Using arrays, variables, and conditional statements to dynamically manage your Flash movies

The code below creates a new array in Flash, and then uses the array to:

- Create duplicate instances of a movie clip
- Position the duplicate instances in random locations around the stage
- Test for collisions between the mouse and each instance

About the code above:

Line 1 creates the new array, line 2 instructs Flash to loop through lines 3 through 6 a total of 15 times. Lines 3 through 6 create duplicate movie clip instances, each with a unique name, and randomly position each new instance on the stage.

Lines 15 through 18 instruct Flash to continually check for collisions between the mouse and any of the movie clip instances. If Flash detects a collision it sets the alpha of the movie clip instance to 30, making the clip translucent.

For more details on this example, see Chun pp. 540-544.
February 15th in class activity:

Follow the steps detailed in Chun pp. 540-544 to create a Flash script that automatically positions movie clips around the stage and checks for collisions with the mouse, as described above.

For an extra challenge:

Once you have everything working, try the following:

- Change the number of movie clips from 15 to 25 (you may first want to enlarge the stage to accommodate the additional clips). Be sure to edit the actionScript so that each instance becomes translucent when the user passes the mouse over it. If you don’t edit carefully, only some of the instances will change due to collisions with the mouse.
- Change the code so each clip not only becomes translucent, but also rotates 90 degrees when the user passes the mouse over it.
- Edit the script to be sure your original movie clip instance becomes invisible

Where to find helpful information for this activity and others

Timelines: root, parent, child (explained in Chun, Chapter 5)
Variables: global vs. local (explained in Chun, Chapter 9)
Manipulating information: generating random numbers, creating arrays, using conditional statements (explained in Chun, Chapters 9 and 11)

Where to find additional information about Flash, a very partial listing:

Books
- ActionScript Cookbook: Solutions and Examples for Flash MX Developers by Joey Lott
- Flash Hacks: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools by Sham Bhangal

Websites
- http://www.flashkit.com/
- http://www.gotoandlearn.com/

Closing thoughts:

Flash is not supposed to be easy, that’s why knowing Flash makes you valuable.
You all know more about Flash than you think.