

Carousel/LCD Digital Signage – User’s Guide

Carousel is the web-based interface that you will use to create, arrange, and “send” content to your department’s LCD monitor.

There is a steep learning curve associated with setting the system up and configuring your “channel” (i.e., screen layout), but I have already done most of that work for you. This User’s Guide will help you understand the principal tasks associated with creating, formatting, and sending content to those screens.

Since I have already created the zones and zone layout for your screen, *you can skip the sections about “Creating Zones” and “Setting the Zone Layout for your Channel.”* I included those strictly for future reference if you decide later to alter the placement and layout of zones on your LCD screen. I do not recommend that you attempt to do so until you first become well-acquainted with the Carousel system.

If you need help, just ask! My e-mail is wkisting@gru.edu, and my office phone is 706-737-1738.

Table of Contents

Accessing Carousel.....	2
Understanding Zones	2
Creating Zones	3
Setting the Zone Layout for your Channel	4
Changing your Current Zone	4
Displaying Content (“Bulletins”) in a Zone.....	5
Editing or Deleting Content (“Bulletins”) in a Zone	5
Creating Templates	5
Disabling (or Enabling) the “Bumper Graphic”—that weird yellow image.....	6
Setting the Pace/Timing of Bulletins and their Transition Effects	7
Viewing the Content on Your LCD Screen from a Browser.....	8

Accessing Carousel

To access Carousel:

1. Open your browser and go to: <http://10.6.16.94/FrontDoor/FrontDoor.aspx>.
2. Enter your departmental username and password and click “Login.”
3. Select “Carousel” in the menu. You are now in the Carousel system.

Understanding Zones

Before you can send content to your screen, your “Channel Layout” (i.e, the LCD screen) must be divided into “zones.” (I have already done this for you, but it will be helpful to understand how zones work.)

A **zone** is a specific portion of the screen that acts as a placeholder for content. The content you display in each zone is like a PowerPoint slideshow playing on continuous loop. Within that slideshow, each individual slide of content is called a “bulletin.” You can display as many slides (a.k.a. “bulletins”) in the slideshow as you like, and the zone will rotate through them on a continuous loop. And just like a PowerPoint slide, you can format the bulletin however you like—using headings, blocks of text, pictures, videos, etc.

The zone will cycle through its assigned content bulletins on a repeating loop, at intervals you control (typically 10 to 30 seconds).

Some things to keep in mind:

- A zone can be any size you like, but it is best to keep its proportions close to one of the most common aspect ratios for images/video (16:9, 4:3, or 1:1); otherwise, you may end up with an odd look or a lot of unused “dead space” around images/video.
- If you create too many zones, it will be onerous to maintain them all with content.
- If you create too many zones, the screen may look “busy” and hinder ease of reading.
- No matter how many zones you create, they need to fit together seamlessly so that, collectively, they *cover every pixel of the screen*; otherwise, there will be “dead space” you cannot control, and you will be unable to use a “seamless background” (a single background image that fills the entire LCD screen and spans all of your zones for a seamless look).

To simplify your workflow and ease the initial learning curve, I have already created a zone layout for your channel. If you decide to be more ambitious later by redesigning your zone layout, I can help you do that, but I recommend getting very familiar with the Carousel system first.

In the default layout I created, **you only need to “manage” two zones**—one is the department title zone that will display the name of your department (which you can “set and forget”); the other is the main departmental information zone, which will display department-specific content (it occupies most of the screen and will need to be updated periodically with content you wish to share with passers-by). I have named these zones “[DEPT]Title1920x160” and “[DEPT]Main1380x770,” respectively—with “[DEPT]” referring to the initials of your department (i.e., ART, COM, HAP, EFL, MUS, POLS, or SOC).

Adjacent to these departmental zones will be three additional “Pamplin” zones for college-wide news, announcements, and weather. I will maintain the content for those zones.

Your channel is already configured to use the zone layout I created, which has the following properties:

Zone name	Width (w)	Height (h)	Position top	Position left
[DEPT]Title1920x160	1920	160	0	0
[DEPT]Main1380x770	1380	770	160	0
PamplinInfo540x680	540	680	160	1380
PamplinWeatherLogo540x240	540	240	840	1380
PamplinBottomZone1380x150	1380	150	930	0

The resulting channel layout (i.e., how the zones display on your LCD) looks like this:



“[DEPT]Main1380x770” zone is where your department-specific content will be displayed. The “[DEPT]Title1920x160” zone is where your department’s name will be. If you choose, you can setup a second bulletin in the title zone that contains a brief message, such as “Come visit us in Allgood Hall N210!” This will cause the title zone to alternate between your department name and the message.

Creating Zones

To create a zone:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the main zone for which you have administrator privileges (most likely “[DEPT]Main1380x770”).
 - If it is, you will see a button labeled “Configure” immediately below it.
 - If it is not, the “Configure” button will not appear. See “Changing your Current Zone” below. You cannot create zones without administrator privileges.
3. Click the “Configure” button.
4. Select “Zones.”

5. Scroll to the bottom and click “Add New Zone.” A box will appear at the bottom of the list.
6. In the box, enter the name you would like to give the zone, then click “Add.”
7. In the configuration settings, type a brief description of the zone’s purpose (if desired), set the resolution to the desired zone size (width and height, in pixels), then click “Save.” Your zone is now created and should appear in the list.

Setting the Zone Layout for your Channel

To set the zone layout for your channel (i.e., how your LCD screen will be utilized and where each zone will be positioned):

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the main zone for which you have administrator privileges (usually “[DEPT]Main1380x770”).
 - If it is, you will see a button labeled “Configure” immediately below it.
 - If it is not, the “Configure” button will not appear. See “Changing your Current Zone” below. You cannot set the zone layout without administrator privileges.
3. Click the “Configure” button.
4. Select “Channels.”
5. Find your department’s channel in the list (e.g., “Dept of History”) and click on it.
6. Select “Channel Layout.”
7. Set the Output Display to 1920 by 1080 (you can just click the “1080p” link in blue).
8. Use the drop-down list of “Available Zones” to locate each zone you wish to add to your channel, then click “Add.”
9. Set the screen position for the zone (i.e., the number of pixels from the *top* and *left* edges of the screen where you want the upper left corner of the zone to begin).
10. Repeat Steps 8 and 9 until you have added and positioned all desired zones. Ensure that the zones are sized and positioned correctly so they do not overlap or run off the edges of the screen.
11. Click “Save.”

Changing your Current Zone

For most tasks that apply to a particular zone (creating “bulletins” of new content, creating templates to control the format of content in that zone, changing zone settings, etc.), you will first need to navigate to that zone before beginning the desired task.

To set your “Current Zone” to a particular zone you wish to edit or control:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Click the “Zones” tab (click right on the word “Zones”).
3. From the right-hand column of the pop-up list, select the desired zone by clicking on it.
4. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone” to confirm that it is now set to the desired zone.

Displaying Content (“Bulletins”) in a Zone

To create and display content in a zone:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone where you wish to create and display content (usually “[DEPT]Main1380x770”). If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “New Bulletin.”
4. Select a template (see “Creating a Template” below).
5. Configure the heading(s), text, image(s), and other template elements as desired. (The availability of these elements depends on the template you selected.)
6. Click “Continue.”
7. Set a desired date range or, to have it run indefinitely, verify that “Until Manually turned off” is checked, then click “Finish.”
8. Click “OK” to confirm the bulletin and send it to the LCD zone. The content should soon appear on your monitor (although there may be a delay until the server updates with the new content).

Editing or Deleting Content (“Bulletins”) in a Zone

To edit or delete content currently being displayed in a zone:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone where you wish to create and display content (usually “[DEPT]Main1380x770”). If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “Manage Bulletins.”
4. Click “Active Bulletins.” All active content bulletins for that zone will appear as a list.
5. Locate the bulletin you wish to edit or delete. From the icon frame/toolbar surrounding that bulletin, select the icon to *either* “Edit this bulletin” *or* “Delete this bulletin.” (Hint: When you hover over each icon, a pop-up tool-tip will tell you the icon’s function.)
6. Follow the on-screen prompts to edit or confirm deletion of the bulletin as desired.

Creating Templates

A template is a pre-formatted arrangement of text boxes (headings and content text) and/or pictures that controls the visual look and layout of how content is displayed within a zone. Once you have a series of templates you like, you merely need to update the text and pictures by creating “bulletins.” The template(s) will set all the design elements automatically (i.e, formatting, color, and layout).

To create a template for a zone:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone for which you wish to create a template. If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “Media.”
4. Ensure that the “Zone” tab (not the “My” tab) is selected. Technically, you can use either tab to create a template, but creating templates from the “Zone” tab ensures that you can “share” that

template with other zones later, if desired—which saves you the hassle of having to re-create the template from scratch for another zone.

5. Click “Templates.”
6. Click “Add.” A template creator will open with options to name the template (“Name”) and to create various customizable blocks (click the “Blocks” bar to expand the list of options). These blocks will determine where headings, text, images, and other elements are typically placed.
 - Any text you enter here in the template is *merely a placeholder* (a means to confirm that the visual look suits your preferences, and to get a sense of its relative size, legibility, etc.).
 - Make sure to **name each block** with a clear, descriptive name. These block names show up later as the names of fields that you edit when creating a bulletin with new content. For example, if you create a text block that will serve as a heading, name it something like “Heading 1” or “Main Heading.” If you create a text block for text beneath that heading, name it something like “Text Box 1” or “Main Text” so that you will remember it later.
 - Generally, the best way to learn the capabilities of the template editor is to play with it. Any templates you create will *not* affect your channel unless you later apply them to your monitor by creating a new “Bulletin” that uses that template. So don’t worry about messing something up. It’s unlikely—but even if you do, I can help you fix it.
7. When you’re satisfied with your template, click “Save.” (In fact, it’s a good idea to click “Save” periodically as you create a template, since the system is a little unstable and will occasionally “lose” some of your edits if you switch between the editing tools without saving.) The next time you create a new content bulletin for that zone, your saved template(s) should show up in the bulletin creator as a selectable option.

Disabling (or Enabling) the “Bumper Graphic”—that weird yellow image

By default, every zone uses a “bumper graphic”—a yellow image that alternates with whatever content bulletins you have created for that zone, rather a lot like a screen saver. It’s annoying, but easy to disable. Just remember that **you must manually disable it for every zone on your channel.** (I have already disabled it from the three Pamplin zones on your channel.)

To disable the bumper graphic for a zone:

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone for which you wish to disable the bumper graphic. If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “Zone Settings.”
4. Select the “Display Engine” tab.
5. Click “Bumper Graphic.”
6. Uncheck the box next to “Show bumper page,” then click “Save.”

Setting the Pace/Timing of Bulletins and their Transition Effects

You can change the default pace of bulletins: i.e., how many seconds each slide/“bulletin” of content displays before it moves to the next slide/“bulletin.” You can also change the default transition effect that is used as the screen transitions from one bulletin to the next (just like the transition effects in a PowerPoint slideshow).

To set the default pacing and transition effect *for all new bulletins you create* (unless you manually alter the settings later):

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone for which you wish to disable the bumper graphic. If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “Zone Settings.”
4. Select the “Display Engine” tab.
5. Click “Bulletin Pacing” to set the timing (in seconds) that is used by default for each new bulletin you create. (Select the desired time amount, 5-20 seconds, and click “Save.” Since this is the default length applied to all new slides, I recommend using 10 or 15 seconds as the default.)
6. Click “Default Transition” to set the transition effect that is used by default for each new bulletin you create. (Select the desired transition from the drop-down list, then click “Save.”)

To set the pacing and transition effect for *an individual bulletin only* (i.e., without affecting the default or individual settings for other bulletins you create):

1. Login to Carousel.
2. Near the upper-right corner of the screen, check your “Current Zone.” It must be set to the zone for which you wish to disable the bumper graphic. If it is not, see “Changing your Current Zone” above.
3. Click “Manage Bulletins.”
4. Click “Active Bulletins.”
5. Click the icon with a pencil and paper (it displays a pop-up tool-tip with “Edit this bulletin” when you hover over it with your mouse).
6. Click “Continue.”
7. Click the “More” button.
8. Under “For how long would you like to display this bulletin?” click the second radio button and enter the time, in seconds, that you wish for this particular slide/“bulletin” to be displayed. (I recommend that you keep this timing to 60 seconds or less. Passers-by are more likely to look at your screen if the content rotates relatively frequently, since the motion catches their eye.)
9. Under “How would you like to transition into this bulletin?” choose the desired transition for this particular slide.
10. Click “Finish.”

Viewing the Content on Your LCD Screen from a Browser

Rather than walking out to check what is on your LCD screen, you can view its content as a live feed from a browser (on campus only). To do so, find your department in the table below and type the corresponding link into your Internet browser.

Department	URL for Carousel Live Feed
Dean's Office	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=53
Art	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=41
Communications	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=42
English & Foreign Languages	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=43
History, Anthropology, & Philosophy	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=44
Music	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=45
Political Science	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=46
Sociology, Criminal Justice, & Social Work	http://10.6.16.94/Carousel/Public/WebDisplay.aspx?ChannelID=47

IMPORTANT: You must resize your browser window to mimic a 16x9 aspect ratio (like your LCD screen) or the content will appear distorted.