

# Advanced Whiteboarding 2: Profiles & Customisation

## Custom Profiles

A Profile stores various information about the ActivInspire layout, including:





- Position of the toolbox and browser.
- Position of the menu and document tabs.
- Default colour of the background.
- Size of the icons.
- Which icons appear on the toolbox and marquee handles.
- The behaviour and appearance of some of the tools.

## Editing Profiles

You can alter the default Profiles that come with ActivInspire, or create your own. **Note:** *Editing default profiles won't affect anyone else, so don't worry about changing them to suit you. Profiles are (or should be!) stored in your own files in the following directory:*

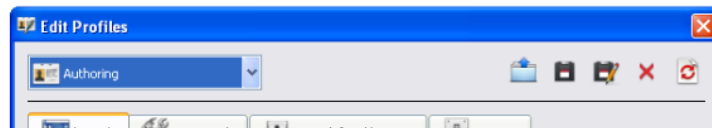
S:\Activ Software\ActivInspire\My Resources\My Profiles

To edit an existing profile, or create a new one, you need to open the **Edit Profiles** window. There are several ways to do this, with each method opening the window on a different tab. It doesn't matter what tab the window opens on, as it's simple enough to switch to the tab you want.



Icon	Menu Option	Shortcut key
	Edit / Profiles...	Ctrl + J
	View / Customise...	Ctrl + U
	Tools / More Tools... / Edit User Defined Buttons...	
	File / Settings...	

All of these bring up the Edit Profiles window.

Once opened, the first thing you should do is set the Profile you wish to edit from the drop down list in the top left corner. If you want to create a new one, ideally pick a Profile that is close to the one you want. **Note:** *Changing Profiles might close the Edit Profiles window – this happens if you switch to a Profile with a different **fullscreen** setting to the current one.*

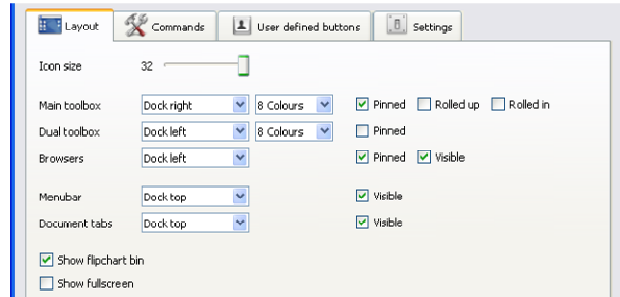


Once you have finished editing the profile, if you want to save the changes so they are available next time, either:

- click the Save icon  to save the new settings to the current profile
- OR
- click the Save As icon  to create a new Profile. *(Be sure to save the Profile in the "My Profiles" file location shown above.)*

## Edit Profiles: Layout

On this tab, you can alter the layout of the screen. You can see many of the changes take effect immediately in ActivInspire itself as you alter the information on this page.



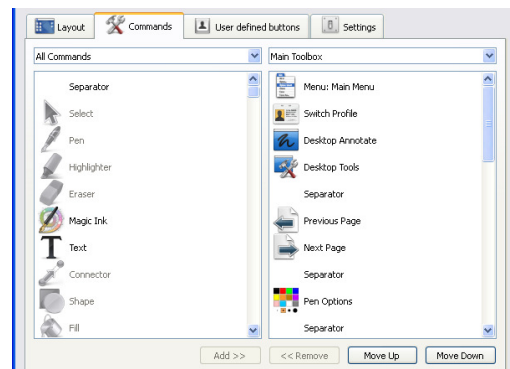
You can:

- Change the size of the icons (shown on the toolbox, browser, etc.).
- Change the position of the toolbox, browser window, menu bar and document tabs.
- Show or hide the bin.
- Switch between fullscreen and normal mode. **Note:** Changing this will close the Edit Profiles window, so you'll have to reopen it.
- Change the number of colours shown in the toolbox.
- Change whether the toolbox is rolled up, rolled in and/or pinned.
- Change whether the browser window is pinned.

**Note:** There is a setting for Dual toolbox which, unless you have dual pens working on your board, you can ignore.

## Edit Profiles: Commands

This tab allows you to add, remove and change the position of icons on the toolbox, and the marquee handles (use the drop down list on the right to switch between toolbox and marquee handles).



General hints:

- Colour icons on the left side are available to move to the toolbox / marquee handles.
- Greyed out icons on the left side are already present on the toolbox / marquee handles.
- Select an icon on the left side and click “Add >>” to add it.
- Select an icon on the right side and click “<< Remove” to remove it.
- Select an icon on the right side and use “Move Up” and “Move Down” to adjust the order.
- Add a “Separator” to create a thin horizontal line to help group related icons.
- Separators can be moved and removed just like the tool icons.
- Not all the icons you add to the marquee handles will function.

## Edit Profiles: User defined buttons

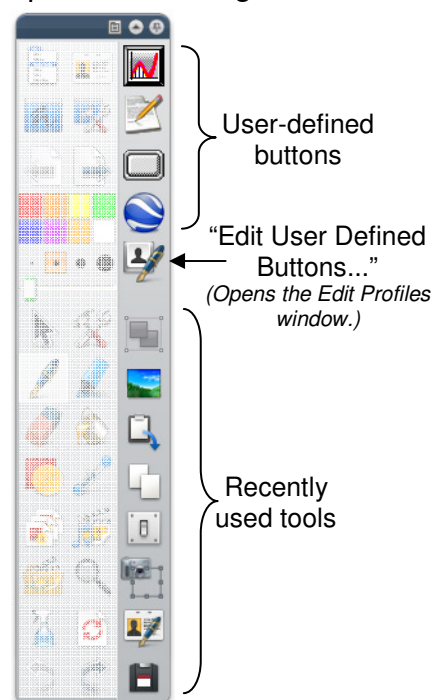
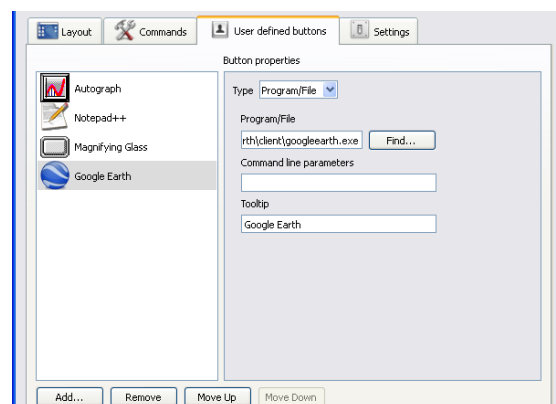
If you use some programs or files frequently in your lessons, rather than inserting a button into a particular flipchart (as shown in the Lesson Hub part of the **Media & Gadgets** session), you can have a button that appears on the extended toolbar every time you use this Profile.

As long as the toolbar is not “Rolled In”, you will see a third column containing user defined buttons at the top and recently used tools at the bottom.

You can add buttons to the top with this section of the Edit Profiles menu.

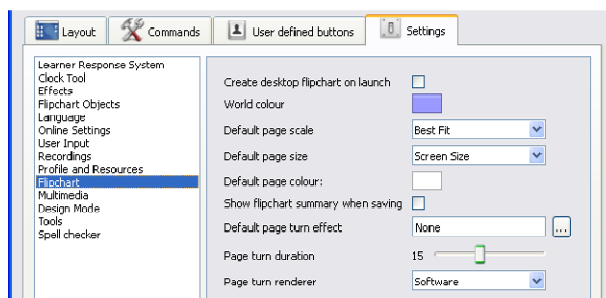
1. Click the **Add...** button in the bottom left corner of the window.
2. In the right side, under Button properties, select “Program/File” from the Type drop down list (it’s the only option).
3. A button labelled **Find...** will appear – click this to open a file dialog box.
4. Select the program or file you want and click “Open”.
5. The location and filename should now appear in the Program/File textbox.
6. Enter a meaningful name in the Tooltip box.  
*This is especially important if the program or file you are selecting doesn't have a distinct icon – the Tooltip text will appear when you hover the mouse over the icon, reminding you what this button is for. If you leave the Tooltip box empty, you'll get an unhelpful “Launch File” message.*
7. Click **Done**, and you should see your shiny new button on the toolbox.

You can also remove and reorder your custom buttons using the **Remove** and **Move Up / Move Down** buttons respectively.



## Edit Profiles: Settings

The final tab on the Edit Profiles window gives access to many different settings within ActivInspire. The settings are gathered into groups, but even so, this section can seem a little overwhelming.





The trick is to experiment first, without worrying too much about the changes you're making – if you don't save the changes, you won't be doing any long-term damage!

The list on the left shows the different groups; selecting one will reveal the settings you can change on the right.

The table below shows some of the settings you might wish to experiment with. **Hint:** If you have the affected object, window, tool, etc. open in the background, you can usually see the effects of your changes without having to close the Settings window.

Setting Group	Setting	What it does
Effects	Spotlight Tool (multiple settings)	Change the colour, translucency, etc. of the Spotlight tool.
	Revealer Tool: Colour	Change the Revealer screen colour.
Flipchart Objects	Automatic annotation grouping	Untick this to stop ActivInspire grouping the annotations that make up letters, words and sentences – every pen stroke will be a separate object, even the crossbar on the letter “t”. Probably best left ticked.
	Resource Library: View Mode and Thumbnail Size	Change the way resources are displayed in the Browser.
	Enable actions on hidden objects	With this ticked, even when an object is hidden, it can still be clicked on to activate an action. Clear the tick to prevent this.
Profile and Resources	Path settings	You can set particular locations for resources rather than use the default settings.
Flipchart	World colour	Change the colour of the area beyond the boundaries of the main page. You can see the World area when the page doesn't fit neatly on the screen.
	Default page colour	Change the colour of the main page.

Setting Group	Setting	What it does
Multimedia	Show sound controller	Clear the tick to stop the tiny sound window popping up when ActivInspire plays a sound.
Design Mode	Various settings	These control what happens when you switch the design mode button from  blue (normal) to  orange (edit).
Tools	Default tool	Select the tool that appears first when you start up ActivInspire.
	Show pen width indicator	Displays a dotted circle as you write, showing you the size and colour of the pen. Also shows you the size of the eraser. Clear the tick to turn this off.
	Maths tools – various	Set the size, transparency and colours of the protractor, ruler, etc. Turn on <b>Show Draw Zone</b> to see the area your pen needs to be in to “stick” to the edge of the tool when writing.
	Shape tool	If you want to draw a circle centred on a particular point, you need to adjust this setting to, “Create shapes by dragging from <b>Centre</b> .”
	Calculator	You can use these settings to select an alternative calculator program to start when selecting the Calculator tool icon, rather than use ActivInspire’s built-in calculator.

## Action Browser

The Action Browser allows the creation of customised buttons you can place onto your page to control your flipchart or ActivInspire itself. To get you started, the browser comes with some simple **Drag and Drop** buttons.

As the name suggests, you can drag these from the browser and drop them onto the current page to create an action button. They are no different from selecting the same icon from the toolbox or menu, but can be far more convenient.



**Note:** the **Fill** action, once selected, can only be unselected by clicking on *Select from the toolbox*; clicking on another action button won't work (and will usually result in **filling** part of the other icon!). Before version 1.5, the **Shape** action suffered from a similar problem.

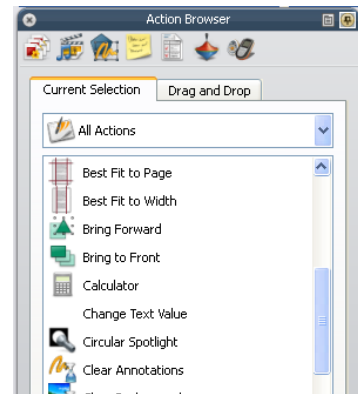
**Note 2:** If you drag one of these icons and drop it onto an existing object on the page instead of an empty space, you'll probably find you give the action abilities to the existing object, and the **Drag and Drop** icon won't appear at all.

The **Drag and Drop** choices are limited, and far more can be done with the other tab on the Action Browser, labelled **Current Selection**.

Although the actions in the Current Selection also have icons next to (most of) them, you cannot drag and drop them. Instead, you turn your own objects into buttons with those actions. (The icons just show that the action can also be achieved using a toolbox or marquee button, or menu option, although I haven't found all of the available actions in other locations.)

Here's how to use the **Current Selection** Actions:

1. Select the object on the page you want to assign an action to. (That is, the object you want to turn into a "button". If the object already has an action assigned to it, you can right-click on it instead of left-click. If you can't see the marquee / sizing handles, the object probably isn't selected.)
2. Select the chosen action from the Browser list.
3. Fill in any **Action Properties** that might appear at the bottom of the Browser window. (You might need to click on the small plus sign to open them. Not all actions have them.)



4. Click the Apply Changes button at the very bottom to complete the process. (If your action button doesn't seem to work, it's likely you forgot this step – I usually do.)


**Hints & Tips:**

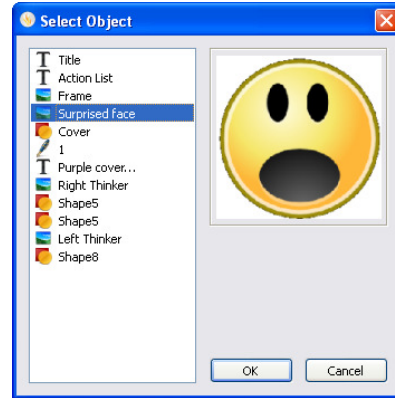
- Actions can only affect one object (even if that object is part of a group).
- Naming your objects in the **Object Browser** will make them easier to find if needed for **Action Properties**.
- Click on **Remove Existing** to clear an action from an object. It's normally a good idea to remove any previous action before applying a new one.

## Action Properties

For more about Properties, see the final two sessions, **Introduction to the Property Browser** and **Containers & Restrictors**.

Action properties provide extra information required by some actions. The most common property is **Target**. This allows you to choose an object that will be affected by the action. This can even be the same object you're turning into an action button.

To help you choose a target object, the property has a special button  that opens the **Select Object** window. Select the object on the left; a picture of the object will appear on the right.

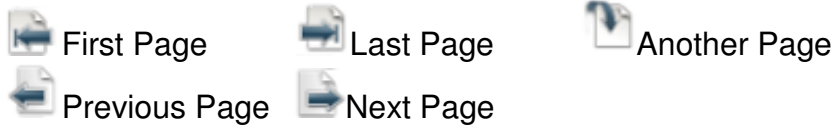


Other properties require numbers or text, and are usually self-explanatory in context.

## Action List

The list below is not exhaustive, and only highlights certain actions. The groupings are my own. In ActivInspire, the actions are listed in alphabetical order, and there are more than 200. A filter at the top is intended to help you find the actions you want, but I find the available groups a little vague.

### Page Actions



- These allow you to create custom buttons for navigating around your flipchart.
- Apart from **Another Page**, these all have **Drag and Drop** equivalents.
- **Another Page** allows you to jump to a specified page in the current flipchart.

### Toggle Actions



- Each of these actions is like a switch, turning on and off with successive clicks.
- The Hidden action can be used to hide and reveal objects.

**Note:** In versions of ActivInspire older than 1.5, it was possible to mess up grouped objects when using Hidden. Since actions can only affect a single object (even if part of a group), Hidden can only hide one part of a grouped object. In old versions, a hidden object didn't move with the rest of the visible objects, even though it was still grouped with them! This seems to have been resolved in the newer versions.

### Layer Actions



Bring Forward



Send Backward



Bring to Front



Send to Back



To Top Layer



To Middle Layer



To Bottom Layer

**Note:** *There is no "To Background Layer".*

- These actions allow you to move objects in front and behind each other, or move them to different layers altogether.

### Translucency Actions



Translucency



More Translucent



Less Translucent

- The translucency of an object is measured by a number between 0 (fully visible) and 255 (invisible).
- The Translucency action sets an object to a particular value, while the others increase and decrease by a particular amount. (The values are set in the Action Properties.)

### Angle Actions



Angle



Angle Incrementally

- The **Angle** action sets the target object to a particular angle.
- The **Angle Incrementally** action allows the target object to be repeatedly turned by a particular angle.
- Unlike in mathematics, angles are measured **clockwise** with **0°** pointing straight up the page.
- Use negative angles to turn something anticlockwise.
- How the object turns (e.g. about its centre, corner, etc.) is determined by its own **Property** settings (not the Action Properties - see the final two sessions for details.)



## Text Actions

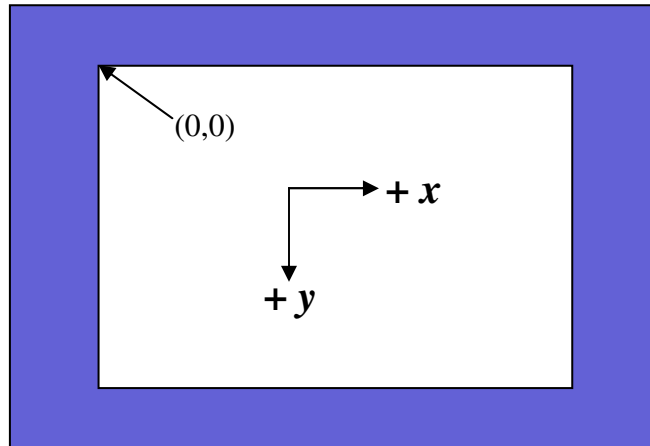
 New Text Object  Append Text

 Extract Text  Change Text Value

- **New Text Object** makes a piece of text appear each time the action button is clicked. I can't think of many uses for this...
- **Append Text** adds some text to the end of an existing text object. Each time the action button is clicked, further copies of the specified text are added.
- **Extract Text** is rather more useful, and only works on the action object (which must be a text object). Once applied, each time you click on a word in the text, a new text object, containing just that word, is created. This can be used for:
  - Literally pulling out key words within a text.
  - Turning text containing a list of special symbols into “fuzzy felt” (see the **Building Blocks** notes), allowing you to drag copies of special symbols onto the page as required.
- **Change Text Value** changes the words of the target text object to those specified in the **Action Properties**. However, if the text involved (that is, in the target object and the Action Property) consists only of numbers, the value of the Action Property text **is added to** the target text object. Useful for making counters, scoreboards, etc. (Use negative numbers for subtraction.)

## Position, Size and Stretch Actions

There are 10 different Position actions, but before messing with them, make sure you understand the **coordinate system** of the screen:



The blue section is the **World area**, and is visible depending on the ActivInspire zoom settings. The white area is the **Page area**. (Colours can, of course, be changed as described in the **Settings** above.)

The top left corner of the **Page area** is the  $x$ - $y$  coordinate (0,0). Unlike the common Cartesian coordinate system we're used to from mathematics, while the  $x$  value increases to the right as normal, **the  $y$  value increases as you move down the page**. (Annoying, but it's in keeping with many computer graphics systems.)

When referring to the corners, edges and centre of an object, this actually refers to the corners, edges and centre of the rectangle that bounds the object (that is, the rectangle that's usually visible when you select the object).

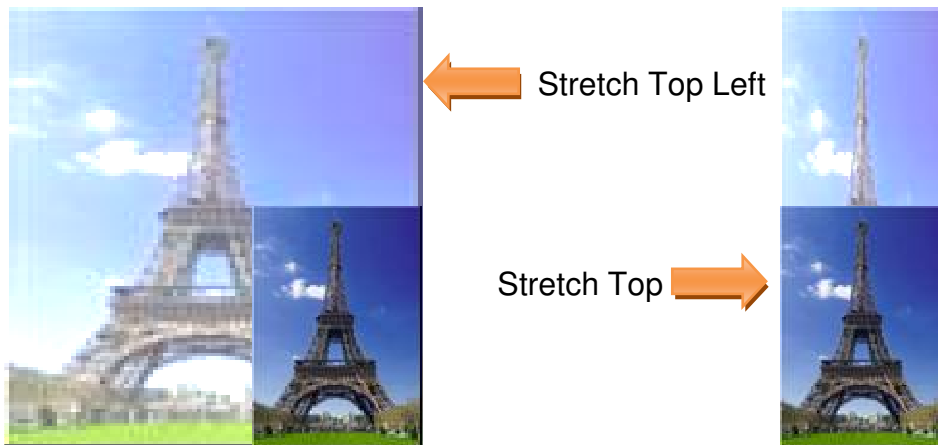
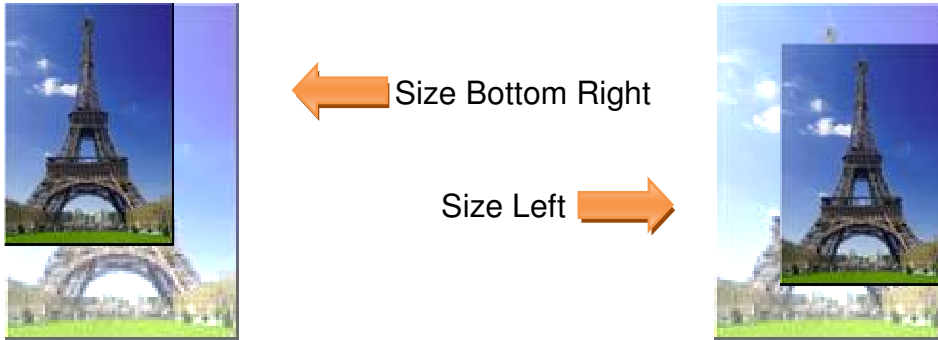
Objects can be positioned within the blue area, even to the left or above the page (by using negative values.)

- **Position Central** sets the **centre** of the target object to the given coordinates (in the Action Properties). Similarly, the **Position Top Left**, **Top Right**, **Bottom Left** and **Bottom Right** set the appropriate **corner** of the target object to the given coordinates.
- **Position Top**, **Bottom**, **Left** and **Right** act slightly differently. Each one sets the appropriate edge of the object to the given  $x$  or  $y$  value. In this way, an object can be moved to the top, bottom, left or right of the screen, regardless of the value of its other dimension.
- **Position Incrementally** allows an object to be **moved** through a given amount **horizontally and vertically** at each press of the action button – effectively (for you maths fans) translating the object through a given vector.

There are 18 **Size actions** and 18 **Stretch actions**, which seems excessive (and probably is). Both Size and Stretch are concerned with the changing the size of an object. The only difference is that, while Size maintains the proportions of the object, Stretch doesn't, distorting the object's appearance.

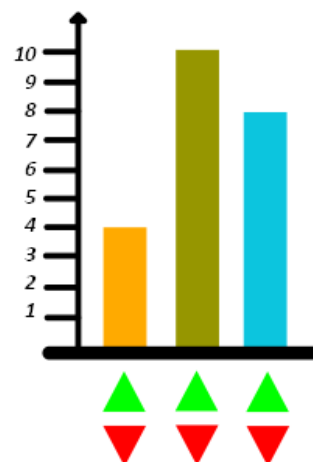
For each type of action, 9 are for setting the size to a **particular value**, and the other 9 are for setting the size **incrementally**.

The reason there are 9 of each is because of the possible compass directions (here called **Top Left, Top, Top Right, Right, Bottom Right, Bottom, Bottom Left, Left**). These directions indicate which direction(s) the object will be resized in. (The differences can be subtle for Size actions, but are rather more important for Stretch actions.)



One use for the Stretch actions is to create an interactive bar chart, where the bars are the targets for **Stretch Top Incrementally** actions. To get them to shrink, use a negative value in the Action Properties.

**Note:** In versions of ActivInspire older than 1.5, **Stretch actions** were extremely unreliable, often refusing to work at all. When they did work, they worked more reliably with images than with shapes. At the time of writing, it's possible this issue has been resolved in newer versions. Or it might just be that ActivInspire is being fickle and feels like working "today".



## Open Actions



Open Document, File or Sound

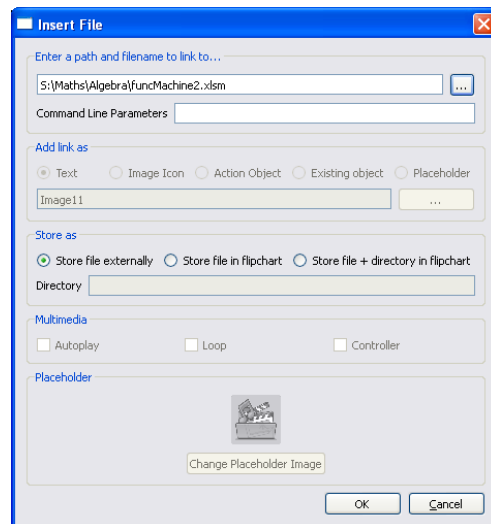


Open Flipchart



Open Website

- Somewhat confusingly, **Open Flipchart** just opens a file window allowing you to select a flipchart to open. If instead you want a specified flipchart to automatically open, use **Open Document, File or Sound**, and select the appropriate flipchart in the Action Properties.
- For **Open Website**, you don't need the "http:///" part of the web address.
- When you Apply Changes for the **Open Document, File or Sound** action, the **Insert File** window opens. This is the same window used when you insert a file from the menu (see the **Media & Gadgets** session).
- One useful feature not covered previously is the "**Store as**" part of the window:
  - **Store file externally** is the default, and means the flipchart will always look for the file in the place you said it should be. If the file moves, the link will be broken.
  - **Store file in flipchart** saves the file information directly into the flipchart. This means the file will always be available, even if the original is moved or deleted. However, if you make changes to the original file, the flipchart will still only have the version before the changes.
  - **Store file + directory in flipchart** does the same as above, but also saves everything else in the same directory (folder). This can be useful if the file is something like a PowerPoint presentation that itself has links to other files. But the other files must be in the same folder, and you might find a load of superfluous files are also saved that aren't required - **use with caution!**



**Important:** if files are stored directly in the flipchart, this can dramatically increase the size of the flipchart, particularly if you are storing videos. This might affect the usability of your computer and, while it might work a dream on your super deluxe machine at home, the poor cousin computers in school might struggle with the multimedia extravaganza you have planned. Multimedia can be done, but this isn't necessarily the best way to do it.