

TypeMonkey

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www.typemonkey.net

Welcome to TypeMonkey!

TypeMonkey is an evolutionary new approach to creating kinetic typography for video and film productions. It allows for an endless range of keyframeless, completely customizable solutions in seconds, generated entirely within After Effects. It's intuitive, powerful and even a little bit addicting. Whether used to generate an end product, a head start on a complex assignment, or just for brainstorming, TypeMonkey is an invaluable tool for any AE user.

Installation:

To install TypeMonkey (CS4 and later) as a dockable panel, place it in After Effects/Scripts/ScriptUI Panels (MAC) or After Effects/Support Files/Scripts/ScriptUI Panels (WINDOWS).

Trial Period is 7 days and maximum word count of 10.

Overview

TypeMonkey creates random kinetic type layouts based on the parameters entered into the control panel. While the algorithm is very complex, the user interface is easy and intuitive. It was created to be used by both novice and expert alike.

To start, select a font in the Character Palette of After Effects,

create a composition, then launch TypeMonkey.

The simplest way to get up and running is to enter text into the text area, click DO IT!, and watch the Monkey go to work. To generate a different layout Click Undo it and try it again.

TypeMonkey will distribute the words evenly over the length of the composition (or Work Area if that is selected). It will also create a parented camera that points to each successive word as it transitions on.

Markers are labeled with the corresponding word on the Master Control layer. By sliding the marker, both the timing of the word, and the camera move will adjust with it. Keep in mind, the Type Animation Speed won't change (eg: if you select Fast, when you slide a marker, it won't slow down), it will just make it later in time.

Each word is comprised of two layers, a control layer and a text layer. Both are defaulted to shy, but are visible in the building process.

TEXT BOX: This is where you either type or paste your copy. An assortment of keyboard commands will help control the layout and the timing of the end result.

By clicking the Star button, an info box will pop up listing the key commands.

^ - Inserts pauses & gaps in Master Control layer. This is great for inserting beats after keywords. Multiple ^ will insert multiple spaces. Inserting these

will also leave gaps in the Master Control layer, which will help make organizing a longer project easier.

[] - Square brackets define horizontal groups. The brackets will group words into a single line with a consistent size. Each word still animated on individually.

{ } - Curly brackets define stacked groups. As with the square brackets, the words are a consistent size and animate on individually.

{ [] } - Nesting horizontal into stacked is ok. Use this to create multiple lines of copy.

[{ }] - Nesting stacked into horizontal won't work.

| - Connects multiple words into single group. This differs from the square bracket command in that the group of words will animate on together, as if they were one word.

LAYOUT: This controls the overall layout parameters.

Create Text Layers Only: - When selected, TypeMonkey just splits your text into individual layers for each word. The text layers are not arranged, scaled, or animated in any way, and no camera or control layers are generated. You might use this feature to create text layers to be processed by LayerMonkey.

All Caps:- When selected, it will override whatever case is used in the text box. Unselected, it will use whatever case you input.

Font Size:

Random: Defined by the Minimum and Maximum text box

Constant: Defined only by the Minimum.

Spacing: The space between the lines

Rotation Probability %: Chance of a 90 degree rotation occurring on the next word or group of words. Note that once a rotation has occurred, there will be a minimum of 4 words per rotation. Otherwise there might be a lot of quick back and forth movements.

Color Palette: By default, one color - white- is selected. Up to 5 colors are available by activating each box and/or clicking on the grey square.

Kuler: If you click the K button, TypeMonkey will allow you to load a Kuler (.ase) file into the Color Palette. You can download Kuler files from Kuler.com. We have included a few Kuler files in the TypeMonkey download folder for your convenience.

TYPE ANIMATION

Style: This is the area that controls how the text animates on. By default it is random, but you can isolate a specific type of motion by selecting it in the control box. There are eighteen to choose from.

Speed: Indicates how fast the transition is. Keep in mind, that since the camera is synched to the transition, this also relates to the camera moves. Roughly speaking, the selections break down like this (in FPS): Fast: 10, Med: 15, Slow: 20, Sloth: 30.

Motion Blur: Checking Motion Blur will activate motion blur when TypeMonkey creates text layers in the composition. It doesn't, however, activate the composition's Motion Blur preview switch-so the effect won't be immediately visible. Activating that switch will show you the motion blur, but will also slow down the preview. Whether the preview is selected or not, Motion Blur will automatically be active when you render.

MARKERS

Time Span: Controls the length over which TypeMonkey will evenly distribute the markers. **Comp Duration:** Markers will be distributed over the length of the comp **Work Area:** By adjusting the work area sliders (B/N on the keyboard), and selecting this option, the animation will be distributed over a defined length within the comp. This is particularly convenient for pad at the end.

Marker Synch: This will synch up the markers to a guide layer that has markers already applied. For example, an audio layer that has a marker every beat, when selected as the guide layer will place a word at every beat. Two recommended scripts to generate the audio markers are Lloyd Alverez's Audio-to-Markers and MamoWorld's Beat Assistant.

MONKEY CAM

Include Camera: If you don't want a Monkey Cam, turn this box off.

Movement: Type of interpolation used for the movement of the camera:

Smooth Stop & Go : Will ease in and out of each move.*

Smooth Constant: Will drift continuously from one word to the next with eases.

Linear Stop & Go: No eases, (best for smooth moves thru single lines of text)

Linear Constant: Will move continuously from one word to the next without any easing.

*Stop & Go might cause skipping if the markers are too close to allow for the move to complete. To fix this, change the movement style, or drag the entire comp into a new comp (Pre-Comping might cause expression errors) and enable time-remapping.

Auto Rotate: Will rotate camera with each text rotation.

Auto Frame: Will keep each word a consistent size by zooming in or out. There are five options to choose from, Loose, Medium, Tight and Kong. You can also turn it off.

Update Cam: This allows for experimentation with the camera once the layout is set. Click update to revise the camera without having to regenerate the layout. To alter the speed of the camera (only), change the speed selection in the Type Animation section after the layout is built, then update the camera.

DO IT!: Tells the TypeMonkey to start kinetic typing.

Undo it: Will delete all of the TypeMonkey's hard work. When Clean is selected, the option of saving the existing TypeMonkey marker layer (the Master Control Layer) will pop up. If you have worked on the timing by sliding the markers, we suggest you save the layer. Once the composition has been cleaned, check the Marker Synch box in the Marker Area, then select the saved layer (it will appear with a yellow label in the composition timeline) to synchronize the new marker layer with the old one. If there are not enough markers in the saved marker layer, an error message will appear. TypeMonkey will not know what to do with the extra words in the new composition.

Save: Clicking Save will save your current TypeMonkey settings in an xml file to a location of your choice on your hard drive. It saves the text (but not the specific layout of the text), as well as your selections in the TypeMonkey user interface panel. Note that any selection in the Text Mods drop down menu is not saved.

Load: Clicking Load allows you to restore settings previously save in an xml preset file. Locate the saved file on your hard drive and click 'Open'.

Text Mods: Use this drop down menu to access a third-party text modifier script you have installed within the (TypeMonkey_TextMods) folder. The selected script will modify the text in the Text Box before TypeMonkey creates the text layers. This would typically be used to perform formatting (such as reversing the word order) specific to a particular language. Note that this drop down menu will be disabled if the (TypeMonkey_TextMods) folder doesn't exist on your system.

MONKEY TIPS:

MANUAL ADJUSTMENTS:

Customizing a layout manually is very easy. Just click and move, resize or rotate. It might be easier to unshy all the layers. Keep in mind that each control layers is parented to the one before it, so by adjusting one, everything after will be changed as well. Font & Color: These are functions of the text layer itself. Unlock the layer and make the changes in AE's Character Window. Word Opacity: Also a function of the Text layer. Unlock and adjust.

COMPLEX ANIMATIONS:

As with any long or complex animation, managing a project takes some forethought. To create long, or fast paced kinetic typography, it's best to consider a few things, no matter what technique you use.

- 1) Edit: Try to eliminate as many unnecessary words as possible.
- 2) Break it up: Is there a way to break the project up into small comps to simplify things?

TypeMonkey will handle animation of any length, but there will be a lot of markers and layers to deal with. Unfortunately After Effects doesn't allow you to select multiple markers and drag them around like you can with keyframes, so they need to be shifted one at a time. This could be quite tedious in long comps.

3) Pauses: Use the '^' command copiously to help break things up, both visually and temporally on the Master Control layer.

4) Keep it loose: Set up the comp longer than the final project. It's much easier to adjust the markers when they're looser than when they're packed tightly together.

5) Sequence: If possible, don't start messing with timing until the layout is set. This part might take the most tweaking on more complex projects, so leave it until the others are set.

6) Think Global: Globally change the overall speed by adjusting the Duration or Stretch parameters of the Master Control Layer, just as you would any other layer.

CAMERA TWEAKING:

Since the camera is moving from the center point of one word to the next, there may be unintended consequences. We've built in a few ways around it, but you might find others. Here are some suggestions:

1) Use the | Command: In a situation where a short word is followed by a long word, vice versa, or worst case scenario, a long word is sandwiched between two short ones, the camera is prone to swing wildly from one center point to the next. By combining the words into one group, it will only see one center point.

2) Move the short word so it's closer to the center point of the long one. One example would be to manually center the problem words. The closer they get to centered, the less distance the

camera has to travel.

3) Allow for more time by increasing the space between the problem markers.

4) Play with the Camera controls (Movement, Auto Frame, Speed).

DELETING A LAYER

Don't. It will break the expressions and parenting. Either regenerate the layout, or make the text layer invisible.

PRE-COMPING

At this time there seems to be an AE bug when pre-comping. An error message regarding expressions being broken will probably appear. However, by pressing OK it should still work. We're currently looking into this and have filed a bug report. The work-around is to drag the entire comp into another comp... basically manually pre-compose it.

WORKING WITH AUDIO

Dealing with lyrics and VO takes a little planning. The more key commands in the Text Box, the less moving of markers you'll have to do....which is a good thing. Insert a lot of pauses (^) after lines and on lyrics that hold.

Begin by bringing the audio track into a comp. Set the Time Span to Work Area* in the Marker Section (* Remember to set it back to include the entire comp once you are ready to render, or it will only render the lyric section).

Move the beginning of the work area (B) to just before where the typography should begin, and end (N) just after you want the type to end. TypeMonkey will distribute the copy across the

length of the work area. It will start by inserting a space, not a word, and end that way as well. The fewer words to distribute, the bigger spaces between the markers. Try to place the beginning of the Work Area in anticipation of that, so the first lyric will fall into place.

Most likely you'll end up fine tuning the markers manually...but use the ^ to get as close as you can.

It might be worth cleaning, adjusting the text box and rebuilding a few times to get as close as possible.

If there is an instrumental, we suggest splitting the song into multiple comps. An alternative would be to pre-comp (or drag into a new comp) and apply Time-Remap.

Congratulations if you made it this far...now we want to encourage you to just jump on and start TypeMonkeying around. Don't worry- it won't bite!

Have fun!

-Dan Ebberts & Orrin Zucker