

Teacher Guide to Web Zones

<http://community.lightspeedsystems.com/documentation/web-filter/administration/web-zones/teacher-guide-to-web-zones/>

Web Zones – Introduction

Web Zones are a powerful tool for balancing IT and educator administration.

Admins: learn more [here](#).

Your Internet filtering software from Lightspeed Systems includes the ability to create customized web zones. These web zones are like virtual rooms that teachers create and manage. Students can request to join these web zones by navigating to a web page in their browser. Within these zones any teacher authorized as a web zone administrator can specify rules for what web sites the students can or cannot access. Teachers can even override existing content filter rules.

EXAMPLE: So, let's say you were teaching a unit on how special effects are produced in movies. You may have five web sites that you would like your fifth graders to use for research, but two of them are blocked by the content filter. Instead of going to your IT staff for help, now you can take matters into your own hands and add the two sites to a web zone. Once a student has joined that web zone, the rules will now be applied to their browsing session.

Open Zones

Open zones are created on the fly. They are called open simply because authorized teachers can create them at any time from any where, and students can request access to these zones when the zone is active. This functionality differs from a fixed zone in that fixed zones apply to specific IP's or IP address ranges. If a teacher or student is within one of these IP ranges as setup by the IT staff, the users are automatically placed into that zone and do not have the option to leave.

Once IT has specified you as an authorized web zone administrator, you can manage your open zones by simply opening a web browser and navigating to a local network address provided by your IT staff. Login using your regular network credentials. To create a new web zone, you'll first give it a good descriptive name, like "Special Effects in Movies."

Whenever an open web zone is created the zone is automatically activated as noted by the toggling Active/Inactive button at the top right. Just below, you'll see we have a user management panel containing lists for pending user requests and joined users. Your students will have access to a web page where they can request to join an active web zone.

Right below the user management panel are the domain rules. From our example, we'd want to add under the Allowed List the two sites that are normally blocked by the content filter. Essentially you are expanding your students' normal access rights to include these two additional sites. So you don't have to enter all five sites you want them to use, only those that are normally blocked.

IMPORTANT: Do not include the protocol (http:// or https://) in your domain rules. Review this and other rules in another wiki article, Allowed & Blocked list rules for proper entry of Allowed & Blocked list entries.

However, if you want to help your students stay on task, we can enter all five web sites and select the “block all domains expect for allowed list” (under the Block List). This restricts use of the Internet to only the five sites located in the Allowed box.

TIP: You’ll need to communicate the web zone name for students to join it. In addition, if you’ve limited their access to a few sites, you’ll need to provide these web addresses separately because the rules are not displayed for students to see. Perhaps you could include them in the assignment, in favorites/bookmarks, or on your whiteboard.

Joining a Web Zone

Your students will open a web browser and navigate to the “join request” page—your IT staff will provide the URL.

TIP: You may want to bookmark this “join request” page on each computer or have a shortcut on the desktop to assist your students.

From this page students will be asked for first and last name and the name of the web zone you wish for them to join. When the user begins to type in the name of the web zone, all matching and active web zones will be displayed to select from. Once a student has sent the join request, they will not be able to join another zone until the teacher takes action upon that request.

You’ll see here on the zone management page that a request type of “join request” requires your response. Once you allow that student to join the zone, they are admitted; and the browsing rules of the zone are applied to them.

Students wishing to leave the zone for any reason can submit a “leave request” from the page where they first requested to join the zone. The system knows that they are already joined to a zone and prompts them with the appropriate action. Again once the student submits the request to leave the zone, the teacher sees a request type of leave request and can release the student from the zone.

IMPORTANT: Users can be joined to just one web zone at a time. So be sure to accept their leave requests in a timely fashion. Note, you can select all requests at once.

Fixed Web Zones

If your administrator has setup a fixed web zone for a range of IP addresses (e.g., a computer lab), things go a little differently. For instance, students don’t have to request to join or leave a join since they are accessing the Internet from within that fixed range of IPs. If you login from within that IP range, you’ll immediately be placed into that zone. The teacher can still manage the domain rules and activate and deactivate the zone when needed.

Note: Proper Allowed & Blocked site entry

Please follow Allowed & Blocked list rules for proper entry of Allowed & Blocked list entries.

Watch: Overview of Teacher Web Zones

Using Web Zones in the Lightspeed Dashboard

Teachers: If you're using the Lightspeed Dashboard and SIS integrated, you can create and use Web Zones seamlessly from there! Learn more [here](#).