

# Foundation XML and E4X for Flash and Flex

Sas Jacobs



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*I'd like to dedicate this book to my Grandma Lucy, who died while I was writing it. You are a beautiful person, and I miss you very much.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Sas Jacobs** is a web developer and author who works with Flash, Flex, and XML. Sas has written several books on these topics and has spoken about them at conferences such as Flashforward, webDU, and FlashKit. Nowadays, Sas works as a software developer in the area of e-learning, where she tries to share her passion for all things ActionScript.

When she's not working, Sas loves traveling, photography, running, and her son.

## ABOUT THE TECHNICAL REVIEWER

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**Kevin Ruse** is the principal of Kevin Ruse and Associates Inc., a web and print design and consulting firm based in Santa Clara, California. Kevin has been a trainer in web development and graphic design in a variety of environments, including De Anza Community College and the University of California, Santa Cruz. Kevin has also taught the staff and faculty at Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley.

Kevin is an Adobe Certified Instructor and a Certified Training Partner for the Altova XML Suite of software and the <code>oxygen</code> XML editor. He currently teaches the following languages and software: Flex, Fireworks, Flash, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, InDesign, Acrobat, Quark XPress, JavaScript, ActionScript, MXML, XML, XSLT, DTD/Schema, ColdFusion, HTML, XHTML, and CSS.

Kevin is the author of *Web Standards Design Guide*, a college textbook. He is an enthusiastic instructor who maintains a strong belief that with patience, determination, and guidance, all individuals can reach their maximum potential.

## ABOUT THE COVER IMAGE DESIGNER

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**Corné van Dooren** designed the front cover image for this book. After taking a brief from friends of ED to create a new design for the Foundation series, he worked at combining technological and organic forms, with the results now appearing on this and other books' covers.

Corné spent his childhood drawing on everything at hand and then began exploring the infinite world of multimedia, and his journey of discovery hasn't stopped since. His mantra has always been, "The only limit to multimedia is the imagination," a saying that keeps him moving forward constantly.

Corné works for many international clients, writes features for multimedia magazines, reviews and tests software, authors multimedia studies, and works on many other friends of ED books. You can see more of his work at and contact him through his web site, [www.cornevandooren.com](http://www.cornevandooren.com).

If you like Corné's work, be sure to check out his chapter in *New Masters of Photoshop: Volume 2* (friends of ED, 2004).



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks again to all the people at friends of ED for your hard work in putting this book together. You're a great team and, as always, it has been a pleasure working with you.

# INTRODUCTION

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This book started out as an update to my first book on Flash and XML. Originally, the idea was to update the content with the changes to XML in ActionScript 3.0. However, when it came to drafting the table of contents, I realized that there was a whole audience of Flex developers who would also benefit from a book about XML and ActionScript 3.0. Hence, this book was born!

So, my plan is for this book to cater to both audiences: Flash designer/developers and Flex developers. I've included common code approaches, as well as topics that are specific to each package. I've tried to show readers how to achieve the same XML results in both software packages.

This book is best suited to people who have limited experience in the areas of XML and ActionScript 3.0. It is really pitched at introductory level users who are keen to learn more about ActionScript 3.0. The book is purposely simple in its approach, showing how to achieve common tasks required for working with XML in Flash and Flex. The Flash sections show function-based approaches, whereas the Flex sections show how to work with custom classes.

I hope that you find this book useful and that it whets your appetite for working with XML in your SWF applications. Hopefully, you'll find that the power and simplicity of XML will inspire you in your Flash and Flex development efforts!

## Layout conventions

To keep this book as clear and easy to follow as possible, the following text conventions are used throughout:

- Important words or concepts are normally highlighted on the first appearance in *italics*.
- Code is presented in *fixed-width font*.
- New or changed code is normally presented in **bold fixed-width font**.
- Pseudo-code and variable input are written in *italic fixed-width font*.
- Menu commands are written in the form Menu ► Submenu ► Submenu.
- Where I want to draw your attention to something, I've highlighted it like this:

*Ahem, don't say I didn't warn you.*

- Sometimes code won't fit on a single line in a book. Where this happens, I use an arrow like this: ➡.

This is a very, very long section of code that should be written all ➡ on the same line without a break.