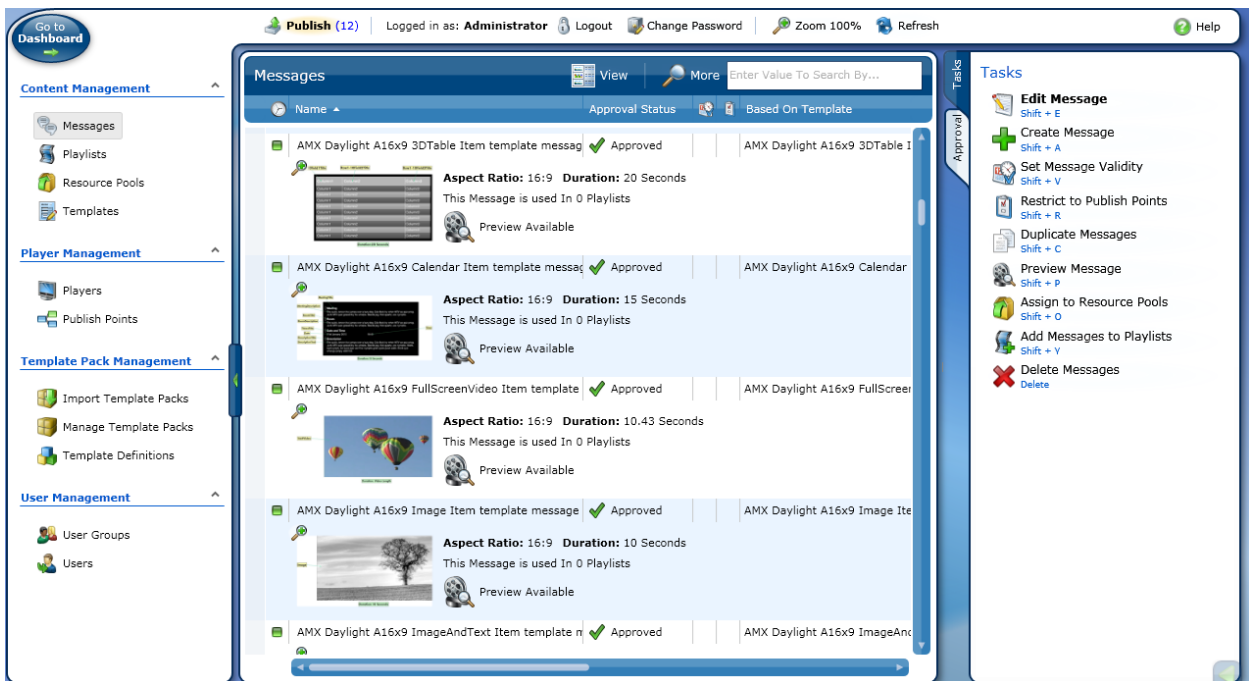# AMX by HARMAN

END USER GUIDE

COMPOSER

INSPIRED EXPERT

AV FOR AN IT WORLD®

IMPORTANT SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

1. READ these instructions.
2. KEEP these instructions.
3. HEED all warnings.
4. FOLLOW all instructions.
5. DO NOT use this apparatus near water.
6. CLEAN ONLY with dry cloth.
7. DO NOT block any ventilation openings. Install in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
8. DO NOT install near any heat sources such as radiators, heat registers, stoves, or other apparatus (including amplifiers) that produce heat.
9. DO NOT defeat the safety purpose of the polarized or grounding type plug. A polarized plug has two blades with one wider than the other. A grounding type plug has two blades and a third grounding prong. The wider blade or the third prong are provided for your safety. If the provided plug does not fit into your outlet, consult an electrician for replacement of the obsolete outlet.
10. PROTECT the power cord from being walked on or pinched, particularly at plugs, convenience receptacles, and the point where they exit from the apparatus.
11. ONLY USE attachments/accessories specified by the manufacturer.
12. USE ONLY with a cart, stand, tripod, bracket, or table specified by the manufacturer, or sold with the apparatus. When a cart is used, use caution when moving the cart/apparatus combination to avoid injury from tip-over.
13. UNPLUG this apparatus during lightning storms or when unused for long periods of time.
14. REFER all servicing to qualified service personnel. Servicing is required when the apparatus has been damaged in any way, such as power-supply cord or plug is damaged, liquid has been spilled or objects have fallen into the apparatus, the apparatus has been exposed to rain or moisture, does not operate normally, or has been dropped.
15. DO NOT expose this apparatus to dripping or splashing and ensure that no objects filled with liquids, such as vases, are placed on the apparatus.
16. To completely disconnect this apparatus from the AC Mains, disconnect the power supply cord plug from the AC receptacle.
17. Where the mains plug or an appliance coupler is used as the disconnect device, the disconnect device shall remain readily operable.
18. DO NOT overload wall outlets or extension cords beyond their rated capacity as this can cause electric shock or fire.

The exclamation point, within an equilateral triangle, is intended to alert the user to the presence of important operating and maintenance (servicing) instructions in the literature accompanying the product.

The lightning flash with arrowhead symbol within an equilateral triangle is intended to alert the user to the presence of uninsulated "dangerous voltage" within the product's enclosure that may be of sufficient magnitude to constitute a risk of electrical shock to persons.

ESD Warning: The icon to the left indicates text regarding potential danger associated with the discharge of static electricity from an outside source (such as human hands) into an integrated circuit, often resulting in damage to the circuit.

WARNING: To reduce the risk of fire or electrical shock, do not expose this apparatus to rain or moisture.

WARNING: No naked flame sources - such as candles - should be placed on the product.

WARNING: Equipment shall be connected to a MAINS socket outlet with a protective earthing connection.

WARNING: To reduce the risk of electric shock, grounding of the center pin of this plug must be maintained.

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AMX WARRANTY AND RETURN POLICY

The AMX Warranty and Return Policy and related documents can be viewed/downloaded at www.amx.com.

Table of Contents

Composer End User Guide

Overview

This document describes the basic Composer features available to end users. This guide assumes that an administrator has setup Composer, imported Templates, configured Players and created a number of end user accounts and resources.

For information on intermediate and advanced features refer to the Composer 5 Server Instruction Manual, the IS XPert Instruction Manual and the various IS XPert How-To guides, see **http://www.amx.com/products/**.

Templates

Each user in Composer has access to a selection of *Templates*. A Template provides the basic structure for the "slides " displayed on-screen. These "slides" are called *Messages* inside Composer. When a Message is created, a Template is selected to use as a base for the Message.

Templates consist of a number of elements, some you can edit, while other elements are fixed.

Typical editable elements:

- Text (title, subtitle, body text, etc).
- Color (Text/Background).
- Images
- Videos

Note that some text, colors, or images may not be editable, it depends on the Template designer.

Fixed elements:

- Shapes (e.g. banners, gradient filled areas, etc)
- Animation (e.g. how shapes, text and images move on the screen - note sometimes this is modifiable in special Templates)
- Message duration (length of time Message is shown on-screen).
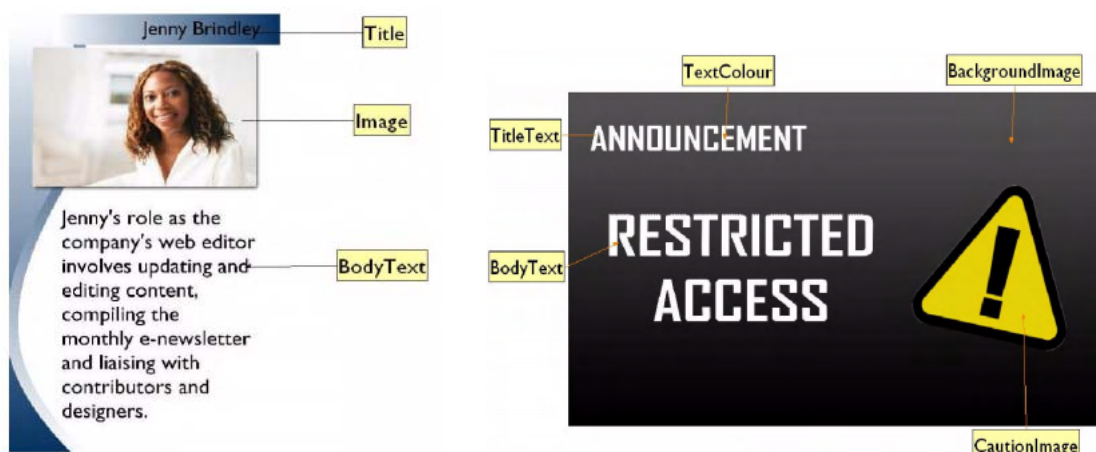
See FIG. 1 for some example Templates:

FIG. 1 Examples of Template Guide with Templates and Modifiable Elements Indicated by Black Text on a Yellow Background

The nature of the Message used to communicate will determine which Template to use. A number of different Template Packs are available along with documentation in the form of Template Guides (see the amx.com website) which describes each Template in detail. A Composer administrator will import Template Packs for you which contain multiple templates.

When selecting the best Template to use, consider the length and format of the text being displayed (e.g. is it a headline, bullet point, event detail, etc.) and whether there are one or more images to display. You may also wish to display a video clip; if so, a Template with a video area should be chosen.

Messages

Once a Template has been selected, use the information in the Template Guide to create a Message. Typically, a Message consists of a number of fields: title, body text and one or more images, depending on the Template chosen. Some Messages are also available for displaying videos.

Any images or videos being used are of the appropriate aspect ratio, i.e. that the ratio of width to height of your image is similar to the image area in the Template you are using. For example: if using a tall thin image area, avoid putting a short wide image in it, otherwise the image will be truncated or scaled to fit. Resize or truncate images as appropriate. See FIG. 2 for an example of different Messages produced from the same Template.
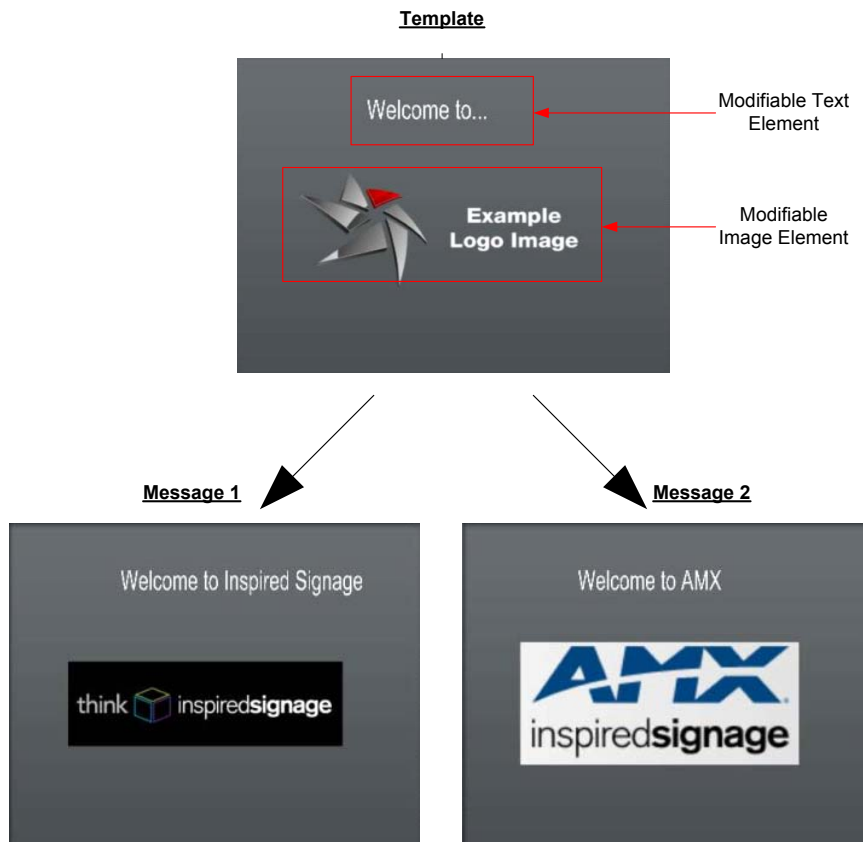

FIG. 2 Examples of Different Messages Produced from the Same Template

Playlists

Once a Message has been created, it must be placed in a Playlist in order to display it on-screen. Playlists determine the order in which Messages are displayed and are similar to the Playlists on MP3 players. Different Playlists are displayed on different Signage screens (called Players in Composer).

If using a multi area screen layout with, for example, a main area, side bar and bottom bar, then different Playlists (called Area Playlists) control these different screen areas. A Composer Administrator determines which Playlists are displayed on which screens and which screen areas they control, contact your Administrator for details on the Playlists in your installation.

By default, Playlists are configured to loop when all Messages have been displayed.

See FIG. 3 and FIG. 4 for an example of a multi-screen layout with different Playlists controlling different areas of the screen. All the Playlists in the example contain just one Message except the A16x9 Area Playlist which contains two Messages.
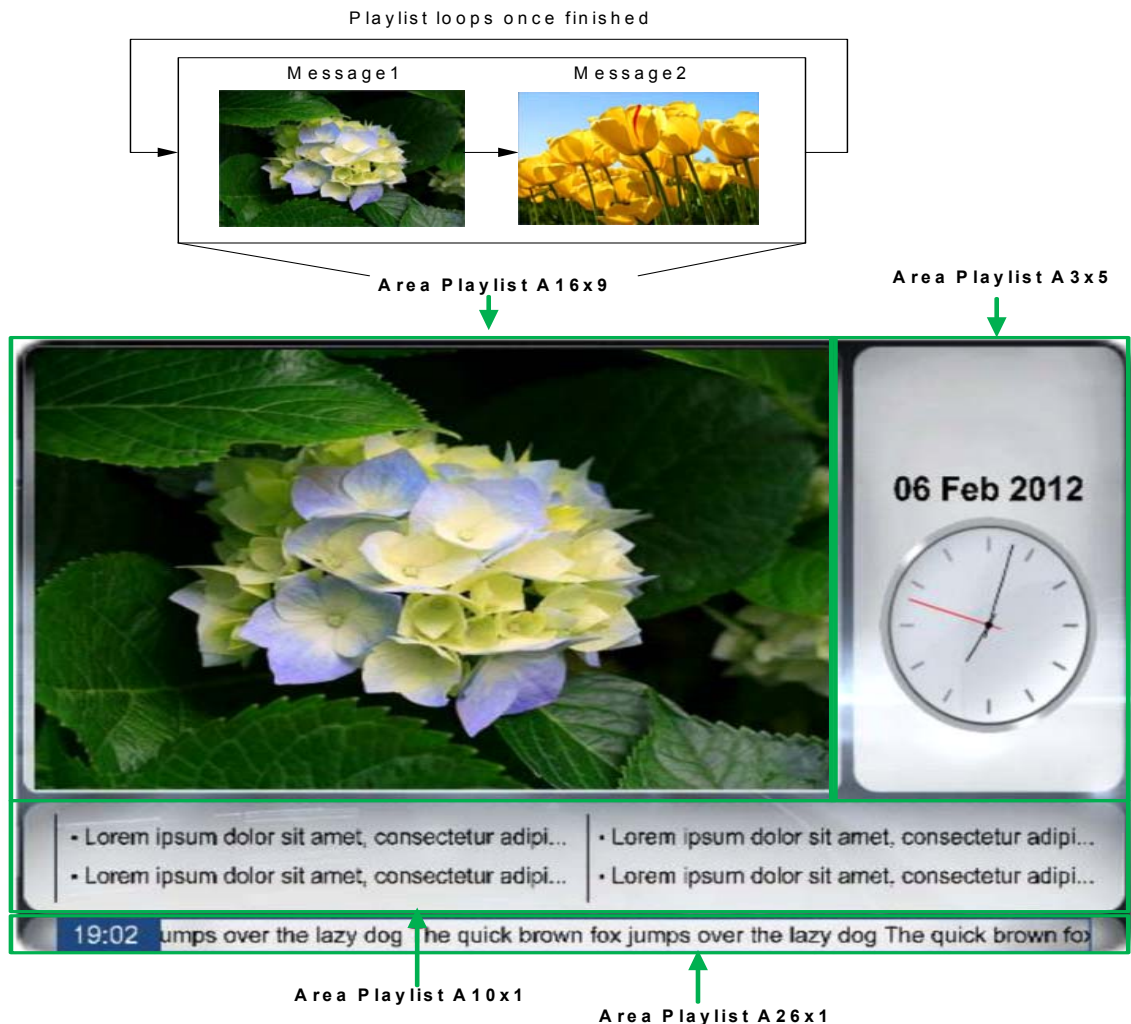

FIG. 3 Playlists Controlling Different Screen Areas

FIG. 4 Screenshots Showing the Display in FIG. 3 Above at 5 Second Intervals

Publishing

When one or more Playlists have been changed, or the Messages they contain have been changed, then the updated Playlists must be sent to the Players to update the Signage displays; this is called Publishing. The displays will not automatically update when you publish, the Playlists displaying on-screen will only update when they loop to provide a smooth transition for viewers.

Workflow

A typical process when using Composer is as follows:

- Create a new Message. For example, to inform people that the network is down for maintenance and they will not be able to access their email.
- Add the newly created Message to a Playlist. For example, the Playlist shown on the displays in the company lobby.
- Publish changes to Players to update the Signage display. Everyone can now see the new Message.

NOTE: *If administrators are using the approval system then there is an additional step, as all changes made to Playlists or Messages must be approved by a user with approval rights before these changes can be published. Consult your administrator for details.*

Login to Composer

1. The Composer Administrator will provide a link to Composer. Open your browser and enter the URL into the navigation bar. If Microsoft Silverlight Plug-in is not installed on your system, the browser will inform you and provide a URL link to the Plug-in. The following progress screen should be observed as the Composer Silverlight application loads:

FIG. 5 Loading Modules Window

2. A login box should appear. Enter your username and password in the appropriate fields. Please note these details are case sensitive.

FIG. 6 Login Screen

Once logged into Composer, the first screen that appears is the Composer Dashboard (FIG. 7). The dashboard provides some information about the steps required to configure a network of Signage Players and a summary of the current state of the system. As an end user you can ignore this information, Clear the check box *Show Dashboard* at startup at the bottom right hand corner and click *Go to Composer.*
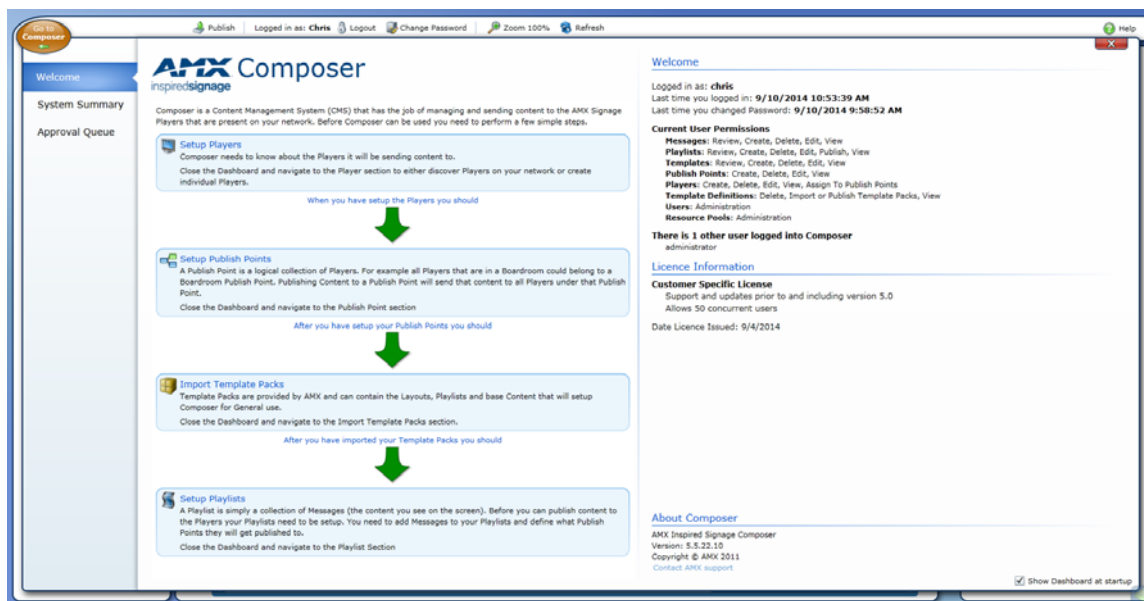

FIG. 7 Composer Dashboard - Welcome Screen

Composer User Interface Structure (Sections and Sub-sections)

The composer interface contains a number of sections and sub-sections accessed using the left hand pane under the blue icon **Go to Dashboard**. End users generally only work in and may only have access to the Content Management section. Content Management contains two sub-sections used for the majority of your work: Message and Playlists.

- The Message Sub-section is mainly used for creating Messages.
- The Playlist Sub-section is mainly used for modifying the contents of Playlists displayed on Signage displays.

Creating Messages

Creating a Message in Composer consists of four steps further defined with images on the following pages:

- Choose a Template as a basis for the Message.
- Name the Message.
- Enter text, images, and videos into the modifiable Template fields to create the Message.
- Save changes. The Message is now ready to be added to Playlists.

The full Message creation process is described in detail below.

1. Expand the left side Content Management menu identified in FIG. 8
2. Select *Messages*.
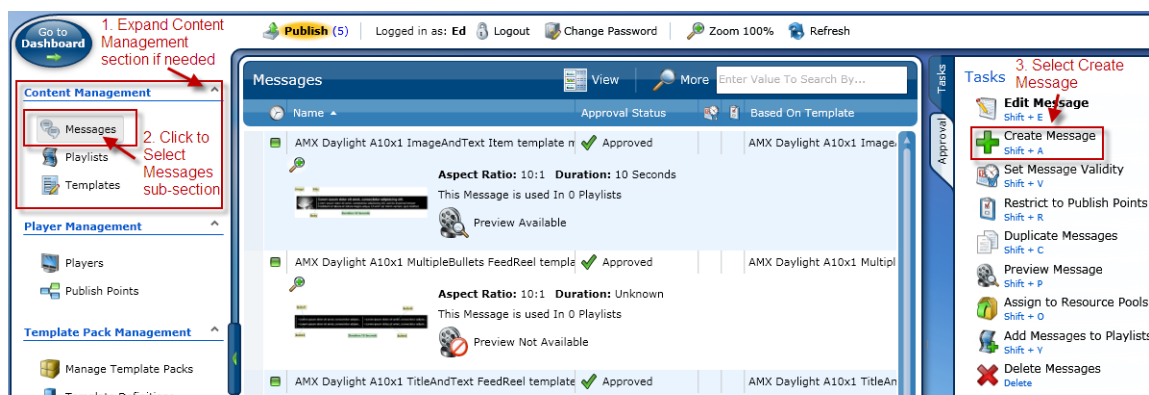3. In the right side Task Panel click *Create Message*.

FIG. 8 Select Create Message Task

4. Scroll up and down through the list of Templates until you find a suitable choice. Alternatively, if known, type in the name of the Template chosen from the Template Pack and press enter to select this Template. Note that it isn't necessary to enter the full Template name. Part of the name is sufficient to narrow down the choice. Once a Template has been selected, Select *Next*. Refer to FIG. 9
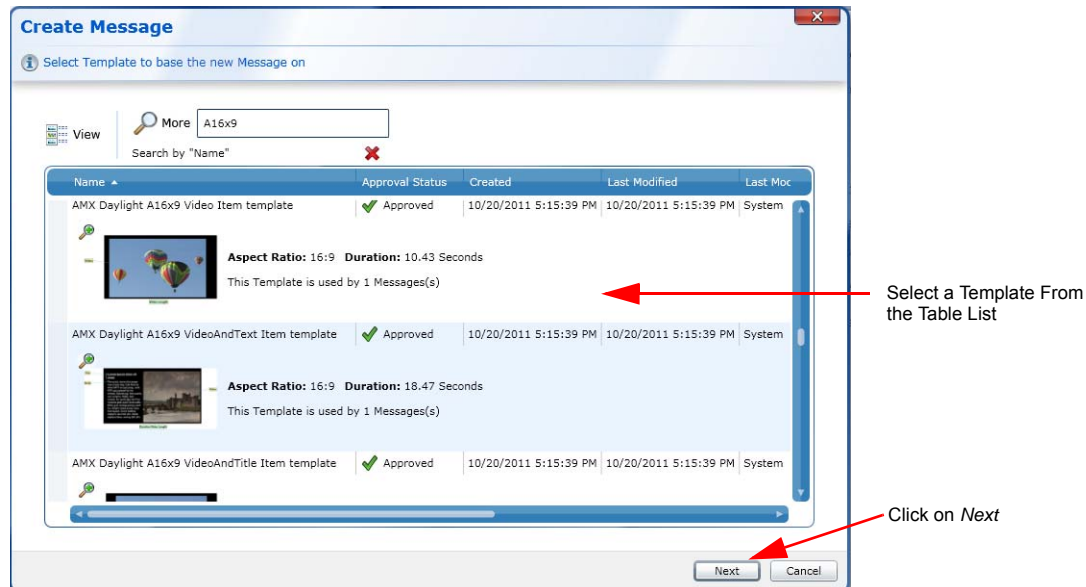
FIG. 9 Select Template to Base Message On

5. The next window appears as shown in FIG. 10. Enter a name for the new Message in the *Name* field.

6. Modify the Message Property fields to create your Message. Enter the text for your message in the Text fields (where present).

NOTE: *If too many characters are entered, the extra text will not be displayed. Refer to the Template guide for information about the number of characters. This number of characters is not exact as different characters take up different amounts of space. It may be necessary to experiment using the Message Preview facility.*

7. If the Message has image fields, select image files to display. Make sure the images selected have suitable aspect ratios (refer to the Template Guide). Use an appropriate resolution to avoid over-stressing the Player. Consult the Composer Instruction Manual for details.

8. If the Message has video fields, select a video to display. Consult the Composer Instruction Manual for details of the supported video formats. Use an appropriate video resolution to avoid over-stressing the Player which may cause display jitter.
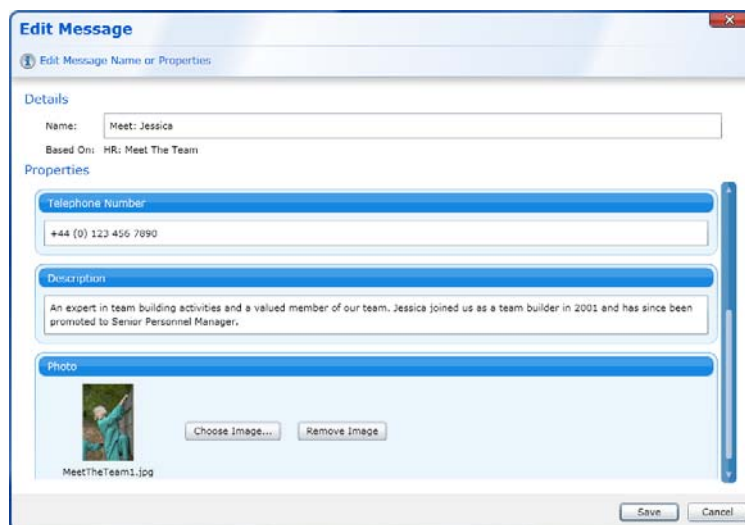
FIG. 10 Edit Message Dialog

9. On some Templates, the title, text and background colors are editable. Use the color palette or picker to choose an appropriate color. Note that your organization may have brand guidelines that specify particular colors.

10. Once the Message has been created, a dialogue box opens with a list of optional things to do with the new Message. Typically the next step is to add the Message to a Playlist. This adds the Message to the end of the selected Playlist so it will be the last item played.
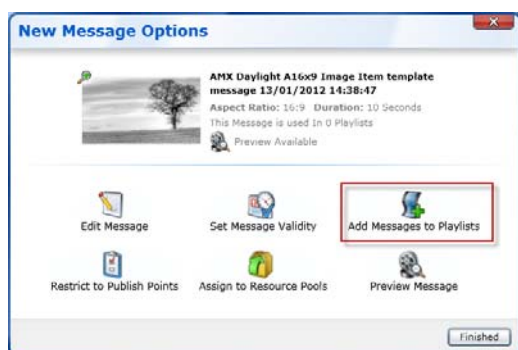

FIG. 11 New Message Options Dialog

Preview Message

Composer provides the ability to preview Messages before they are published. This allows previewing the Message to ensure it will display correctly and to identify any issues. Common problems include images that are not in the correct aspect ratio for the Message's image area or text truncated due to size restrictions on Message text areas.

1. Select the Message to preview from the table of Messages in the Message sub-section.

2. Click *Preview Message.* This opens a screen which shows an animation of the message above a timeline showing snapshots of the animation. (Note this animation is not smooth as it is constructed from images at 0.5 sec intervals but the on-screen animation will be smooth as it is made up of 50 images per second). Click on any of the snapshots to jump to that part of the animation.
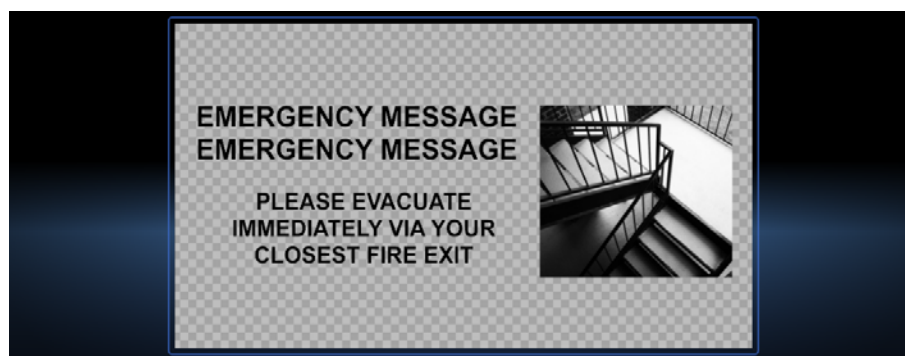

FIG. 12 Timeline Message Preview Screen Shows Message Changing Over Time (0.5 sec intervals)

Quick Preview Messages

The quick previewer allows users to edit messages and preview content without leaving a message to make changes. Only certain messages are allowed to be previewed. When a message is selected the expanded view of the message will show whether a message has a Quick Preview or not. Below in FIG. 13, the message 'Preview + Quick Preview Available' indicates that the message can be previewed using the existing Preview functionality and the new Quick Preview functionality.

Quick preview functionality is only available if the template packs have been updated to contain quick preview enabled content. After upgrading Composer, existing messages will only work with the old preview functionality. Once a template pack has been installed, and if template pack has template messages with quick preview enabled content, then those messages can be quick previewed

NOTE: *Do not expect quick preview to work after upgrading unless template packs which have preview enabled content have been imported first.*
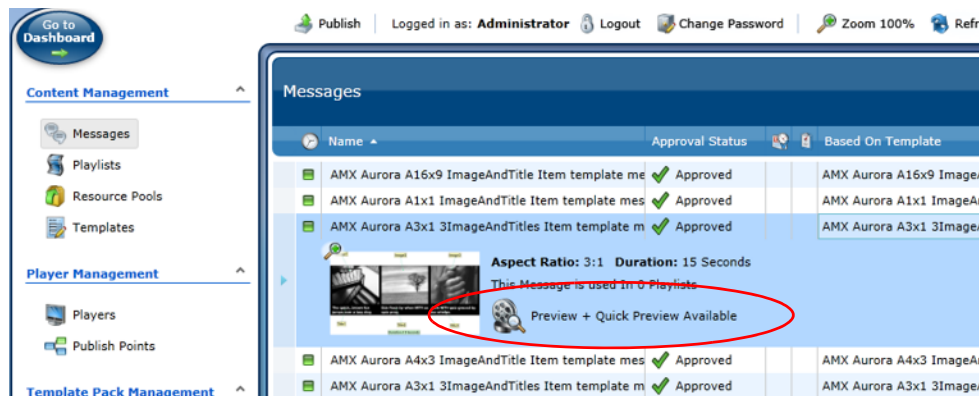

FIG. 13 Quick Preview Availability

Launching a Quick Preview

1. "Double Click" a message to preview it or select it and select *Edit Message* from the Task Panel. In the bottom left corner of the Edit Message view, a 'Quick Preview' button is shown. Refer to FIG. 14.
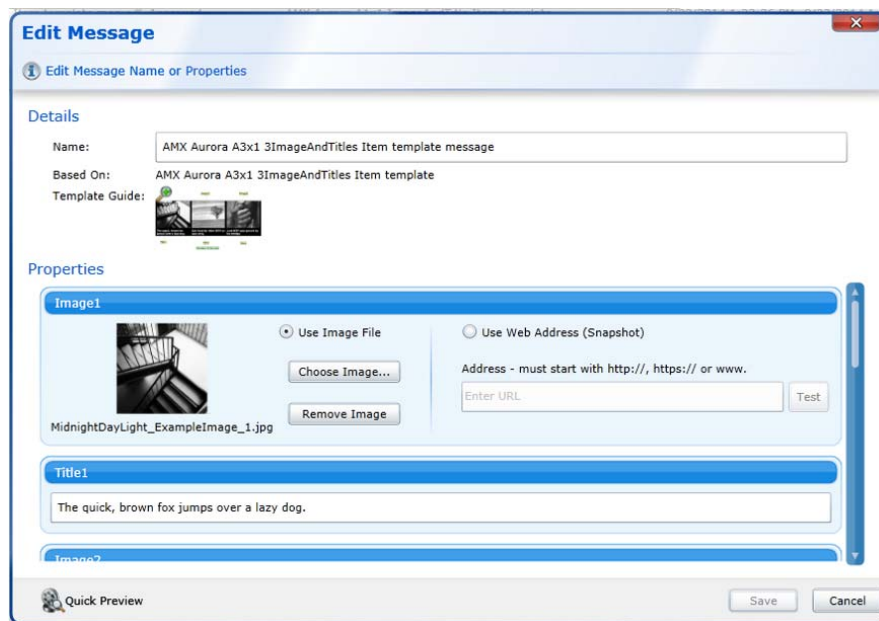

FIG. 14 Launching the Quick Previewer

2. When the 'Quick Preview' button is pressed, the previewer is launched using the existing content of the message. Refer to FIG. 15.
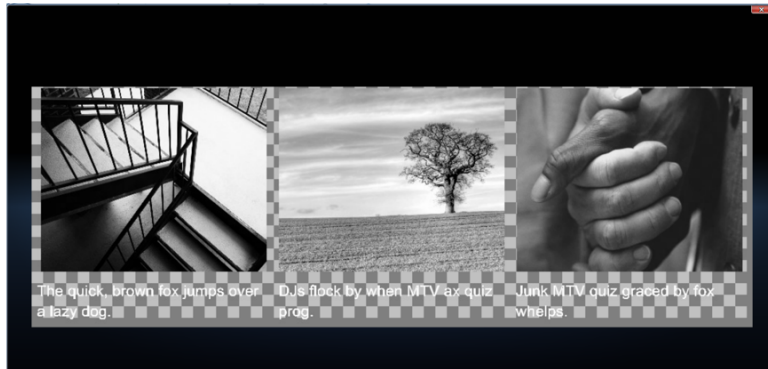

FIG. 15 Quick Preview of a Message

Changing Data

If the user chooses an image to be part of the preview in the Edit Message window above, the previewer will use that image in the preview it displays of the existing message. Refer to FIG. 16.
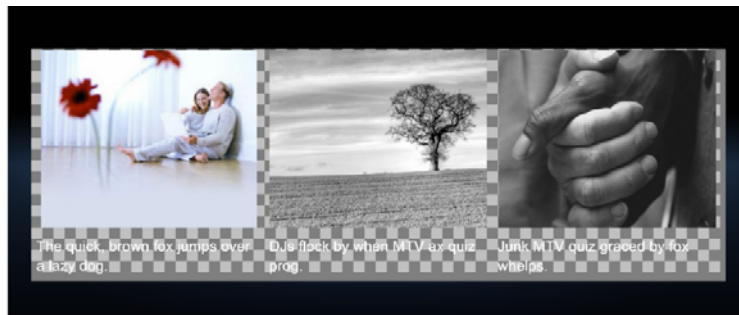

FIG. 16 Changing an Image in Quick Previewer

In addition to uploading images, the user can change all the properties of a message that can be edited.

Message Validity

Once a Message is created, an expiration date is typically set beyond which it is no longer displayed. This is useful as Messages are often not relevant beyond a certain date or time. In Composer this is achieved using the Message Validity feature which provides the ability to set date and time ranges when Messages can be displayed on-screen. Outside those times the Message will not be visible.

Once a date range is set for a Message, the days of the week and the times during those days can be set so that the Message may be displayed. Multiple date ranges may also be set if one is not sufficient.

NOTE: *Messages will not automatically appear on-screen when it is valid for display. It will also need to be put in a Playlist that is published to one or more of your Signage Players.*

To set Validity Rules for a Message:

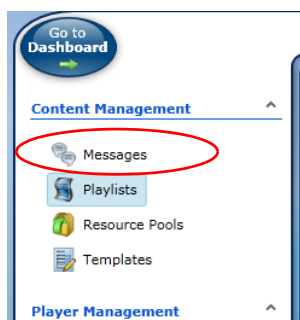1. Select *Messages* in the Content Manager menu section.

FIG. 17 Content Management Menu - Messages Selection

2. Select the Message from the Table list to set display parameters for certain times and dates.

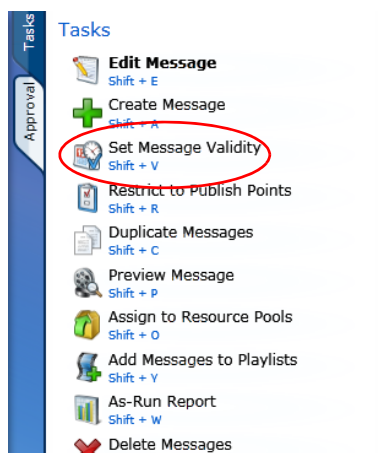3. Click *Set Message Validity* in the right side Task Pane.

FIG. 18 Messages Task Pane Menu - Set Message Validity Selection

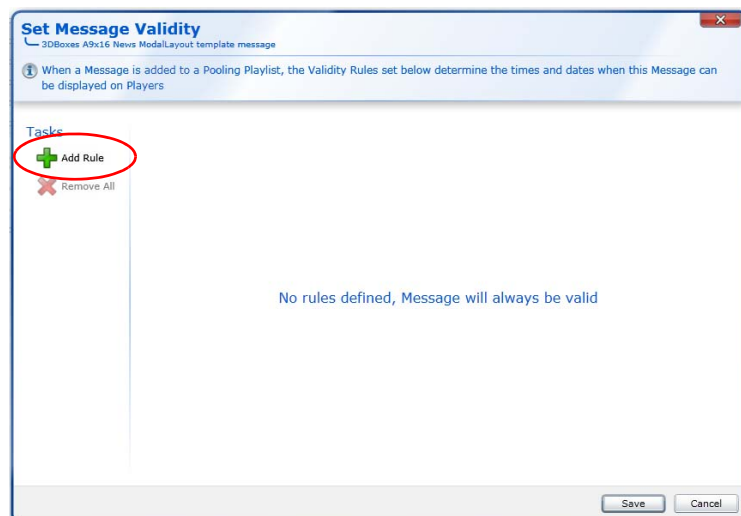4. Click *Add Rule* to create a date range within which the Message will be displayed on-screen.

FIG. 19 Set Message Validity Window

5. Enter a start date for the range in the **Valid From** field. If a start date is not provided, then the range will start from today's date onwards.

6. Enter an end date for the range in the **Valid To** field. If an end date is not provided, then the range will not end.

Defining Specific Weekday Rules

Select the *Define Specific Weekday Rules* check box to display a timesheet showing all the days of the week and the hours from midnight of the previous day to midnight on the current day. When the user enables the *Define Specific Weekday Rules* option, the start and end times will be disabled as shown in FIG. 20. Use this timesheet to precisely specify which days of the week and which time intervals within those days that the Message is valid in 15 minute granularity. For example, a Message may be valid on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 2:00PM to 6:00PM between 10th May and 10th December 2014. Intervals where the Message is valid are shown in bright orange. Intervals where the Message is invalid are shown in gray.

7. Use the timesheet to set time intervals during the different days of the week when a Message can be displayed. Left click and drag to set a range where the Message is valid, shown in orange. If you make a mistake you can erase part of a time range by left clicking the orange time and dragging the cursor over the range to erase it.

8. Click *Save* once finished setting Validity Rules for this message.
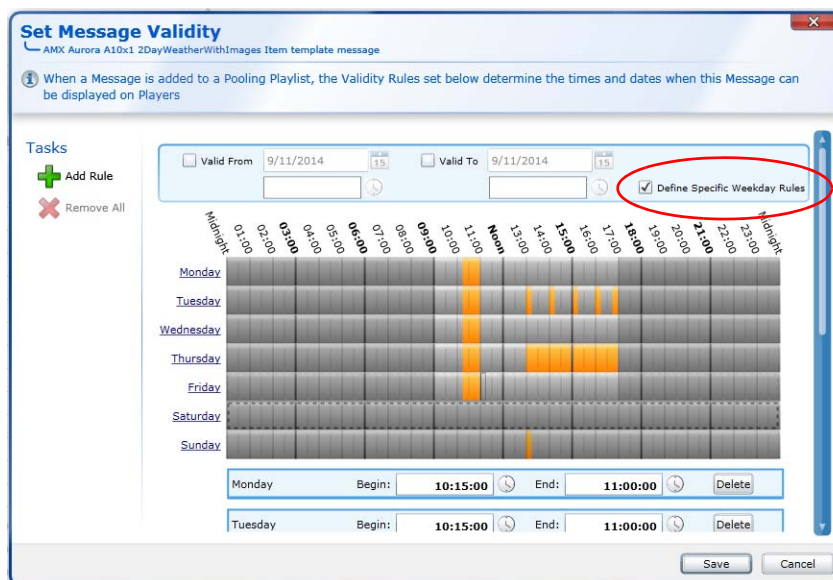
When checked, time fields are grayed out.

FIG. 20 Setting Validity So Message Can Be Displayed During Certain Periods and Days

Approval

Unless the system administrator has disabled it, any changes made to Playlists or Messages are provisional until approved by a manager or other User with the ability to approve changes. Contact your Manager and ask them to approve your changes. Once the changes are approved they may be published to the Players.

Changing Message Play Order

The way Messages are ordered in a Playlist determines the order they are played on-screen. If a Message is playing out of order, change the order of play as follows:

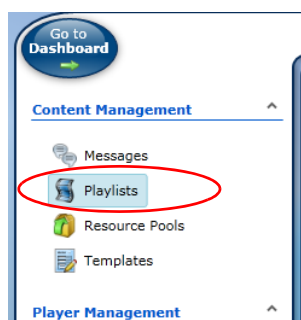1. Select *Playlist in* the Content Management menu section.

FIG. 21 Content Management Menu - Messages Selection

2. Select the Playlist from the Playlist Table containing the Message that is Playing out of order.

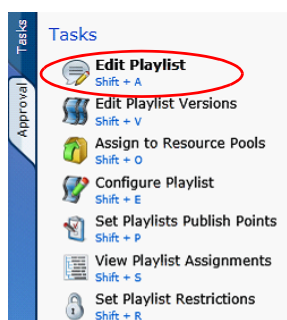3. On the right side Task Menu panel click *Edit Playlist*.

FIG. 22 Playlists Task Bar Panel

4. This brings up a window showing the Playlist contents and contains two panes (FIG. 23). The left hand pane shows all the available messages in Composer. The right hand pane shows all the Messages in this Playlist in order of play. Messages at the top play before Messages at the bottom.

5. Select the Message that is the wrong order and click Move Up, Move Down, Move to Start or Move to End to change when this Message is played.
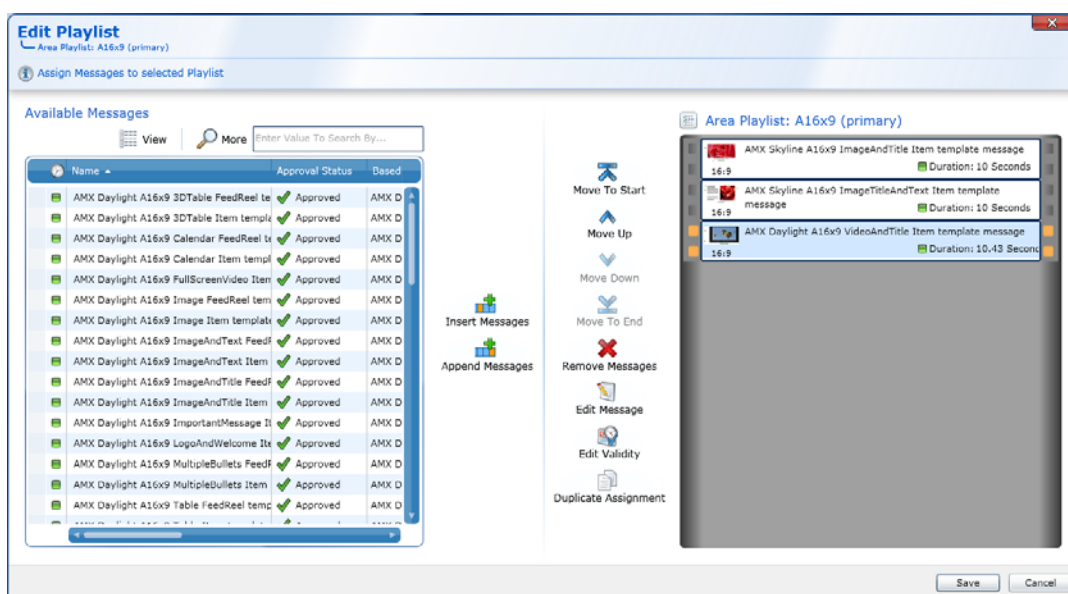
6. Click *Save* to confirm the changes.

FIG. 23 Edit Playlist Screen

Publishing Content Changes

When changes to Playlists have been made, or the Messages in those Playlists have been changed, these changes must be published to update the Signage display. A number will appear to the right of Publish button which indicates that X number of jobs will be processed to determine if there is content to send to a player. So if a system has 30 players then 30 jobs are put in a queue of which some will have files to be sent. The publish button will show the number 30 next to it and as each job is processed the number will count down.

In addition, the publish button will flash indicating there are players to be processed. Once all the players have been processed, the button will stop flashing.

Publish Changes as follows:

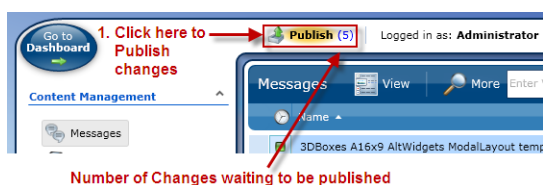1. Click the *Publish* icon in the top toolbar. See FIG. 24

FIG. 24 Step 1 - Click Publish Icon

2. Select *Publish Content Changes* from the drop down menu, as shown in FIG. 25. Other publishing options are available in the menu but are only rarely needed. Refer to the Composer Instruction Manual for more details.
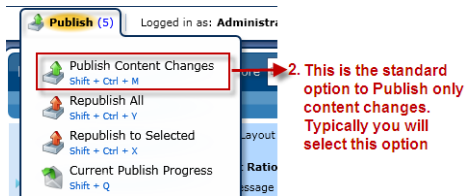

FIG. 25 Step 2 - Select Publish Content Changes

3000 RESEARCH DRIVE, RICHARDSON, TX 75082
AMX.com | 800.222.0193 | 469.624.8000 | +1.469.624.7400 | fax 469.624.7153