SIMPLE Administrator's Guide

Part 2- Running a Simulation

SIMPLE Platform Documentation

September 2012

Introduction

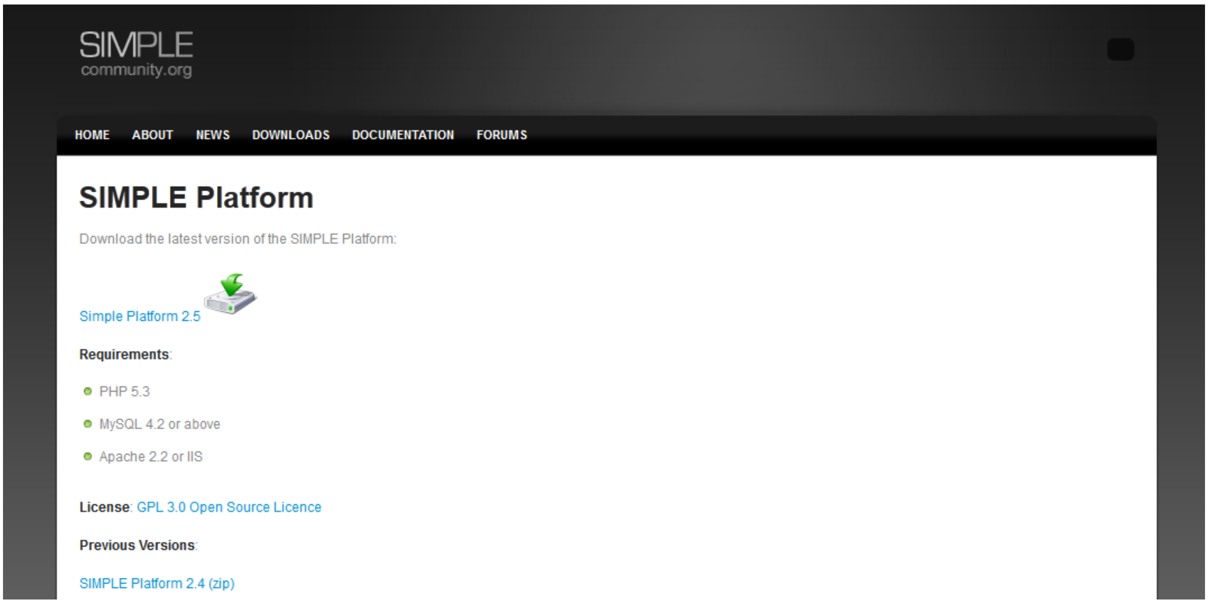
Once you have built your simulation file, you will want to deploy it to the SIMPLE Platform. You can then create individual simulations, create and assign users, and run the simulations.

Installing the SIMPLE Platform

If you already have a working SIMPLE installation, you can ignore this section.

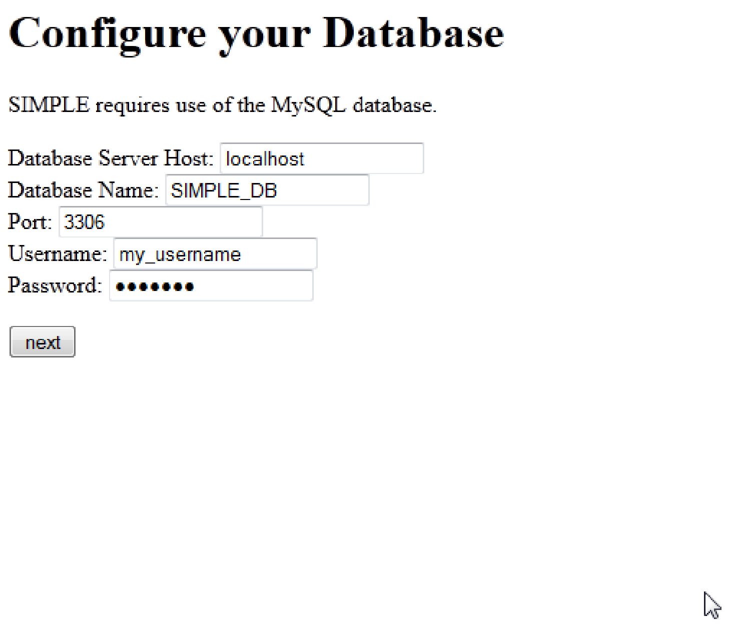
SIMPLE should be installed by someone who is familiar with server management.

1. Go to the downloads page at http://simplecommunity.org to view the server requirements. An up-to-date LAMP setup is recommended.
2. Download the latest version of the SIMPLE Platform from the downloads page.



3. Extract the zip file and upload the contents to your web-accessible folder on your server
4. Point your browser to your web folder. The system detects that SIMPLE has not yet been installed and prompts you to click on an install link.

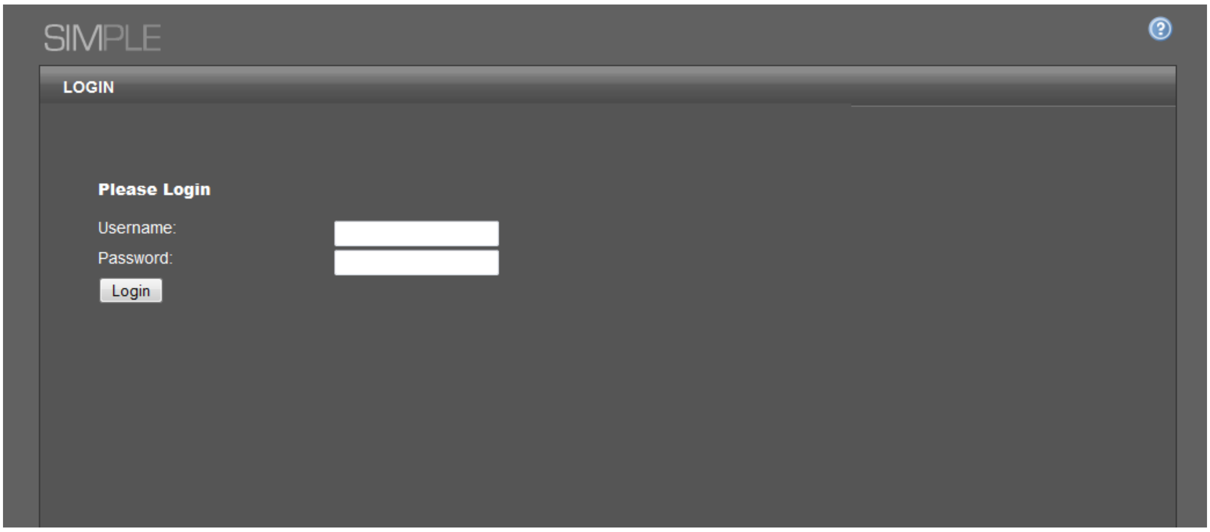
5. Follow the instructions. On the Configure Your Database page, enter the user credentials of a MySQL user with full permissions to create tables. (You should first of all create the MySQL table so that SIMPLE can access it with the supplied credentials).



6. Complete the remaining steps and SIMPLE will direct you to the front page of the system, where you can login with the following details:

   U: super

   P: super

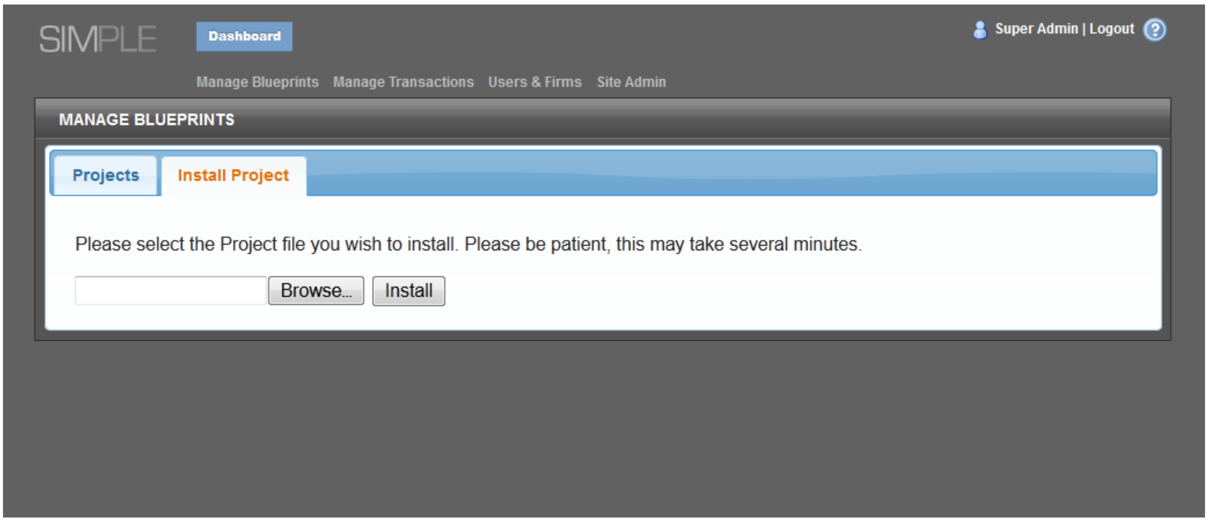


   You should change this password as soon as possible.

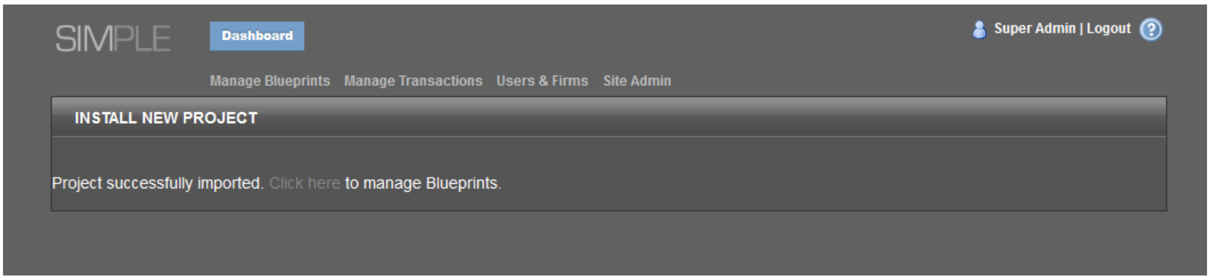
7. Remove the *installer* directory.

Uploading Simulations

1. Click on Manage Blueprints
2. Click the Install Project tab.



3. Browse for your simulation file. This will be the zip file that was created when you packed your project in SIMPLE Tools.
4. Click Install.
5. One or more Blueprints will be created on the system. Your project is now installed.

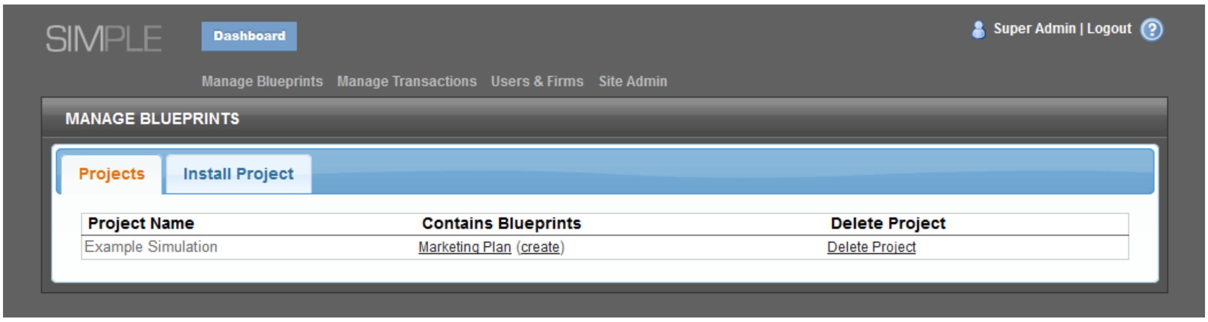


6. If any errors are generated, you should go back into SIMPLE Tools to rectify them and then re-upload your file.

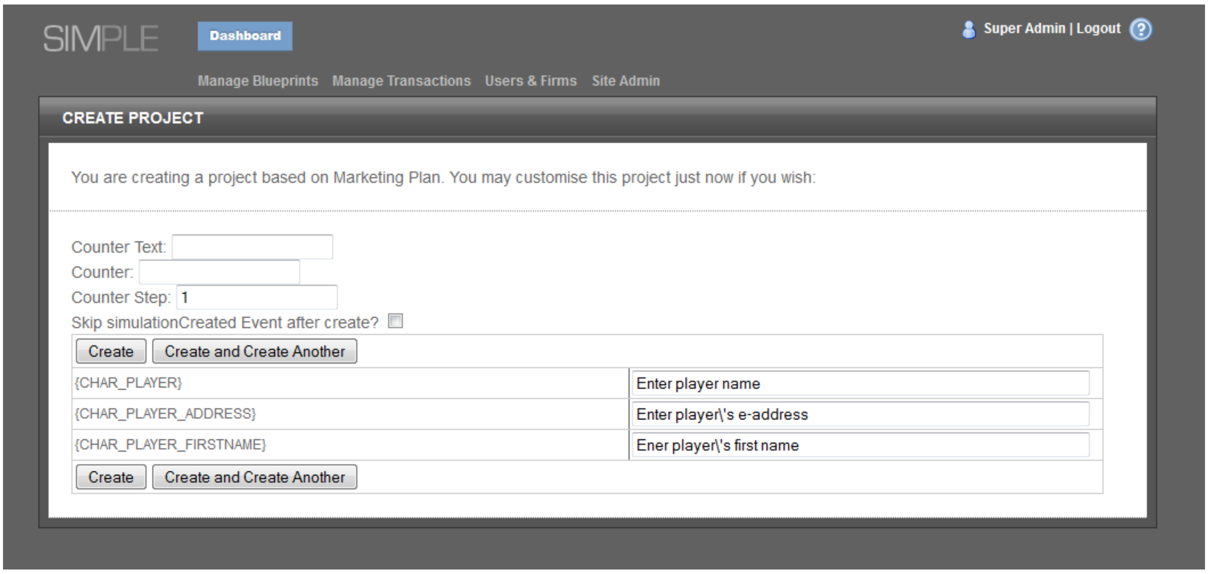
Creating Simulations

Individual simulations are instantiated from Blueprints.

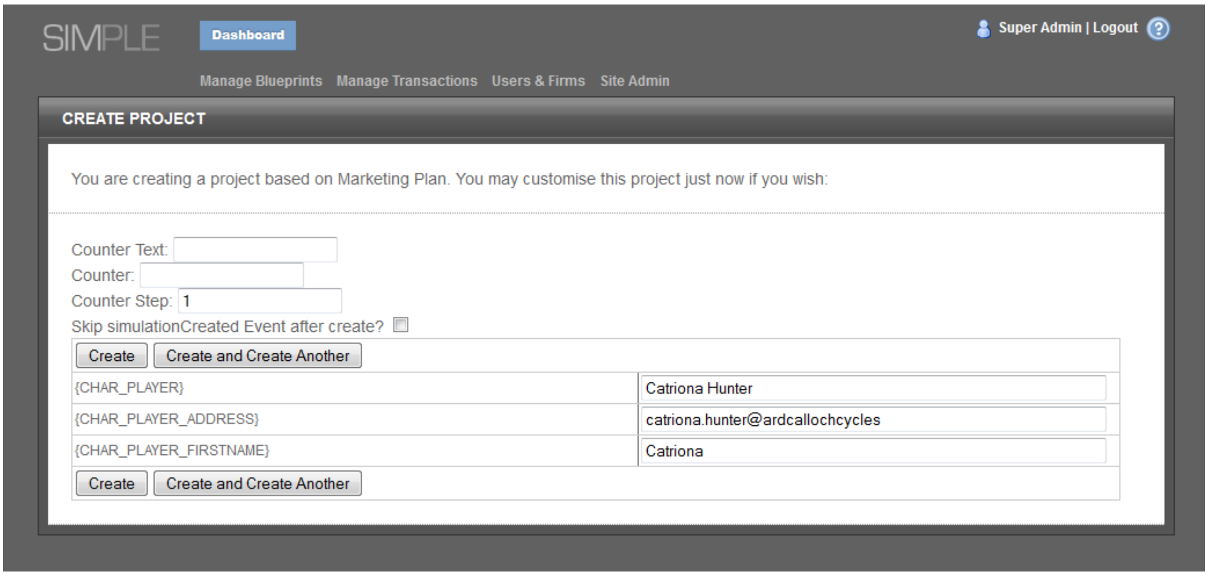
1. Click Manage Blueprints.
2. A list of projects is displayed, each with one or more Blueprints. There is a *create* link next to each Blueprint. Click this.



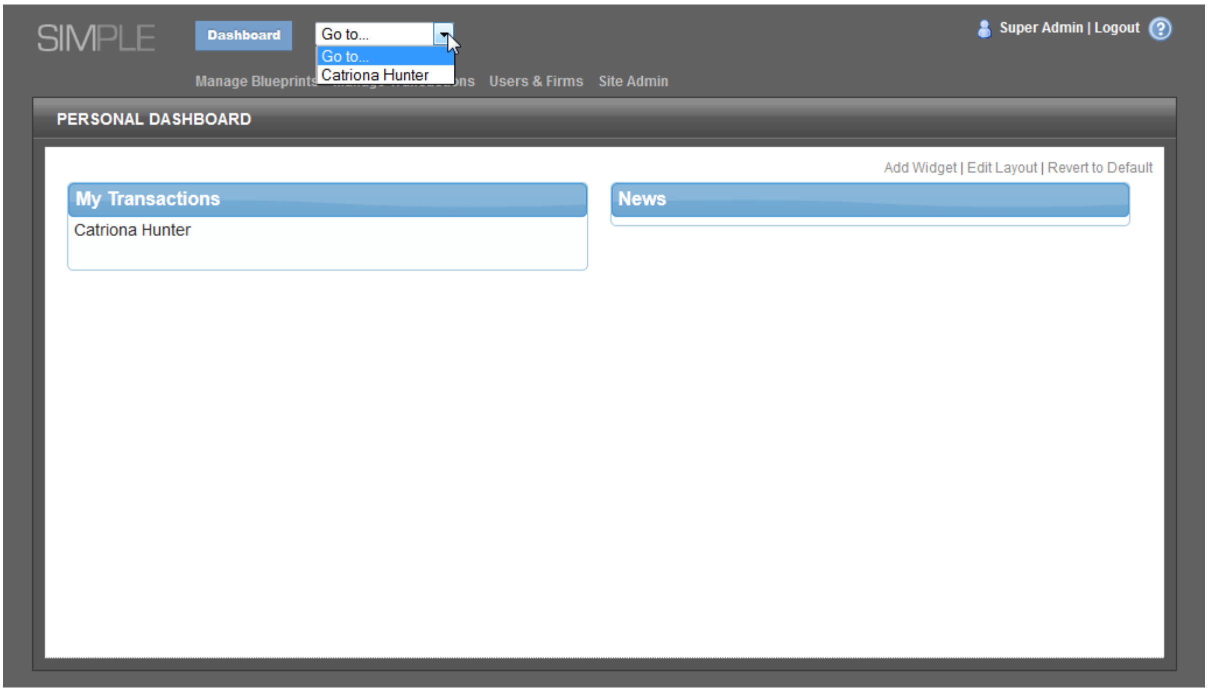
3. You are taken to a page where you can fill in values for any variables that the Blueprint has.



4. Fill these in, (or leave as defaults if appropriate), and click create.



5. The simulation is then created and will appear in the dropdown menu at the top of the screen, as well as in the Dashboard.



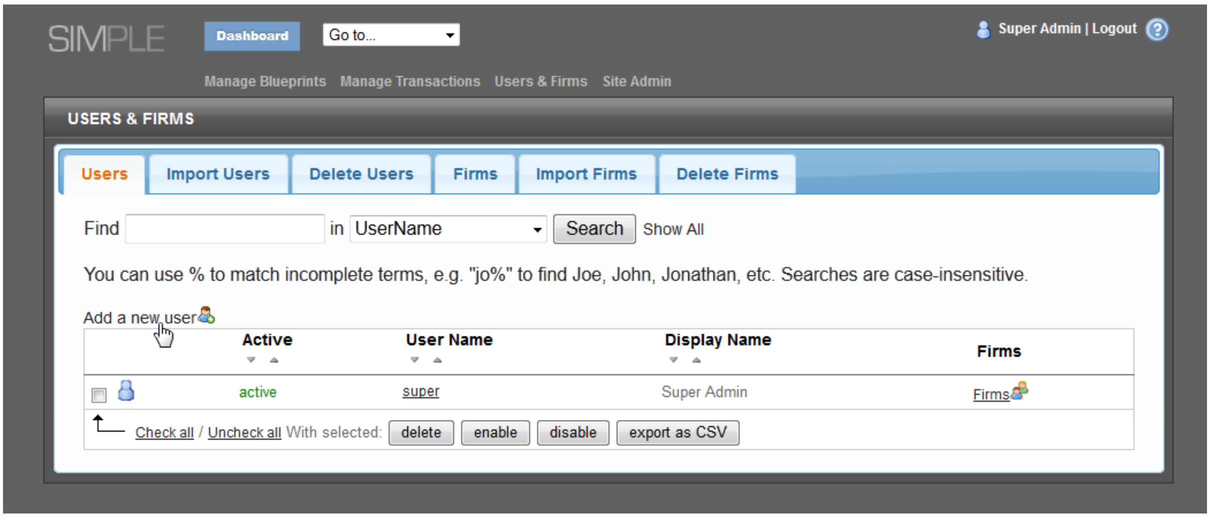
Linking Simulations

Some projects have more than one Blueprint, and these should be linked, in order that multiple players can play linked narratives. You can skip this if your simulation does not have linked blueprints.

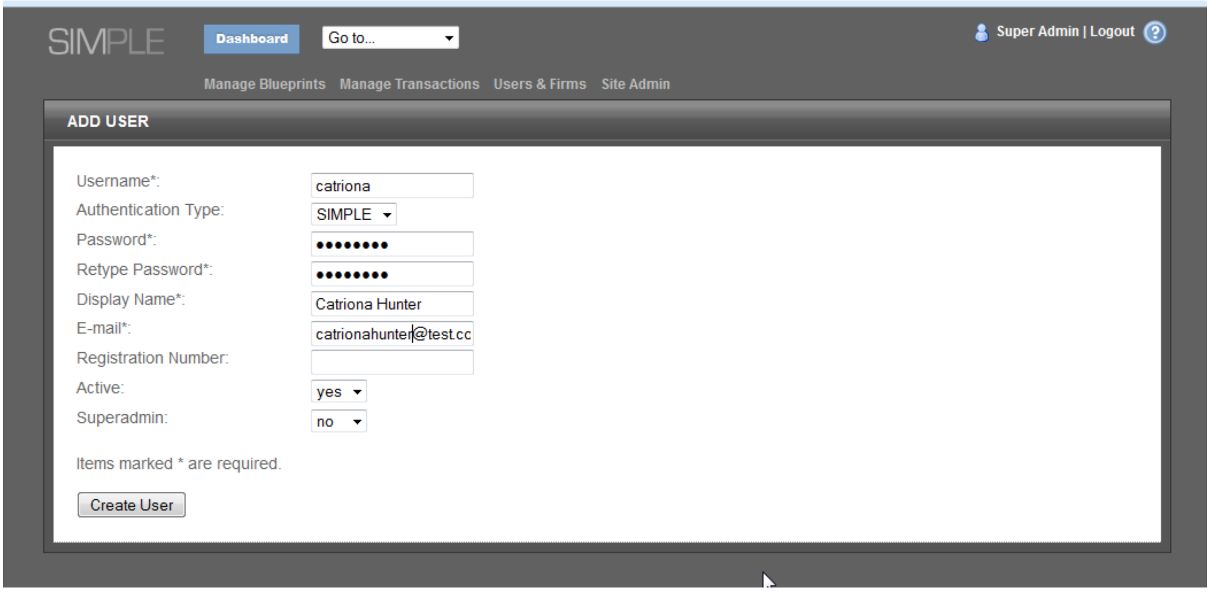
1. Go to Manage Transactions, and you will see a list of all installed simulations. There is a Link button next to each one. Click this.
2. You are taken to a Link Projects page. Select the simulation that you wish to link to, from the list on the right hand side. Click Link.
3. You must now choose the characters being played in each of the simulations. Select these and click Link Projects.

Creating Users

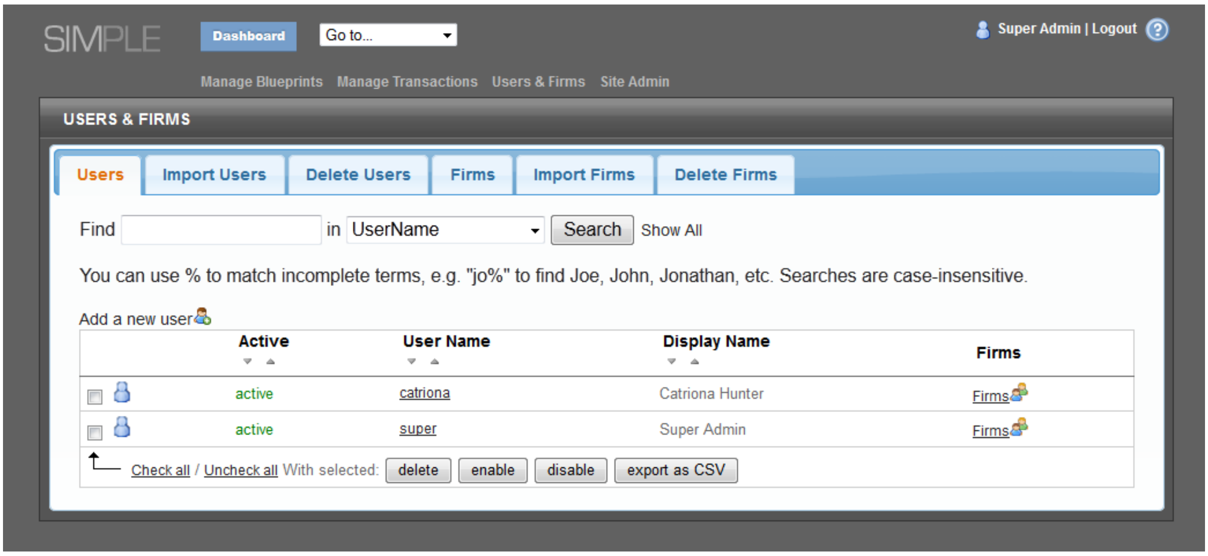
Click *Users & Firms* in the main menu. You are taken to a list of users, where you can click *Add a New User*.



Enter the *username*, *password*, *email address* and *display name* of the user. *Authentication Type* will be SIMPLE, unless authentication plugins are being used. For the majority of users, *superadmin* should be set to no. This is only used when full permissions over the installation are required – for all learners and most mentors, a standard user will be most appropriate.



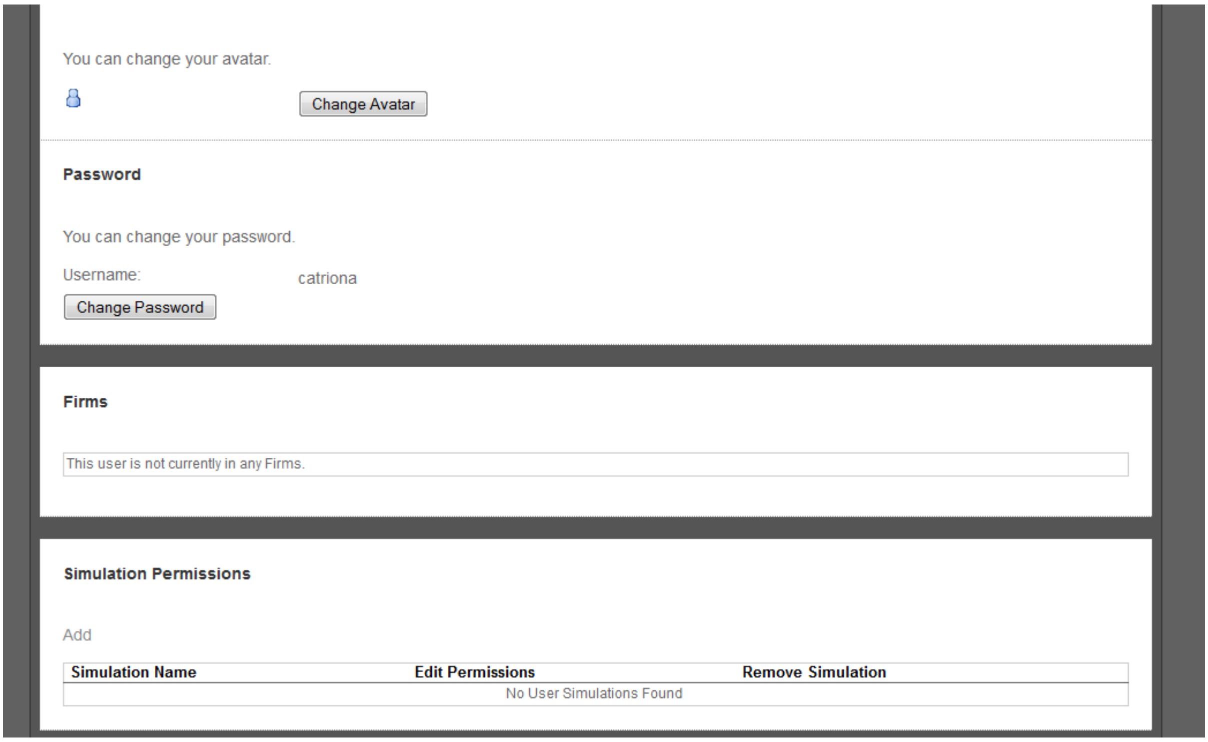
Click *Create User*, and return to the user list to see your user has been added.



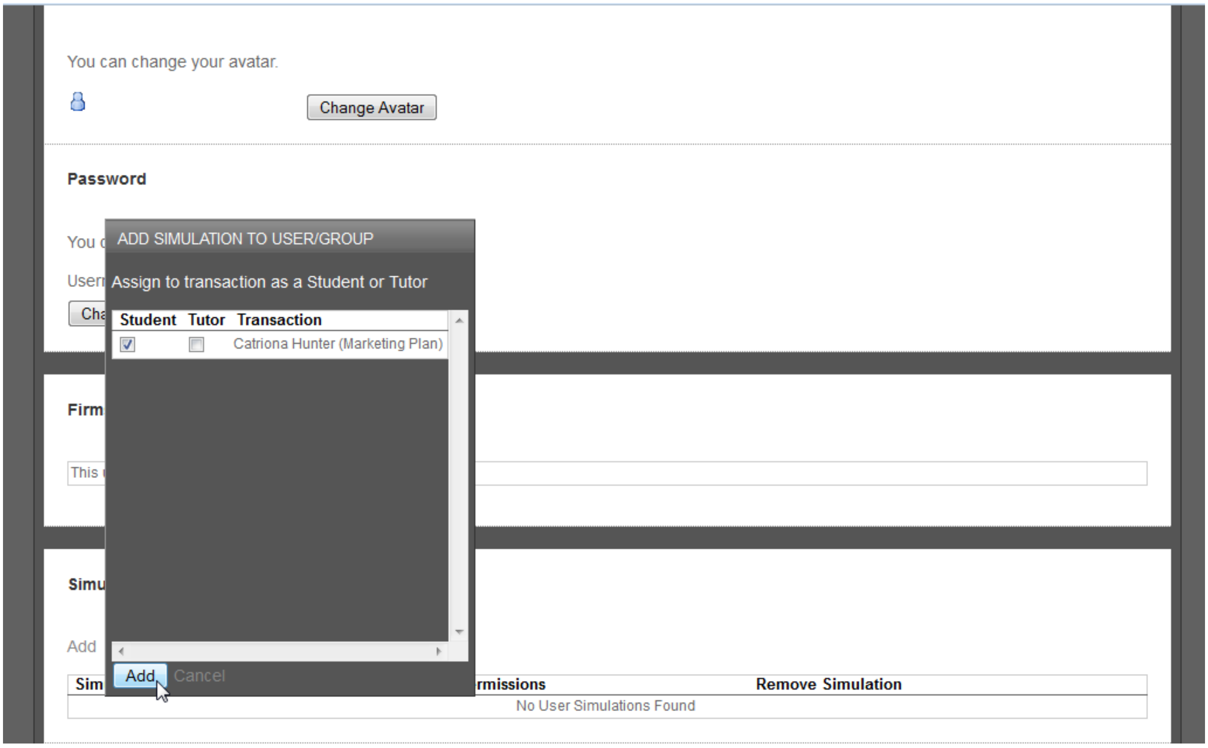
You can then click the username to edit that user and assign permissions to simulations.

Assigning Learners and Mentors

Click *Users & Firms*. Select a user by clicking on their username from the user list. Scroll down to the bottom of the screen to where it says *Simulation Permissions*.



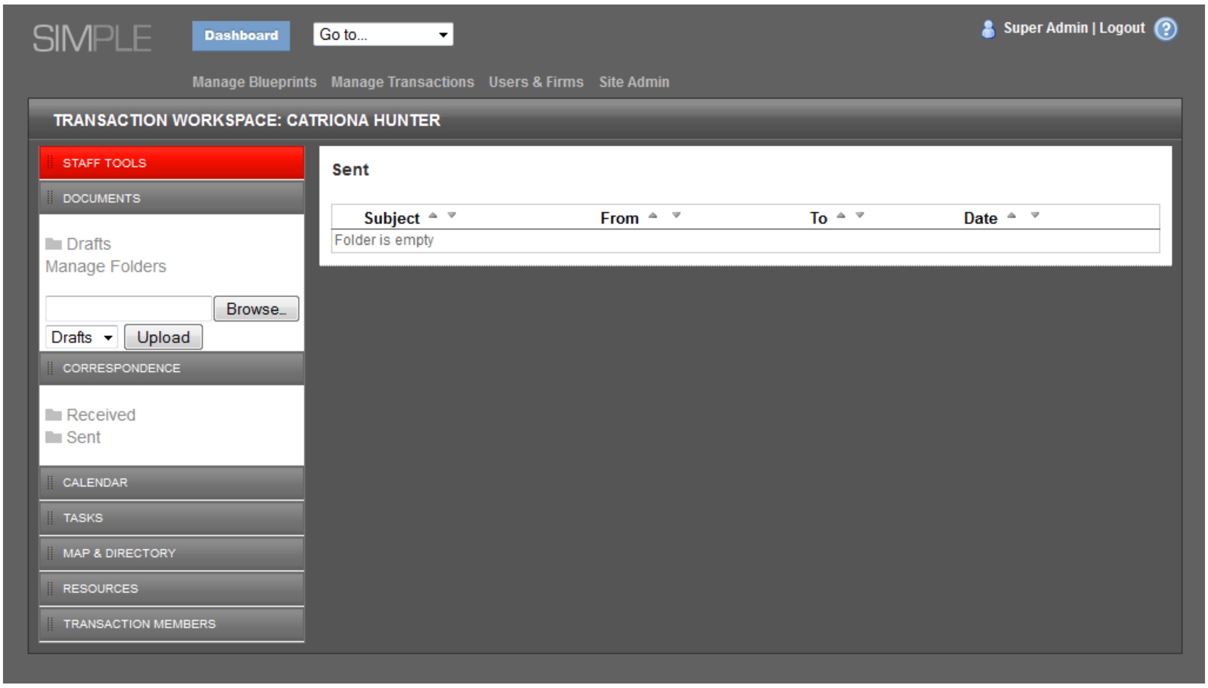
Click *Add* to bring up a dialog box. Select whether the user is to be a student or a tutor and click *Add*.



The user is now assigned to the simulation and will see it in their dashboard and dropdown menu when they log in.

Staff Tools

When viewing a simulation as a mentor, you will see exactly the same as a learner, with two key differences.



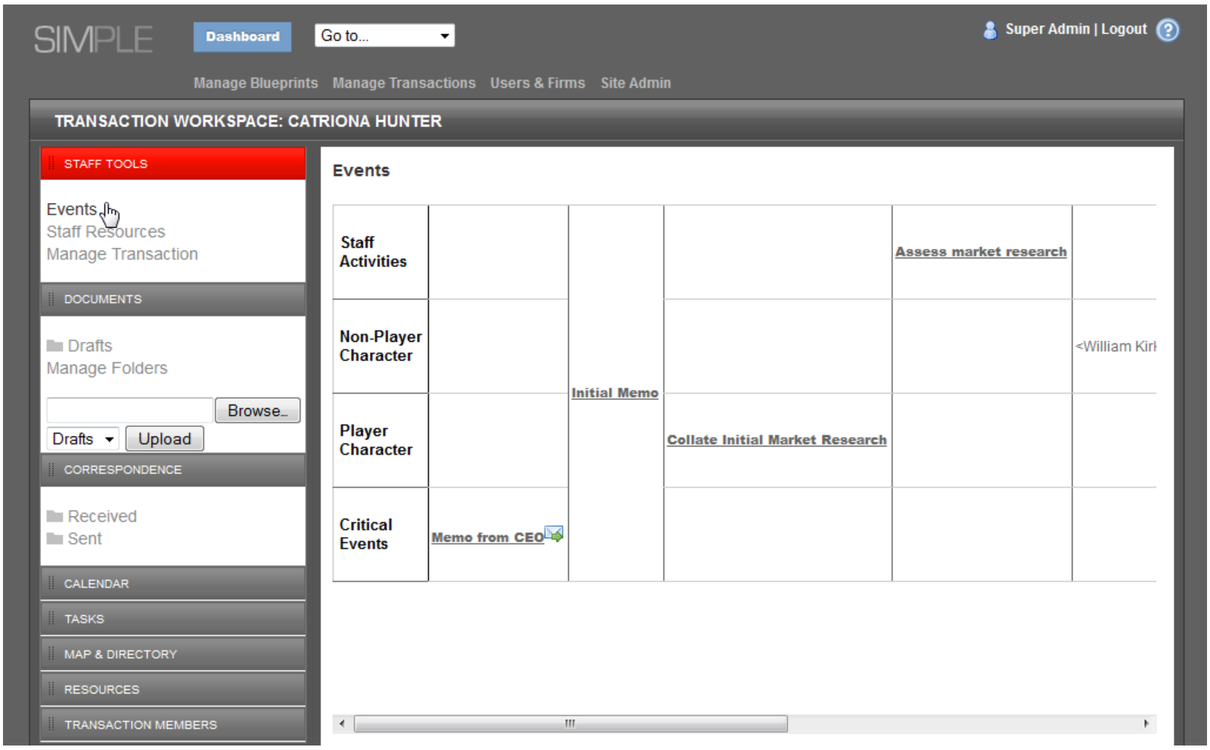
1. The *Sent* folder is displayed by default. This is so you can see at a glance what documents the learner/group has sent. If logged in as a learner, it defaults to the *Received* folder.
2. There is a red *Staff Tools* bar on the left-hand-side of the screen. This contains tools for use by mentors, and does not appear for learners.

Select a simulation from the dropdown menu or from the dashboard to view the office environment.

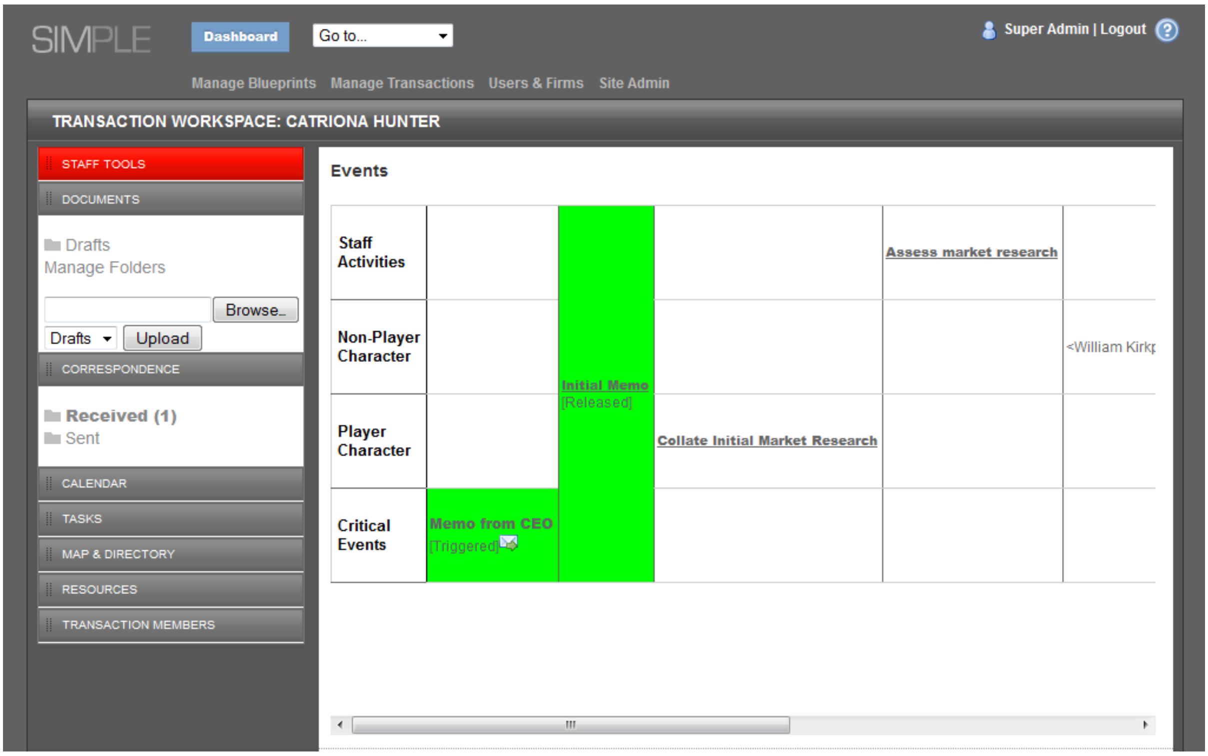
Triggering critical events

Many simulations begin with a Critical Event that automatically sends one or more documents to the learners.

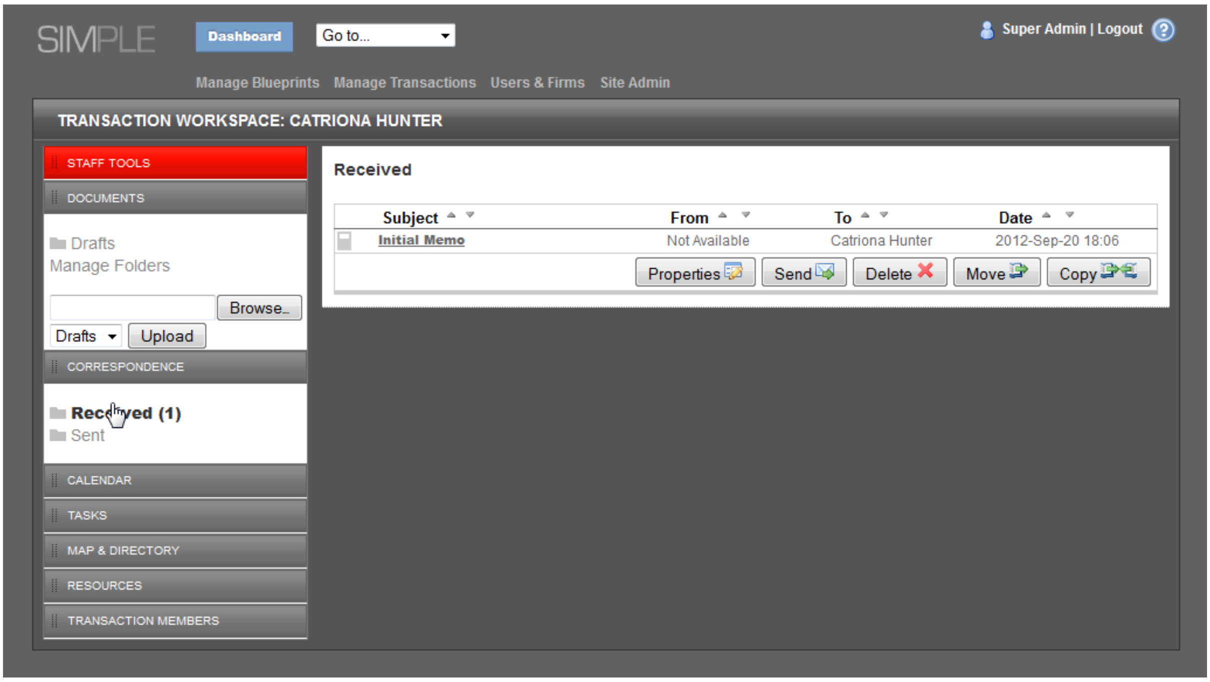
Click the Staff Tools bar to open the panel. Then click *Events*, to open the *Narrative Event Diagram*.



The critical event has a hyperlink and an envelope icon. The name of the document to be released is in the next column (*Initial Memo*). Click the hyperlink and click *Trigger* when asked if you want to trigger the event. The event turns green, and the document is sent to the *Received* folder.



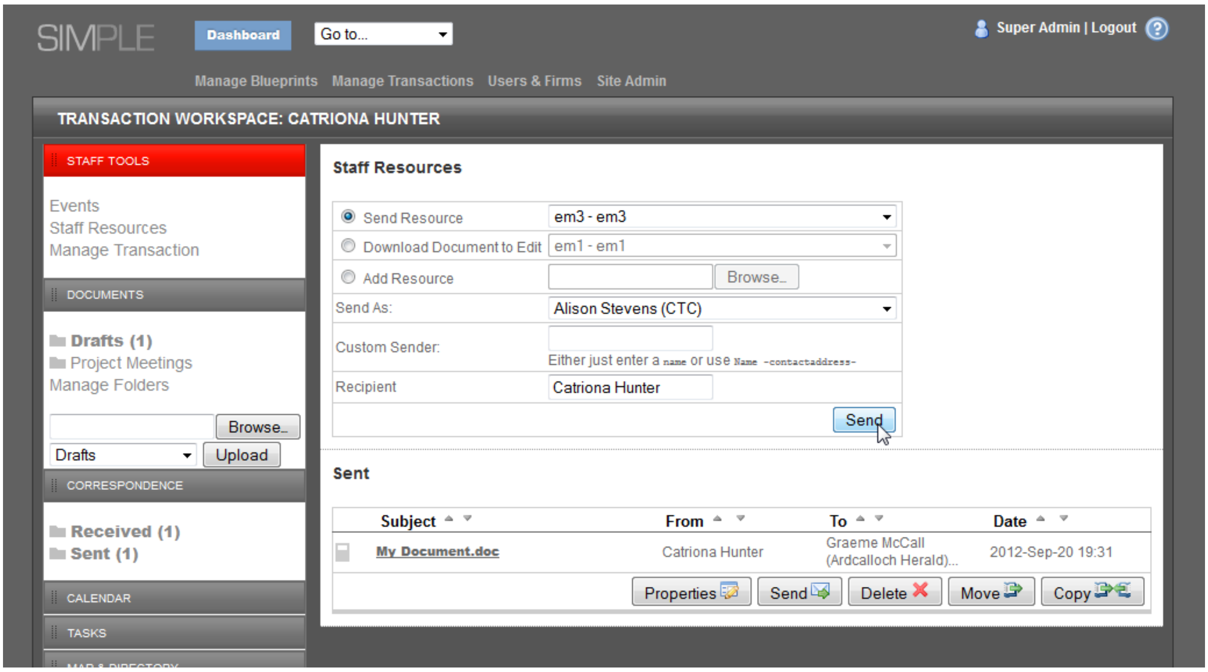
Clicking the Received folder shows all received documents.



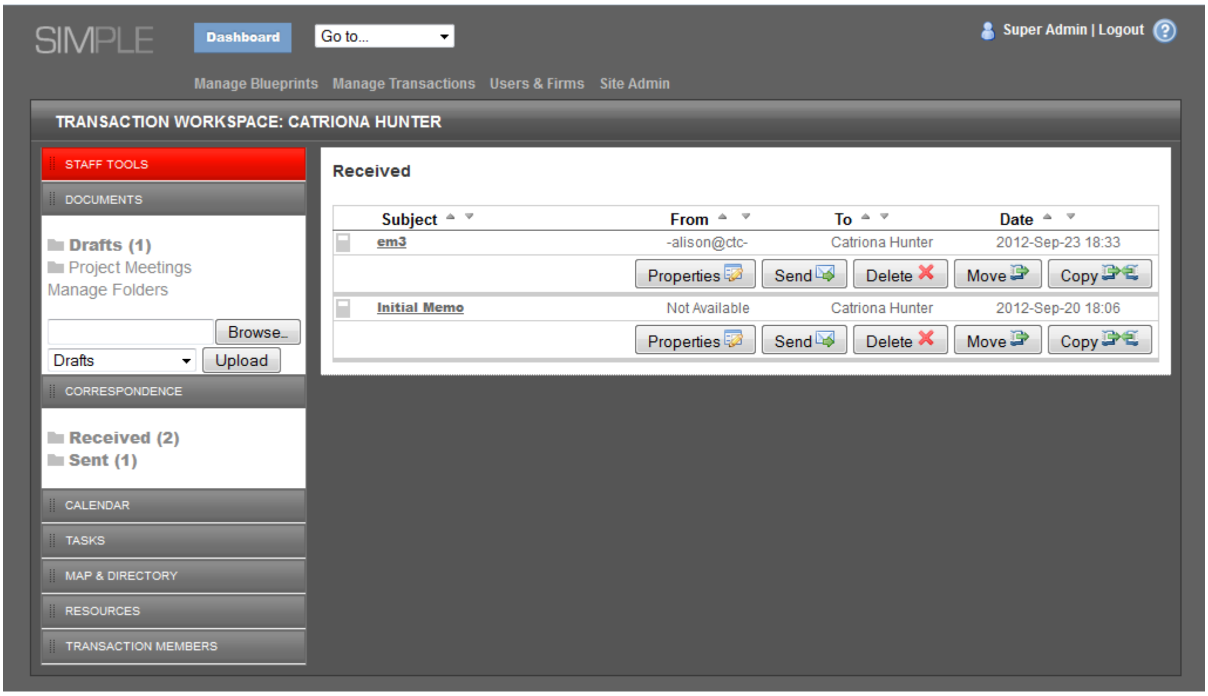
Sending custom documents

As the simulation progresses, you will want to interact with the players by sending documents as various characters. To do this, click the *Staff Tools* sidebar, and then *Staff Resources*. The Staff Resources panel will appear in the main window.

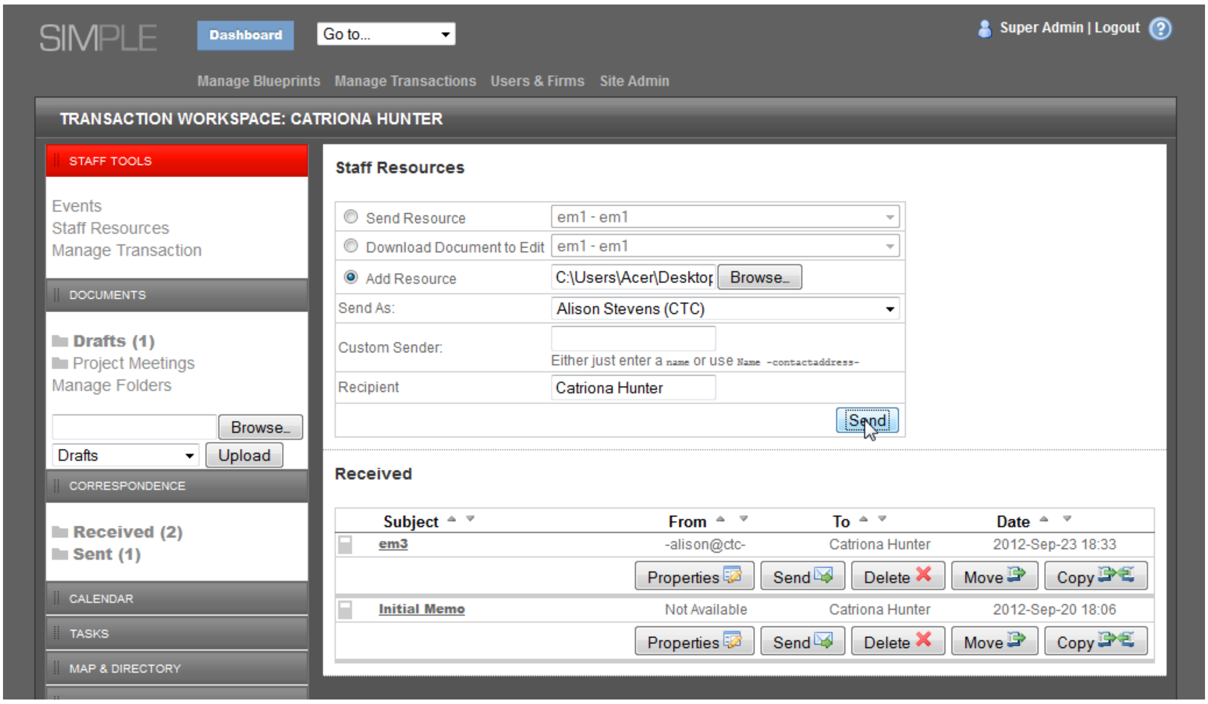
You can send one of the resources already attached to the simulation by selecting Send resource and choosing the desired resource from the drop-down. You should then select the character who will be sending the resource, and who the correspondence is addressed to (i.e. the recipient).



After clicking send, the document will appear in the players *Received* folder.

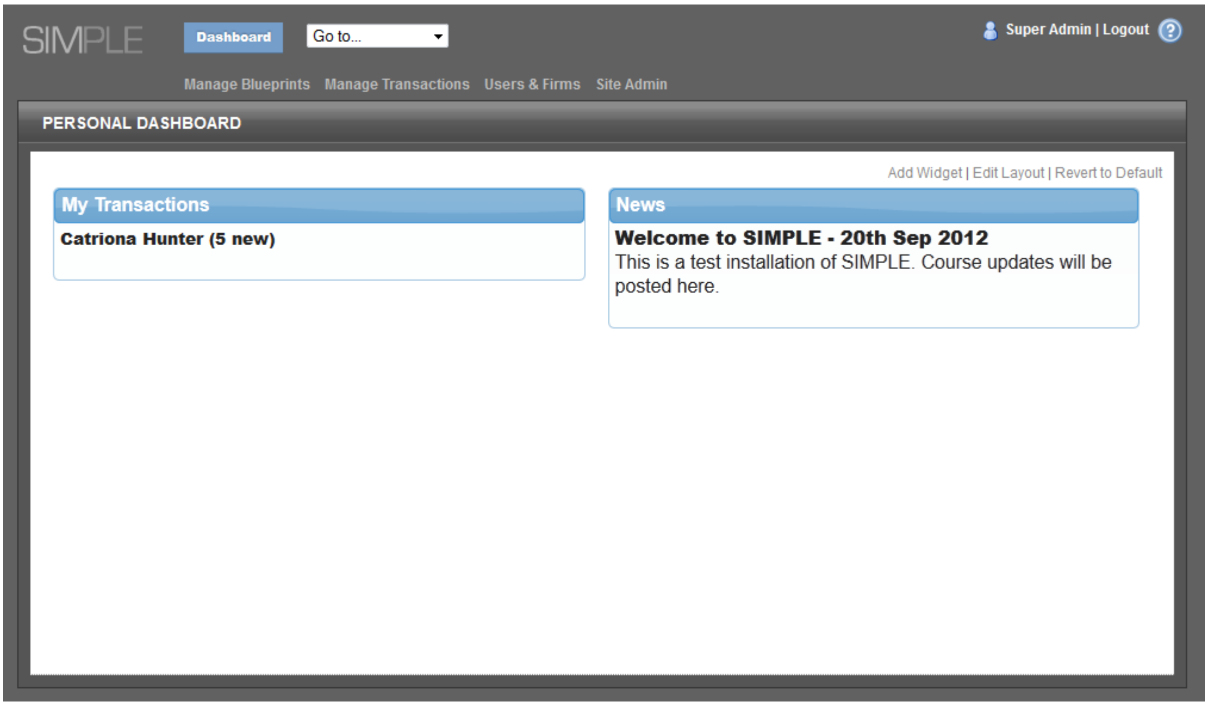


Alternatively, you can upload a custom document to send by selecting Add Resource and browsing to your document. This allows you to reply to unanticipated requests and correspondence from players.



Using the Dashboard for updates

Each user has a personal dashboard, which serves as your homepage. This page differs from the office environment in that it is not shared with other users. A useful feature is the *My Transactions* list, which lists all simulations you have access to. This list bolds any simulations which contain correspondence that has not been read by you, and shows a number alongside the simulation name, which is the number of unread items. The list below has only one simulation, which has 5 unread items.



This is useful for mentors who may be supervising multiple simulations and don't want to go into each individual simulation to check for new activity. Note that all new items are included in the tally, including those sent by mentors. So, you should ideally read items that you have sent in order to keep the number of unread items at zero. This is also good practice, since it ensures that the document is working correctly and has not been corrupted in any way. Note that the document will still appear unread to all other users.

Site Administration Features

There are some useful features in *Site Admin* that allow you to configure your installation. Under *Content and Customisation*, you can edit the text that appears on the login page in *Update Login Page Content*.

Set Vocabulary allows you to customise the words used within the admin area for simulations and groups. This allows you to tailor the vocabulary to your particular industry or specialism.

Student Help URL allows you to change where the help icon links to (the help icon is the question mark at the top-right of the screen). This defaults to the User Guide PDF which ships with SIMPLE (in the /help folder), but can be changed to any URL, in order that you can provide a customised help file.

News Content allows you to add news stories, which appear in the News feed on the Dashboard. These appear for all users, and can be used to alert users to system bugs/updates, or to any issues they need to be aware of.

Plugins allows you to upload, enable and disable plugins. Plugins can be written for various purposes, such as custom authentication. An iPad plugin is available from simplecommunity.org.

Server Details gives the version number of SIMPLE, along with some server details. This can be used to help with debugging and to be sure that your installation is up to date.

Backups

All data, including documents, is stored in the database. As part of your backup strategy, you should make regular backups by dumping your database to a secure location.