
- Smooth transitions
- Using the playhead and the Pin
- Tweening element properties
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- Turning off transition smoothness
- Adding easing
- Using overflow on the Stage
- Using the Elements and Timeline panels to manage layers
- Using transition strips to automate repetitive tasks
- Animating on a curve

If you haven't already downloaded the chapter files, they can be found at http://www.apress.com/9781430243502. In this chapter, we will be using these files:

- Autumn.an
- ThePin.an
- Clip.an
- Rabbit.an
- Matrix.an
- Easing.an
- Dragons.an
- Splat.an

This chapter is going to contain a lot of information, so let’s skip the pleasantries and jump directly into animating with Edge Animate.

Auto-Keyframing

Depending on how you look at it, Auto-Keyframing in Edge Animate is either a blessing or a necessary evil. It sure does speed things up when there is a lot of motion to be added to the project but it can also be a hindrance when you want to move things from here to there but aren't sure where “there” is going to be. Let's look at both scenarios:

1. Open the Autumn.an file located in your Chapter 2 Exercise folder. When it opens you will notice there are only two elements: Bush and Leaf. The plan is to have the leaf fall off the branch and gently tumble off the Stage.

You will notice that we have locked the Bush element. A great habit to develop is to lock elements that either won’t move or have already been animated. This way they can’t accidentally be selected and manipulated.