SMARTMESSAGES

Quick Start Sending Guide

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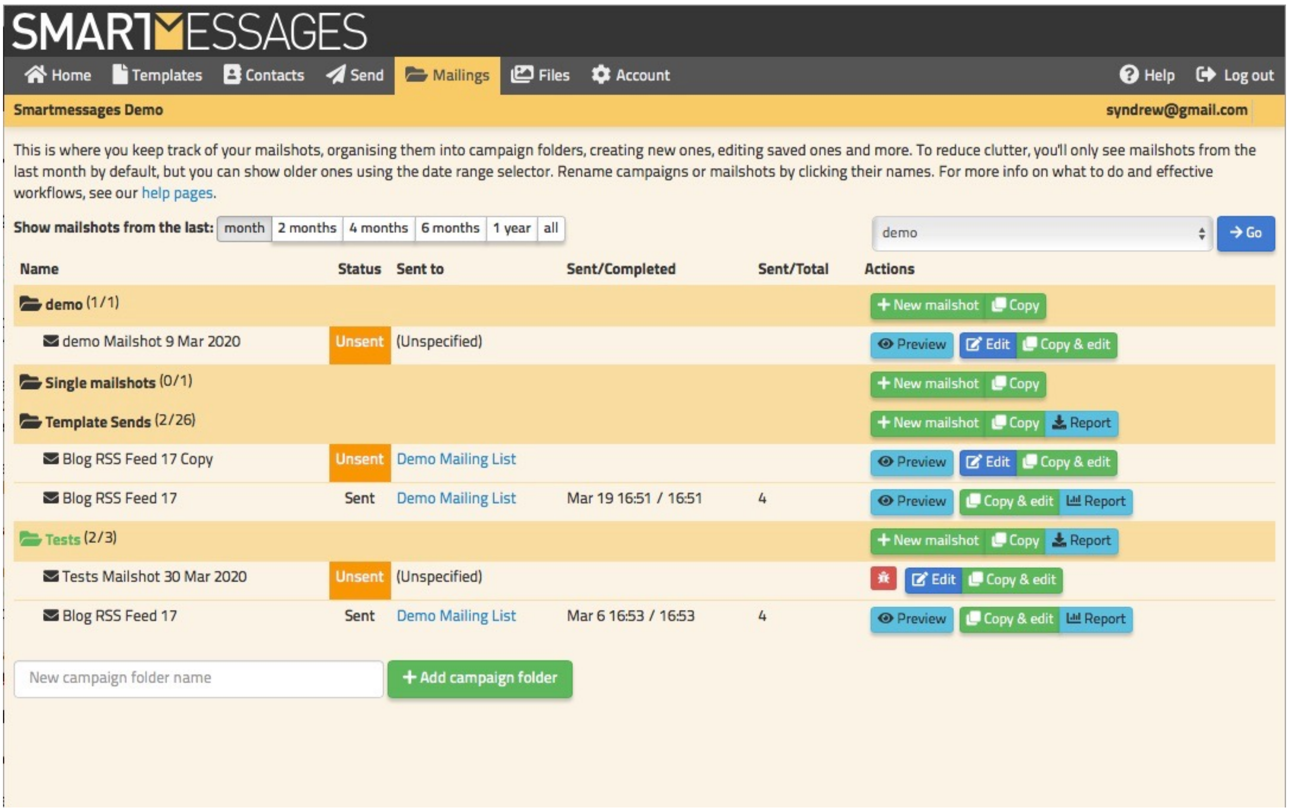
This guide assumes that the account is already set up with branding, there are templates ready to use, and mailing lists have already been uploaded.

There are two parts to an email message – a plain-text version and an HTML version. It's up to the receiver which one they choose to view; most will see the HTML version, but it's worth making sure both look good.

In the HTML version there are three main components: the HTML code which defines styling and layout, the text to be read, and images. Images are attached into the message via URLs (image's address), which point at the image's location on Smartmessages servers.

Images can be placed directly into layouts, and resized within the editor, but it's best if they are prepared in advance in a graphics application before they are uploaded so that they can be the right size and dimensions.

There are two ways to to set up a mailing - either starting from scratch, or by copying a previous mailshot.



Starting from an existing mailshot

The simplest way of creating a mailshot is to copy one you've used before and then change it. You'll probably find this is what you use most of the time.

Go to the mailings tab and click the "Copy & edit" button next to any mailshot you want to send a new version of, and you'll be taken straight into the editor with a copy of the message ready to edit.

Starting from scratch

Go to the mailings tab and click on a "New mailshot" button.

When you start this way, you'll get a default template to start with, but you can pick one of many standard templates by choice one by name from the templates menu, or by clicking the template gallery button and picking one from there. The template will then be copied into the editor, and you can start work on it – note that it will replace anything you had in the editor before.

Saving your work

You can click the "Save" button in the top right, and your mailshot will be saved and you'll be taken back to the mailings page. When you save, your template will be checked for errors first, and you'll be able to choose whether to stay and fix the errors, or just save it as-is.

Clicking the "Send a test" or any of the preview buttons will also save your work.

There isn't an autosave and so it is worth saving once in a while to avoid losing work if there is a browser timeout.

Uploading images

To upload images in advance of creating mailshots, go to the files tab, and then drag & drop images form your computer onto the page, and they will be uploaded.

You can store your images in different sub folders to keep them tidy and to avoid clashes between images with the same name.

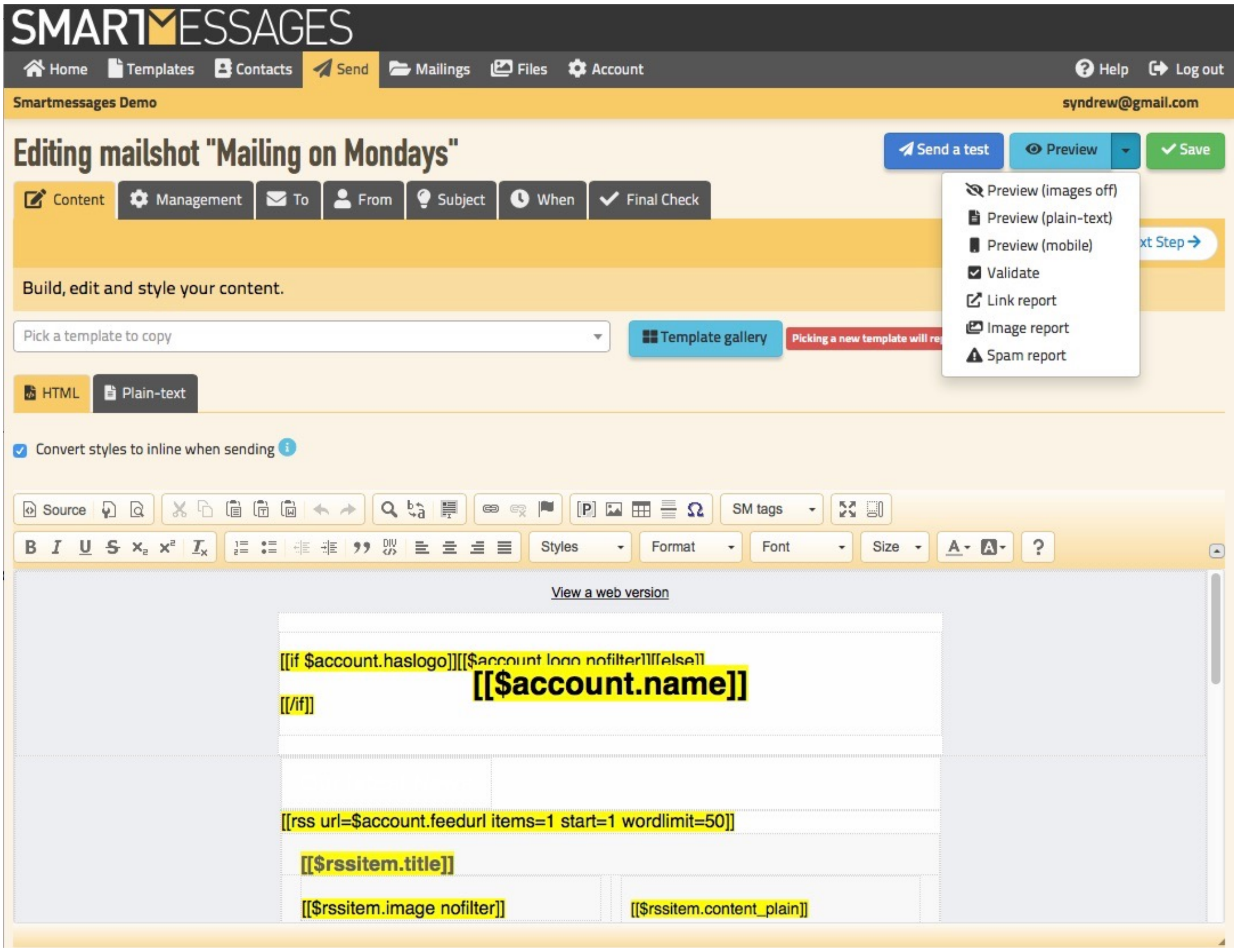
The file manager has a simple image editor built-in allowing cropping & resizing, but a dedicated graphics application will have more functionality and control.

You can also upload images when you are editing your email, straight onto the email. When checking the image report, oversized images will be highlighted and can be resized directly from the report.

Testing mailshots

It's vitally important to test your messages before sending a mailshot! Your account should already have a test list defined on the contacts page; when you're working on a mailshot, click the "**Send a test"** button and it will immediately check your template, save it, and send a test mailshot to your test list. It is a good idea to have a range of email clients and platforms as test recipients, such as yahoo, gmail, hotmail, Outlook, Apple Mail, etc) to check how it looks on different platforms.

Next to the "Preview" button is a drop down which allows a range of different preview and testing options, including links, images, spam check, and HTML validation.



Sending a mailshot

After you receive and inspect your test mailshot, make any corrections and **test again**.
When you've got it just right, choose a sensible name (under the Management tab) and in which campaign folder it will be stored. Choose the list you wish to send to, set from options, the subject line (which is itself a complete template), and when you want it to send (the default is a couple of minutes from *right now*, so you have a moment's grace in case you hit send accidentally!), check the final check tab and when you're ready, click "Send".

Top Tip - This editor toolbar button  takes you to a full-screen editing mode, giving you lots more space to work.

RSS Emails

If you have an RSS feed, like a blog or recent news, the URL can be added to the contact details page under the Account tab.
By going to create a mailing, a template can be chosen from the template gallery and previewed, which will be populated with the stories from the feed.
If you have different categories, then the email can created in different sections and populated accordingly, thus different email could be sent to different lists depending on their interests.

There's lots more to explore…

Smartmessages has many other features make your templates more dynamic and personalised, or to help build layouts automatically from RSS feeds. You'll find it all documented on our help pages at https://wiki.smartmessages.net/.