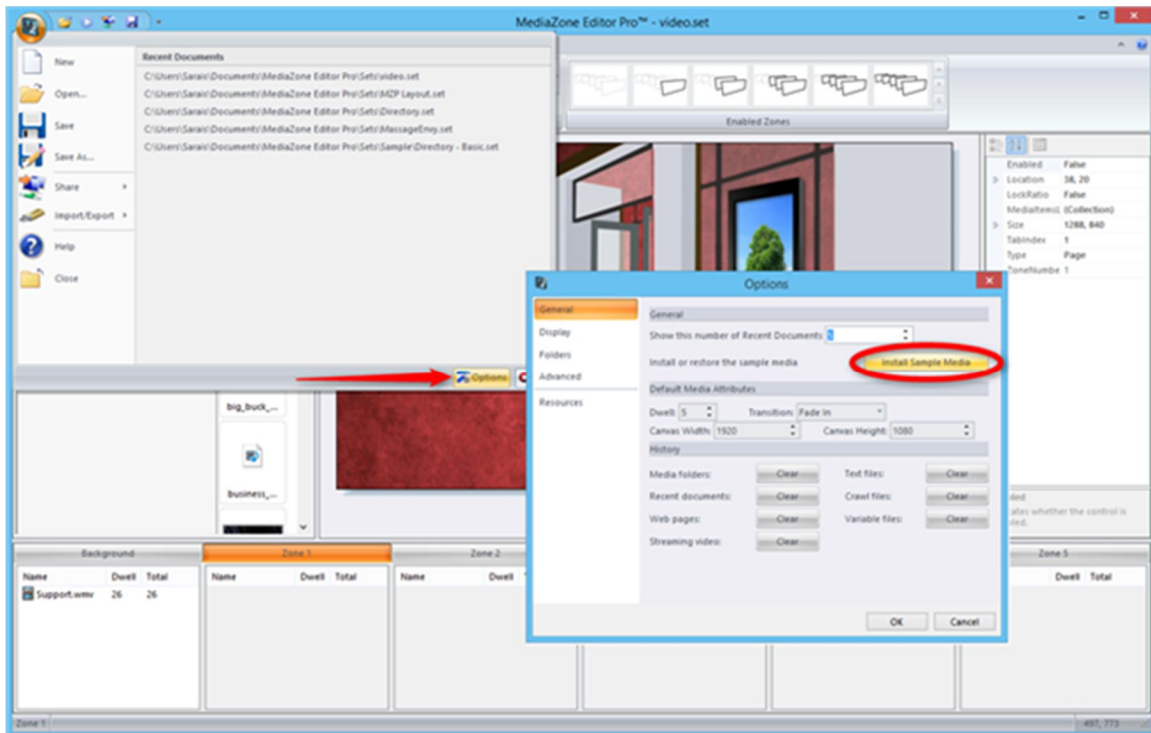The following practice exercises provide examples of how to use **MediaZone Pro Editor** to create playlists for typical digital signage usage, and expose various techniques to achieve the best results. To follow the examples, please ensure the sample content is installed.
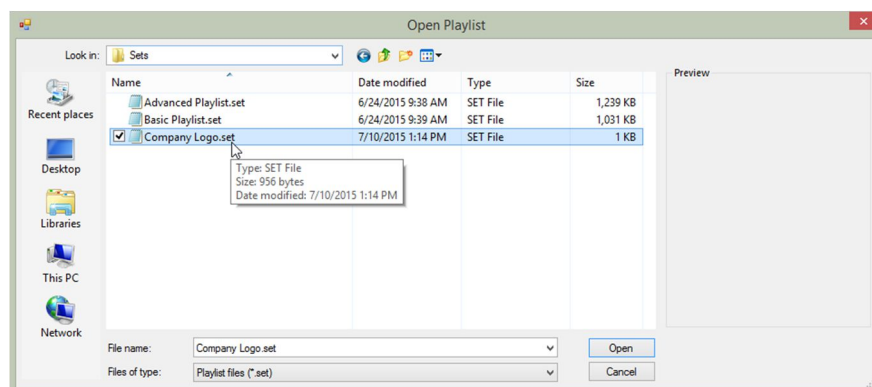
## SAMPLE MEDIA

If the **Sample Media** was not installed or has been deleted, select the **Add Sample Content** button in the **Options** dialog window.  The **Options** button can be found at the bottom right of the **File** menu.
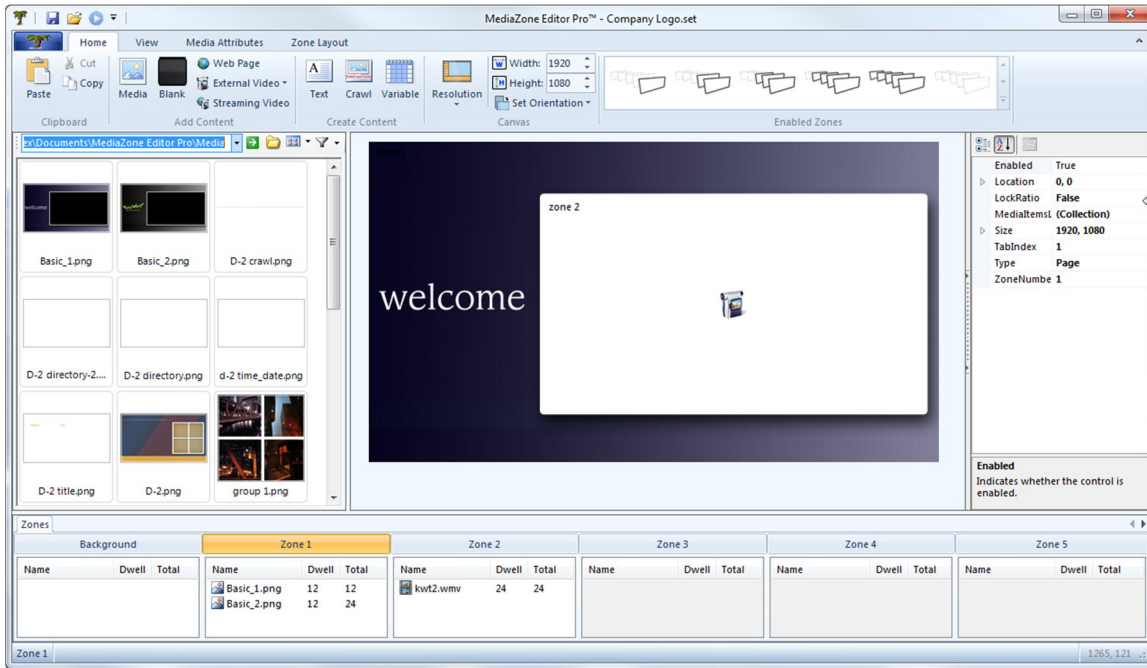


## GETTING STARTED

Once the **Sample Media** files are available, open the sample playlist included with the **MediaZone Pro Editor** software called "Company Logo." To open a playlist, click the File menu, select open, and click on the desired ".set" file.  Once the playlist loads, you can begin working through the first exercise.
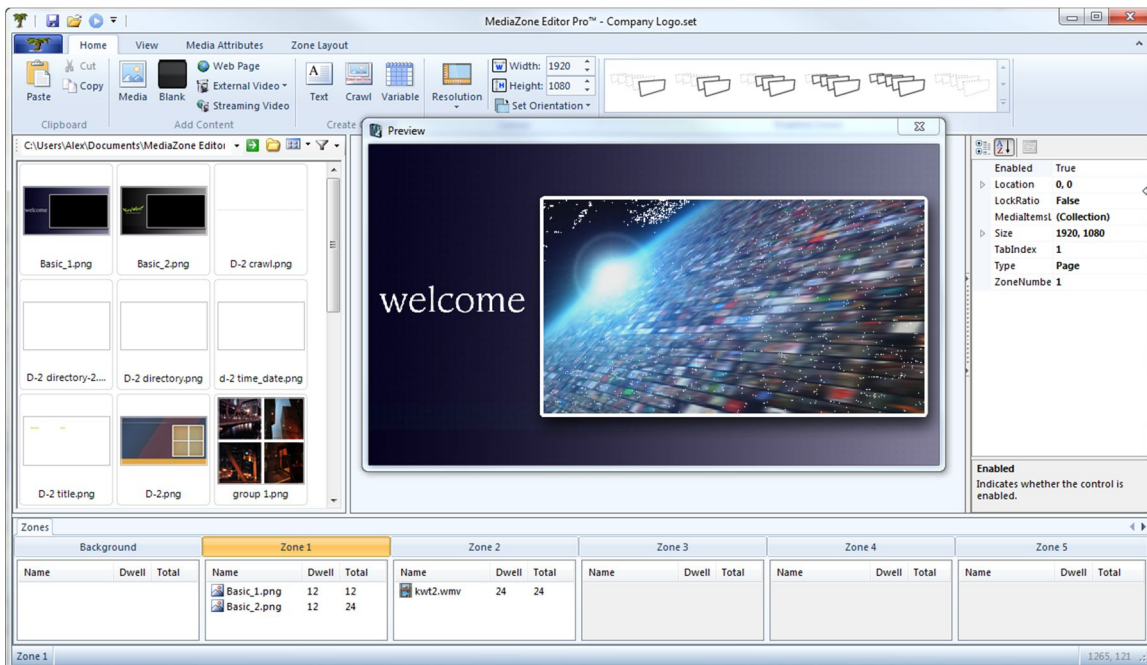
## COMPANY LOGO EXAMPLE

The company logo example is suited for users new to MediaZone Pro Editor and digital signage in general. It includes a basic playlist, consisting of two rotating background images and another zone for videos. As part of this example, an exercise is included to add an additional video. Open the Company Logo example by navigating to the My Documents\MediaZone Editor Pro\Sets folder and opening the Company Logo.set file. Once open, the interface will appear as follows:



To preview the playlist, press the Play button located on the title bar in the upper left (if this button does not appear in the title bar, use the Play button on the View ribbon tab). A separate preview window will open and load the playlist, as shown below.

## COMPANY LOGO EXAMPLE (CONTINUED)

This playlist is designed to be an advertisement for an organization, perhaps to appear on digital signage located in the lobby of the corporate headquarters. It only contains three media files, but is still eye-catching and dynamic. Close the preview window to continue.
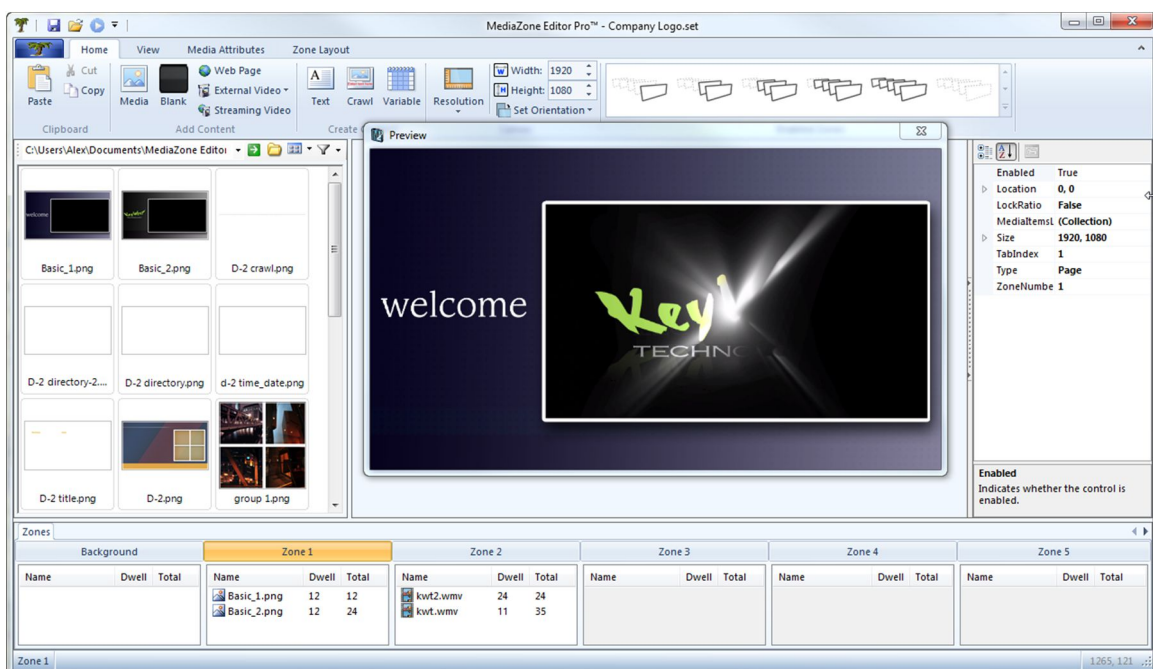
In the Company Logo playlist, zone 1 is used like a background zone, sized to fit the full screen. It contains two images, Basic_1.png and Basic_2.png. The reason these images are in zone 1 instead of in the background zone itself is because zones 1-5 can contain transitions while the background zone cannot. The other zone, zone 2, contains a single video. To add two more videos to zone 2 simultaneously, follow the steps below in Exercise 1.

## EXERCISE ONE – ADDING VIDEOS

1. In the media pane, scroll to and select the kwt.wmv media item. While holding down the Ctrl key on the keyboard, select the kwt2.wmv media item. Both items appear highlighted. Notice the generic icon for these items, which resembles a photo from an instant camera
2. While pressing the left-mouse button down over the selected media items, drag them to the zone layout area and drop them onto zone 2
3. The zone list for zone 2 now includes kwt.wmv as the second media item and kwt2.wmv as the third
4. After several seconds, the generic icons for kwt.wmv and kwt2.wmv in the media pane are replaced with thumbnail from the videos. The zone layout area automatically refreshes to display the new thumbnail in zone 2, as well

If desired, press the play button ▶ to preview these changes.

Adding media by drag-and-drop (or with the Add Media button) places new items at the bottom of the zone list. To better control where a media item is placed among the existing items, it can be dropped directly into the zone list. While dragging a media item over the zone list, a red line appears. This line signifies where in the list the new item will be added, once dropped. This method can also be used to move items in a zone list. To use the example from Exercise One, click and drag the kwt.png to the top of the zone 2 list.

## DIRECTORY BOARD EXAMPLES

A directory board is an informational panel, such as those located in an entry for an office building, hospital or convention center. A directory board usually lists occupants, their location, and sometimes includes map information, as well.
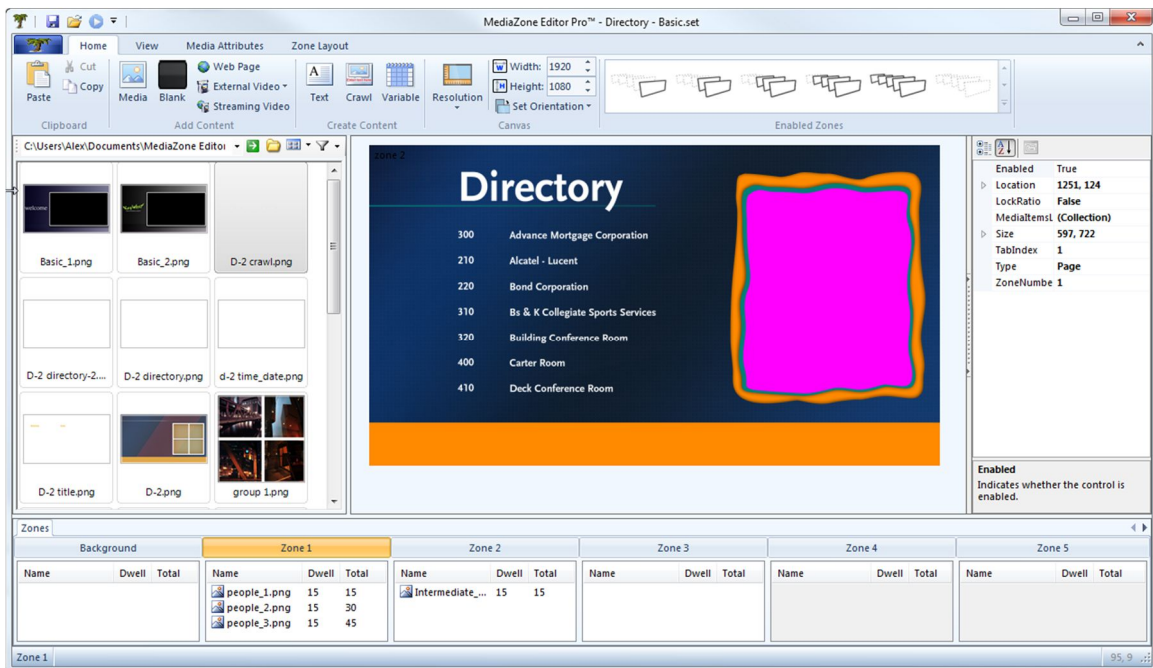
Traditional directory boards use either interchangeable letters or permanent nameplates to display the information. Changing the directory information can often be tedious or expensive. With digital signage, a directory board can be much more dynamic, easy to change, and offer additional information. Take, for instance, a scenario where an occupant is not available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A digital-signage directory board can inform patrons of this with a different playlist, scheduled to play on those days.

The two examples in the following pages are as follows:

- **Directory – Basic**: a simple directory board playlist that utilizes a color-keyed region
- **Directory – Advanced**: a more complex directory board playlist to demonstrate advanced features

## BASIC DIRECTORY BOARD EXAMPLE

The Basic Directory Board playlist includes three images in zone 1 and one image in zone 2. The exercises for this playlist cover the concepts of overlaying images and transparency color-keying. Open this playlist by navigating to the My Documents\MediaZone Editor Pro\Sets folder and opening the Directory - Basic.set file. Once open, the interface will appear as follows:
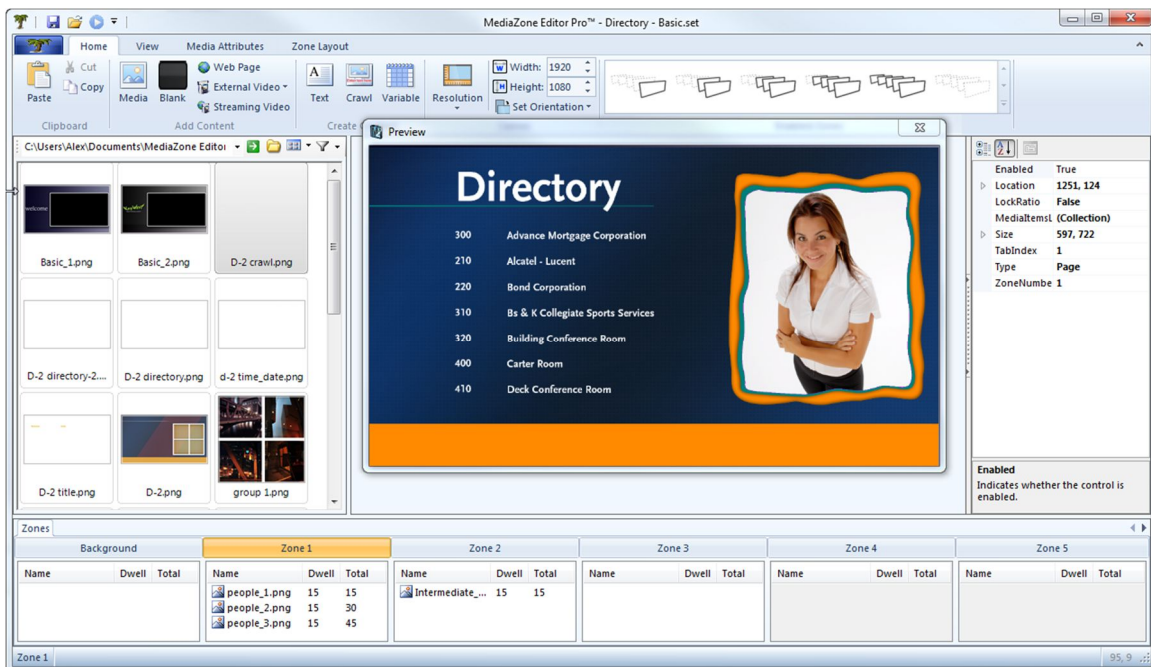


To preview the playlist, press the Play button. During playback, notice how the images of people can be seen with irregularly shaped borders. Close the preview window.

In the zone list area, select people_1.png in zone 1. Clicking this image "brings to front" the selected zone, allowing hidden content to be seen. In MediaZone Pro Editor, all the images in zone 1 are hidden by the full-screen Intermediate_directory.png image in zone 2. However, during playback the images of people in zone 1 become visible. This appears to conflict with the zone order rule, which states that content in higher-numbered zones overlaps the content in lower-numbered zones. To discover how this playlist circumvents this rule, follow the steps below in Exercise 2.

## EXERCISE TWO – COLOR KEY TRANSPARENCY

1. In the zone list for zone 2, select Intermediate_directory.png. Note how the glyphs for zone 2 are equal to the full screen size of the canvas area. This indicates that any media item in zone 2 will completely cover any content in the background zone or zone 1, per the zone order rule

2. On the Media Attributes ribbon tab, in the Transparency group, the assigned Color Key value is #FF00FF and the preview box shows a magenta color. Notice the irregular shape on the right side of the image which is also of a magenta color. Because of this color key assignment, any portion of the image that is magenta in color will be "keyed out", or transparency. This explains how the images of people are seen through the magenta region of Intermediate_directory.png during playback

3. On the Media Attributes ribbon tab, in the Transparency group, remove the assigned Color Key value from #FF00FF by typing "None" in the textbox

4. Press the play button ▶ to preview these changes. The images of people are hidden and the magenta region is visible. Close the preview window

5. Reassign the color key transparency by pressing the Set Color Key button 🎨 and selecting magenta, which is in the last column, second row. Press OK

6. The color key textbox should contain "FF00FF" again, with a preview box showing the magenta color

Although this playlist used an irregularly shaped area for transparency, it could well have been a circle, ellipse, or any other geometric shape. This method of using a color key to make an area of a  full screen image transparent can be thought of as using a "window" to see underlying zones. With this technique, a zone no longer must be constrained to a rectangular shape, providing a powerful way to develop creative playlist content.
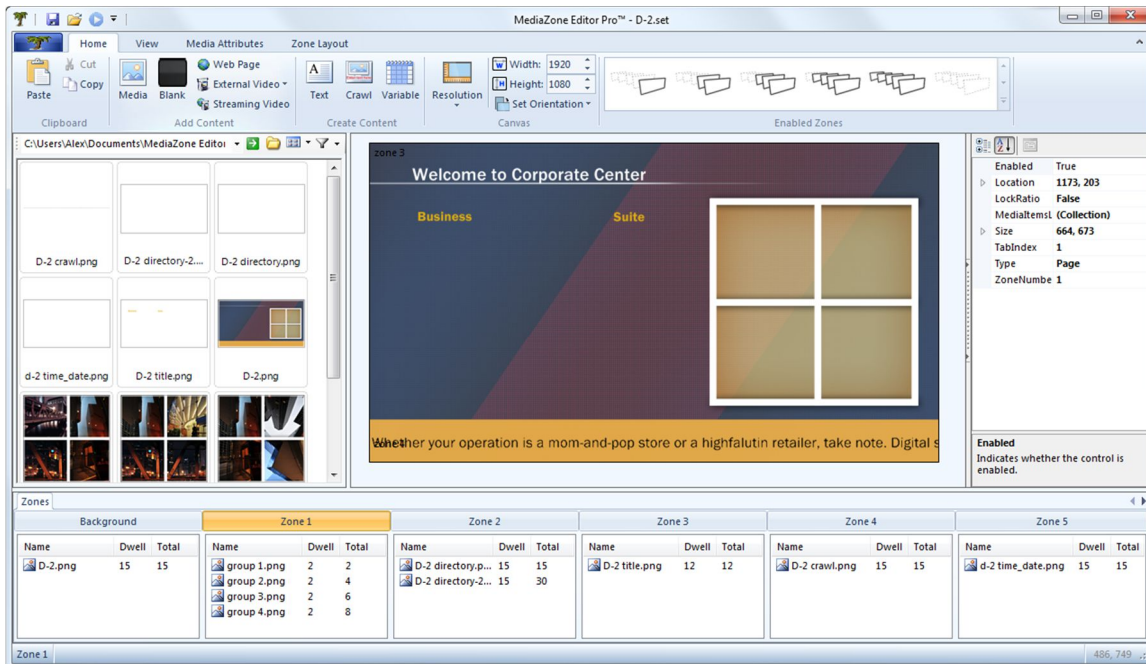
## ADVANCED DIRECTORY BOARD EXAMPLE

The Advanced Directory Board playlist includes five zones of content layered over a stylish background. Open the Directory Board example by navigating to the My Documents\MediaZone Editor Pro\Sets folder and opening Directory - Advanced.set. Once open, the interface will appear as follows:



To preview the playlist, press the Play button .

With a rotating bank of images, sliding directory text and horizontal crawl, the dynamic effect of the playlist is immediately impactful. Close the preview window. Note how some of the images which appeared in the preview are not easily seen in the zone layout pane.
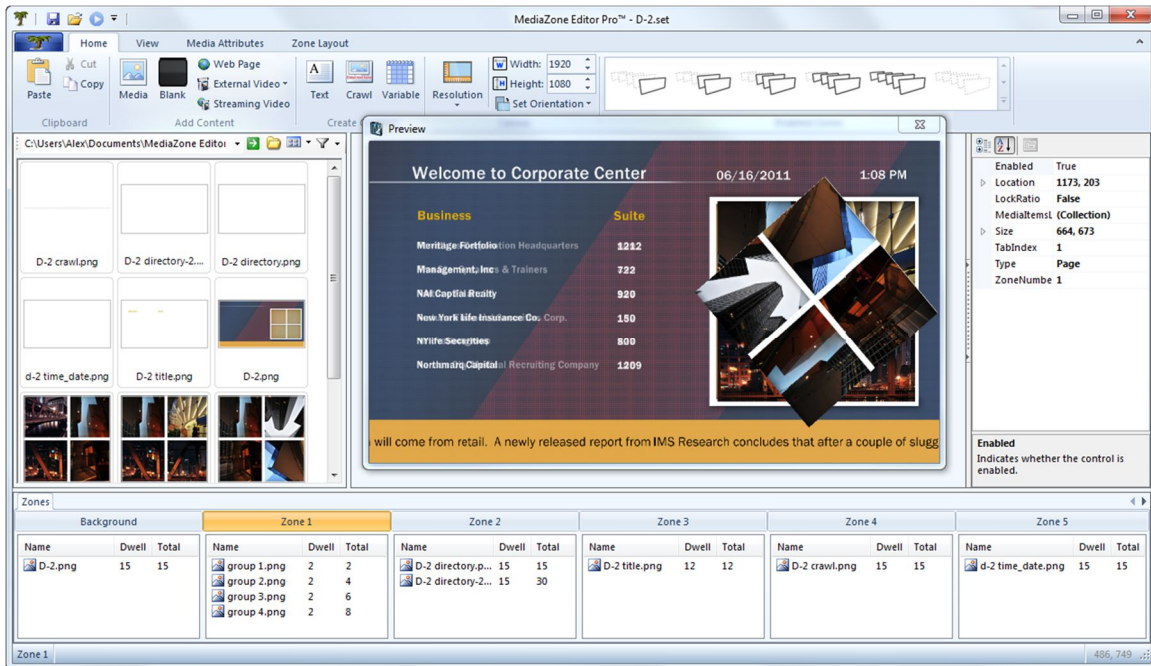
Because this playlist makes use of full size zones, which overlay other zones, some of the content is hidden. However, selecting a zone or a zone button performs a "bring to front" to reveal its content. Beginning with the Background button in the zone lists pane, select each of the zone buttons. As each button is selected, the associated content is shown or hidden. The exercises below will demonstrate how to improve the playlist design to eliminate conflicts which hide content.

Next, select the Zone 1 button and notice in the zone layout pane how eight "glyphs" around the square images appear. This indicates that zone 1 is now the active zone, and brings to front its content. In the zone list, select each media item within zone 1 and notice how the images in the zone layout update to reflect each individual image. To demonstrate how easy it is to change the playback of the playlist, follow the steps below in Exercise 3.

## EXERCISE THREE – CHANGING TRANSITIONS

1. In the zone 1 list, select group 2.png. The ribbon will automatically select the Media Attributes tab
2. On the Media Attributes tab, select the Transition drop-down menu and change the Fade In transition to another, such as Grow Left
3. Now select group 3.png and change its transition to Spin CW Center, and group 4.png to Cut
4. Select all media items in zone 1 list by holding down the Ctrl key while selecting the top and bottom items
5. On the Media Attributes tab, change the dwell from 2 to 7 seconds

Press the play button ▶ to preview these changes. After each 7 seconds of dwell time, the new transition effects will be shown. Notice how the Cut transition assigned to group 4.png is actually no transition at all.
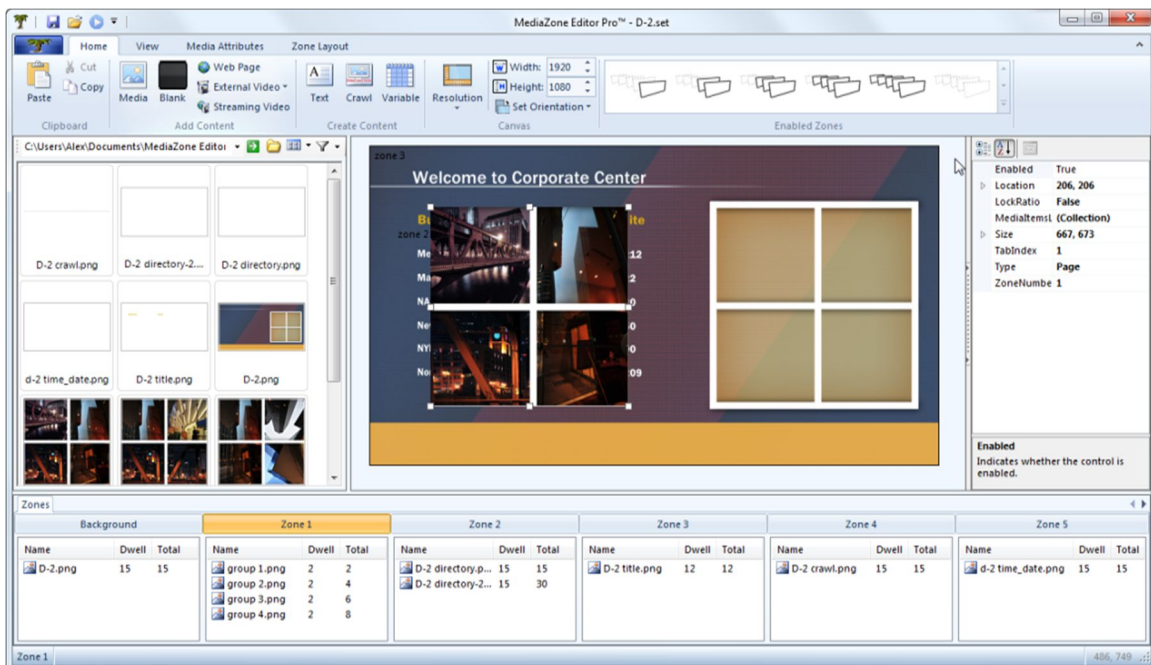
## EXERCISE FOUR – ZONE PRIORITY

To further describe the Zone Order Rule and demonstrate how zones act when layered over one another, follow the steps below. If it is still open, close the preview window.

1.  Select the Zone 2 button. Note how the position of zone 2 in the zone layout occupies most of the left side of the canvas
2.  Select the Zone 1 button to see how it occupies the right side of the canvas
3.  Move the mouse cursor over this zone in the zone layout pane. The cursor changes to a four-sided arrow to imply a move command
4.  Click and hold down the left mouse button and drag the cursor to the left until the zone is positioned on the left side of the canvas, in the same general location as zone 2, then release. The zone layout pane should look similar to below:
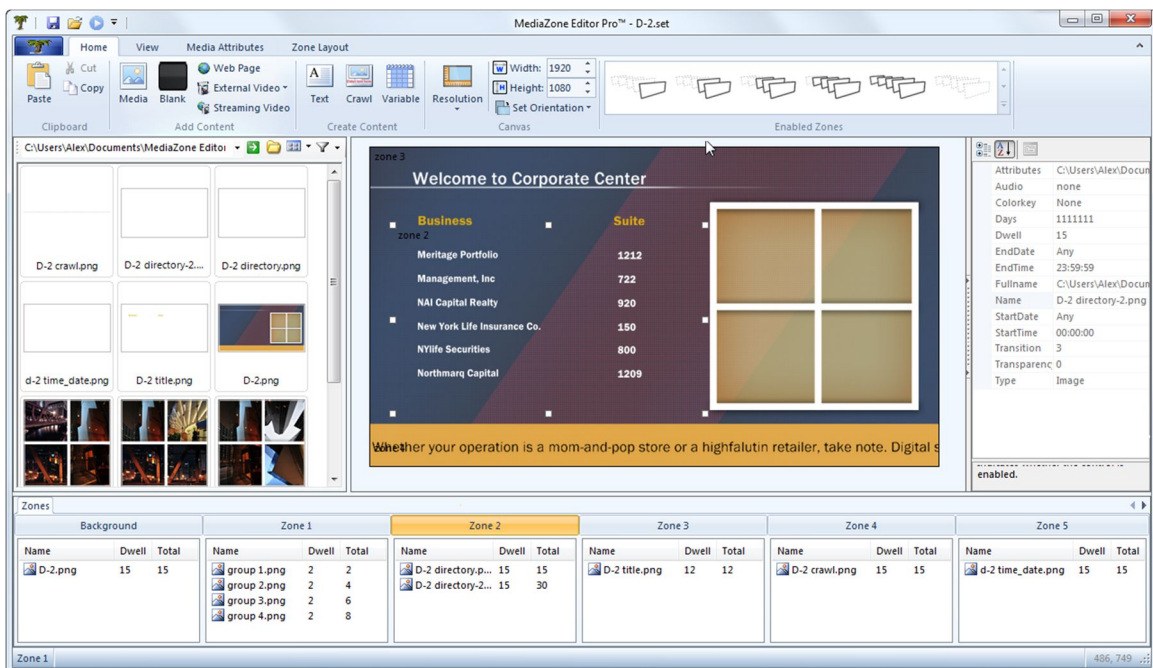


Press the play button to preview this change. It's important to note that although zones 1 and 2 occupy the same space, both can be seen. Also notice how zone 1 was moved *behind* zone 2 and not in front of it. The reason for this is simple; during playback, the number of the zone dictates its depth priority. The larger the zone number, the closest to the foreground it will appear. In this exercise, 2 is greater than 1, so zone 2 appears on top of zone 1. Additionally, the only reason the content in zone 1 can be seen beneath the content in zone 2 is because the images in zone 2 have a transparent background. If they were not transparent, zone 1 would be hidden during the playback.

Close the preview window and move zone 1 back to its original position, or press the Reset Zones button on the Zone Layout ribbon tab.

## EXERCISE FIVE – EDITING A TEXT-BASED IMAGE

To demonstrate how the Text Editor is used to create and edit text-based images, select D-2 directory-2.png from the zone 2 list. Notice the misspelling in the zone layout; the third line of occupants reads, NAI Captial Realty. To correct this spelling error, double-click this media item in the zone list. The Text Editor will launch with what appears to be a blank page. The reason it appears blank is because this image contains white text on a transparent background. To change the view to make it easier to work with white text, follow these steps:
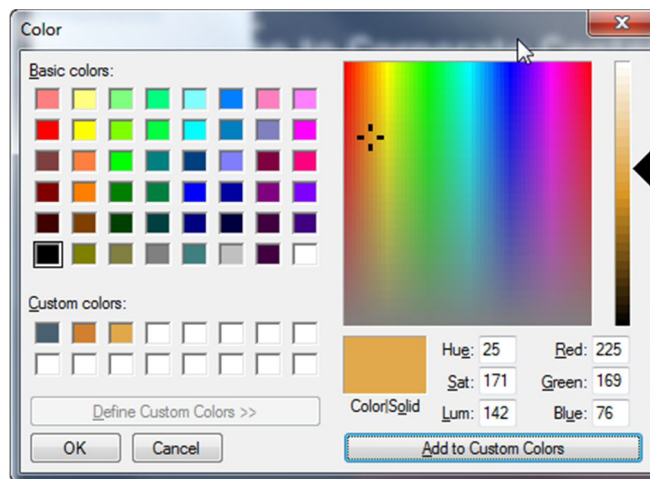
1. On the Home ribbon tab, in the Background group, select the Color drop down menu
2. Move the cursor over Select until the pop out menu appears
3. In the gallery of colors, click one of the non-white colors. For instance, the baby blue in the lower left corner. With the background color set, the white text now becomes readable
4. Select the text that reads **NAI Captial Realty**. A large white textbox now becomes active
5. To change the background of the textbox, select the Back Color drop down menu on the Text ribbon tab and choose Grey
6. With the text now readable, place the cursor near the misspelling and change the word Captial to Capital
7. Select the Home ribbon tab and press the Transparent button in the Background group
8. Save and exit the image. The spelling now appears correct in the zone layout pane

## EXERCISE SIX – COMBINING OVERLAY IMAGES

In this playlist, both zone 3 and zone 5 contain full screen, transparent images. Zone 3, a page zone, contains D-2 title.png and zone 5, a variable zone, contains D-2 time_date.png. Because both of these zones are full screen overlays, they compete with one another unnecessarily and should be combined to eliminate viewing conflicts in the zone layout pane. The preferred type for an overlay zone is a variable zone. Perform the following steps to replace the page zone (zone 3) and combine its contents with zone 5. This exercise also demonstrates how to create custom colors.

1. In the zone 5 list, double-click D-2 time_date.png. The Variable Editor will launch

2. On the Home ribbon tab, in the Tools group, select the Text Box button ⬛. A text box appears in the drawing area and the current ribbon tab is automatically switched to Text. Type the word "Business"

3. In the Font group of the Text ribbon tab, set the font name to Franklin Gothic Demi (Note: if this font is not shown, select Arial Black). Set the font height to 32. Press the bold button

4. Click the color drop-down menu ⬛ and select More Colors

5. In the Color dialog, press the Define Custom Colors button to expand the dialog

6. In the Red, Green and Blue boxes, enter these values respectively: 225, 169, 76

7. Press the Add to Custom Colors button. The dialog should look similar to the following:



8. Press OK to close the Color dialog

9. Move the Business text box into position over where the word "Business" appears on the background. To move the text box, place the cursor at the edge of the text box, between two glyphs. The cursor will change appearance to the four-sided cursor. Click the left mouse button and drag to move the textbox. Once the text box is in the desired position, release the mouse button, move the cursor outside the text box, and click once to exit edit mode

10. Press the Add Text Box button ⬛ and type the word "Suite". The formatting and color of this text box will match the previous style

11. Move the Suite text box into position over the existing background

12. On the View ribbon tab, remove the Show Zones checkbox. The background image is replaced with a dark grey background, leaving only four remaining text boxes

13. Save the image and exit to close the Variable Editor

14. With the updated D-2 time_date.png in zone 5, zone 3 is no longer required. Press the Zone 3 button to make it active, then set the Enabled value to false at the top of the properties pane

With these two images combined into one image on a variable zone, the conflict is resolved and the zone layout can now display all image information.

## EXERCISE SEVEN – EDITING A CRAWL IMAGE

The Advanced Directory Board playlist includes a crawl image in zone 4. This exercise will demonstrate how to change the test styling of a crawl, and how to find and replace text. To edit the crawl image with the Crawl Editor, double-click the D-2 crawl.png in the zone 4 list and follow these steps:

1. On the Home ribbon tab, in the Font group, press both the Bold and Italic buttons **B** *I*
2. Change the text color in the Color drop-down menu **A▾** to yellow
3. In the Effect group, press the Shadow button **A Shadow**
4. Select to the View ribbon tab and ensure the Enable Word Wrap button is pressed, to display more text
5. On the Home ribbon tab, in the Editing group, select Find or Replace 🔍
6. In the Find Text dialog, type the word "highfalutin" in the Find textbox and "prominent" in the Replace textbox. Press the Replace button, then Cancel. The new text appears highlighted in the Editor
7. Save and exit the image

Note the new text formatting in the zone layout pane, or press the play button ▶ to preview this change.