



spectrio
Engage



The Content Editor

Tips, tricks, and best practices for our online design tool.

Creating your own digital signage content is quick, easy, and (dare we say) *fun* with our all-online Content Editor tool, available directly within the Spectrio Engage web portal.

Work from hundreds of expertly-crafted templates to get an inspired start—or build your content from scratch using your own uploaded graphic assets and any of more than 2,500 built-in stock photos and design elements.

Designing and editing content

For comprehensive tutorial videos on using Spectrio's online Content Editor, login and visit the Help section in the top menu.

- > To find great, new Content Editor media files as they're released, explore the Codigo Content Vault called GoTemplates, and search, sort, or browse through all of our pre-built designs.
- > To open an existing file within the Content Editor, simply search your Media Library for HTML+ content files, which will also be denoted with a purple  icon.



THE CONTENT EDITOR INTERFACE ▲

What you see is what you get with our simple content creation online tool. Select images and text on the Stage area, then control their appearance and behaviors using the floating Properties Panel at the right.

Things to consider when creating your own content:

- > Like good stories, the most effective ads have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Create a scene that announces your message in a catchy way, dedicate a lengthy middle portion to the details, then finish off with a long and direct call to action your audience will respond to.
- > Performance of HTML+ content is tied to the hardware being used, so if you see performance issues on a certain file, try reducing the number of images animating concurrently or number of scenes being used.
- > While you can create as many scenes as you want, performance is best when you use fewer scenes.
- > Make sure your message is comfortably readable by using the **Play All Scenes** button and adjusting the Scene Duration where necessary
- > When adding a new Scene, using the Copy button is a great way to bring in a new message while keeping the background and other design elements intact.
- > Animation Delay is a great way to create visual interest in your designs. Have items appear sequentially by setting their Animation Delay in increments of 0.3 or 0.5 to stagger their appearance in an eye-catching way.
- > Once you have an ad built that has great structure to it (such as any of our GoTemplates), it's simple to change images, backgrounds, and text to completely change the whole purpose of the ad without having to change positions or animation effects. Plus, this method helps to keep your format consistent.



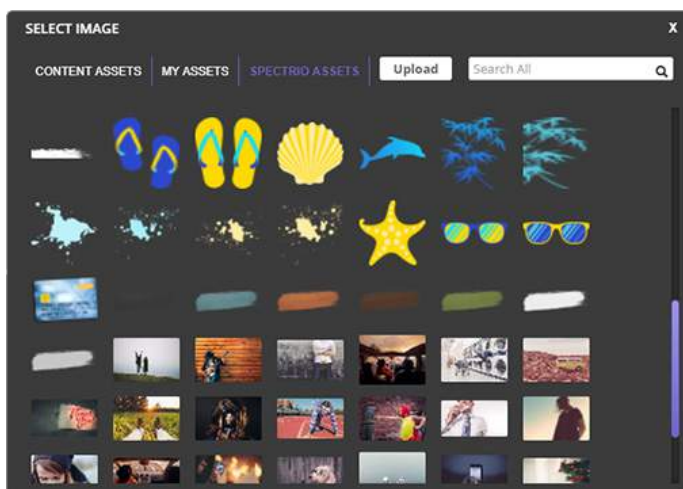
Working with assets

All **images** to be used in your Content Editor creations are known as Assets, and they can be uploaded to your Spectrio account in two ways:

- By going to My Assets from the top menu and clicking the purple Upload button
- While working within the Content Editor, by using the paperclip area, which allows you drag-and-drop images from a folder on your computer or select an asset to replace and locate the replacement image on your computer

Things to consider when creating your own Assets:

- With an HD resolution, your digital screens are 1920 x 1080 pixels. For best performance, backgrounds should be created at that size.
- Considering that resolution, other images shouldn't be any bigger than ~2000 pixels in height or width.
- The Asset Library accepts images up to 25MB, but if you're following the guidelines above, most JPG images should be less than 3MB in size—keeping Assets smaller always helps with playback performance.
- If you want an Asset to have a transparent background, use a PNG file format



◀ IMAGE SELECTION

When you select an item on your Stage, such as text, images, or shapes, the Toolbar will adjust to show you the appropriate customization options. All of the menu sections can be opened or closed at any time, but you'll want to leave the file panel open if you're saving regularly and the insert panel is handy when you're building your own content from scratch.

Using Assets within the Content Editor:

After adding or selecting an image asset, look to the image section of the Toolbar to customize it. You can crop it, replace it with an image from My Assets, or upload a brand new image directly to your design.

Content Images – Assets actually included in the currently-saved version of the media you're editing

Your Asset Library – Images that you've uploaded to My Assets

Vault Asset Library – Spectrio's built-in selection of over 2,500 useful backgrounds, photos, and design element images for use in your creations

- Assets are all tagged by keywords to make it easier to find what you're looking for. Use the search bar to quickly narrow down based on keywords—things like colors, shapes, locations, and types of people are typical tags.
- To view or edit the tags of an Asset, double-click on any image in the selection area. Tag editing is available for both your Assets and Spectrio Vault Assets. Tags can also be added to Assets on upload, or within My Assets by clicking the thumbnail for the image you wish to tag.
- Look for common images in the Vault Asset Library— Compliance icons like FDIC, NCUA, and Equal Housing Lender can be found in various colors, along with things like the logo for Apple and Google's app stores.



Parts of the content editor

Save Controls

Save or Save As,
plus Video Export
(MP4 or WEBM)

Insert Element

- Images, Text,
Shapes, or Videos
- Duplicate

Play Controls

View current Scene
or All Scenes

Title Area

File name and
total duration
of all Scenes

File Settings

Canvas options and Parameters

Position of selected element

Plus multi-select options and layers

Animation of selected element

For text, images, shapes, and videos

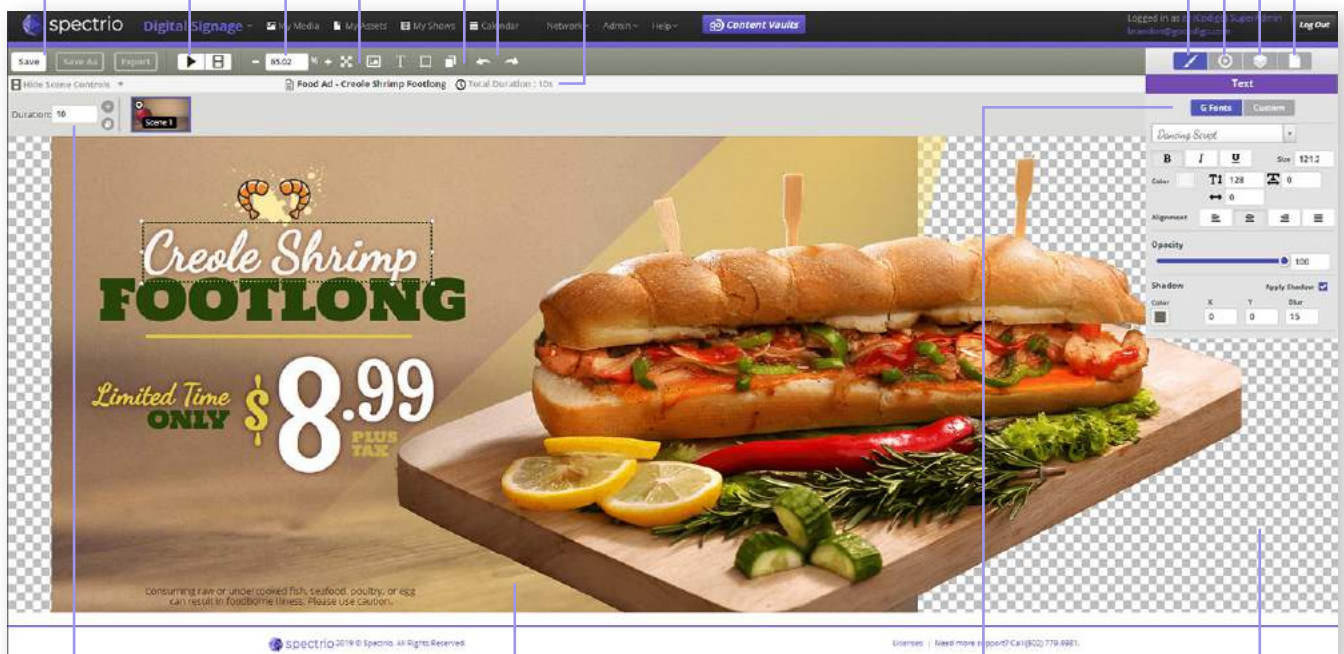
Customization of selected element

For backgrounds, text,
images, shapes, and videos

Zoom

In, Out, Fit to
viewing area,
or percentage

Undo & Redo



Scene Controls

Scenes are shown above the Stage in chronological order, and can be toggled on and off to maximize view of the Stage. They can be re-arranged by dragging left and right, their durations can be controlled in seconds, and the New and Copy buttons near the Scene Timeline are used to create additional scenes.

Stage

This is the main visual area where your designs are composed. The Stage can be zoomed in and out using the plus and minus buttons above it, re-sized to fit the viewing area with the  button, or moved around using the space bar to get the hand icon. Select nothing to see the Stage trim to its exact pixel dimensions.

Workspace

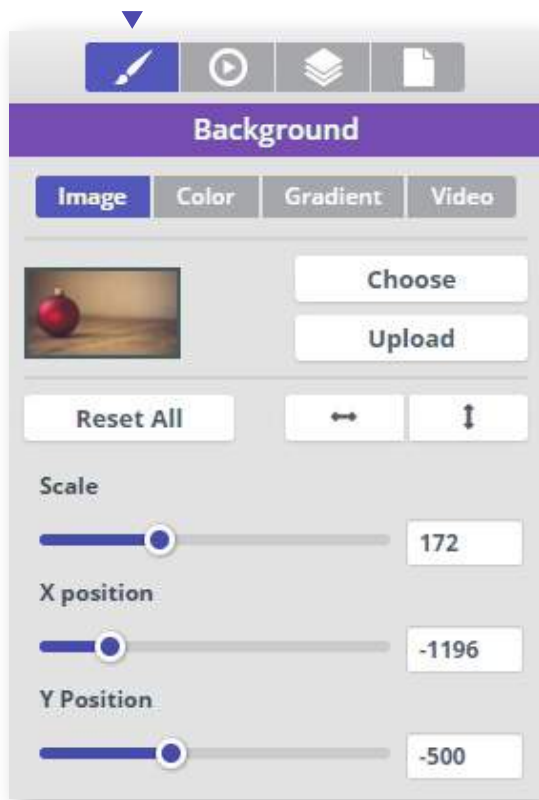
Toolbar

All options for text, image, shape, background, and video customizations are located in the panel to the right of the Stage. It's broken down into four sections: Editing, Animation, Position and Layers, and File Settings. The options seen will change automatically based on what element is selected.



Editing & Customization

The **primary toolbar section** for managing the basics of your design includes options for backgrounds, text, images, shapes, and videos and changes depending on the type of element currently selected.



Background

When nothing is selected on the Stage, you'll see options for controlling your background, which can be an image, solid color, gradient color blend, or a video.

Images - Choose from our massive Vault of backgrounds or upload your own, either from the Upload button on this panel or by choosing one from My Assets. Then use the sliders to control the size and position of the background or flip it vertically and horizontally.

Color - Select a solid color for your background.

Gradient - Create a gradual fade between multiple colors, choose between linear and radial fill styles, and adjust the position of the gradient.

Video - Like images, video backgrounds can be selected from our Vault or your uploads. Choose when the video starts to fine tune how it fits into your Scene and adjust scale and position the same way as images.

Text

Select any text item on Stage and you'll see all available options appear, including fonts, color, style, alignment, and even spacing tools for line height, words, and individual letters. These customizations work for single or multiple text elements as well as individually-selected words or letters.

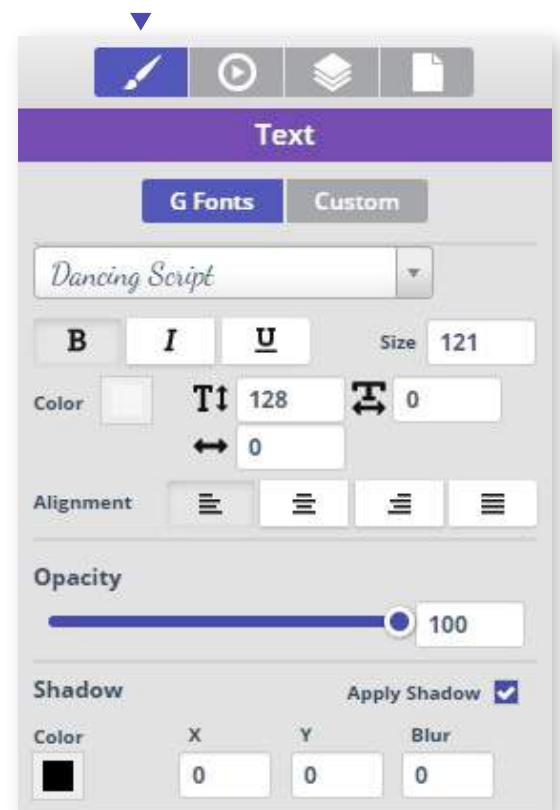
Click a text box:

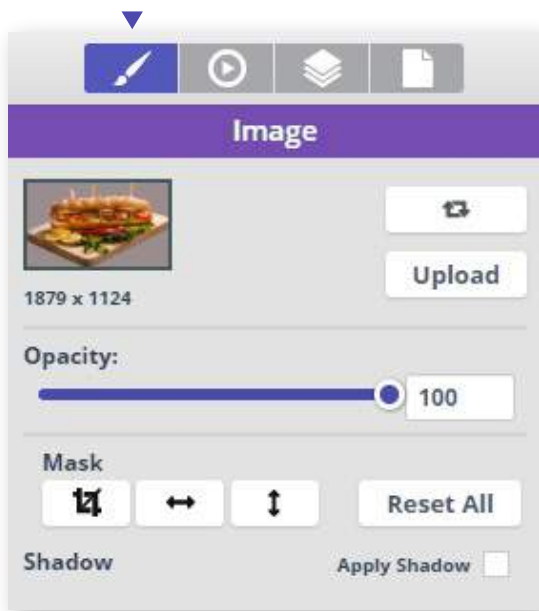
- **Once** to select it for placement and scale.
- **Twice** to access text customization for the full text box
- **Double-click** to begin selecting individual parts of text

Google Fonts - Select from hundreds of webfont options.

Custom Fonts - Upload your own font files (TTF) to My Assets and they'll be converted to the web-friendly WOFF format and located in the Custom tab here.

Text Shadow - Click the checkbox to add a text shadow and control its color, position, and blur factor with the options that appear beneath.





Image

Select any image and the Edit toolbar will switch to Image options, which includes a thumbnail of the selected JPG, PNG, or GIF file along with its dimensions. Just like with backgrounds, images can be swapped out with stock photography from our Vault or from My Assets or uploaded on the spot.

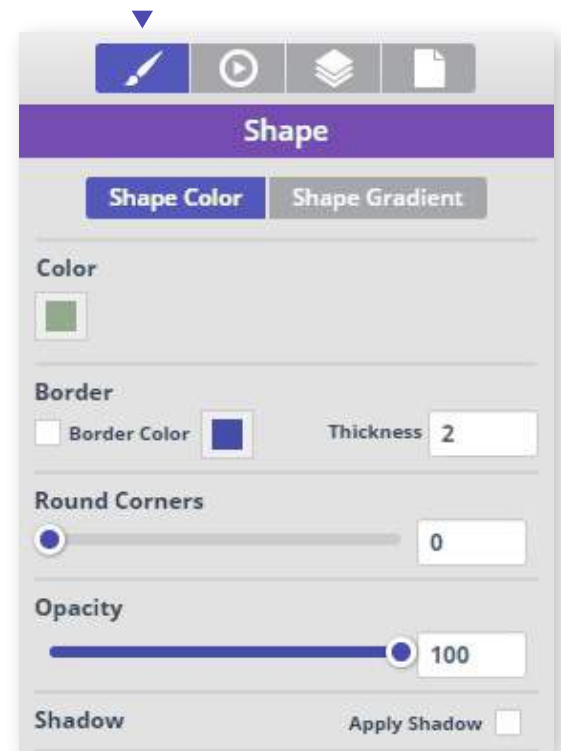
Mask - Images can be cropped within the editor using the Mask tool. Once you've selected how an image is to be cropped, that instance will be replaced with a new cropped version. However, the original image will still be available through My Assets, Spectrio Assets, or your local drive where it was uploaded from.

Shape

With a shape selected, you'll see a tool panel that allows for customization of its color, border color and thickness, roundness of its corners, opacity and shadow. If you'd like the shape to fade from one color to another, switch to the Shape Gradient tab and select the colors in the gradient. There can be as many colors as can fit in the gradation scale, and gradients can fade from any level of opacity.

Rectangles only?

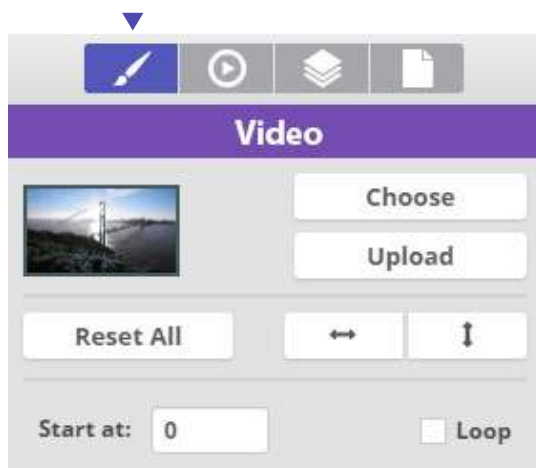
Currently, shapes are limited to four-sided boxes, whether those are squares, long lines, or a shape that covers the entire Stage. It's also possible to create circles by increasing the Round Corners value. We plan to add more shape abilities as the Content Editor tool develops further.



Video

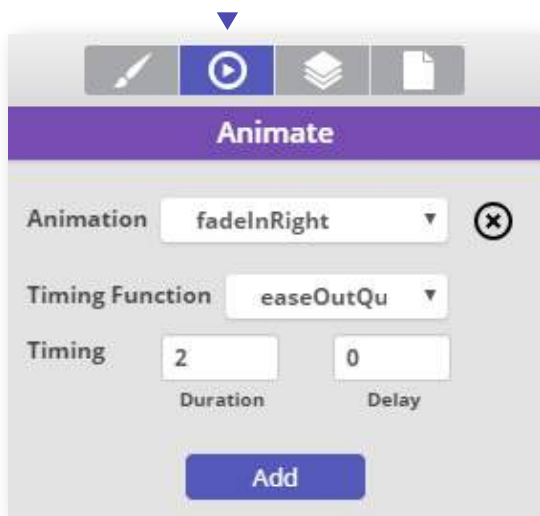
Short video elements can be added to the stage and positioned or scaled just like an image. For on-stage video elements, it's best to keep them as small as possible using H.264 compression for MP4 files.

Start Time and Loop - If you'd like your video element to begin playing at a time other than its very beginning, set the start time to the number (in seconds) that it should jump to. You can also set videos to repeat endlessly using the Loop checkbox. Regardless of what time they begin, they'll loop around to play the entire video repeatedly.



Animation

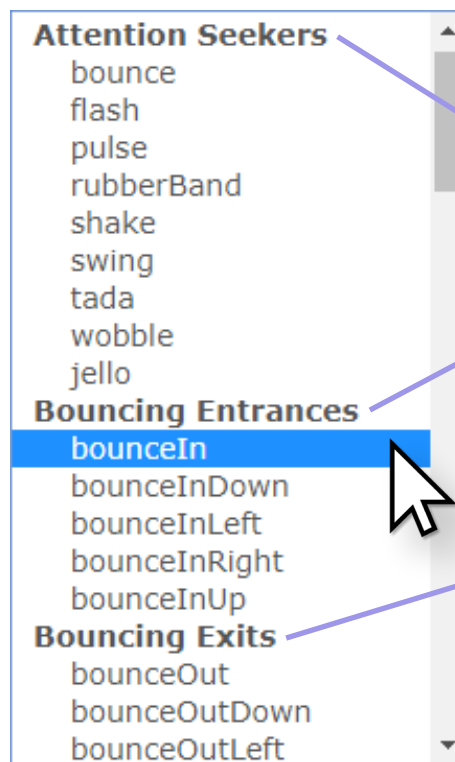
Any **on-stage element** can have one or many animation effects applied, and those are always managed using the second section of the toolbar, the Animation panel.



THE ANIMATION PANEL ▲

As animation effects are added using the “Add” button, the panel extends. There’s no limit to the number of effects, but they’ll always happen sequentially, not simultaneously. Effects can be removed without disrupting the animations that were otherwise slated to happen before or afterwards, but can’t be rearranged.

Animation Effects - How the selected element moves is assigned by choosing from the Animation dropdown. There are three types of effects outlined below—entrances, exits, and attention seekers.



Attention Seekers:

These are great secondary effects to draw attention to an element that is already on Stage

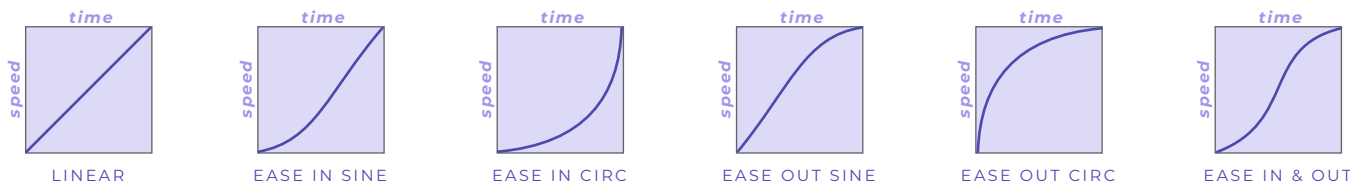
Entrances:

These effects bring elements into view on the Stage, so prior to their Delay time, they will not be visible.

Exits:

These effects take elements off the Stage for the duration of the Scene, unless a later effect brings them back.

Timing Function - This dropdown controls *easing*, the curve of speed in which the animation effect happens over the course of its duration. Typical for more advanced animation tools, this is a way to fine-tune the smoothness of the animation effect. “Ease In” means that there’s more fluid motion at the beginning of an effect and “Ease Out” means that there’s more fluidity at the end of the effect. “Ease In/Out” adds smoothness at both the beginning and the end of the movement.



The other word in the Timing Function setting relates to how dramatic the easing curve is. Above are some examples that help to illustrate how easing can help add subtle, lifelike movement to your effects.

Duration - This setting controls how long the animation will last, down to the tenth of a second.

Delay - This setting controls when the animation effect will begin, with zero being the moment the Scene begins. Scenes take 1 second to transition from one to the next, but the moment that transition occurs is considered the zero second mark. When using multiple animation effects, the Delay time will be dictated by the Delay and Duration of previous effects so that each effect happens sequentially.



Position & Layers

Like popular graphics tools, the Content Editor makes it possible to move elements to an exact position on the Stage, change to pixel-perfect width or height, and rearrange layers of images, text, shapes, and videos.

Arrange

This section is dedicated to getting the selected element or multiple elements right into the perfect spot. The Back and Front buttons will send elements back behind everything else on stage or bring them to the top, respectively.

Align & Distribute - These tools are designed for multi-element selections. Imagine 5 text items scattered across the Stage that need to be a bulleted list— with all of them selected, Align Left will line them up along their left side, and Distribute Vertical will make sure that each one is equally spaced out from each other.

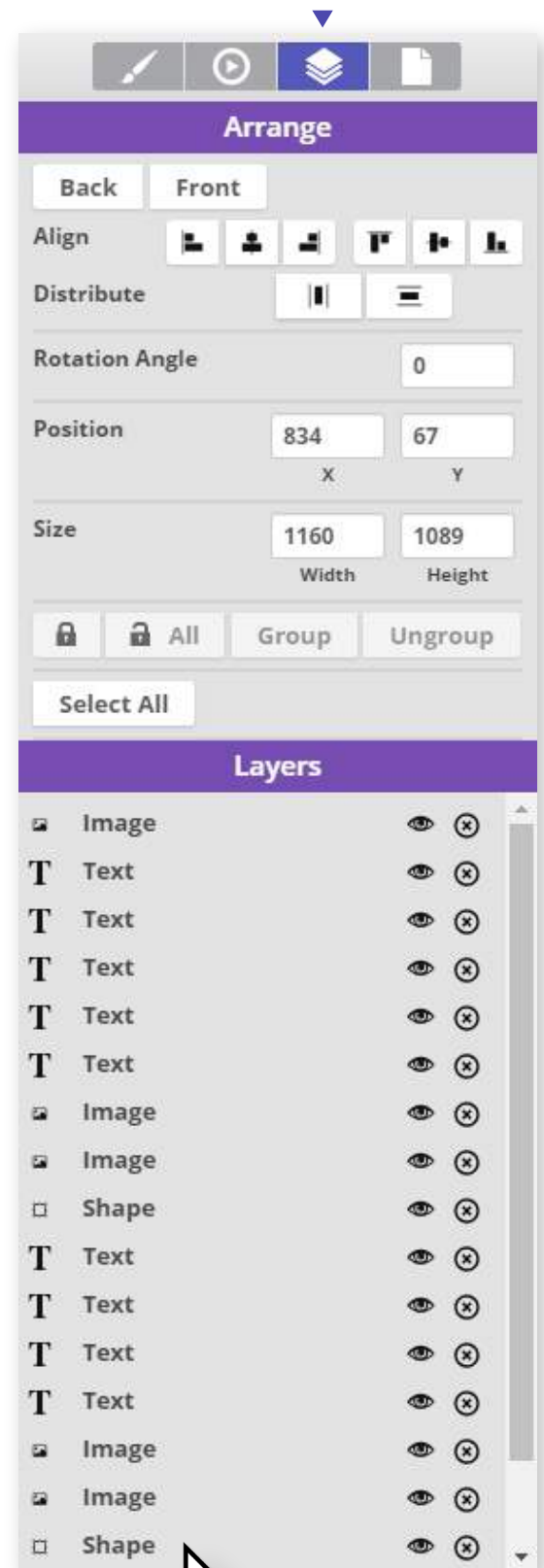
Position, Size, and Angle - The top left corner of an image, shape, text box, or video acts as its anchor point for the X, Y position determined here. Width and height can be controlled individually for shapes to make them any size, while for images, either can be changed, but the image will always constrain its proportions.

Locking & Grouping - In complex designs, sometimes an element is simply in the way, making it difficult to click onto nearby text or a shape on a lower layer. In these cases, it's handy to lock an element, which keeps it visible, but renders it un-selectable. Since it can't be selected, you can use the Unlock All button to release all locked elements. Grouping allows you to select multiple elements of any type and join them as a unit that can be moved, layered, and animated as if it were a single object. If you need to access the individual elements later, simply Ungroup.

Layers

Every element on Stage that comprises your design are stacked on top of one another, with the Background always being at the bottom of the pile. The Layers panel lets you see all of them and how they're arranged in depth, sometimes referred to as the z-axis.

Layers work with a drag-and-drop interface to rearrange the stack— and as they're moved, you'll see them go below or come above other elements on Stage. Here, each one can be deleted using the (X) button on the row corresponding to the element or hidden using the eye button. Hidden elements are made temporarily invisible on Stage to allow for easier editing, but will always remain intact in your design and will re-appear after a Save.



File

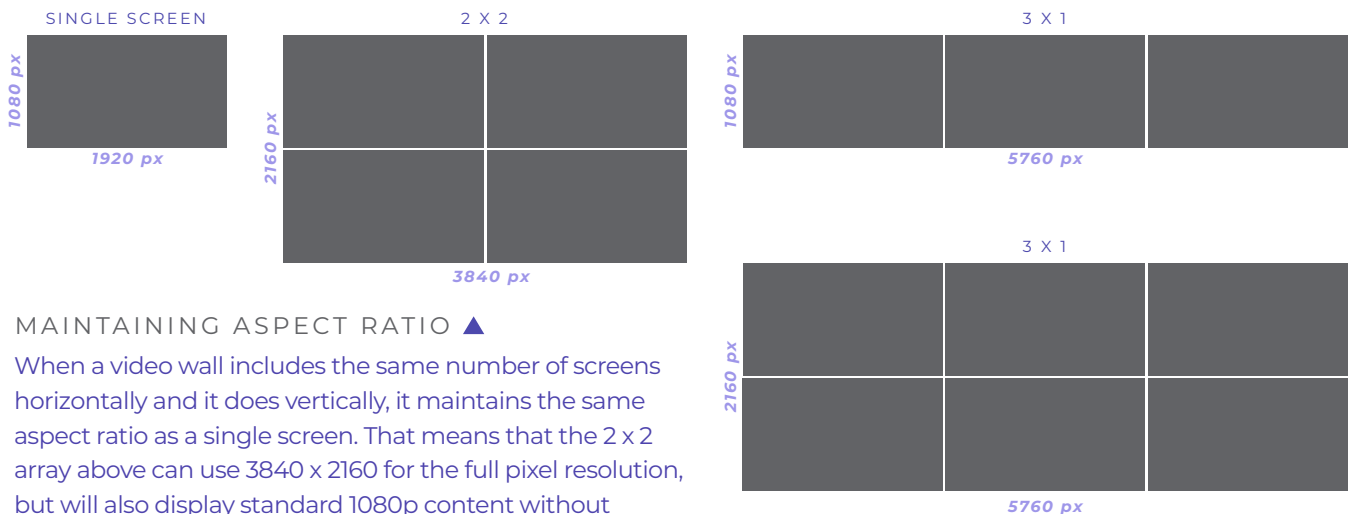
General settings for your content are found in the File section, including the dimensions of your canvas and Parameters for controlling the behavior of dynamic or data-driven content.



Canvas Size

While the Content Editor defaults to a widescreen aspect ratio (16:9) at HD resolution (1920 x 1080), you can create content at any pixel dimensions. Just change the width or height of the Canvas Size and the Stage will instantly change to reflect your new resolution. To make it easier to jump to common sizes, standard Presets that fit each of our layout's zones are available to select. This makes it simple to design your own banner-sized announcement or re-create an ad for a Portrait-oriented screen.

Video Walls - The ability to create at any resolution comes in handy for video walls or any multi-screen digital signage application. Just consider the pixel dimensions of all screens in your array and calculate the total.



MAINTAINING ASPECT RATIO ▲

When a video wall includes the same number of screens horizontally and it does vertically, it maintains the same aspect ratio as a single screen. That means that the 2 x 2 array above can use 3840 x 2160 for the full pixel resolution, but will also display standard 1080p content without stretching out of proportion.

▲ BREAKING ASPECT RATIO

For any other arrangement of screens, it's critical to determine the full dimensions of the array in order to design content perfect for the display. However, resolutions can be reduced to a lower common size with simple division. For example, the dimensions of the 6-screen video wall above could be divided in half to get 1920 x 2880, which will still fit without stretching and allow you to use smaller assets for better performance.

Parameters - Dynamic content like weather, news, and stocks require some input in order to function the way you want—those settings are called Parameters. Whether you're choosing a ZIP Code for your local weather, the speed of a news ticker, or which stock market data you want to pull in, those settings can be controlled by clicking the Parameters button and making selections, which vary by content file.

