

### Scala InfoChannel® 5 - Frequently Asked Questions



#### What is being introduced?

##### **Introducing Scala InfoChannel® 5 – The Next Generation is here...**

The next generation of the most widely deployed digital signage software platform in the world, Scala InfoChannel® is now available. With the release of Scala InfoChannel 5 – Scala continues to exceed customer expectations around the world and is now poised to gain an even wider industry lead. InfoChannel 5 further extends the benefits and ROI of digital signage and corporate communications networks around the world.

InfoChannel 5 introduces the brand-new InfoChannel Content Manager which together with other significant Authoring, Network Management and Playback enhancements ensures that this next generation of digital signage software offers unequalled, new features that benefit both Digital Signage and Corporate Communications customers alike: streamlined interface/workflow; rapid template based content authoring; sophisticated content management including new channel planning/scheduling modules; new 3D-based rendering engine for improved visual quality and performance and multiple independent output channels per remote Player PC dramatically reduces hardware costs at remote playback locations.

Of course, the traditional InfoChannel strengths which propelled Scala to its leading position in the first place are still there and better than ever: authoring option provides the fastest system for creation of Dynamic Content in the business; support for both Interactive (kiosks, touch-screens, etc) and Passive displays; support for both Terrestrial & Satellite (e.g. multicast) IP-based networks; flexible integration with external databases (e.g. POS) or other external systems (e.g. legacy systems) using VBScript, JavaScript or Python; and finally InfoChannel's real-time rendering at the "point of playback" ensures smaller file sizes coupled with intelligent file transfers dramatically reduces network bandwidth requirements. With field proven scalability and 24/7 reliability, Scala InfoChannel is installed in more digital signage networks around the world than any other digital signage software platform.

**New Content Management & Planning** – Managing your digital signage content can be challenging, but with the new state-of-the-art content management, planning and scheduling tools included in Scala InfoChannel 5, management and control of your network is both improved and simplified – reducing the resources required to control and maintain your network. New template support – plan-based content distribution, timetables, and playlists – keep you in control of your network from wherever you are in the world, through the new browser-based interface.

- ☑ **Roles and Users** – The new Content Manager User Interface is fully multi-user capable. Everyone can contribute to the network at the same time. User profiles can be defined to only allow certain feature/functionality on a user-by-user basis.
- ☑ **Templates** – From the Content Manager's web front end, any user can fill in forms that drive predefined templates. Templates are defined in InfoChannel Designer. No additional software needs to be installed on the users desktop. Data-driven content templates allow even your least design-savvy employee to create great looking displays.
- ☑ **Plan-based Content Distribution** – Simply define your "channel" and assign it to one or more players. Content is then automatically distributed to all "points of playback". You can even tag content with metadata, and use that to dynamically control playback without special scripting.
- ☑ **Playlists and Schedules** – Playlists and schedules can be easily defined from Content Manager's web front end. De-

fine one-time or recurring time slots that employ variable recurrence patterns and start/end dates. Specify playlists for each time slot and view the schedule graphically at-a-glance.

☑ **Content Management** – Directly ingest MPEGs, JPEGs, Flash and Scala scripts directly into Content Manager, with metadata and thumbnails. This gives you the best of both worlds – Sophisticated applications can still use InfoChannel Designer. Media planners are not forced to use Designer. Content Manager can ingest content, data or video feeds, automatically from multiple remote FTP servers that can be automatically incorporated into a “smart playlist”.

**New Simplified System Management** - Content management and planning are key to the success of any digital signage network, but without careful system management of network components your message may not be delivered to your intended audience. The new InfoChannel Content Manager provides tools for maintenance scheduling, roles and workflows, and a field-proven stable & scalable transmission engine all controlled by a new intuitive user interface that ensures reliable delivery of your content to your audience.

☑ **Maintenance Scheduling** – The Player knows its “rules” for scheduled maintenance tasks, even if the network is down. Tasks such as weekly reboots, log retrieval, health monitoring are defined from Content Manager’s web based GUI. Once entered, maintenance requirements can be executed at specified times with minimal disruption to your digital signage network.

☑ **Roles and Workflows** – User Roles allow users/groups to be assigned different access rights and roles for improved security and workflow. Preset roles can be individually adjusted as needed. Many users can log into the system at the same time.

☑ **Transmission Engine** – Build a timetable of playlists outlining what content should play when and where, and content will be automatically delivered by the field-proven Transmission Engine, to all the specified “points of playback”.

☑ **New User Interface** – Navigate the Scala InfoChannel software platform faster and easier with an even more intuitive and friendly user interface. The new InfoChannel 5 user interface makes extensive use of context menus, rich web-interfaces with drag and drop thumbnails, advanced media searching and browsing, timetable based scheduling, and more, allowing you to access and control your network from anywhere in the world.

**New Superior Visual Quality & Performance** – The appearance and performance of your content will capture and keep your audience’s attention with crystal clear, smooth tickers and animations. The new Scala InfoChannel® Player 5 offers many advancements in quality and performance including: multi-channel support per player, auto scaling provides resolution independence, auto rotation makes managing of portrait content a breeze, multiple frames per channel, and more consistent timing in addition to smoother tickers and fonts and overall better performing graphics.

☑ **Multi-channel Support** – Run multiple channels from a single InfoChannel Player PC with Dual Output Video cards - immediately reducing your hardware, OS licensing, and administration costs.

☑ **Multiple Independent Zones** – Each display can have multiple independent zones or regions of the screen, each running their own independent script or playlist. Zones are defined from Content Manager’s rich browser based interface.

☑ **Resolution Independence and Scaling** – Players can render different sizes on the fly with outstanding visual clarity. Layout your content for the correct aspect ratio (16x9, 4x3, or 9x16), and the new InfoChannel Player will make it look great regardless of resolution.

☑ **Rotation Support** – With this new feature, you can design your content in portrait mode, but have the InfoChannel Player rotate this for landscape playback (to work with a wider variety of screens and computers) without any visual side effects.

☑ **Greater Visual Performance** – The new 3D based rendering engine offers greater visual playback performance to ensure your message is delivered as crisp and as clear as possible in native screen resolutions, including HD.

☑ **Smoothness** – Scala InfoChannel 5 ensures smoother tickers/crawls and animation or transition effects due to greater performance, improved scaling, and sub-pixel positioning. Video and animations on each page play seamlessly during page transitions.

**New Cutting-Edge Architecture** - Behind every great application is a great architecture. Scala InfoChannel 5 is no exception. Newly added features - including easier upgradeability, better compatibility, secure database backend, proof of playback reporting, and simplified content delivery – give Scala InfoChannel 5 the flexibility, security, scalability, extensibility and ease of use that your market demands.

☑ **No Player Dongles, Online software upgrades** – InfoChannel Content Manager manages the licenses for your entire network centrally, therefore there are no more player dongles to keep track of. Software updates are available online based on this new licensing scheme.

☑ **HTTP and HTTPS support** – With InfoChannel 5, there is no FTP server to set up. No custom ports to configure in a firewall, and no IIS to configure. Built in applications provide both web server and database functionality. Improved security is now possible with HTTPS support. Many CISCO networks will find this very helpful.

☑ **Proof-of-Playback Reporting, New XML Format** – InfoChannel 5's new playlogs are XML based, allowing us to support the new POPAI standard and other third party applications (e.g. DS-IQ). A new Scala Billing Viewer offer simplified generation of proof-of-playback affidavits, saving you time and eliminating costly delays in extracting detailed billing information from your InfoChannel 5 network.

☑ **State-of-the-Art Technology** – InfoChannel 5 Content Manager is based on modern, rich, open standards such as J2EE and SQL all wrapped in a rich AJAX-based web-interface - giving the platform the ability to scale easily and adapt to a variety of IT environments.

<b>Feature Comparison Chart</b>	<b>InfoChannel 3</b>	<b>InfoChannel 5</b>
Much Improved InfoChannel Designer 5 Interface with context sensitive menus & new look & feel		X
Any content element can be "global" (survives page changes) - even with opacity		X
Content elements (including videos) can play over background movies		X
Design in portrait-mode and auto rotate on playback		X
Quality of TV playback with TV tuner EX significantly improved		X
Save within Design menu		X
Extensive use of latest technology (Java, J2EE, Ajax)		X
Built-in SQL Database back-end for management of content & player databases		X
Sophisticated, browser-based, content management including scheduling & planning		X
Direct creation of playlists in the new InfoChannel Content Manager (without using InfoChannel Designer)		X
Thumbnail previews of content in InfoChannel Content Manager		X
Control content thru adding of meta-data (valid dates/times, custom fields, etc)		X
Supports both passive and interactive digital signs or kiosks.	X	X
Easy content creation from templates		Optional
Create & plan content "channels" & assign to one or more players or group of players		X
Timetable-based scheduling thru rich, browser-based graphical interface		X
New powerful browser-based interface for creating & managing Playlists	X	X
Network monitoring, including InfoChannel Player "health" status, etc	X	X
InfoChannel Player Health and log views	X	Even Better!
Proof of playback		Optional
Billing log viewer and reporter with SQL back-end	X	X
Remote software updates		X
InfoChannel Player Maintenance tasks can be scheduled into the channel plan		X
Central management of InfoChannel Player and optional features licenses		X
No dongle required for a network connected InfoChannel Player		X
Role-based user access rights		X
Ability to update while on-air	X	Plan-based
Transmission scheme	Job-based	X
Intelligent file transfer	X	X
FTP transmission	X	X
HTTP/HTTPS Transmission		X
Terrestrial & Satellite (multicast) IP-based communication carriers are supported	X	X
Better firewall transversal and security for Back-channel		X
Transmission Server Module runs as a service		X
New 3D rendering & playback engine for improved performance and visual quality		X
Auto Scale content to any resolution (resolution independent of playlists/scripts)		X
Real-time rendering of output at time of playback		X
Import standard graphics and video	X	X
Flexible data integration & user customization using VBScript, JavaScript or Python	X	X
Multiple independent frames or "zones" per channel/screen	X	X
Run multiple independent channels from one PC		X
Smooth and powerful visual effects		Even better!
Control of external devices at points of playback	X	X
Elements animate during page wipes		X
Support for higher display resolutions and MPEG4 video playback		X

**When will InfoChannel 5 be available to ship to customers?**

InfoChannel 5 is targeted to be available for shipping to customers in September 2006.

**Where can I find out more about the product?**

Information on this product will be available on [www.scala.com](http://www.scala.com) or you can contact your channel manager.

**What are Modules and which ones are included and which are not?**

There are several modules to the InfoChannel Network. These are separate software pieces that comprise the larger products. Some are included in the products and some are sold separately as Extension modules to the basic InfoChannel product. Historically these have been referred to as "EX"es.

<i>InfoChannel Player</i>	
<p><i>Included Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Configuration Module</li> <li>Transmission Client Module</li> <li>System Optimization Module</li> <li>Playback Module</li> <li>Broadcast Receiver Module</li> </ul>	<p><i>Optional "EX" Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TV Tuner EX Module</li> <li>CORIOgen EX Module</li> <li>Weather EX Module</li> <li>Video Control EX Module</li> <li>MyHD EX Module</li> <li>Widescreen Banner EX Module</li> <li>NewSight 3D EX Module</li> </ul>
<i>InfoChannel Content Manager</i>	
<p><i>Included Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transmission Server Module (1)</li> <li>Network Monitoring Module</li> <li>Planning Module</li> <li>Content Management Module</li> </ul>	<p><i>Optional "EX" Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Billing Reporter EX Module</li> <li>Template Composer EX Module</li> <li>Publish Automation EX Module</li> <li>Additional Transmission Server EX Modules</li> </ul>
<i>InfoChannel Designer</i>	
<p><i>Included Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design Module</li> <li>Playback Module</li> <li>Template Design Module</li> </ul>	<p><i>Optional "EX" Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TV Tuner EX Module</li> <li>CORIOgen EX Module</li> <li>Weather EX Module</li> <li>Video Control EX Module</li> <li>MyHD EX Module</li> <li>Widescreen Banner EX Module</li> <li>NewSight 3D EX Module</li> </ul>
<i>InfoChannel Broadcast Server</i>	
<p><i>Included Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadcast Module</li> </ul>	<p><i>Optional Modules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>

**What happened to Infocchannel Network Manager?**

In late 2004, Scala acquired Streambase Technologies in Norway and in early 2005 Streambase was renamed to Scala Nordic, now a wholly owned Scala subsidiary. The technology, know-how and development team we acquired with the Streambase acquisition has played a major role in redefining the role of the Network Manager product and extending it to include the sophisticated Content Management functionality now found in the new InfoChannel Content Manager. InfoChannel 5 could be considered to be the first child of this marriage, so:

The Network Manager Enterprise Edition functionality has been re-created from scratch and its functionality (and much more) has been incorporated into the newly announced InfoChannel Content Manager.

### **Are there any products in InfoChannel 3 that have been permanently removed from InfoChannel 5?**

The following products have new equivalents in InfoChannel 5.

*Network Manager:* This functionality (plus much more) has been incorporated into the new InfoChannel Content Manager product

*Reporter:* The Reporter product functionality (plus much more) has been incorporated into the optional "Template Composer EX module" of the new InfoChannel Content Manager.

### **Are there any features in InfoChannel 3 that will not be available in InfoChannel 5 at launch but will be added in a future release?**

The following products or features are scheduled for release in Q4 of 2006.

*Foreign Language User Interface versions:* The initial release of InfoChannel 5 will be available only with an English language user interface and manuals. The following versions are planned for release before end of 2006: French, Japanese, Korean, Chinese Traditional, Chinese Simplified

*Foreign Language Authoring and Playback Support:* Authoring and playback of American, Western European, Central European, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cyrillic, and other language fonts are fully supported from day one. Arabic, Thai, Hindi, Farsi, Urdu, and Hebrew will be supported by the end of 2006.

*InfoChannel Broadcast Server:* This product will be available in Q4 2006.

### **What is the Template Composer EX Module and why is it being sold separately?**

As stated earlier Reporter has been discontinued and its functionality (plus much more) has been integrated into an optional InfoChannel Content Manager Module called the Template Composer EX Module that will be sold separately. This new Template Composer EX Module has a much richer and user friendly template functionality than the old "Reporter" product that is being discontinued beyond InfoChannel 3, so the functionality in this area is actually significantly better, including a preview thumbnail view feature of a completed template.

Templates can be created in InfoChannel Designer 5, allowing the creative content designers (graphics artists) to create the "look and feel" of a channel. People with other roles in an organization can then simply select a template in the InfoChannel Content Manager, fill in the "blanks" (or compose), preview it and then insert it into the playlist of the channel (assuming they have purchased this optional EX module). All this can be done through a browser on any internet-connected computer.

Not all customers need this feature. For example customers who only need to play back full-screen images, videos and/or flash files may not need this exciting new module.

### **How compatible is content (Scala Scripts) developed in IC3 with InfoChannel 5?**

There is a very high level of compatibility between content (Scala scripts) developed in IC3 and InfoChannel 5. Contact Scala for more details.

### **How easily can an IC3 network be transitioned to an InfoChannel 5 network?**

For smaller networks, transitioning from IC3 to InfoChannel 5 will be straight forward and simple. For more complicated networks there will of course need to be additional planning which Scala and Scala partners will assist with. For more information on transitioning contact your Scala Authorized Partner.

## **Are there any changes to the software support program for this product?**

Yes – significant changes to the existing IC3 “SSP” (Scala Support Program) are being planned under the program name Scala Advantage.

Scala products will be sold with one complimentary year of Scala Advantage Basic that entitles customers to major upgrades, minor upgrades, bug fixes, access to the Scala knowledge base, discounted technical support incident pricing, and an online interface.

Scala Advantage Plus will be sold through Scala resellers to the end users. Resellers may want to sell this product when they do not have the staff or skill level to support their end users via their own technical support programs. Scala will provide support to end-users if they have subscribed to Scala Advantage Plus.

*Scala Advantage Basic\* – Upgrade protection and maintenance.* The end user can negotiate a technical support agreement directly with the Scala Authorized Partner. Scala will continue to support our partners.

- Major upgrades (self-service)
- Minor upgrades (self-service)
- Bug fixes
- Access to the Scala knowledge base (self-service)
- Reduced rate per incident pricing (\$89)

*Scala Advantage Plus\* – Upgrade protection, maintenance, and Scala technical support.* Technical Support at all levels provided to the end user direct from Scala. Scala Advantage Plus is purchased through the reseller, but the reseller is not required to support the customer in any fashion. Scala will handle all technical issues directly.

- Online support
- Phone support
- E-mail support
- Major upgrades (self-service)
- Minor upgrades (self-service)
- Bug fixes
- Access to the Scala knowledge base (self-service)

\*All programs may not be available in all of the more than 60 countries where Scala products are used at the time of launch.

## **Should I wait to deploy Scala InfoChannel 5 or start with InfoChannel 3?**

Until Scala InfoChannel 5 is shipping customers should continue to deploy InfoChannel 3. If a customer deploys a new InfoChannel 3 network, they will receive a complimentary transition to Scala InfoChannel 5 as soon as it is available. It is recommended that customers start with InfoChannel 3 and transition to Scala InfoChannel 5 when it becomes available.

**If I have a support agreement will I get InfoChannel 5 for free? What if I don't have SSP - can I sign up for maintenance and get the new product for free?**

Customers under current support agreements will be provided the opportunity to transition to InfoChannel 5. Customer who have expired support agreements will be able to renew and receive InfoChannel 5 for free. For details on the transition policy, please contact your Scala Authorized Partner.

**What are the hardware recommendations for InfoChannel Designer 5 & InfoChannel Player 5?**

	<b>Low-end InfoChannel Players &amp; InfoChannel Designers</b>	<b>Mid-range InfoChannel Players &amp; InfoChannel Designers</b>	<b>High End InfoChannel Players &amp; InfoChannel Designers</b>
<b>Display Resolutions up to a maximum of</b>	1024x768x32bpp	1280x768x32bpp	1920x1080x32bpp
<b>Recommended minimum storage</b>	40GB/2MB-Cache, 5400RPM ATA-100 or SATA-150 or better.	80GB/8MB-Cache, 7200RPM ATA-100 or SATA-150 or better.	RAID-1, 80GB/8MB-Cache, 7200RPM ATA-100 or SATA-150 or better.
<b>Recommended Operating Systems</b>	Windows XP Professional SP2 (32 bit) or for larger networks contact Scala for an XP Embedded HD image (lower cost & preferred)		
<b>Minimum Processor Speed &amp; Type</b>	Intel P4-based Celeron-D-300-series CPU's at 2.66 GHz+. AMD Sempron, 3100+	Intel P4-500/600-series, 2.4 GHz+/FSB 800MHz+ or better. AMD Athlon64, 3200+	Intel P4-600's CPU or better. AMD Athlon64-X2, 3800+
<b>Minimum RAM Size</b>	256MB of DDR-SDRAM	256MB of DDR-SDRAM	512MB of DDR-SDRAM
<b>Graphics sub-system</b>	An integrated graphics processor such as: Intel 945GV or for better performance: ATi RADEON Xpress 200G, or nVidia Geforce 6100 IGP	A discrete graphics processor on an AGPx8 or PCIeX16 card such as: ATi RADEON x600 or nVidia Geforce 6600 or better	A discrete graphics processor on an AGPx8 or PCIeX16 card such as: ATi RADEON x1300 or nVidia Geforce 7600 or better

Examples of current mainstream/corporate systems that have been deployed that would be appropriate for InfoChannel 3 and InfoChannel 5:

IBM ThinkCentre M50, M51, M52

DELL Optiplex GX270, GX280, GX620

EQUUS Pundit or Noblis

Fujitsu-Siemens E600, E5901

HP dx5150

NEC VC30