

Digital Signage Goes to College

Administrators, students and advertisers are discovering the benefits of using digital signage to provide relevant information, entertainment content and targeted ads.

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Educational institutions are a market where digital signage is beginning to get a foothold. Its presence will continue to grow exponentially in campuses across the world, as digital signage offers a number of unique opportunities for educational information, live content and advertising revenue.

“Digital signage can instantly deliver information across the campus and capture the attention of students, faculty, and visitors,” said Miriam Portell, head of media at the University of Deusto, a Spanish university based in Bilbao that recently deployed a digital signage network on its campus.

Delivering relevant information

In various locations around campus, digital signage can be used to communicate information. Educational institutions have a wide variety of informational content that they need to give students. University campuses are typically large and spread out and freshmen or visitors might easily get lost on the grounds or in a specific building and the signage can be used as a way finder, helping students reach class quicker or helping visitors find the right building. It can also show students who are

new to town where restaurants and other stores are outside of campus, making the experience of being a new student at the university less overwhelming.

Digital signage can also be used to convey emergency information in a timely manner. In the event of a fire or an event, such as the Virginia Tech shootings, each piece of signage across the campus can alert students as to where they should go to reach safety and inform them when it is safe to leave.



Digital signage networks can be used as a way finder, helping students reach class quicker or helping visitors find the right building.

The network can be used for other forms of information, too. The campus cafeteria can use signage as a menu board or to inform students what the daily special is. It can inform students of special events happening on campus or show the class schedules for an individual room.

The signage can be controlled from a remote location and offers administrators flexibility. Each screen in the network can display completely different messages or they can display the same message. It can be tailored to whatever the administration wants to show on a given screen at a given time.

Live content

An important way to keep viewers coming back to digital signage is to show relevant content. Educational information is one way to do that; live entertainment content is another. Dynamic feeds can keep the content fresh, lively and relevant. Weather feeds can be shown on the network, keeping students informed about the conditions outside. News broadcasts, through CNN or a broadcast from the campus news network, are also popular.

Showing sports content on the digital signage network is another benefit to live content. Most schools have active athletics programs and a large part of the social scene centers around sporting events. The digital signage network can be a part of that, showing either games or news about the various teams.

Advertising

While keeping students informed and entertained is a great idea, many university

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— Yael Elstein, vice president of marketing for C-nario

administrations will want to know if the cost of installing and running a digital signage network is worth the investment. The good news is digital signage doesn't have to be limited to informational and entertainment content for the university; it can be a great source of revenue, too.

"They (universities) can justify the investment through third-party advertising," said Yael Elstein, vice president of marketing for C-nario, a global provider of advanced digital signage software solutions and applications.

Colleges can make money by attracting advertisers, who are constantly looking for ways to directly communicate with specific demographics. University campuses feature a homogenous crowd, typically men and women ages 18 to 25 who either live on the campus or are on campus several days a week for long stretches at a time. Advertisers looking to target the 18- to 25-year-old audience know that a campus is a guaranteed way to ensure that their message reaches their target audience.

Success stories

A number of universities around the world are using digital signage for information, live content and advertising. The University of Deusto, implementing C-nario's digital signage software, has already deployed a network at its Bilbao campus, featuring 13

screens with information about events on campus, as well as information on the weather, sports and general news. The deployment has gone well and the university plans to soon install another network on its San Sebastian campus.

Aside from the University of Deusto, Bauman Moscow State Technical University, one of Russia's leading engineering universities, recently installed 13 displays that are designed to convey information to new applicants about various programs and departments, as well as research conducted by the university, helping them select the most appropriate curriculum for their needs and interests. This digital signage network is also managed by C-nario's software.

The success of digital signage on college campuses is not limited to Europe; it's becoming more common in the United States, too. C-nario has also worked with a number of American universities on digital signage networks, including UCLA, the University of Colorado, Cardinal Stritch University in Wisconsin, Northeastern University, and Pensacola State College. The University of Colorado uses their signage to create a video wall called the "wow" wall for high impact content in the lobby of the student union. They also have 12 digital signage menu boards placed in strategic locations in the cafeteria area. Lastly, there are stand-alone digital signage displays throughout the campus featuring faculty information and pertinent announcements.

Because of the wide variety of options digital signage offers universities, the technology can only be expected to become increasingly popular in upcoming years.



The digital signage network can be used to broadcast information about events on campus, as well as information on the weather, sports and general news.

"It's a booming market," Elstein said. "There's no end to what universities can do with digital signage."

About the sponsor: C-nario is a global provider of advanced digital signage software solutions and applications. C-nario helps corporations and organizations worldwide attract customers, increase revenues and enhance branding. Focused on the customer's business needs and requirements, C-nario provides the industry's most advanced digital signage capabilities with maximum Return-on-Investment (ROI). The company's easy-to-use solutions are the product-of-choice for hundreds of customers, including Fortune 500 corporations, in a variety of industries: retail, banking, transportation, advertising and media, entertainment, sporting events and facilities, education and telecom, among others. Through its global partners and international value-added resellers, C-nario has deployed its solutions in 40 countries. The company has offices in the United States, Europe, and Israel. For more information about C-nario visit www.c-nario.com.