Contents Page

Overview

All of the SnapComms Tools use templates to display message content onto PC screens. Templates typically represent the brand or required look-and-feel of the organization and are loaded into the SnapComms Content Manager. When creating a message, Administrators simply select the specific templates they require, type or paste in the appropriate text and then publish the communication to the intended target audience.

The Customer, or the Customers designer, is responsible for supplying SnapComms with image files that represent the required look-and-feel of the desired templates. SnapComms integrates the image files with kernels associated with template functionality and display and makes them available from within the SnapComms Content Manager. While image files can be supplied to SnapComms as JPEGs, GIFs etc, the preferred format is PSD (Photoshop) files.

There are four template formats for which images files are required. The dimensions of each of these are detailed below together with some examples to provide further context to the design requirements.

Screensaver Formats

Screensavers displayed via the SnapComms tool, utilizes existing screensaver functionality available within the windows operating systems. In terms of dimension, 1024 x 768 pixels or ratio of 4 x 3 represents the most common screen size. PC screens with dimensions of 1024 x 768, 1152 x 864 and 1280 x 960 will all display screensaver images of this aspect ratio without distortion (refer p5 - p6 for discussion on screensaver graphics).

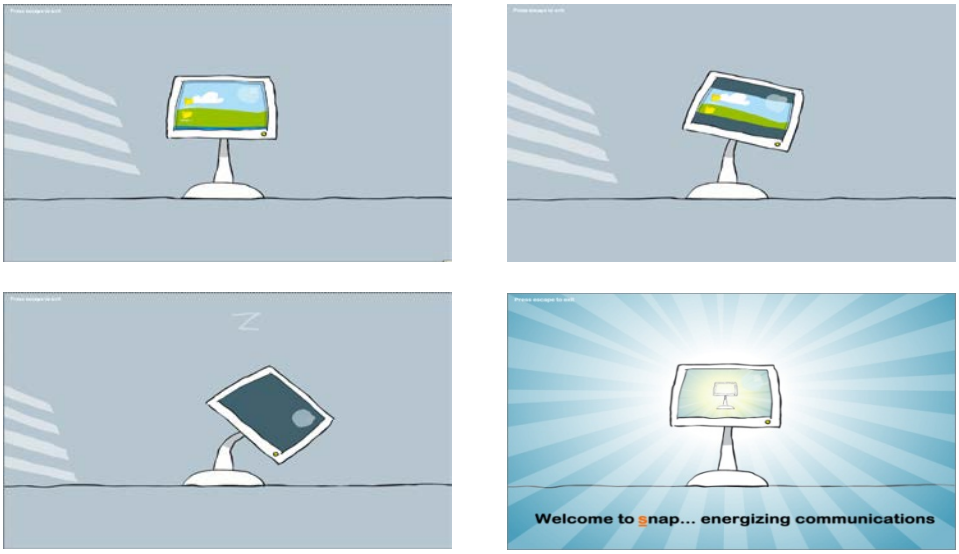
Static Image Screensavers – these are able to be uploaded quite simply by the Customer as standard image files (JPEG, GIF, PNG) directly into the Content Manager, no involvement from SnapComms is required.

Flash Animation Screensavers – these are able to be uploaded quite simply by the Customer as SWF files directly into the Content Manager, no involvement from SnapComms is required. It is important to ensure that the SWF files provided to the Customer are compatible with the Flash player version deployed on their PCs.

When building Flash animated screensavers it is important to specify whether they are created as either:

a) **First-Frame-First** format (plays from start to finish) and as such the 'Display Entire Animation' option within the SnapComms Content Manager should be used, or

b) **Last-Frame-First** format (will continually play repeatedly without sequencing onto other screensavers i.e. continuously loop) in which case the 'Display for XXX Seconds' option within the SnapComms Content Manager will need to selected and the duration of the movie specified.



Pop-Up / Message Window Formats (Alert, Quiz, Poll, RSVP, Video)

Pop-up / Message window formats are applicable to all of the Alert, Survey, Quiz, RSVP tools. The same shape is generally applied to all the pop-up / alert formats, where differences are applied through changes in colour, text or embedded graphics.

There are three essential elements of the pop-up / message window format:

a. **Pop-Up Notification –** small window, approximately 250H x 350W pixels, not resizable
b. **Message Window –** main window, approximately, 450H x 650W pixels, resizable
c. **Close Buttons –** as they relate to Pop-Ups and Alerts, includes both the Close Button and Roll Over

Separate graphics files of each of the three elements are required in their final size and resolution. If read-now / read-later buttons are required they must be supplied as separate image files, including the roll over graphics.

Generally, standard geometric shapes are best when it comes to creating the templates but SnapComms is able to accommodate almost any design provided. Ideally the image graphics are supplied as Photoshop (PSD) files. Please also supply a style guide that details the default font types, size and colours required.

Note: Edge transparency is not supported so ensure all outside edges are solid colour (fully opaque).

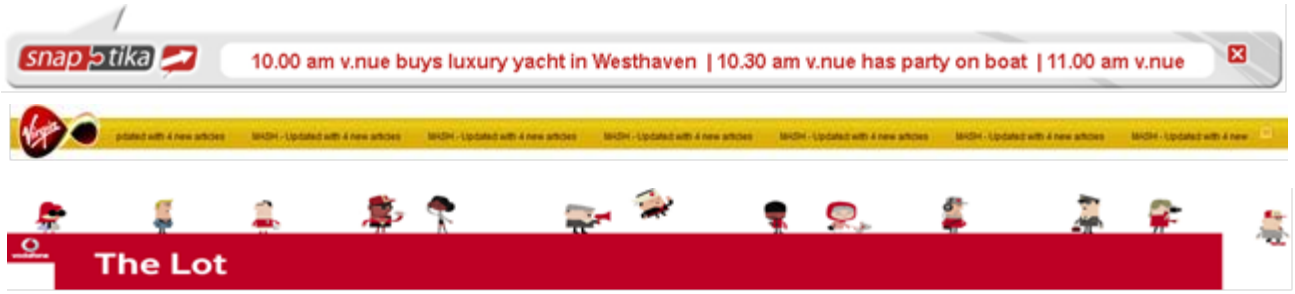
Ticker Bars (Ticker, RSS, SnapMag)

The ticker bar scrolls along the bottom of the PC screen. Ticker bars are utilized when displaying content created using the Ticker and RSS tools and for notifying SnapMag publication of Blog posts.

The ticker bar should approximate 900W x 40H pixels in dimension. Please also supply the matching message window as required by the Ticker tool. The close button and the corresponding roll-over are also required. All graphics need to be supplied as **separate images,** ideally in **Photoshop (PSD)** format.

Generally, standard geometric shapes are best when it comes to creating the ticker bar templates but SnapComms is able to accommodate almost any design provided. Ideally the image file required is **Photoshop (PSD).**

Edge transparency is not supported so ensure all outside edges are solid colour (fully opaque) (refer page 5).



Banner Formats (SnapMag)

The banner format is represented as a banner which appears as a default page header for SnapMag publications. The banner as a graphical element should approximate 985W x 200H pixels in dimension. SnapComms involvement is required to upload the image files into the banner templates.

Generally, standard geometric shapes are best when it comes to creating the banner templates but SnapComms is able to accommodate almost any design provided. Ideally the image file required is Photoshop (PSD).

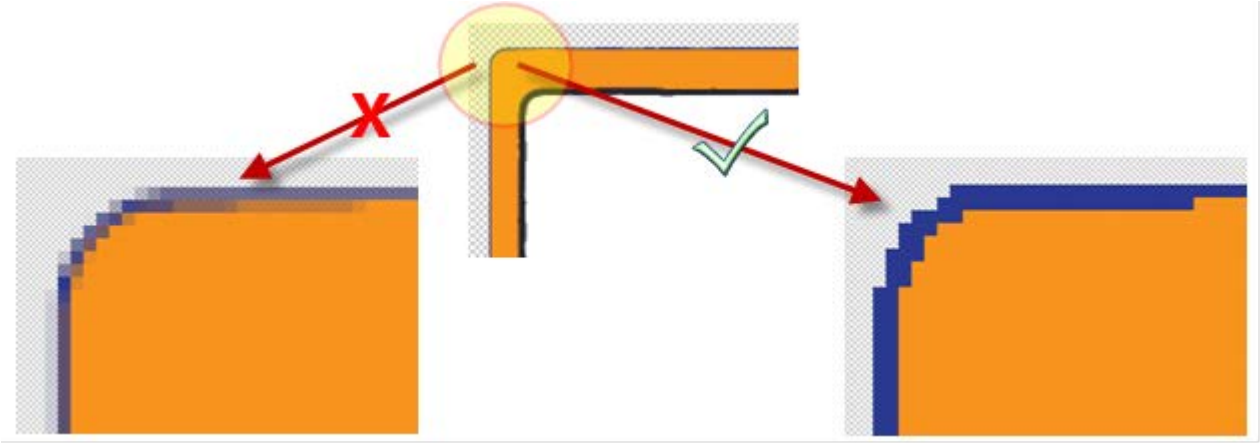
Web Page Formats (SnapMag)

Virtually any style or look-and-feel can be catered for in terms of magazine design but the width needs to be limited to 1024W pixels. This will be a customized instance of the SnapMag format but will serve to provide an organisation with total freedom when it comes to how they wish to present their magazine content.

Design guidelines ideally should mirror those of good web page design and ideally the web design team would create the necessary template look-and-feel. It is also quite possible to specify the format and layout of the text that is desired to ensure consistency - this is especially important if staff are contributing articles to the magazine. The magazine web based template can be supplied as either **HTML** or **PSD** files.

Edge Transparency Not Supported

Please ensure all template edges are not transparent in any significant way – ideally all edges are solid colour / opaque – this will ensure a clean edge is displayed when the template is rendered on screen.

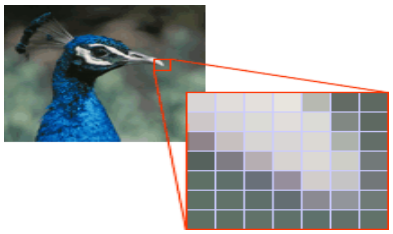


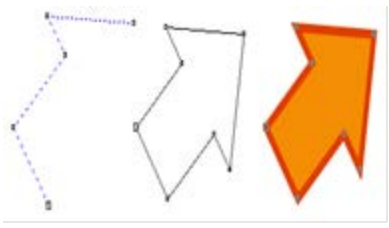
Graphics Files

Bitmap graphics (JPEG, GIF, PNG) are the most common graphic format in use on the web and on the computer. With the exception of Flash, every single graphic seen on the web is a Bitmap graphic which is why the SnapComms solution only supports Bitmap and Flash graphics files today. While there is growing demand for browsers such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) to support Vector graphics, this is still some time away.

Bitmap vs Vector

Bitmap graphics (also known as Raster graphics), are data structures that spatially map an array of pixels as an ordered grid (columns and rows) to form a composite image. Each pixel contains specific numeric information representing magnitudes of brightness and colour. A single image may be composed of hundreds of thousands of individual pixels which are only clearly and individually visible when the image is magnified. PCs support Bitmap graphic formats but not Vector graphic formats.





Vector graphics, rather than being composed of pixels, consist of points, lines, curves and shapes which can be used to form objects. These objects can be filled with solids colours, gradients and patterns. Vector graphics are mathematical equations which detail a series of instructions on how images should be drawn. Vector graphics are easily converted into Bitmap formats, at which point, the constitution of the image is permanently changed from mathematical data into an array of pixels.

Bitmap Pixellation

Unlike Vector graphics which can be resized and manipulated without any loss in quality and coherence due to their mathematically based composition, Bitmap graphics suffer from distortion when the size or aspect ratio of the image is changed in any way. The resultant blockiness or blurriness is known as pixlellation and is more noticeable when the size of the original image is increased although similar effects can occur when images are reduced.

When a Bitmap graphics is resized, the size of the individual pixels do not change, but the number of pixels used to make up the image changes. If the original image is reduced pixels are removed, if the original image is increased pixels are added. Because there is no mathematical formulae available (as with Vector graphics) to state which pixels to remove or which pixels to add, such a determination must be derived based upon the composition of the original image. Computers are not especially capable at making such 'choices' and as a result pixilation will occur to some degree. The best option therefore, is to ensure the original image is of the right size to begin with.

Screensaver Display Resolution

Image Screensavers

When using the 'Image Screensaver' template, it is important to recognize the most common size of PC screen in use currently is 1024 pixels wide and 768 pixels high (1024W x 768H) with an aspect ratio of 4 to 3 (4:3). While laptops and monitors of greater display resolutions / aspect ratios are becoming more popular, when creating screensavers, we suggest that the 1024W x 768H display resolution is the default dimension that you work to.

When constructing a Bitmap based image (JPG, GIF, PNG) for use as a screensavers, it is prudent to ensure that the full size of the Bitmap graphic you are constructing approximates 1024W x 768H. This will ensure the resultant image, when displayed on screen as a screensavers, will not be pixellated in any way and the clarity and sharpness of the original file will be preserved.

If the image for use as a screensaver has been created as a Vector graphic, it will need to be converted into a Bitmap format (rasterised). Given the ease with which Vector graphics can be resized and manipulated without distortion or pixellation, the original image can be created in any dimension of choice and then resized to 1024W x 768H before it is rasterised.

Flash Screensavers 

When using the 'Flash Screensaver' template, it is also important to recognize that the common PC screen size is 1024 pixels wide and 768 pixels high if Bitmap based images are used within the flash movie. Flash however, is a vector based graphics program, so other than accounting for the use of Bitmap based images if used, there are no other constraints to consider. Accordingly flash movies uploaded into the SnapComms Flash Screensaver template in SWF format, will automatically resize to accommodate any screen size and aspect ratio without distortion or pixilation.

Template Display Resolution

Templates as they relate to the Pop-Up / Main Window formats, Ticker Bar formats and SnapMag Banners and Web Page formats, when created, should closely resemble the approximate sizes, as specified below, in order to avoid distortion / pixellation. If logos and/or icons are included within the PSD files that are supplied to SnapComms, it is important to ensure they are supplied as separate layers and too are representative of their intended on screen size.

Pop-Up		Ticker		Magazine	
Pop-Up	Main Window	Ticker Bar	Main Window*	Banner	Web Page
250H x 350W	450H x 650W	900W x 40H	450H x 650W	1024W x 200H	1024W

* Relates to Ticker templates only