Targeted Content Channel Creation Tutorial

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Introduction

The Luminis portal system contains a robust set of rules that can be assigned to users allowing them to control various aspects of the portal. Channel creation is one of these permissions and allows a user with channel creations permissions to build content channels for public consumption. This tutorial will walk a user through the process of creating a channel using the channel creation wizards, and outline methods for successful channel creation as well as some tips to make the process go smoothly.

Step 1: Logging in

To access the portal, open up a web browser (Internet Explorer 5.5+ or Netscape 6.0+ are supported applications for the internal administration of channels) and enter the portal address: http://mcsquare.messiah.edu into your browser :

After you access the main login page, use your network ID and password to log in. You will see something that looks like this –


Note: You must have the "Manage Targeted Content" permission in order to create channels and manage content within Luminis. Check with your system administrator if you need this permission and do not have it.

Step 2: Channel Admin Screen

Click on the Channel Admin link as listed above to access the area where you will be creating content channels.

The Channel Admin screen appears. (You may not see all three of the links displayed below.)
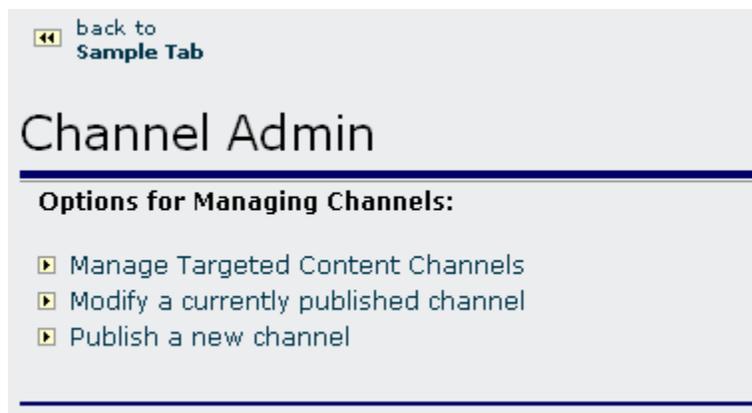
The types of channels that you will be creating are called Targeted Channels. These are boxes of content on the screen that can be configured to display for everyone, or specific roles. These roles have been pre-determined and are listed for you to choose from (more on that later).

Step 3: Channel List

Click the **Manage Targeted Content Channels** link.

The Targeted Content Manager appears, showing all targeted content channels that have been created for the system:
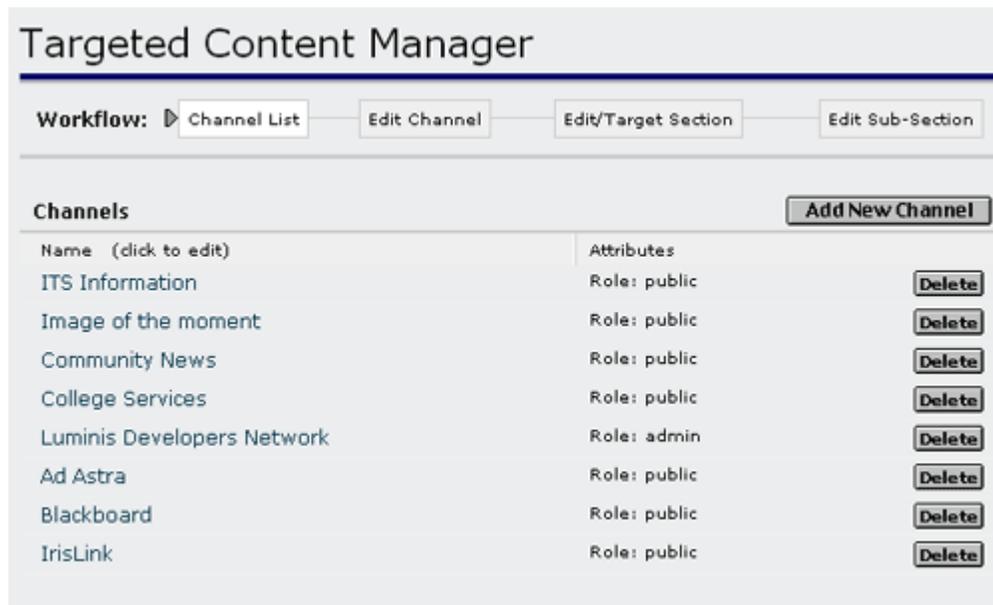
Chances are, this list will be substantially longer than the one in this screenshot.

Step 4: Create a new channel

Click the **Add New Channel** link in the top right corner.
The screen will flash and a linked named **New Channel** will appear at the top of the channel list. This is the place holder for the configuration settings that we'll be entering. The default name is 'New Channel' and can be somewhat confusing if more than one person clicks this button at the same time (multiple links called New Channel will be displayed).

Step 5: Rename channel

Click on the New Channel link to rename and set up the channel Category. This category is where the channel will sit within a menu structure. The categories have

been preset by the administrator allowing for some channel organization. When a channel is placed on a user's layout, the user can choose a category to narrow down the type of channel they may want. Some examples of these categories are department names, Applications, Entertainment etc.

Targeted Content Manager

| Workflow: | Channel List | → | Edit Channel | Edit/Target Section | Edit Sub-Section |

Channel Attributes   **Save Attributes** **Reset**

Channel Name: First Channel

Channel Title: My First Channel !

Channel Categories:
- World
Other
Test / Dev
- Alpha
- Beta
- cDump

Enter a **Name** and **Title** for the channel. (These are usually the same, but can be different as in the example above..) The Name is used in the list of channels users see when they are subscribing to new channels; the Title will appear in the user's page layout at the top of the channel. (see demo_* examples in Appendix A)

Select a **Channel Category** as appropriate, then click the **Save Attributes** button.

Note:
*You MUST click **SAVE ATTRIBUTES**, or the channel definition will be lost.*

When you click Save Attributes, you are taken back to the channel list. Now you can see your renamed channel. Click on the link to edit the newly renamed channel.

Note:
The channel has now been published to the portal, but it has no content yet. The next step is to provide content to be displayed. Believe it or not, due to the way Luminis implements the channels, users can now add this new 'empty' channel to their layout, so it is important to not leave the process at this point.

Step 6: Add a Section

A channel is divided into sections. These sections can be thought of large role-based containers. What that means is that you can create a channel that acts differently depending on whether a student, employee or faculty user is viewing it. To do this you create different role based sections of the channel.

Click the Add New Section button, the screen will flash and a link named "New Section" will be displayed. Click that new link to configure the role and content sub sections.

Targeted Content Manager

Workflow: Channel List ──── Edit Channel ────▷ Edit/Target Section   Edit Sub-Section

Section Attributes

Section Status: Active ▼

Section Title: Student Section

Section Options: ☑ Display in bulleted lists
☐ Open links with school frame

Targeting Attributes: Role: Student

Build Attributes

In the screenshot above, you'll notice that I have named this section 'Student Section', marked it active (if it is inactive, the configuration settings will be saved, but the entire section will be hidden from view within the channel). I've checked Display in bulleted lists (see Appendix A for examples with this on and off).

The Open links with school frame allows you to link to external websites, and frame them within the portal. Be aware that there are some sites that are 'frame busters' (CNN.com for example) and if you link to that site within a school frame, the site goes full screen and pops you out of the portal with no way to get back short of logging in again. So use this option with caution.

To set this section to a student role, click the Build Attributes button and the role selection screen is displayed:

Targeted Content Manager

Workflow: Channel List ──── Edit Channel ────▷ Edit/Target Section   Edit Su

Available Attributes

Attribute Type: **Selected Attributes:**

Role:
Observer
PortalContent
PortalGroupManage
PortalTeam
PortalTrainers
Prospect
ProspectiveStudent
Student

Save Changes

We have selected Student here. To make a multiple selection (more than one role for this section), hold down the CTRL key, find and click on other roles. When you're done, click the Save Changes button.

Since the section is now configured we need to click Save Changes. Just like the other time we clicked a save button, it takes you to the previous page. Click on your newly renamed channel and we'll add a subsection.

Step 7: Subsection overview / tour

Within the Luminis portal, there are many ways to add content to build a channel the way you want. (See Appendix A for examples).
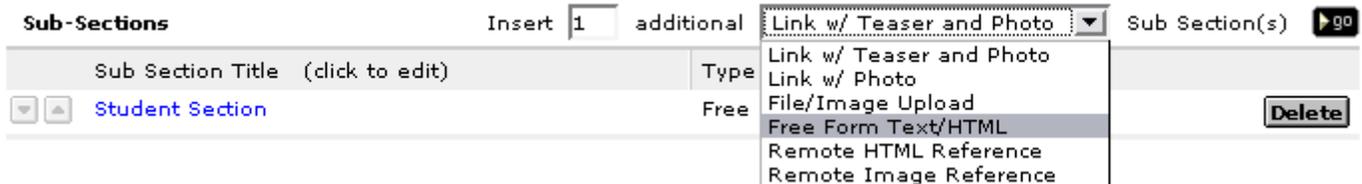
Link with Teaser and Photo: This subsection allows you to create a hyperlink to another website or resource along with a descriptive paragraph and an image. A few notes about this section are necessary to understand its power and limitations. The descriptive text (teaser) and photo are optional. Images, if you choose to use them are uploaded to the portal system. They are inserted into the channel **AS IS** meaning that if you upload a huge image, it will display huge and offset a user's layout. Please process your image before uploading, meaning open it in PhotoShop or Fireworks and shrink / compress / modify the image size. If done properly, there will be no distortion. If you need help with this contact your help desk person. The paragraph text is straight text, and can not be formatted HTML, any HTML code entered will be rendered as code so you will see something like hi there!

Link with Photo: This subsection allows you to create a link to another website or resource with a photo. You can achieve this effect using the Link with Teaser and Photo subsection, but I think they just wanted to offer more options.

File / image upload: This subsection allows you to upload a file or an image and have it display in the channel. Image attributes can be added like height / width / align=center etc. A bit more flexible than the Photo in the first subsection.

Freeform Text / HTML: This subsection allows you to enter a paragraph of text, unformatted into a channel, This is great for a description of a photo or simply a blurb about an event or item. If you choose the HTML option, you can use HTML to format the text in this channel (see Appendix A). Be aware that bad usage of html can mess up a layout. There is an overall style applied to the site, so some HTML tags may be rendered useless.

Remote HTML Reference: This subsection is rarely used and references a webpage on another system. The html from that page is pulled in, processed and thrown into a channel. This can be useful but can also cause problems such as page latency, and improper rendering of the remote page (ie. Graphics missing, links broken etc). Use with caution.

Remote Image Reference: This subsection's end result looks like the Image upload subsection, however, it is simply a reference to an image on another server somewhere. Due to image sizes, this subsection can also be problematic, so use this with caution as well.

Step 8: Adding a subsection to the configuration

Choose Freeform text for this example, click the go arrow to add a new subsection. In normal fashion, 'New Sub Section' displays as the link.

Note:
Any subsections you create are all subjected to the role of the major section they're under. So in this example, all the subsections we may add are all targeted toward a user with the student role.

Sub-Section Attributes

Sub Section Title: Student Section   (title not displayed to end users)

Start Date: April ▼ 1 ▼ 2005 ▼   End Date: May ▼ 31 ▼ 2005 ▼

Content

Content: Content uses HTML ▼

> This is the freeform text / HTML subsection.
 You can format your text with HTML code. Just be careful that you don't hose up the channel layout with bad HTML code. I suggest you build an HTML block in Dreamweaver and then paste it in this box.

Contents should not contain **<HTML>**, **<HEAD>** or **<BODY>** tags for best results

Change the Content to: Content uses HTML

Enter in text below in the box –

```
This is the freeform text / HTML subsection.   <br> You can format
your text with HTML code.  Just be careful that  you don't hose
up the channel layout with bad HTML code.  I suggest you build an
HTML block in <a href="http://www.dreamweaver.com"
target=_blank>Dreamweaver</a> and then paste it in this box.
```

Notice the HTML code within the paragraph of text.
Click Continue
Click Save Changes
Click Done
Click the link at the top of the page entitles – "back to..." to exit the channel admin area.

The Student channel is now complete. Any user who has the Student role associated with their user account can see this channel in the channel categories. If we were to add another section to the channel, assign it the employee role, add another subsection and save it, that channel would then become available to employees. If the content within the role sections are different, the channel will render differently for each group.

Step 9: Adding the channel to your layout.

Select a tab that you want to place your new channel on. The Sample tab is a good one to play with, although you can add it to any tab in your layout (excluding the MyMail tab).

Click the Content / Layout link –

Content/Layout
Channel Admin

Welcome Jonathan Wheat
You are currently logged in.

This link takes you into a new screen full of boxes (if you're on a tab with channels already placed). These boxes represent channels. You can perform various operations on these channels, such as moving them around by clicking on the arrows. When moving a channel from one column to another (left – right) it automatically pops to the bottom of the stack. If you want it moved up, you'll have to click the up arrow for each channel you want to put it in front of. You can click the ☒ icon to remove the channel from the layout. A channel may have this feature disabled, represented with a ☒ grayed out icon. This channel has been locked down and can not be removed by a typical user. If there are channel settings that can be modified, you may click the edit ✎ icon. This will take you to a screen allowing user input, if any is needed to make the channel work properly.

◄ Select Column ►

Add Channel

Messiah College Weather

Add Channel

Make sure you've selected the Sample tab while you're in the layout edit mode. The selected tab will be a dark blue color.

Click an Add Channel button in the location you would like to place your new channel. You will see the channel list of categories we talked about earlier.

Choose the category you set during the channel creation process, and click go. A list of subcategories will display to further narrow down the search for a channel. There will also be a channel list on the right. Scroll, through and find our channel. Click on it and then click Add Channel.
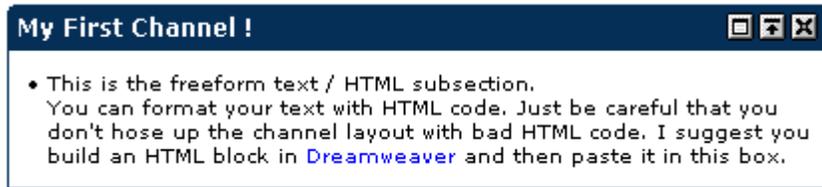
It should look something like this –

Step 10: Viewing your new channel

Up at the top, click the "back to…" link to exit layout mode and get back to the previous tab you were on. The tab you were on, may not be the tab you just edited. So if you're not there, click the Sample tab (or the tab you placed your channel on).

My First Channel !

- This is the freeform text / HTML subsection.
  You can format your text with HTML code. Just be careful that you
  don't hose up the channel layout with bad HTML code. I suggest you
  build an HTML block in Dreamweaver and then paste it in this box.

Here is the code that we pasted into the channel –

> This is the freeform text / HTML subsection.
 You can format your text with HTML code. Just be careful that you don't hose up the channel layout with bad HTML code. I suggest you build an HTML block in Dreamweaver and then paste it in this box.

Notice how it rendered in the channel? There is a line break after the first sentence because of the <br> tag. Also notice the link to the Dreamweaver site? Also notice the bullet ? Seems kind of silly since there is only one section of text, but you see what happens when that option is checked.

Step 11: Congratulations !

Congratulations, you've created a Targeted Content channel for the portal based on the Student Role. You can see in Appendix A how useful these different types of subsections can be, because you can inter twine these to create layouts that the default channel types can't handle.

Feel free to play around with the different subsections. Please save them in the Test / Dev category until you are ready to launch them for everyone else. This will help us remove them when the portal goes live.

If you have questions about channel creations, Luminis, this tutorial or anything about the portal, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is on the title page of this document.

APPENDIX A:

Channel Subsection Type Examples

demo_Link_Photo

Heading as link text

rat looking

also use this just for a link

demo_remote_image

My Favorite Google logo

demo_remote_html

TITLE SEARCH OPTIONS

Alphabetical Listing

0-9 A B C D E F G H I J K L
M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Key Word Search

You may enter a key word or group of key words.
Separate multiple words with a space. Example: Nursing Nurse LPN
*All result sets will be sorted by title.

Search

This section is actually a freeform text box, to explain the above
content. this is a remote html reference. It pulls in html from a
remote source on another server. Beware as this channel can cause
problems if the remote service is disrupted. It can also cause delay
in page rendering since the system must go fetch this html.