DayStar Media User Manual

This manual describes the operating functions and features of the DayStar Media software version 1.0 for your LED display. The version of software installed can be found in the About menu item located under the Help menu.

For additional support, please contact:

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1-800-237-3928

- or visit our Support website at -

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The Information boxes located within this manual contain additional important notes.

Alert boxes contain instructions that must be followed to ensure proper performance of the software or display.

What is DayStar Media?

DayStar Media is an advanced Windows®-based software application that controls the message on your LED display. With it, you can add text, images and video clips that can be scheduled at the time and date of your choice.

DayStar Media also offers a suite of diagnostic tools and hardware controls that allow you or a technician to fine-tune the performance of your display.

> *Due to the wide variety of matrix sizes and display colors that are compatible with DayStar Media, the examples contained in this manual may not reflect the capabilities of your display.*

Terminology

The following terminology is used throughout this manual.

- *Display* – The portion of your outdoor sign that contains the LEDs and other electronic components. Displays come in a wide variety of sizes, and can be single or double-sided.
- *Frame* – A single unit of a playlist that can contain static text, scrolling text, a still image or a video clip. A frame can be scheduled to be shown on a certain date or at a certain time, and can have various incoming and outgoing transition effects.
- *Playlist*– A sequential list of frames that will be shown on your display. The playlist also contains information on duration, scheduling, and any transition effects selected.
- *Preview*– Viewing a single frame or the entire playlist within the software to see how it will look on the display.
- *Transmit*– Sending the playlist to the display for viewing by the public.

System Requirements

DayStar Media can be run on any modern Windows®-based computer. The following are the minimum requirements for installation:
- Windows XP Service Pack 3 and above, .NET 3.51 and above
- Pentium processor
- 512 MB RAM
- True color 24-bit color video card, minimum resolution of 1024x768
- 100 MB free drive space
- Network card or serial port (depending on the display connection method)

Installation

> ⚠️ *If there is an existing version of DayStar Media installed on your computer, it must be uninstalled before proceeding.*

The software may be delivered via CD-ROM, or via an emailed or downloaded ZIP file. Browse to the file location (the CD drive or inside the ZIP file), and double click on the **setup.exe** file to start the installation process.
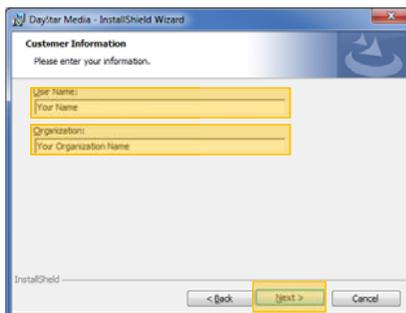
setup.exe
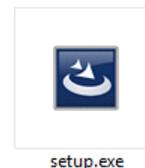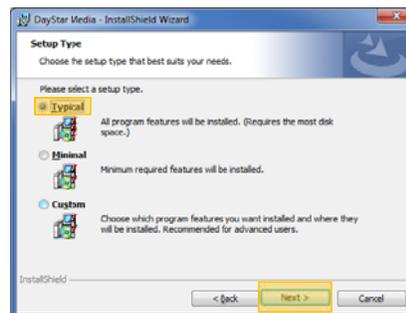
1. Click the **Next** button to start the software installation.
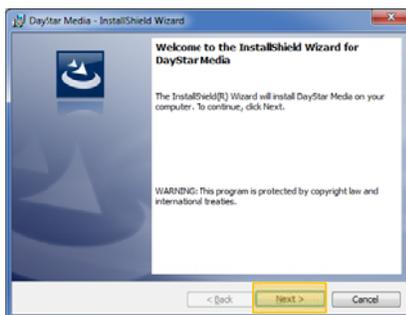
2. Accept the license agreement by clicking on the **I Accept** radio button, and then click the **Next** button.

3. Enter your name and organization name, and click the **Next** button.

4. Verify that **Typical** is selected as the setup type, and click the **Next** button.

5. Confirm your selections by clicking the **Install** button.
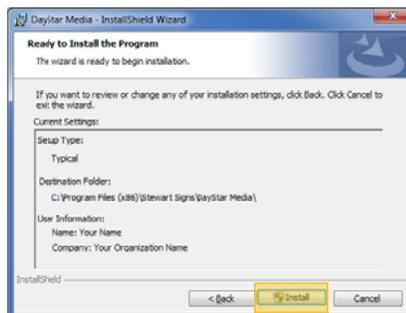
*6. If you use Windows® 7 or Windows® Vista, you may have to click **Yes** to the User Account Control window.*
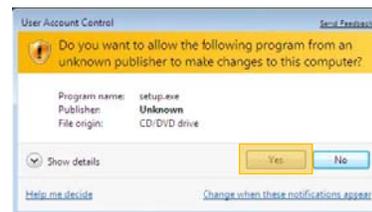
Windows® 7 and Windows® Vista only

Once installed, the DayStar Media icon will be available on your desktop and within your Start menu. Click on the icon to start DayStar Media.

DayStar Media

Display Setup

Before you can use the DayStar Media software, you must first add your display in the settings. Click the **Display** button[1] on the toolbar, or select **Display > Connect to Display**[2].
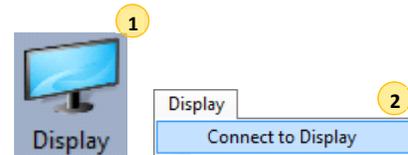
A window will appear with the Select Display tab in front.

Click the **Add Display** tab.
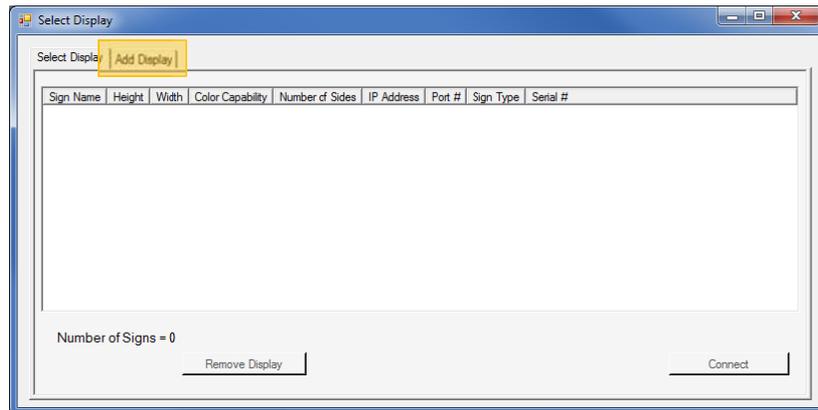
Select Display window

When communicating with your display over a computer network, enter the IP address of your display into the **IP Address** box.

-or-

When communicating with your display over a serial connection, click the **Serial** button and select the **COM Port** you will be using.
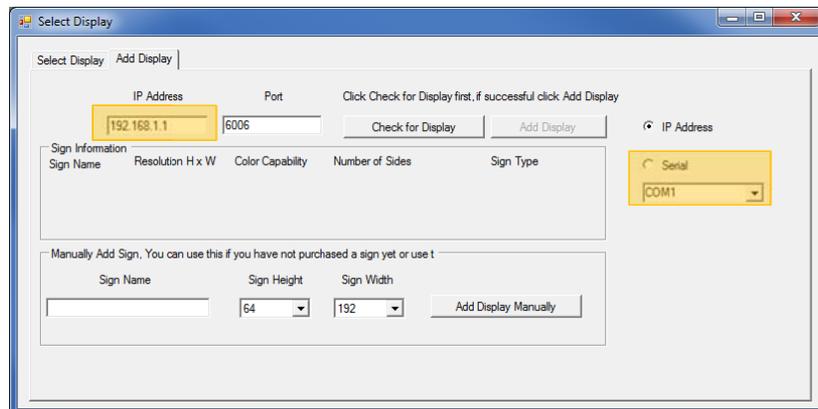
Add Display window

The technical information about your display such as the IP address or serial port should be available from your computer systems administrator. Network or other computer system configuration is the responsibility of the customer.

1. Click the **Check for Display** button.

2. Text will appear indicating if the sign was detected successfully.

3. If successful, click the **Add Display** button.
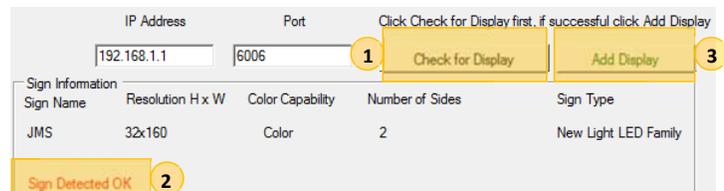
Adjusting Display Settings

After the display has been added into DayStar Media, the options for that display can be set. In the file bar, select **Display > Settings**.
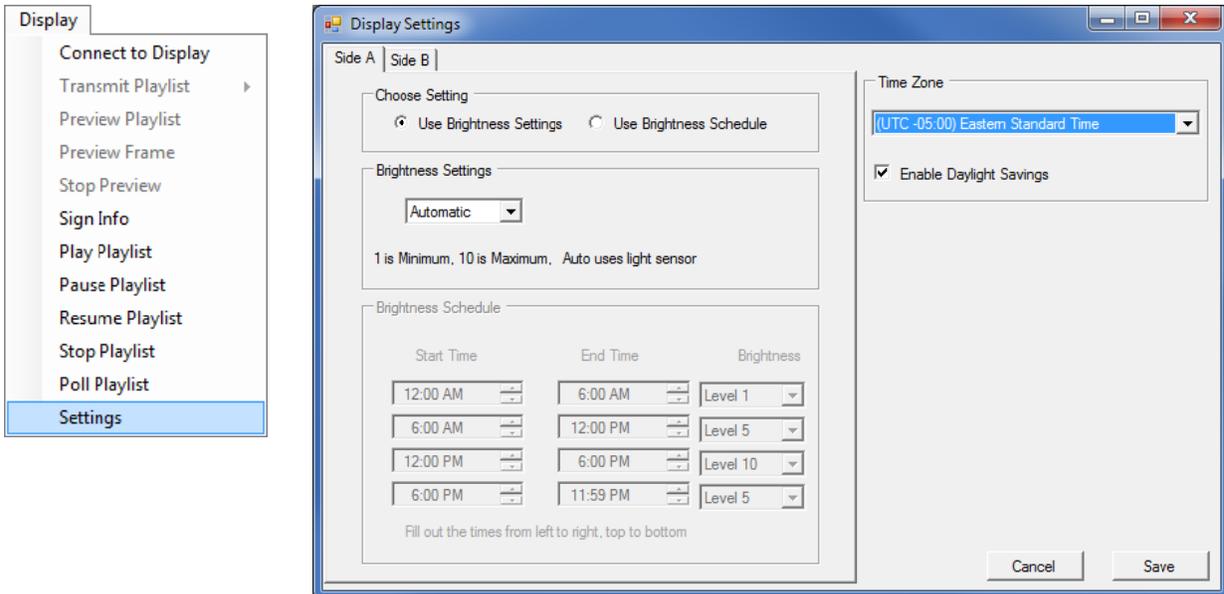
Display Settings window

The following settings can be specified:

Brightness

The brightness of your display can either be set to a single setting, or use a schedule of different settings over 24 hours.

- *Use Brightness Settings* – Choose this option to maintain the same setting over 24 hours.
- *Use Brightness Schedule* – Choose this option to create up to four time ranges with different settings. The Brightness Schedule can also be used to turn the LED display off and on at certain times.

The brightness is set independently for each side of the display by using the **Side A** and **Side B** tabs at the top of the window. If your display is double-sided, "Side A" refers to the side with the electrical connection on the right when viewing the display from the front. If your display is single sided, you will control it with the "Side A" tab.

> *The "Automatic" selection available in both Brightness Settings and Brightness Schedule uses an ambient light sensor to determine the display brightness. This selection will automatically brighten the display during the day to compete with the sun, and dim it for evening and night-time use.*

Example settings:

Brightness setting set to automatic (recommended)

Brightness schedule with the brightness set to level 5 between 6am and 12pm, level 10 between 12pm and 6pm, and the display off between 10pm and 6am

Time Zone

With this setting, you may select the appropriate time zone for the internal clock of your display. You may also turn on or off the automatic adjustment setting for Daylight Savings Time.

Creating a New Playlist

A playlist is a sequential list of text, images, and video clips that will be shown on your display. The playlist also contains information on duration, scheduling, and any transition effects selected.

To create a new playlist, select **File > New Playlist**. Enter a file name and click the **Save** button. This will create a new playlist with the correct dimensions for your display.
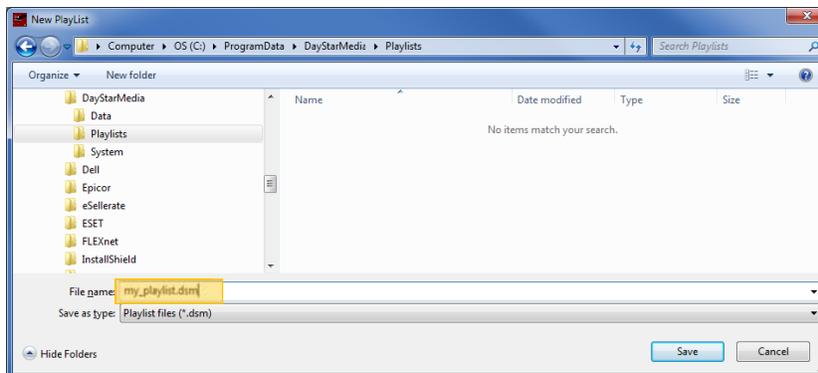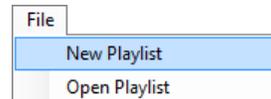
A playlist ("my_playlist.dsm") being saved in the default folder

> *DayStar Media playlists use the .dsm file extension. It is recommended that you save these files into the default folder (C:\ProgramData\DayStarMedia\Playlists). You may create as many playlists as you would like.*

Opening an Existing Playlist

If you have an existing playlist on your computer, it can be opened by selecting **File > Open Playlist**, browsing to the file location and clicking the **Open** button.
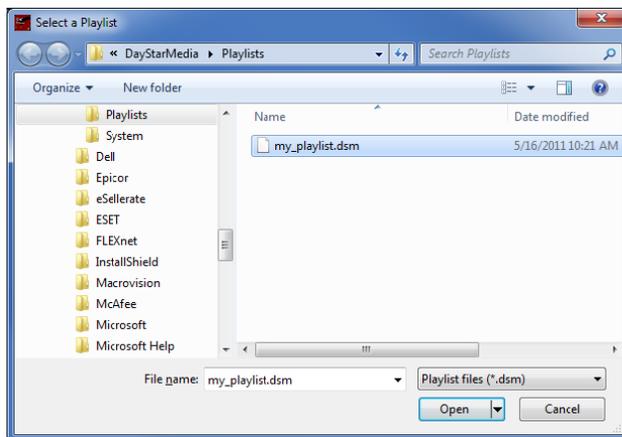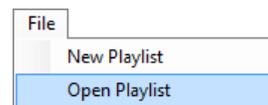
A playlist ("my_playlist.dsm") being selected for opening

Screen Overview

The main screen for DayStar Media with a playlist open has the following sections:
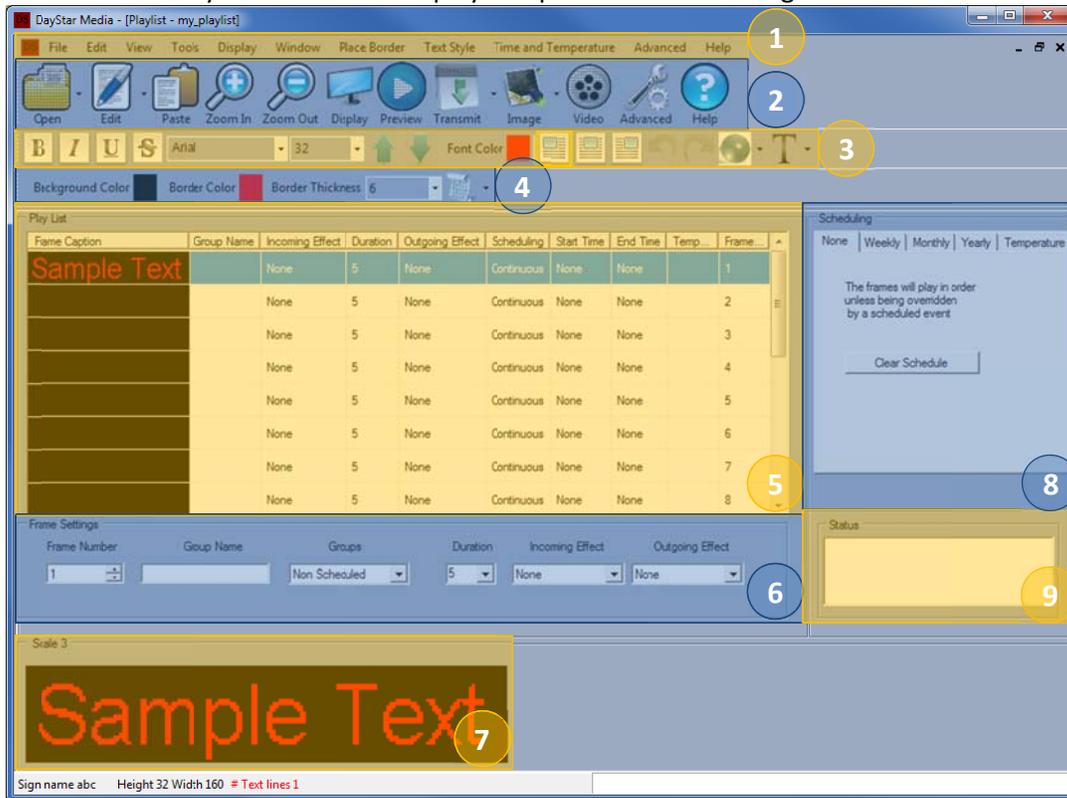
1. *File Bar* – All functions of the software such as previewing, saving and transmitting a playlist are available from this bar.
2. *Toolbar* – Allows quick access to some of the more commonly used functions in the file bar.
3. *Font Selections* – These controls allow you to select the font, size, style and color of text that will appear on your display.
4. *Background and Frame Selections* – These controls allow you to select background color and border settings.
5. *Playlist View* – A list of all existing frames in your playlist. Clicking on a line within the playlist view will select the frame for editing.
6. *Frame Settings* – These controls allow you to select the duration of frames as well as any incoming or outgoing transition effects. You may also specify a group name for individual frames, as well as narrow the playlist view down to certain groups.
7. *Frame Editor* – This is where text, images and video clips are entered into the frame, as well as where previewing occurs. The size of the frame editor can be set at actual pixel size and up to 12 times actual pixel size.
8. *Scheduling* – These controls allow you to schedule an individual frame on a continuous, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly schedule. You can also schedule frames to be triggered by temperature conditions.
9. *Status Box* – Provides information on playlist transmission, spelling errors, scheduling conflicts and other items.

Working with Frames

A frame is a single unit of a playlist that can contain static text, scrolling text, a still image or a video clip. A frame can be scheduled to be shown on a certain date and/or at a certain time, and can have various incoming and outgoing transition effects.

*A frame with a single line of centered text*

The frames contained in your playlist can be seen in the **Playlist View**. The frame that is selected within the Playlist View can have its properties and contents edited. Frames can also be reordered by clicking and dragging them within this section of the screen.

Click and drag a frame up or down in the Playlist View to change the order

A new playlist opens with 16 blank frames. However, frames can be added or removed as needed.

To insert a frame, select **Edit > Insert Frame Before** or **Edit > Insert Frame After**. This will place a frame before or after the selected frame in the Playlist View.
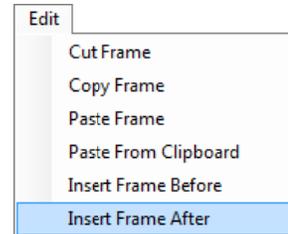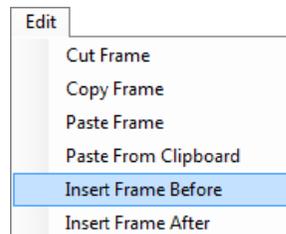
Frames can have all of their contents removed by selecting **Edit > Clear Frame**.

A frame can be completely removed from the playlist by selecting **Edit > Delete Frame**.
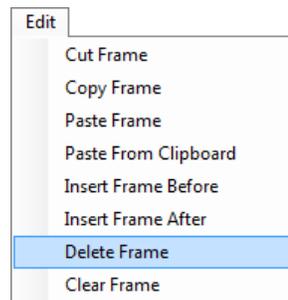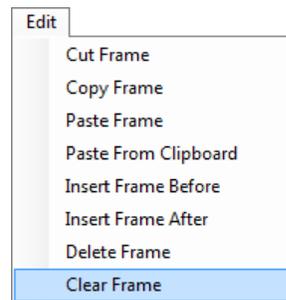
Blank frames that have no text, images or video clips contained within them are automatically excluded from the playlist when it is transmitted to the display.

Frames can also be cut or copied, and then pasted elsewhere in the playlist. With a frame selected, click **Edit > Cut Frame** or **Edit > Copy Frame**. Select a different location within the playlist and click **Edit > Paste Frame**.
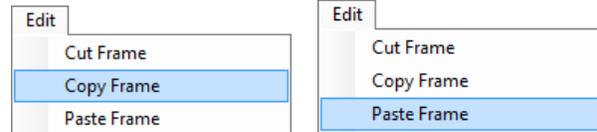
The frame as seen in the Frame Editor can be made larger or smaller on your screen. This can make it easier to work with text and other elements. Select **View > Frame Editor Scale x1 – x4,** or press the **Zoom In** or **Zoom Out** buttons in Font Selections bar to change the size of the frame editor.
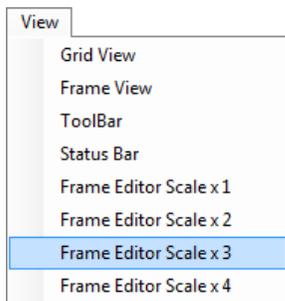
Frame Editor scale changed from 1x to 3x

Adding Text to a Frame

With a frame selected in the Playlist View, click within the **Frame Editor** at the bottom of the screen and type in your desired text.

Font
The font, size and color of the text can be changed with the **Font Selections** controls near the top of the screen.

Font size can also be changed with the up and down arrow buttons on the Font Selection bar.
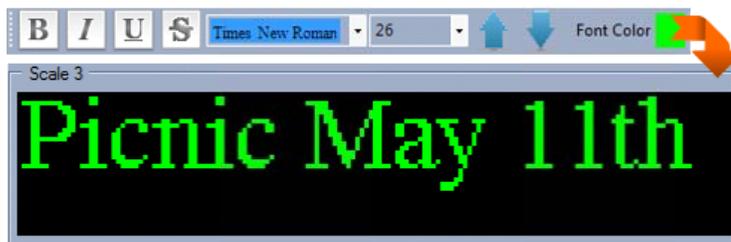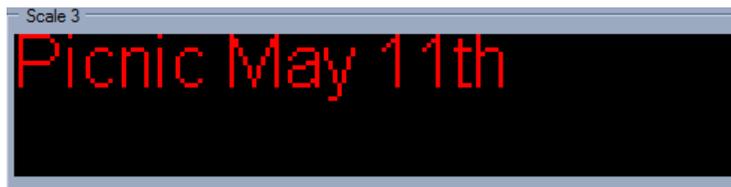
Text set to size 26, green Times New Roman font

> The fonts available within DayStar Media are the fonts that have been installed on your Windows® system.

Text Style
Text can be made bold, italic, underline or have a strike-out by selecting the option from the **Text Style** menu, or from the buttons in the **Font Selections** menu. Text can also be left, center or right aligned to the display.

Text made bold, italic, underlined and centered horizontally

Text Position
Lines of text can also be moved by **holding the Ctrl button on your keyboard, clicking and dragging** them to the desired location.

Text centered vertically by holding the Ctrl button, and clicking and dragging the line

Text Color
Sections of text can be changed by highlighting them with the mouse, and then changing the text properties for that section.

Section of text made red by highlighting it with the mouse and changing the color

Multiple Lines

Multiple lines of text can be added to the frame by pressing the **Enter** button on your keyboard between lines. These lines can be sized, positioned and colored independently.

Two lines of centered text with different colors

Scrolling Text

If you attempt to type text that is longer than the display, DayStar Media will prompt you to enable scrolling. Scrolling text will move from right to left on the display.


Text set to scroll across the display

To enable or disable scrolling for any line, select **Text Style > Scroll**. A red cursor indicates when a line is set to be scrolled.

If there is more than one line of text set to scroll within the same frame, the lines will scroll one at a time starting with the top line.

The speed that text scrolls across the screen can be adjusted by clicking on the down arrow next to the **Scroll** button and selecting a speed. Speed can be set individually for each frame.
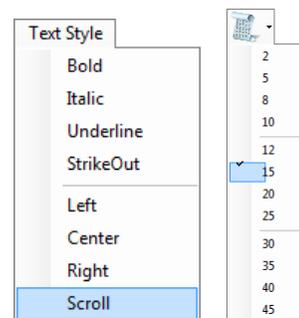
Text Height

The height of the text can also be adjusted by using **LED Text Height**. This value will change the selected line of text to be an exact number of pixels high, regardless of the font or size selected.

This feature is useful when maximizing the amount of text that will fit onto your display. For example, to fit 4 lines of text on a 32 pixel high display, use the 7 pixel LED text height (with the 8th pixel blank to separate the lines of text).

*Various LED Text Heights on a 32 pixel high display*

Text Opacity

The opacity of text can be controlled by clicking the **Opacity** button and selecting a value. A value of less than 100 will allow some of the background to show through the text, with a value close to 0 being almost completely transparent.
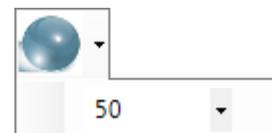
Copy & Paste

If you have copied some text from another program such as Microsoft® Word, you can paste it into a frame by selecting **Edit > Paste From Clipboard**.
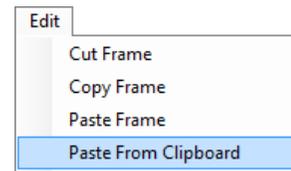
Spell Check

A spell check can be performed on all text within a frame, or across the entire playlist. Select **Tools > Spell Check Frame** or **Tools > Spell Check Playlist** to check for misspelled words, which will be noted in the Status Box.
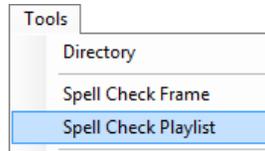
Find & Replace

You can also perform automatic text changes for a single frame or within the entire playlist. Select **Edit > Find and Replace**, and enter the word to be replaced and its replacement.

Optionally, you may attempt to match the capitalization of the text by selecting **Match Case**.
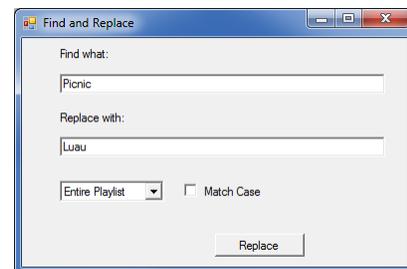
Adding Images to a Frame

DayStar Media allows you to add still images to be shown on your LED display. Images must be in BMP (bitmap) format to work with the software. These files have names with ".bmp" at the end. There are two different ways that images can be added to a frame:

Fitting an Image to the Frame
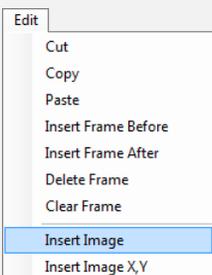
To size the image so that it takes up the entire frame, click **Edit > Insert Image** with a frame selected in the Playlist View.
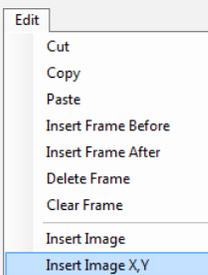
Browse to where the BMP file is located on the computer, select it and click **Open**.
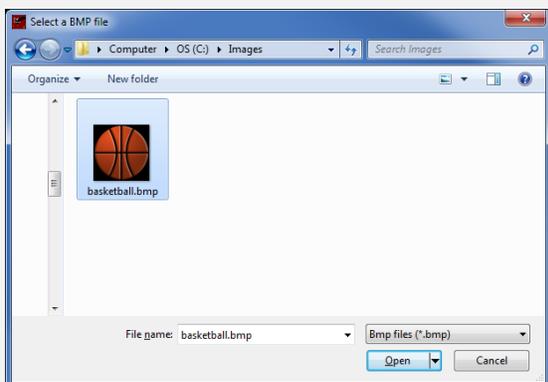
The image will be scaled to fit the entire frame.

Placing an Image on the Frame

To place an image at a particular location on the frame, click **Edit > Insert Image X,Y** with a frame selected in the Playlist View.
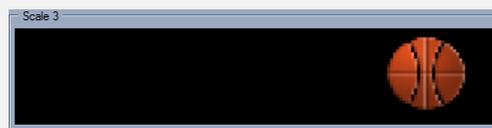
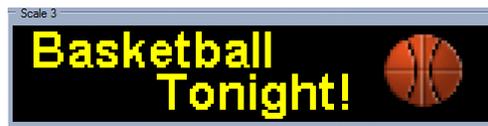Browse to where the BMP file is located on the computer, select it and click **Open**.
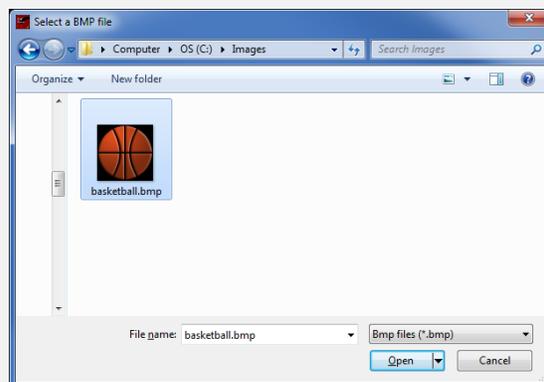
With your mouse, draw a square where you want the image to appear.
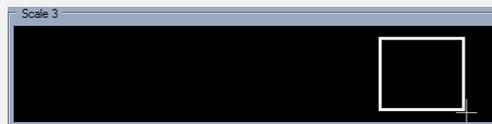
The image will be scaled and positioned within the square.

Once an image has been added to a frame, text can be entered on top of or next to the image.
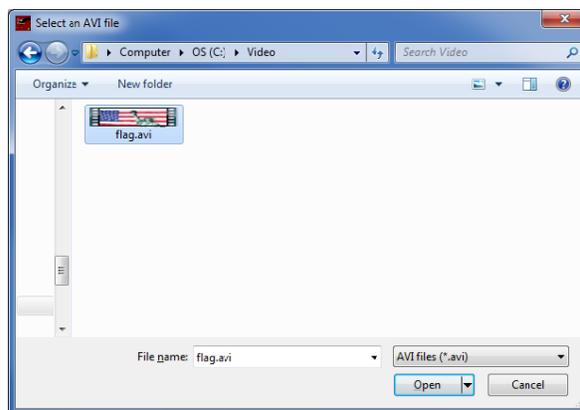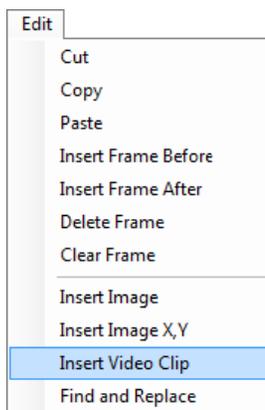

> ⚠️ *The amount of detail that can be shown on your display is dependent on the matrix size. Images that contain a large amount of detail may not show well on your LED display.*

Adding Video Clips to a Frame

DayStar Media allows you to add video clips to be shown on your LED display. Video clips must be in AVI format to work with the software. These files have names with ".avi" at the end.

To add a video clip, click **Edit > Insert Video Clip** with a frame selected in the Playlist View.

Browse to where the AVI file is located on the computer, select it and click **Open**.

The video clip will be scaled to fit the entire frame. The duration of the frame will be automatically set to the length of the video clip.

Once a video clip has been added to a frame, text can be entered on top of it.


> ⚠️ *The amount of detail that can be shown on your display is dependent on the matrix size. Video clips that contain a large amount of detail may not show well on your LED display.*

Adding Date, Time and Temperature to a Frame

DayStar Media allows you to include the current date, time and temperature in a frame. The date and time are derived from an internal clock within the display, which is updated from the computer running DayStar Media. The temperature is derived from an attached temperature probe (if equipped).
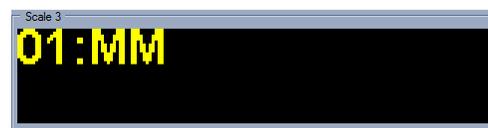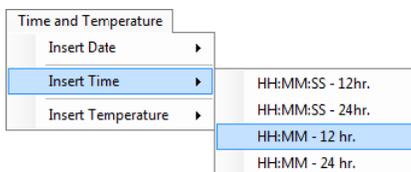
Date
To insert the date, with a frame selected click **Time and Temperature > Insert Date** and choose the date format you wish to use.
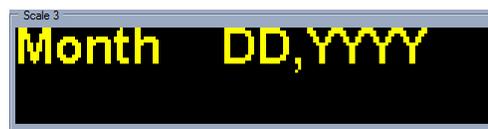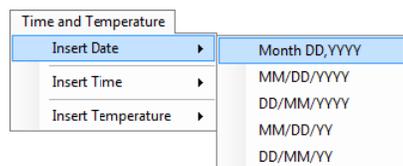
Frame set to display the current month, day and year
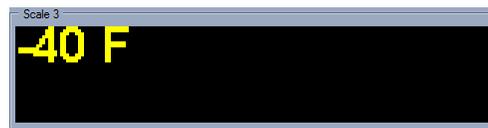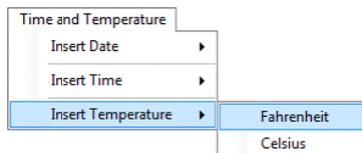
Time
To insert the time, with a frame selected click **Time and Temperature > Insert Time** and choose the time format you wish to use.

Frame set to display the current time in hours and minutes

Temperature
To insert the temperature, with a frame selected click **Time and Temperature > Insert Temperature** and choose the temperature scale you wish to use.

Frame set to display the current temperature in Fahrenheit

This information can be combined onto one frame, and positioned as desired. Font, size and color options can be changed as with regular lines of text.

Frame as seen in the software

Once transmitted to the display, this frame will always show the current date, time and temperature.
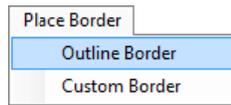

Frame as seen on the display

If the clock is incorrect on your computer, the time or date may show incorrectly on the display. It is recommended to use a time-synching service on your computer to keep this information accurate.
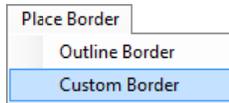
Adding a Border and Background Color to a Frame

A border can be placed around the edge of a frame by selecting **Place Border > Outline Border**.
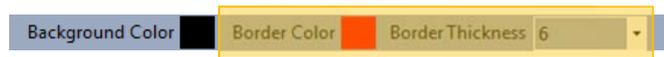

Red outline border

A custom border can also be drawn onto the frame by selecting **Place Border > Custom Border**. Draw a box with your mouse cursor where you want the border to be displayed.
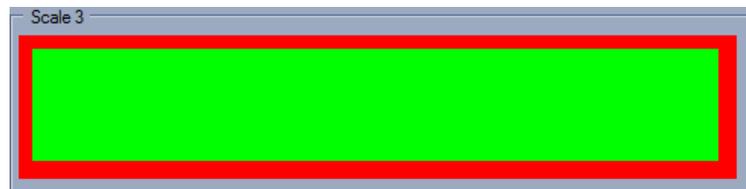

Red custom border

The color and thickness of the border can be changed from the **Background and Border Selections** bar.

The background color of a frame can also be changed from the **Background and Border Selections** bar.

In this way, you can create multiple color combinations for your text frames.

Green background with red outline border

Text can be added to the frame and positioned at any point.

Black text on green background with red outline border

Setting the Frame Duration

The amount of time that a frame is displayed can be changed in the Frame Settings. With a frame selected, enter the duration with the drop-down box or by typing in any number. Duration is measured in seconds.

Duration time is not applicable to frames with scrolling text or video clips. These frames will automatically calculate their duration based on the frame contents.

Using Transition Effects

Transition effects are special visual effects that can be used between frames. These effects can create interest and draw attention to your message. With a frame selected, choose an incoming or outgoing effect in the Frame Settings. Transition effects will work with text, image and video clip frames.

The following effects are available:

- *Blank Display* – Frame is blank.
- *Curtain Open* – Frame is revealed starting from the middle moving outwards.
- *Curtain Closed* – Frame is revealed from the edges moving inwards.
- *Twinkling Star* – Frame is revealed with a random fade.
- *Barrel Roll Left to Right* – Frame rotates in from left to right.
- *Barrel Roll Right to Left* – Frame rotates in from right to left.
- *Barrel Roll Top to Bottom* – Frame rotates in from top to bottom.
- *Barrel Roll Bottom to Top* – Frame rotates in from bottom to top.
- *Dissolve* – Display fades out randomly.
- *Dim* – Display fades out uniformly.

You can change the properties of several frames at the same time by holding down the Ctrl key on your keyboard and selecting multiple frames within the Playlist View.

Scheduling a Frame

Individual frames can be scheduled to be displayed on certain dates or at certain times. These frames will start at the scheduled time and last for the length of their duration setting. Schedules can be set for daily, weekly, monthly or yearly display; as well as being triggered by temperature information.

Example schedule settings:

No schedule (default setting)

Show every day starting at 1:00pm

Show every Monday starting at 8:00am

Show the first day of every month starting at 12:30pm

Show every July 4th starting at midnight

Show when the temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit

Frames that do not have scheduling information are set as "Continuous" in the playlist. These frames are shown in order on the display in a continuous loop unless overridden by a scheduled frame.

There must be at least one frame in the playlist that does not have a schedule setting. This ensures that there is always something showing on the display.

If two or more scheduled frames are set to be displayed at the same time, the information on the conflicting frames will be shown in the Status Box. Clicking the Conflict Report button will show only the frames with conflicting schedules in the Playlist View.

Previewing, Saving and Transmitting Your Playlist

Previewing

After the frames are created within the playlist, you can preview it by selecting **Display > Preview Playlist** or by clicking on the **Preview** button. This will show your playlist within the Frame Editor.

You can also preview a single frame by selecting **Display > Preview Frame**.

The preview can be stopped by selecting **Display > Stop Preview**, by clicking on the **Stop** button, or by selecting a frame within the Playlist View.
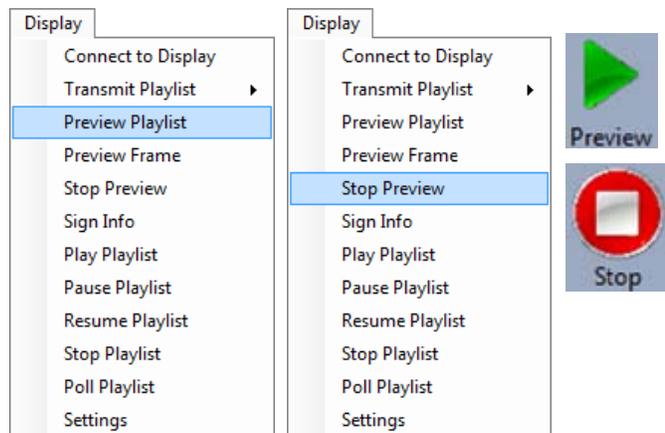

Saving

You may save your playlist at any time by selecting **File > Save Playlist**. This will store a local copy of the playlist on your computer for later use within DayStar Media.
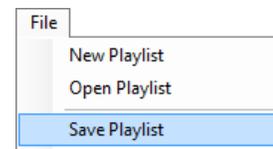
Transmitting

When you are ready to transmit the playlist to your display, click **Display > Transmit Playlist** and select the side you wish to use. In this way, different information can be shown on each side of a double-sided display. The **Transmit** button can also be used.
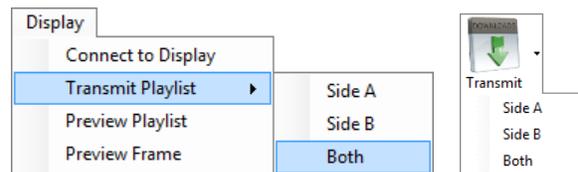
After the playlist has been successfully transmitted, the display will run it using an onboard processor. You may close the program or shut down the computer at any point without affecting the display.

Advanced Functionality Appendix

Working with Multiple Displays
If you have multiple displays that are compatible with DayStar Media, they can each be controlled from the software. *You must first add each display using the instructions in the Display Setup chapter.*

With no playlists open, click the **Display** button or select **Display > Select Display**.

Choose the display you wish to work with, and click the **Connect** button.

You are now ready to start working with this display.
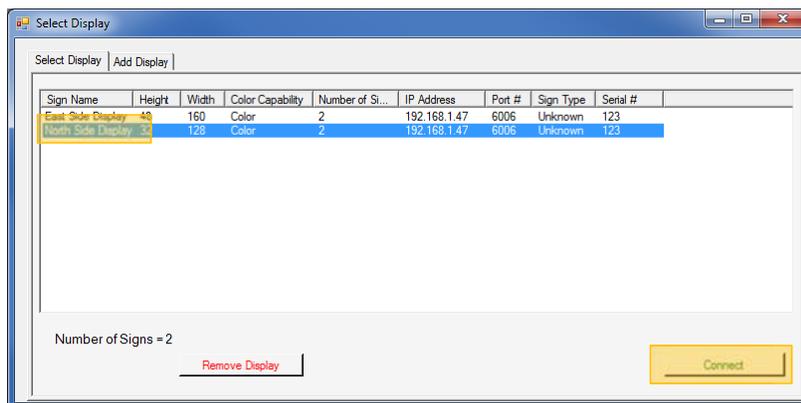
New playlists that are created will have the dimensions of the selected display. Playlists that are transmitted will be sent to the selected display.

Working with Frame Groups
Individual frames can be a member of one or more groups within a playlist. These groups can make it easier to work with and organize playlists that have a large number of frames.

Viewing Groups
To view frames that are a member of a particular group, select the group name from the **Groups** drop-down box in the Frame Settings.

This will filter the frames shown in the Playlist View to only those frames within that group.

Assigning Groups

Frames are automatically assigned into standard groups, but can also be manually set into custom groups. Type in a **Group Name** to assign a frame into a group. The group will be created if it does not already exist.

This group will now be available for selecting under the **Groups** drop-down box.

To return to viewing all frames regardless of group, select **All** from the Groups drop-down box.
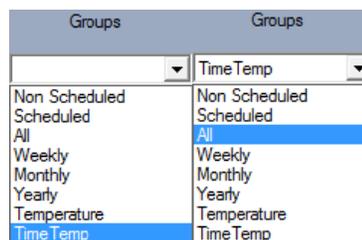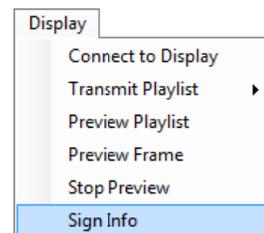

Viewing Display Information

Technical information about your display can be accessed with DayStar Media. This information can be useful to a technician when diagnosing an issue.

With a display selected, click **Display > Sign Info** to view the diagnostics information.