

Detailed Feature Comparison MediaZilla V1 vs V2

Overview

There are a lot of changes in the recently launched version of the new platform. This document details the new features added to date, which features were not added, and considerations for the decisions that were made. You can elect to read the entire document or focus on specific sections that are most relevant to you and your clients.

New Features

User Interface

Completely Redesigned Interface

We curated years of feedback from our members and redesigned the interface from scratch to be more intuitive and professional. When many members encountered the same confusion about how something worked, it was clear that changes needed to be made to it. It now looks consistent with your existing editing software and doesn't feel like you have to learn a new program.

Group Content by Sort Criteria

Sort-by-recently-uploaded will group content by month, and sort-by-title will group by letter or number. Our members have been asking for better ways to organize content in their account since day one. Although we haven't implemented project organization yet, this is definitely an improvement.

Mobile Optimized

The majority of clients viewing content from MediaZilla are using mobile devices. We made sure the new system was optimized for mobile viewing, providing a premium viewing experience for clients and members. It looks and functions like an app, and even goes full screen in mobile Safari when viewing a collection or video within your account.

Bug Removal

There were a number of little annoying bugs (e.g. with menu background image uploading) in the legacy system from the old codebase that are now all gone as a result of the new codebase. Of course with any new code, new bugs are introduced, but we are now able to quickly identify and squash them as they are discovered instead of waiting until a major release.

Display Description and Total Duration of Videos and Collections

When members and clients launch a video or collection from their dashboard, it now displays the description of the media along with the total duration. This allows the viewer to quickly determine what they can expect before starting it.

Clean and Simple Client Interface

For the most intuitive client experience, it is imperative to keep the interface as clean and uncluttered as possible. On the legacy system we often saw clients converting to trial or paid accounts in order to download or take possession of content. The new client interface looks substantially better and there should be no confusion now.

Digital Delivery

Branded Email

The email sent to the client now appears to come from your company in their inbox (it still comes from a MediaZilla address, but the name appears as your company). The email body has been made much more aesthetically pleasing. Your company name also appears in large font at the top and in the subject so the client knows who it is from and doesn't disregard it. The MediaZilla logo has been minimized at the bottom (it is important for the client to know where they are creating an account so they know where to sign-in in the future or which app they need to install).

We will be adding support for your company logo in the future. Also, the optional message in the email now supports line breaks and hyperlinks for better formatting. Your company name can easily be updated at any time from your account settings in case your business has multiple brands (weddings, corporate, etc).

Beautiful Client Landing Page

It is important to make a good impression with the client and there was lots of room for improvement here from the legacy platform. When the client clicks on the link in the email to take possession of the project, they now go to a page with a full-screen image background from your project. It also displays your company name and title of the project.

More Intuitive Onboarding for Clients

Clients were often confused about the invitation page, the purpose of creating an account, if they needed to enter a password you provided or create their own, and more. We curated all the constructive feedback we had from clients and members on this process and made sure the new design, user flow, and copy addressed every single one. This process on the new platform is tremendously better.

Auto-launching Media After Adding

When clients take possession of their project, it now automatically launches the project in their account, minimizing the number of clicks and things they have to figure out before they start watching.

Immediate Digital Delivery Sending

Digital deliveries send immediately now instead of in batches every few minutes. You no longer have to wonder when it will be sent.

Tracking Digital Delivery Status

For some of our members, this is the most valuable new feature. You can now see a list of all the digital deliveries that were sent out for a given video or collection, and its status (queued, sent, received, or error). If you hover your mouse over the status, it will provide a timestamp of when the status changed.

Queued - The email hasn't been sent yet, but will be soon. You probably won't see this status for very long since emails are dispatched immediately. If you drop in several hundred at once you will see the status update as they go out.

Sent - The email has successfully been dispatched from our system and did not receive an immediate error from the receiving mail server.

Received - The recipient took possession of the project into their own account and most likely viewed it (since it automatically launches upon taking possession)

Error - If the email could not be delivered for various reasons, it will show there was an error. Hovering over the error status will provide details on why.

Instantly Identify Improperly Formatted Email Addresses

When adding email addresses in the digital delivery section, you can now instantly see if any are improperly formatted (e.g. name@company was entered instead of name@company.com). When dropping in large lists of emails, there are often times a handful that weren't entered correctly. We highlight these errors in red so you can resolve them immediately.

Collection Editor

Published and Draft State

Previously, any changes made in the collection editor were immediately seen by the client if you had already delivered it to them. This forced you to be very careful making changes to the style, layout, etc. Now with a Draft and Published version, you can make edits to the collection without clients seeing them before you are ready.

Ability to Remove the Titles from Submenus

The legacy platform did not allow you to remove the titles of submenus. You can now remove them or add them back at will.

Main Menu Title can be Different from Collection Title

No longer does the title on the main menu have to be the same as the title of the collection. There are various reasons why you might want these to be different. Now they can be!

Submenu Titles can be Different than the Parent Button

Previously, the title that appeared at the top of the scene selection or bonus features menu had to be the same as the button on the main menu that linked to it. You can now set the button text on the main menu to something different than what appears as the title on the submenu.

Unlimited Submenus

Finally! You can now create multiple scene selection and bonus feature style menus allowing for many more use cases and structuring of project content.

Main Menu Supports Unlimited Buttons

Previously the buttons on the main menu would wrap until they filled the entire screen, limiting the number of buttons that could be added. We have redesigned the navigation bar on the main menu to scroll instead of wrap, supporting an unlimited number of buttons like the other menus already did.

Menu Tree Display and Navigation

With the added support of multiple submenus, the structure of the menu system can become more complex if you choose. We now provide a visual of the menu structure in a tree format on the right-side of the collection editor. This allows you to quickly see which videos are referenced on each menu and how everything is laid out. You can also click on any of the menus or videos on the tree to go to them.

Preview Mode

While editing a collection you can now click a button to quickly preview exactly what it will look like for the client without having to publish it or return to your main dashboard. Yay!

Add Multiple Videos to a Menu at Once

We've greatly reduced the time it takes to setup a menu by allowing you to easily add multiple videos at once instead of one at a time. You can now also specify the start time in the same step.

Set Start Time for Any Video

Previously the start time for a video could only be set for scenes on the scene selection menu. Now you can set the start time for any video on any menu, turning any menu page into a potential scene selection (just with different layouts).

Easily Duplicate a Menu Button

We've greatly reduced the time it takes to create multiple buttons that reference a single video (such as a scene selection) by allowing you to duplicate a button. You can now select which video you want to add, specify the start time and chapter title, then quickly duplicate it and update the title and start time as needed. This should greatly speed up your workflow.

Set video start time to current time

You can now scrub through the video in the interface and click a button to set the start time to the current time you are viewing. Another time saver.

See Total Duration of Videos to be Added

While selecting videos to be added to a collection, you can see the total runtime of them all. If you expect the runtime to be around 2 hours and it is only 15 minutes, you might want to double check you included all the ones you wanted.

Video

Automatic Detection of Potential Issues

Before we transcode your video and it counts against your quota, we analyze it for potential issues you might want to resolve or must resolve. For example, if the video has a very low bitrate relative to its resolution, this could be impacting the client's experience and we recommend you encode it at a higher bitrate and re-upload. Conversely, if you upload a video with an extremely high bitrate, we recommend you encode it at a lower bitrate so that you are not unnecessarily wasting your upload quota as no difference in quality will be noticed. The recommended bitrate is provided.

We also detect if videos were partially exported from your editing program which oftentimes happens. Again, these checks happen before it transcodes so no upload quota is wasted on a file that will inevitably need to be fixed and re-uploaded.

Improved Video Encoding Quality

Our new platform uses an entirely new encoding system with improved speed and quality. All our settings have been re-tuned for even better results.

Video Playback up to 60p

Our members are often uploading 50p and 60p videos and want their clients to see their projects at the same high frame rate. The legacy system only supports up to 30p, while the new system can support up to 60p.

Support for the Apple ProRes codec

Our new encoder supports the Apple ProRes codec. However, we still recommend encoding in h.264 or h.265 as they are more efficient with your upload quota and will take less time to upload.

Other High Value Features

Additional Allow Downloading Control

Allow downloading can now be controlled separately for the share link and digital delivery recipients. This feature request come up frequently for our members who wanted the client to be able to download the video but not everyone who viewed the share link.

Animated GIF Support

You can now upload animated gifs for any images. This includes video poster frames, menu backgrounds, and scene selection thumbnails. For a good client experience we recommend keeping the file size as small as possible. Full video background support will be added at a later time.

Frame Capture from Video

You can now grab poster frames and scene selection thumbnails from any point in a video. Simply scrub the video to find the frame you want and click a button to capture it. This is yet another new feature that will speed up your workflow.

Self-Serve Upgrading and Adding Quota

Members can upgrade and add additional quota without contacting support. In a time crunch and need more quota? Instantly take care of it now within your account.

Upload Manager

Our new upload manager within the interface allows you to see a list of all the files being uploaded regardless of where you are in the app. This allows you to navigate to anywhere in the dashboard or even edit a collection and always see the progress without any disruption to your uploads. Get stuff done while uploading!

Persistent Notification System

We've built a notification system that allows notices to persist until you address the issues or clear them. This is where you will be notified of any issues we detect with your videos, if an upload will put you over your quota, and much more.

Email Verification System

We've added an email verification system for added security and to ensure you do not have a typo in your provided email address. Your account cannot be accessed until the email has been verified. This ensures you can receive important email notifications from

us. Occasionally members would have a typo in their email address and not receive a critical notice for resolving a billing issue, etc.

Add/Update Payment Methods

Multiple payment methods can now be added and removed. You can also change the default at any time. Reaching out to support or waiting until your renewal date is no longer necessary.

New Codebase

We officially launched MediaZilla on October 1, 2014. We came to a major crossroad in late 2017 and had to make a big decision: Continue rolling out new features in an unsustainable way or re-architect our system with the latest in web technology that would allow us to scale and launch new features faster than ever before. We chose the latter for the long term success of our members, your clients and MediaZilla (collectively referred to as SquadZilla).

This type of endeavor was not a small feat as we rebuilt the entire system from scratch. It required a team of talented engineers, product specialists and determination. We have put measures in place to address technical debt so it does not accrue to an insurmountable state.

Features Not Added or Coming Soon

Video formats other than mp4 and mov

We will be adding support for additional video formats. Based on data from V1 mp4 and MOV make up 90% of all videos uploaded to the platform. M4v represents about 8%.

Because we probe each video to check for a complete file and low or high bit rate we needed to modify our method to account for m4v and other formats.

Manual slider adjustments for font size and tile size of media in your dashboard

We will not be adding this feature back as it did not provide a huge amount of value for our members. We have written responsive code and optimized the viewing experience for all types of screen sizes.

Stats

We built our own in-house system and are tracking analytics to be displayed in the future. This feature will be completed in the near future.

All Media dashboard view

We purposely left this option out to avoid a cluttered viewing experience between videos and collections. Once we implement project organization we will circle back to this feature.

Standard Definition (SD) playback

Currently only the HD version is available for playback, unless there is only an SD version. We will be adding support for SD playback in the future. An SD version is encoded for all video uploads.

Multiple pre-generated thumbnails

Our old system generated thumbnails every 30 seconds, which created a bloated number of options for longer videos. We removed this bloated method and replaced it with a more streamlined approach.

Username

We removed the concept of username in the new system. We found it to be far easier for people to use their email as their login, especially for clients. You will still be able to use your username on the legacy platform.

Legacy Export

You can read our detailed write-up [here](#).

Soft Release

We decided to do a "soft launch" of the new platform on September 4, 2019 for the following reasons:

1. We rewrote the entire application from scratch. It would be impossible to fully debug the platform with only beta testing in our sandboxed environment. Our beta team did a great job to help flush out bugs. Once we had a stable beta release we needed to do testing in a live production environment to discover bugs that wouldn't have come up in the beta.
2. To mitigate the issue we did not force any members into the new system right away.
3. Members who wanted to start using the benefits of the new platform have the option, and those who wanted to wait until more features were added could continue to use the legacy platform.
4. Our top priority was to get the new infrastructure out, and then focus on new features. We did not want to continue delaying the release of the new platform.
5. We have now shifted gears back to new feature development.

Migration

Migrations to the new platform are scheduled to begin by September 30 on an opt-in basis. All accounts will be migrated to the new system by January 10, 2020. Previously we stated December 31, 2019; however, our team will be offline for the winter break until January 6, 2020. We want to set accurate expectations.

Also, we will be doing a detailed write-up of the migration process and our rationale.

Future Features

One of the obvious questions is when will all of the other features be rolled out? We have been curating member feedback and adding feature requests to our product backlog. We are in the process of setting our objectives for the 4th quarter of 2019. We will circle back once we have more clarity about what we can commit to launching in that timeframe.

Here are some of the most requested features. This list is by no means exhaustive.

- 4K
- More streaming apps
- Source file downloading
- Folders for projects
- Multi-user accounts and roles
- Photography support