

# Message Bar Configurator

## User Guide

### What it is

The message bar is web app tool designed to provide a way for non-engineering staff to design and deploy custom javascript-powered banners to The Texas Tribune website.

The message bar replaced AddThis in 2019. The AddThis widget, which was referred to as the "zombie bar" did basically the same thing but included about 200k of trackers and beacon code. It was/is a privacy nightmare. And users couldn't really cancel those hungry trackers--thus the "zombie" moniker. AddThis charged the Tribune for this service.

### What it isn't

The message bar is about 13k of code. No trackers. The goal was to make a dynamic code packaging tool that is quickly comprehensible and easy to use. But there is complexity, and it's always a challenge to determine the line between over-wording, versus being too vague.

It would have been impossible for our TT tech team to replace the entire product of a an Oracle Data Cloud-backed company in a few months. Consequently, this tool's UI is as simple as it can be in order to do the job it needs to do. We continue to build on the framework.

Let us know what you think.

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## Message Bar Configurator

### 1 PREVIEW BANNER WITH SETTINGS

SELECT TEMPLATE STYLE Membership ▼

#### Scheduling

SIMULCAST? Select "YES" for Breaking News NO ▼

Start date     Start time --:--

End date     End time --:--

#### Words + links

Prefix text [ applies a header style ] [max 60 chars]

Main text [max 200 chars]

Need a link in the Main text? URL will be injected into text between brackets [max 90 chars]

Button Text [max 40 chars]

Button URL [ include https:// ] [max 250 chars]

#### Animation + location

Slide animation [ slide down or slide up from pinned edge ] always ▼

Pin position [ platform = mobile:BOTTOM, desktop:TOP ] platform ▼

#### Reset the visibility

Special option: If you are re-publishing a banner with fresh updates and want everyone who canceled it to see it again, change this to a new, unique value e.g. seen-1, and so on [max 30 chars]

### 2 COPY CODE TO CLIPBOARD

Click PREVIEW BANNER WITH SETTINGS to generate code and launch the preview

### 3

#### Manually paste code into the CMS message-bar-here flat block

To deploy the message bar, the copied block above should be pasted into **the message-bar-here flat block**. For details and help please see the help at the top of this app.

# Using the form

1
PREVIEW BANNER WITH SETTINGS

SELECT TEMPLATE STYLE Membership ▼

---

## Scheduling

SIMULCAST? Select "YES" for Breaking News NO ▼

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- 1

### PREVIEW BANNER WITH SETTINGS

Preview banner as the first step to load default settings, and again after making updates to see the new version. This step also creates the code.
- 2

### SELECT TEMPLATE STYLE

Your usage context will determine which template to select from the list. It's easy to preview what each one looks like: select a template and PREVIEW.
- 3

### SCHEDULING

This programs when the MB will automatically be made visible and when it will be switched off. You can either use the calendar and time selection widgets, or type in the dates and times. SIMULCAST "Yes" will ignore timezones and display in all browsers at the time you enter in CDT. "No" simulcast will function as so: a 1pm CDT banner will show in EDT at noon CDT, and at 2pm MTN, and so on.
- 4

### WORDS + LINKS (main MB text)

The optional Prefix was added by art to provide a different font style for an intro. The Main text is the banner message. If you want to include a URL within the main text, please follow the directions on the form--and use the preview to see how it works. It's probably preferable to limit the banner to a single link handled by the button.
- 5

### BUTTON TEXT + LINK

Where the action is: READ MORE, DONATE, WATCH LIVESTREAM, etc The tool will live validate the URL, but be paranoid and check it again anyway.
- 6

### ANIMATION + LOCATION

The default will place the MB based on the browser platform, showing the banner at the top on desktop and at the bottom on mobile. The default behavior for 'top' placement is is to slide down from the top. Set Slide animation to never to eliminate animation.
- 7

### RESET THE VISIBILITY

You probably won't need to change this unless you update a particularly important message and you want to show it again to people who have already seen it.

## Get the code blob

A minimized blob of javascript/css app code is generated from the form on each click of the **PREVIEW** button

This is the MB code that will be deployed to the site via the *message-bar-here* flat block. It's not really human readable, so try not to fixate on it.

The COPY CODE TO CLIPBOARD button will visibly select the entire code block. **Please use this button.** If even one character is missing from the beginning or end of the code blob, the MB will not deploy. **It won't crash the site; it doesn't have that sort of power.** It will simply fail to launch when you expect it and will log a javascript error in the browser.

HELPFUL TIP: Leave the config tool running with this code block selected; you might need it again in case you inadvertently copy something else into your clipboard. Having the copy window with code loaded will save you time.

## Deploy the MB code in the CMS: 1-2-3

1. Under Flat Blocks in the CMS look for *message-bar-here*. *Open it and delete* all of the content in this flat block.
2. Copy the MB code blob into the flat block and save. Maybe double save just to be sure you've saved your work.
3. It's a good idea to check the site when you expect the MB to be live.

2  COPY CODE TO CLIPBOARD

Click PREVIEW BANNER WITH SETTINGS to generate code and launch the preview

3

**Manually paste code into the CMS message-bar-here flat block**

To deploy the message bar, the copied block above should be pasted into **the message-bar-here flat block**. For details and help please see the help at the top of this app.

2  COPY CODE TO CLIPBOARD

CODE CREATED SUCCESSFULLY  
MB\_VERSION 1605554796829  
Use this if you need to check the version in the CMS. Look for the MB\_VERSION value in the code blob  
Character count [ 13887 ]

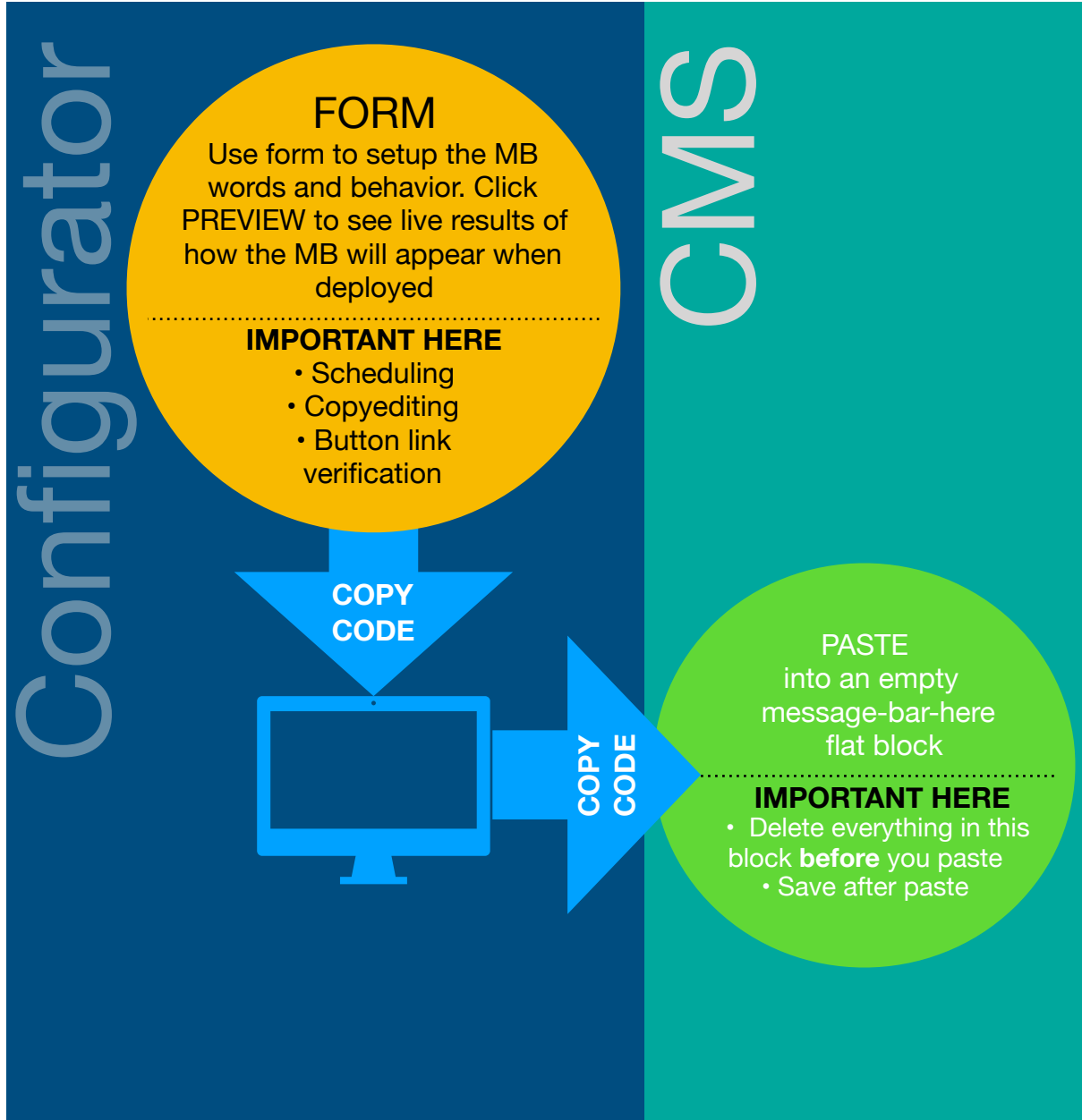
```
<style> .db-bar-frame{ font-family: "Open Sans", "Helvetica Neue", Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif; width:100%; z-index:2; } .db-height-tracker { visibility:visible; will-change:transition; } .db-height-tracker.animation-top { max-height:500px; transition:margin-top .3s ease-in-out 0ms; } .is .db-
```

3

**Manually paste code into the CMS message-bar-here flat block**

To deploy the message bar, the copied block above should be pasted into **the message-bar-here flat block**. For details and help please see GET STARTED above and the **USER GUIDE**.

# Flow



At start date+time

