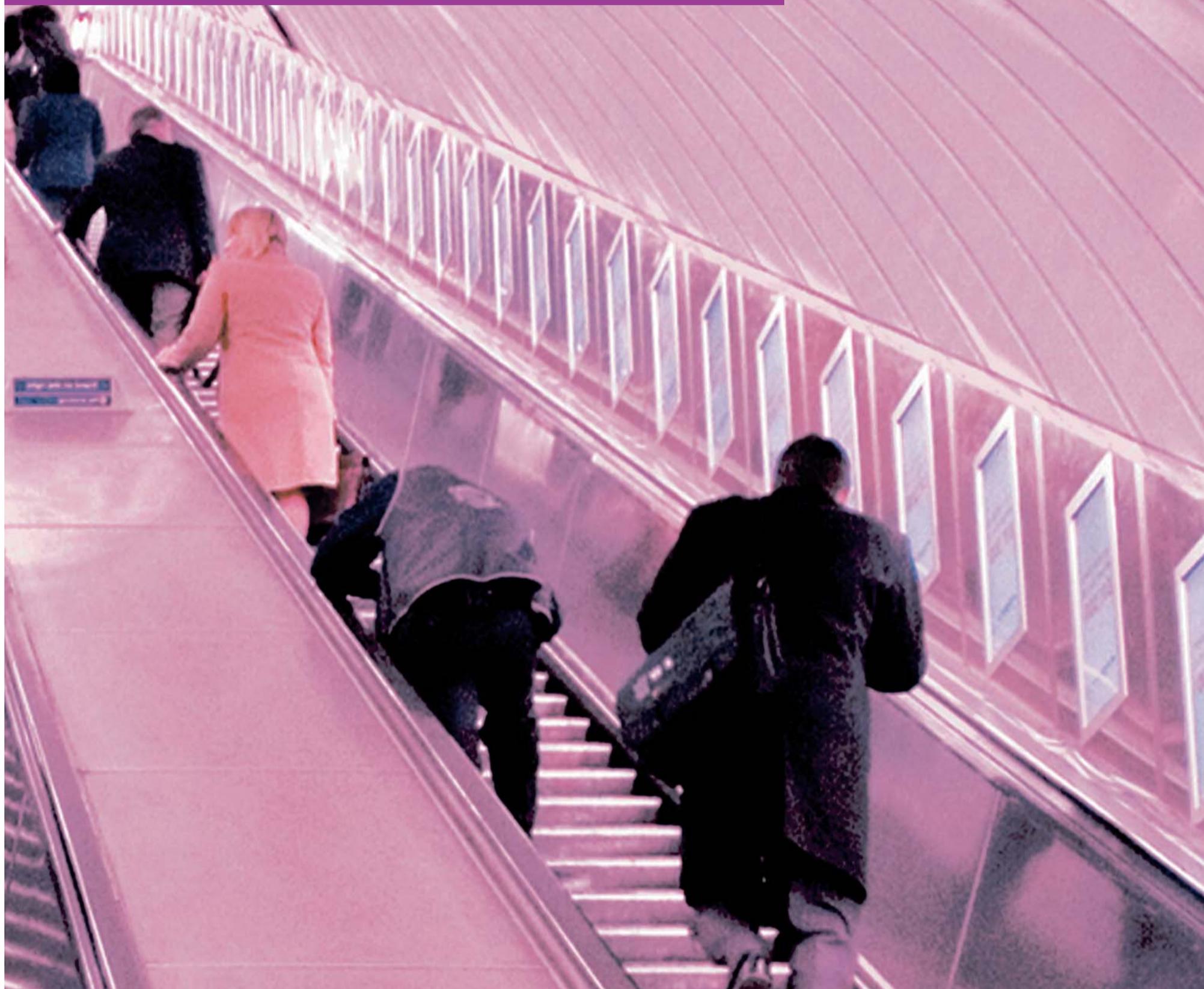


**MEDIA  
PLANET**

30 APRIL 2008

# DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Messages on the move



Register today for a **FREE**  
**Digital Signage Handbook**

Written as an attempt to remove some of the mystery and confusion that can exist around Digital Signage, ONELAN's Digital Signage Handbook is an essential tool for anyone investing in Digital Signage.

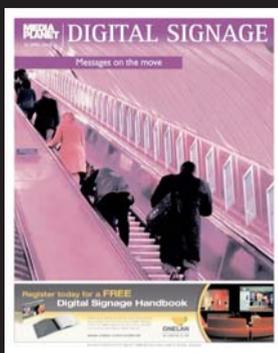
[www.onelan.com/handbook](http://www.onelan.com/handbook)



Tel: +44(0)1491 411 400

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE

## Introduction



## CONTENTS

Return on investment 4-5

Positioning

The science behind digital signage 8-9

Versatility 10

**MEDIA PLANET**

DIGITAL SIGNAGE  
A TITLE FROM MEDIAPLANET

Project Manager: Aminoor Choudhury  
Editor: David Abbott  
Production Manager:  
Katherine Woodley  
Design: Sherine Barnes  
Prepress: Jez MacBean  
Print: News International

Mediaplanet is the leading European publisher in providing high quality and in-depth analysis on topical industry and market issues, in print, online and broadcast.

For more information about supplements in the daily press, please contact Simon Kenneally

Tel: 020 7563 8889  
simon.kenneally@mediaplanet.com  
www.mediaplanet.com

# The digital route to filling the mindspace

The talk among advertisers these days is about the battle for a new territory called "Mindspace". It turns out to be difficult to locate because it is inside your head and the fight is intensifying because it is becoming a hard place to reach.



## ▲ Arsenal Football Club

Our media habits have changed. We are less likely to read a newspaper and we watch less TV; and when we do, we tend to skip over the adverts. So advertisers are getting jumpy and want to find a way to get back to us.

Advertisers are starting to think that the best way to do that, is to catch us when we are out of the home. Out of home (OOH) advertising represents around 10 per cent of advertising in the UK. One industry expert estimates that the OOH market will be worth around £50m, or ten per cent of the advertising market in 2008. Digital out of home – DOOH – will account for about 5 per cent of that, but it is being seen as a share which is only going to increase as advertisers try to keep track of increasingly choosy and mobile consumers.

Digital signage itself just refers to a digital sign with text and still or moving images. But that does not really

do it full justice. It is really a new way of communicating and people are beginning to get very excited about it as they start to see the possibility of a revolutionary shift in the way we communicate.

DS is different: "It's not television," says independent marketing consultant for the digital out-of-home industry, Damien Edmonds. "Consumers can't stop, they often cannot hear, so it's just not the same as sitting down at home in front of the TV," adds Edmonds.

That presents a challenge as content producers grapple with the demands of the advertising equivalent of the haiku. DS can use video as well as static and moving graphics and animations. Many in the industry argue that we are witnessing the emergence of a more sophisticated form of advertising, mixing information and commercial communication and blurring traditional boundaries. And po-

tentially, DOOH offers the possibility of a more experiential form of advertising which can extend brand reach in a powerful way.

In advertising the flexibility of the technology offers the opportunity to run more creative messages with greater choice in how and when to target messages to particular market segments. But at the same time, DS is not just about advertising and it is also being used for corporate communication in many different contexts.

Digital signage is also being heralded as an opportunity to move away from the rigidity associated with the age of the poster. The day of customers paying for a static display which is on show, night and day, seen and unseen, for a relatively long period of time, is dead. There is the enticing prospect of more time slots, greater revenues and a more sophisticated pricing structure.

## New Arsenal signing is a winner

Arsenal Football Club provides a good example of how digital signage can be used to generate value for a business. A network of 470 plasma screens in the concourses and hospitality areas at the Emirates Stadium keeps fans informed and entertained on match days. Promotional and branding messages are delivered through the network and extend the time fans spend in the stadium, all making for a much enhanced experience. Angus Kinnear, head of marketing points out that the LED perimeter boards are also a valuable and flexible branding medium, delivering messages that can be changed week by week or during a match. "Our research indicates that they are at least four times as effective as traditional static boards," said Kinnear.

But that's really more of a potential at present, because change is difficult and there are plenty of pitfalls. We're looking at an industry which is in its infancy.

Arguably the early steps into DS a few years ago failed precisely because advertisers did what people always seem to do with a new medium; they just threw in their old content, like newspapers in the early days of the internet.

"It makes an impact if it's done well, but there are still a lot of cases where it isn't being used well," says Ajay Chowdhury, CEO of EnQii, a leading player in the out-of-home digital media market.

But making sure DS is done well is not so easy, and several industry commentators point out that the industry has its share of people who thought it was going to be an easy way to make a lot of money. There are new opportunities to reach out and create new markets and new consumers, but DS is not a magic bullet.

One thing is for more certain; digital signage is going to transform the whole experience of consuming, selling and communicating.

**DIGITAL SIGNAGE**

IN-STORE TV, DIGITAL MEDIA, AD SCREENS, CONTENT AND SOLUTIONS  
**EXPO 2008**

6, 7, 8 May 2008 | Messe Essen | Essen | Germany

POWERED BY **POP AI**  
The Global Association for  
Marketing at-Retail

**EUROPE'S LEADING DIGITAL SIGNAGE EVENT!**

6th - 8th May | Messe Essen | Germany  
(15 minutes from Düsseldorf Airport)

**FREE ENTRY**

[www.digitalsignageexpo.eu](http://www.digitalsignageexpo.eu)

Platinum Sponsor  
**HUGHES**  
Connect to the future.  
[www.hnseu.com](http://www.hnseu.com)

Gold Sponsor  
**PROVISIO**  
software engineering

Silver Sponsor  
**WERKSTATION**  
COMMUNICATIONS

# OUR AUDIENCE HAS EVOLVED!

## WHAT ABOUT YOUR IMPRESSIONS?

Few of our Health and Fitness club members are professional athletes; but they are Mummies and Daddies, Doctors and Nurses, Pupils and Teachers, Lovers and sometimes Fighters. What they all have in common, is time and money to seek a happier and healthier lifestyle.



Gym Screen Media has evolved to help our health club clients communicate to their members. Brands such as David Lloyd, Virgin Active, Total Fitness and JJB Fitness, use our systems as the primary communication route to their members. Our systems have proven to be highly effective, and ensure customers leave with lots of good impressions.

We'd like to give your brand the same audience. With free independent research to all new customers, you know you have made the healthy choice.

  
**GymScreen**  
M E D I A  
[www.gymscreenmedia.com](http://www.gymscreenmedia.com)



For further information, or to discuss advertising opportunities with us, call Chris Brooks or Kat Ahmed on 0161 333 0595, or email [sales@gymscreenmedia.com](mailto:sales@gymscreenmedia.com)

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE

The great outdoors

# But can you measure it?

Digital out of home advertising (DOOH) may be the glossy and uber-hyped flavour of the month, but how do you know that it is doing what it is supposed to be doing and giving a decent return on investment? That is a question which hard-headed business owners are not slow to ask, and it is also a question with which the DOOH industry is becoming increasingly preoccupied.

The industry rightly senses that its ability to develop the market will depend to a not inconsiderable extent on being able to clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the new medium.

Bob Clarke, CEO of Any Other Business Ltd, doesn't shy away from any of these issues and he makes no bones about the fact that investing in digital signage is a big investment. There is the potential to gain big rewards from DS but, he says, "It's not a coincidence that only retailers prepared and able to make mistakes have embraced ownership of digital signage." Ideally says Clarke, those getting involved need to have the luxury of being able to afford to make mistakes. For those who can do that, who are really the pioneers of a new medium, the rewards will come. But they will have to be prepared to count some of the return in terms of

brand values and customer engagement, not just in advertising revenues.

That's a tall order perhaps, but Clarke thinks that those companies

**“Digital signage produces unprompted recall rates of 42 per cent – a figure ahead of other media.”**

who aren't able to think of digital sig-



nage in these terms are going to be struggling to see a return. For 'follow me' businesses, the high street brands, it may be that the best way to go forward is to defray risk by being aggregated into someone else's network.

Others in the industry take a more cautiously optimistic view. Nick Mottershead finance director of Match Day Media, points out that it's the lack of an agreed yardstick which has constrained the growth in this DOOH market and argues that the industry has to act collectively if it is to move forward.

There's been no transparency thus far in the industry says Mottershead and that's why Match Day Media's have said that they intend to, er, 'get naked'.

Mottershead says that means digital

signage providers have to be able to demonstrate that consumers are watching signage and that it is having an effect. Match Day Media have been working in consultation with Helen Harrison and RSMB and have now got some strong statistical data. The most recent research for Match Day Media shows unprompted recall rates of up to 42 per cent and prompted recall rates of between 66 and 82 per cent. That confirms research from other sources showing that digital signage does produce a higher recall rate than traditional mediums, but there is still some way to go.

EnQii's Ajay Chowdhury agrees that DOOH has unique problems in terms of measurement. Whilst it's not difficult to criticise the validity and signifi-

cance of RSMB ratings for the television audience, Chowdhury points out that at least they provide an agreed starting point for analysis. In the DOOH market in contrast, there is no such agreed standard. Of course, the usual market research measures of dwell time and footfall can be taken and applied, as well as qualitative analysis from focus groups, surveying or interviewing. They can give some indication of how effective this form of advertising is, but that still leaves a lot of uncertainty and room for debate about exactly how to quantify the value of DOOH advertising. Putting a value to the product is therefore an inherently tricky task bound to provoke argument. But it is not for the want of trying; as Chowdhury points out, sev-

1-2 OCTOBER 2008



OLYMPIA LONDON

Screens...Content...Delivery

**"The industry events for customer facing technology"**



Co-Located with

**KioskCom**  
self service expo europe  
1-2 OCTOBER 2008 OLYMPIA LONDON  
[www.SelfServiceExpo.co.uk](http://www.SelfServiceExpo.co.uk)

[www.digitalsignageshow.co.uk](http://www.digitalsignageshow.co.uk) Contact: Phil Hunter at [phunter@selfserviceexpo.co.uk](mailto:phunter@selfserviceexpo.co.uk)



**spinnXS**  
turns heads

rotating digital billboard

attention through movement

360° visibility

Opalio introduces a new movement in digital signage: spinnXS™. spinnXS™ is a rotating digital billboard. A mind moving medium. A great way to put your brand in motion.

Want more? Check [www.opalio.com](http://www.opalio.com) or call +31 30 2322061.

## The great outdoors

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE

eral companies, including Arbitron, TruMedia and Quividi, have devised eye recognition technology which can be built into screens and provide hard quantitative evidence of how many glances screens attract.

But it's still early days for this sort of technology. While Nick Mottershead of Match Day Media says that his company is about to start testing with eye recognition technology, Bill Gerba, CEO of Florida based WireSpring, says that he feels none of the gaze tracking systems are very good. In his opinion they are not quite production ready and he does not feel that any big success stories have yet emerged to convince him otherwise. And poke a bit further and the supposedly hard measures from gaze technology get a bit softer. As Gerba asks, the measure begs questions of how long counts as a gaze, and whether the viewers have to stop, and so on.

But all this uncertainty doesn't have to be an insurmountable obstacle to progress says Gerba. He thinks that searching for some sort of universal measurement is a bit of a red herring; different measures will be appropriate for different contexts and different needs and indeed, it may not be worth the effort, of measuring some things.

Although Gerba doesn't explicitly say so, you can't help thinking that

gaze recognition may be what he has in mind. But this isn't to say that Gerba is advocating a casual approach to assessing the costs and benefits of digital signage. Far from it; he is well aware that the costs of installing a big DS system can be huge. However, he does suggest that in some contexts, for example retail, the usual methods of market research can still be perfectly adequate. Simple split tests can tell you what happens when one outlet has digital signage and another doesn't.

And it's certainly true that working out the costs and return on investment is not equally complex in all cases; it depends on the business model in question.

Tariq Ahmad, CEO of Oggul, argues that if you are talking about a retailer who is using DS purely for sales communications to a large branch network, the savings on designing, printing and distributing sales literature can be huge. Ahmad points out that there are a lot of factors to think about and weigh up before concluding any cost benefit analysis, but potentially he says, the savings can be very considerable indeed.

For those using DS with more complex business models though, the problems in quantifying return of investment remain a point on uncertainty. It's just possible though that the doubters will be persuaded by

James Davies, board director of Posterscope.

Davies is not afraid to simplify and engage with potential clients in a down to earth - but still highly professional - manner. He says that broadly speaking, advertising has always worked on one of two levels; the intellectual or the emotional. Of those two, by far the more successful is the emotional level. In the new DOOH market, it's the emotional level that is particularly interesting and fruitful, partly because the 'infotainment' element of the new medium allows for more opportunity to foster engagement with consumers, or as Davies refreshingly calls them, 'people'.

Davies says that Posterscope's research shows that people like digital signage and feel that brands advertised on it are more high-tech and advanced than other brands. Posterscope also found that DS attracted up to double the trust of traditional mediums. Moreover says Davies, DS has what he calls 'talkability'; simply put, it gets people talking, attracting 44 per cent more discussion than other mediums. Davies cites the examples of Posterscope's innovative work for Yell, Adobe and Disney, where highly interactive digital signage in bus shelters and shop windows has captivated the attention of the public in an entertaining and memorable way.

As Davies points out, the sort of positive experience provided by these examples really engages with people and captures their attention. That he argues, is something which in a media saturated environment is extremely valuable. Just how valuable is a moot point. And in traditional business

terms, of course, the value of an experience is something very hard to distil into the sort of quantitative measure so beloved by accountants.

But just because a thing is hard to measure, it does not follow that it does not exist. In an uncertain business environment, that is useful reminder that

advertising, like business itself, is as much an art as a science. Businesses will of course continue, very wisely, to want to quantify the returns and costs of DS. But the difficulties in doing that should not blind them to the very real opportunities in an exciting, and of course, risky, new market.

“In more complex business models quantifying the return on investment remains a point of uncertainty”



## Creative content production for brands & digital out of home screen networks

Visit our creative showcase at [www.creative.liquiddigital.tv](http://www.creative.liquiddigital.tv)

Clients include WHSmith, Cabvision, Virgin, Coca Cola, Digital Media Sales, IBM, AMV BBDO, The Telegraph, Transport For London, Masterfoods, Watson Wine HK, Full Tilt Poker, Motorola, Lucozade, ABC Media, The Times, GLA & British Airways

[www.liquiddigital.tv](http://www.liquiddigital.tv)  
interact@liquiddigital.tv  
tel. +44 (0)20 7841 3060

digital media innovation

liquid<sup>o</sup>  
digital

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE

## Positioning

# Location, location, location

There are those who would argue that the introduction of digital signage does not really raise any new questions about location. But that is a moot point and on several different levels.



If a big part of the rationale of applying digital signage in the first place has been to hunt down the ever more elusive consumer, it must at least beg the question; "Where the hell are they now?" And questions about location also beg the question of level; are we just talking about where digital signage is best deployed within a building or a shopping centre or are we going up a level? If so, that implies starting to think about the implications of networks for digital signage.

These are difficult questions to answer. Looking at this from the perspective of a retailer or service provider who wants to use DS, Guy Bucknall, MD of Gym Television Ltd, recalls how when he started out in the business he thought back to his time as an infantry officer and asked, 'Now, if someone was going to shoot at me, where would the bullet come from? That hasn't changed much, and

Bucknall's advice is to keep it simple and just look for the white space. That sounds right, although it's not something that seemed obvious to one major UK retailer, which managed to install screens so high that they were above consumers' line of sight, thereby consigning thousands of pounds of advertising budget into the waste bin.

But there is previous knowledge and even a few principles to apply to locating signage: it has got to be placed where people can see it and that means that the old marketing measures of footfall and dwell time are as important as ever. Point of sales positions are going to remain important, but what the new medium will mean is that there could be a proliferation of signage throughout retail spaces, with messages being highly focused and tailored to particular products and contexts.

So far, so good, but delve a bit further and the novelty of digital signage becomes more apparent. If a retailer slaps up a digital sign - a computer screen displayed portrait style - it really is just a digital poster for the very good reason that consumers will not want to stand for a lengthy period of time in a shopping mall watching content, however interesting it is. Content and use are being changed by a new medium and vice versa; it's a two-way channel.

If you are stuck in a queue at an airport or waiting for a burger at a Premiership football match, a bit of entertaining, informative and well selected content, interspersed with some advertising of course, may well hold your attention and compensate for having to queue. But that doesn't mean advertisers can stop bothering to look for those white spaces.

So how much have things changed?

Bob Clarke, CEO of content provider Any Other Business Ltd, is one industry professional who argues that they could well be changing in a big way. Clarke makes the point that while we've had hundreds of years of experience in architecture and professionals can tell us how best to lay out living, office or retailing space, but digital signage really is different.

Clarke makes the point that DS is in the very early stages of its development and it is not necessarily clear what works and what does not work; it really is a new medium. How long will people stand and in which places, and what will engage their attention? In five years' time, suggests Clarke, we will know a lot more about the answers to these questions, at the moment the answers are by no means clear. And even when people do find out answers to problems, in a new industry, there tends to be a reluctance to share knowledge.

“Those fuming in a slow-moving queue could be grateful for a little entertainment and it could even make up for having to queue in the first place”

That still leaves the broader issue about location; finding the sites where those elusive consumers or information users can be located. There is an element of continuity here; advertisers

## NEW IN BRIEF

PricewaterhouseCoopers, see communication as an important tool in adding value to their business. Approximately 2000 staff are employed in the Dublin Headquarters and using the traditional methods of communication was costly and time-consuming. The easiest, cheapest and greenest way to communicate to their staff was to install ONELAN Digital Signage. To reach the 2000 staff, the location of the screens was important, the key visual areas decided upon were the Reception, lift lobby areas, Hospitality Suite, Training Centre and Gym.

Promotional feature

will place screens, just as they did billboards, in the best locations available to them.

But the real sense in which location will become vitally important, says Clarke, is in the development of what will be in effect a digital grid. Those owning networks in proximity to digital cinema chains, digital billboards and digital transport networks will find themselves in very a powerful position. For retail chains, retail malls, football clubs, health clubs, surgeries and owners of networks in these locations, an investment in DS will begin to make sense as their value will be as much influenced by proximity to other networks as to the intrinsic value of their own communities. The implication of this, says Clarke, is that decisions to trigger expansion in the DOOH market will begin to have a lot in common with those driving commercial property development.

That will mean that the greatest opportunities will be found in new developments where developers can start with a clean sheet. That means signage can be built into the fabric of brand and a particular location, becoming an experiential asset. In these situations, the creative and the commercial potential of digital signage are maximised; and at the moment, one of the places where that is most likely to happen is, unsurprisingly, in the growing consumer economies of the Far East.

extra... wireless digital signage solutions



any location, in-store and on the street  
remotely updated using mobile phone technology

advertise - inform - promote

To discuss your digital signage needs for your particular location contact:

[www.comtechm2m.com](http://www.comtechm2m.com)

+44 (0) 1204 664333

COMTECH M2M  
inspiring innovation





# **BROADSIGN™ SUITE: FULL MANAGEMENT OF DIGITAL SIGNAGE NETWORKS AND CAMPAIGN EXECUTION**

**BroadSign™**

[welcome@broadsign.com](mailto:welcome@broadsign.com) | [www.broadsign.com](http://www.broadsign.com)

Tel: +1 (866) 399-1184

# The appliance of science

Somewhere in the digital signage industry, indeed in new media in general, there is plenty of scope for someone to make a very successful niche business acting as a translator to those from non-techie sectors, explaining what the techno-speak actually means.

Fortunately there are those in the industry who are able and prepared to treat ingénues with patience, slow down their speech to a speed more normally used for pets and small children, and revert to ordinary language in order to be understood. In the event that you don't meet one of these sensible people, you will need force them to clarify, explain and to justify their every utterance. But to save yourself at least some of the trouble, just keep reading.

Bill Gerba, CEO of WireSpring, is one of those intelligent people who are fluent in two languages: English and Techie Speak. He explains that a digital signage system really is pretty simple, involving only three main parts; a screen, a media player, and a management platform or a way of controlling the screens and what is being displayed on them.

In terms of screens, the most commonly used format according to Gerba is the LCD as the costs have

come down a lot, they avoid the burn in problems of plasma screens, and they can generally be made to run more brightly, which is obviously vital if signage is to stand out in already brightly lit indoor environments.

The media player puts the content

“Server software can either be bought outright or rented from a company responsible for maintenance”



on to the screen and here there are two main approaches says Gerba. Some companies will use a regular PC and put some custom made software on it and simply use that in order to get content on to the digital screen. On the other hand there are those who prefer to build their own embedded systems. WireSpring for example falls into the first category and use Hewlett Packard PCs with their own customised software. This gives the advantage of cost saving and flexibility. Companies like Cisco and Sony produce their own embedded systems and Gerba's take is that they would claim the advantages of size and power utilisation; they are usually small and use less power than a regular PC.

As for the management platform more or less everyone is going to an Internet based model, says Gerba, and that is becoming the de facto industry

standard but people are using various methods to get their content onto the net. Server software can either be purchased outright, where a company will purchase servers and software and you maintain and run it themselves. But there is an increasing tendency to adopt an alternative model, 'software as a service' whereby a company rents the server infrastructure to a DS user. At the moment, says Gerba, the market is pretty evenly divided between these two models.

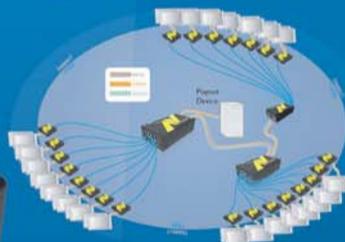
Tariq Ahmad, CEO of Oggul, a fast growing London based company which specialises in multi-screen solutions, confirms this broad picture. Without wanting to over-simplify, Ahmad points out that some DS systems can be in effect just a scaled up version of a PC; it's really just the IT basics of input, processing, and output. But as Ahmad explains, the

beauty of such IT systems is that they can make it so much easier for retail chains to send communications quickly and cheaply.

Ahmad gives an example of a retailer with say, 500 branches over the UK. A firm like Oggul can supply a system into every branch, yet the technology means that the whole network can be controlled from just one content management centre. That is means if the retailer wants to change the prices advertised on in-store signage or send vital customer communications, they can do it very quickly and up-date in real time, secure in the knowledge that their message will be instantly received in every branch. That is an impressive application of technology and in business terms, it is certainly what you'd call compliance!

Some years ago there was talk of the paperless office, but more recently

## ADDER® Digital Signage Distribution and Extension

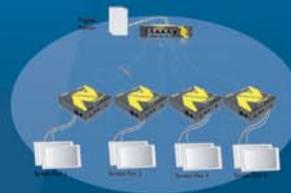


ADDER AV products can be cascaded to support up to 128 screens from a single payout source.

The new AV200 range of audio video extenders from Adder deliver high resolution crystal clear HD video and CD quality digital stereo audio across installations up to 2000ft in width. With full RS232 support, video display panels can be controlled and interrogated remotely, making the AV200 series the ideal professional Narrowcast Digital Signage solution.

To find out more about ADDER's range of Professional Digital Signage, Extension and KVM solutions, please visit:

[www.adder.com](http://www.adder.com)



ADDER TECHNOLOGY LIMITED  
Cambridge, UK  
Telephone: +44 (0)1954 780044  
Fax: +44 (0)1954 780081

ADDER CORPORATION  
Boston, USA  
Telephone: 888-932-3337  
Fax: 888-275-1117

ADDER ASIA PACIFIC  
Singapore  
Telephone: +65 6288 5767  
Fax: +65 6284 1150

Call +44 (0)1954 780044  
to find your nearest dealer or  
check our website

ADDER®  
GLOBAL Suppliers to the Digital Signage Industry

## NEW IN BRIEF

Consumonics looks like a winner with its oggul range of multiple screen displays. The combination of best-of-breed functionality and low price has resellers scrambling to sign up.

Stephen Haxby, Consumonics head of marketing, commented "Our resellers market a leading product without making any capital investment. They make the sales and we assemble, install, train and maintain."

Consumonics predicts strong market growth, based on its comprehensive offering, which extends to content provisioning, and its technology lead, based on protected IPR.

Promotional feature

ness environments. Ahmad cites estate agents and travel agents as examples of sectors where the traditional shop-window filled with paper signs may rapidly become a thing of the past and something to tell your grandchildren about when you're asked to talk about the 'olden days'.

Of course, this is not to say that the technology is without hiccups; anyone who has tried to download programmes knows that computers are not immune to Murphy's Law. In DS some common areas of concern have emerged. One of these is over the quality of the screens. In work or retail environments, screens are being used for excessively long periods of time, far longer than would be the case in a domestic setting. Of course, one obvious defence is for buyers to make sure they are getting a good after sales service, but you do need to try to get to grips with some technical detail.

Stew Mercer, chief technical officer at Oggul, says it is important to make sure that whatever you buy, you make ensure that the screen has a life of more than 30,000 hours and is capable of withstanding high temperatures. When it comes to multi-screens, Oggul's speciality of course, Mercer points out that it is necessary to look at the hardware in the computer which runs the screens and also ensure that you are getting the right software to run the applications.

In terms of hardware, Mercer advises that PCs are generally very reliable as long as they are not tampered with – so take that as a warning against any over-enthusiastic self-appointed office techies who say that they have 'done this at home'. PC-based systems, as the example above

indicates, can also be centrally controlled as long as they are connected to some sort of network, either by broadband or leased circuits.

How much capability a business will need from hardware will depend on how sophisticated they want their DS system to be and how much processing work they will require it to do. Stew Mercer points out that you could make do with a very simple screen with just a memory card, but to really exploit the possibilities of DS you are probably going to be best served by a connected computer using multi-functioning applications.

That will cost more of course, but it will also enable you to do things like up-date in real time, link to web pages, control displays by remote control, or even as fancy things like 'point to multi-point', where one web page can be used to up-date displays at an unlimited number of stores. It

all depends on what you want.

So what does the future hold in store for DS technology?, but many in the industry would argue that these are easily over-exaggerated and solvable. For Stew Mercer, the bigger picture is the possibility of a transformation in the way we buy and sell. An elimination of paper displays and greater use of interactivity both seem highly likely. "In the future, don't be surprised if you walk past an estate agent

and receive a Bluetooth message on your mobile, telling you about a great property being displayed in a window nearby," says Mercer.

If you work in advertising, retailing or commerce, that probably sounds like heaven. Others may find it a turn-off. But don't worry; as one independent consultant said to me the other day, 'If you're over twenty five, you probably can't figure out how to turn on Bluetooth anyway.'

## NEW IN BRIEF

Gym Screen Media reported that sales results for their Digital Signage advertising offering in the health and fitness industry in Q1 2008 were at a record high despite the expected seasonal down swing. The majority of the growth was driven by a marked increase in their B2B sales to SMEs.

MD, Guy Bucknall said 'These numbers are a direct result of the plan put together and executed by our head of Local Sales, Sean Casey, after his appointment last September. He and his team have yet to miss a target and I don't expect them to in the foreseeable future.'

Promotional feature

some have revisited the concept to pour bucket loads of cold water over the notion and ask how we could all have been so naïve. However, Ahmad argues that DS systems are going to be a great boon for retailers and offer the opportunity to dramatically cut down on printing costs. Ahmad points out that a busy UK high street retailer can be designing, printing and distributing posters and publicity material twice weekly. He thinks it is not unreasonable to estimate a cost of something like £4m per year for an 800 branch business; all money which can be saved by installing a good quality DS system.

With savings like that available, it would be surprising if there is not at the very least some reduction in the paperwork cluttering up many busi-



## Grab attention. Save money. Respond instantly.



YOUR LOGO  
ILLUMINATED

You know that retail space is money. Now you can maximise the value of your promotional space with oggul's revolutionary multi-screen design.

Each screen can deliver unique content, driven in-store, or from anywhere in the world using the internet. You can update 10, 100 or 1,000 screens simultaneously and at virtually no cost, through a simple website edit. No physical drops, no staff time to update displays, no errors, no paper mess.

oggul is robustly designed for your demanding retail environment - sturdy, tough, and user-friendly. If your content is managed in-store, your staff will master its simple user interface after a few minutes' training. It's Wi-Fi, so no trailing cables. You can brand the box stand as you wish.

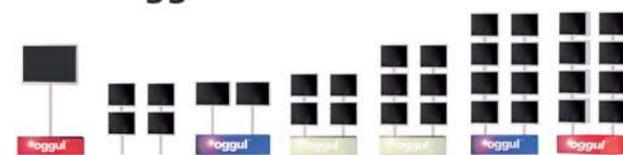
We provide a complete solution - proprietary hardware and software, installation, training, warranty, and content design and management run from our own servers, if you wish.

We offer a wide range of standard products and bespoke solutions, including sunlight readable screen models. Talk to us about which might be right for you.

08454 750 850

www.oggul.com

CONSUMONICS™  
oggul



oggul is a registered trademark of Consumonics Ltd.

Some of the oggul range. We are actively seeking quality resellers.

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE

## Versatility



*i catching*

**Symon**  
View the Possibilities

Imagine a media that puts you in control of the message. The possibilities are endless. The potential is staggering. Symon TargetVision® Communication Solution visually showcases relevant, real time information in a way that is customized, flexible, and thoroughly attention-getting. It's a retailing tool that lets you communicate with greater impact at the point of sale. Seeing is selling. Visit [Symon.com](http://Symon.com) today, and see for yourself how catching your customers with the right message at the right time can energize your bottom line.

To learn more about Symon® Retail Solutions, visit us online at [symon.com](http://symon.com), e-mail [Retail@symon.com](mailto:Retail@symon.com), or call + 44 (0) 20 8663 1810 to talk to us about a **FREE CUSTOMIZED DEMONSTRATION**.

# I want that one

Providers of digital signage solutions could be forgiven for occasionally feeling that their customers can regress into the sort of behaviour associated with Little Britain's Andy Pipkin; stubbornly insisting that they want 'this one' and then rejecting it for another, apparently arbitrary choice.

To be charitable though, such irrational behaviour is not entirely surprising in a fast expanding field where customers may be unaware of what exactly the new medium can do.

But as everyone in the industry will tell you, DS is not television and it is a whole lot more versatile and flexible than the dull, static word 'signage' implies. If you want to get the best out of this new medium, not only do you have to do your research, you also need to make sure you start off with a system which will keep options open, not close them down. "You had better make sure that you have the ability to dynamically change content independently at every location. If your underlying software platform can't handle that, you'd better choose another platform," says Gerard Bucas, CEO of Scala, one of the major software providers to the industry.

It's easy to appreciate the useful command and control aspects of computer technology, but as Bucas points out, many people ignore the various ways in which DS allows users to deploy communications in a much more imaginative and creative way.

Bucas makes this point with some useful examples from retailing. A retailer with 1000 branches will not always want to sell any given item for the same price across all locations, so pricing and other advertising content has to be tailored to local requirements. A DS system which is dynamic will allow for this, enabling up-dating instantaneously in real time and overlaying with customised communication content at every point of playback.

Jeff Porter, executive VP at Scala points out that this sort of versatility needs to be combined as part of what you might call a joined-up marketing strategy. In other words, clever use of DS can enable a retailer to promote ice scrapers in cold weather and umbrellas when it's raining, matching signage to local circumstances.

By providing what can end up being a huge range of special communications - just think how quickly it multiplies up with 1000 outlets, 10 departments and special offers every month - this makes it essential to have a really versatile system platform to ensure that customising content is easy and cheap to do. It's also important to think beforehand about how all this data will be transmitted if you want to avoid a potential IT disaster or the inability to fully utilise your DS network. Video and other graphic content requires big bandwidth and in some cases says Gerard Bucas, it's even worth considering transmitting data by a satellite system.

But as Bucas points out, here too, a forward thinking outlook is required. Even if a business purchasing a DS network doesn't want interactive functionality immediately, it may well pay to get a platform which includes it so it can be switched on easily later.

In a complex environment where the need to pitch messages to different groups of people at the same time can change rapidly and with little warning, the versatility of DS really does offer us the potential for greater choice. Hopefully we won't be as irrational in our choices as Andy, but it'll be nice to be able to join him in saying, "I want that one".

**“A retailer will not always want to sell an item for the same price across all of their locations so pricing has to be tailored to local requirements”**

Enrich your environment.



Sony, ZIRIS and their logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sony Corporation.

### Sony Digital Signage designed to fit your business.

Bringing your retail experience to life, Sony Digital Signage enables you to engage, inform and influence your audience like never before. Dynamic, flexible and scalable, Sony end-to-end solutions range from entry-level installations to global networks. Designed to fit, they can be tailored to meet the needs of your business.

For more information on Sony Digital Signage visit [www.sonybiz.net/digitalsignage](http://www.sonybiz.net/digitalsignage) or call 0870 60 60 456

For the very best service, knowledge and expertise, contact your Sony Specialist Dealer.



# SONY

[www.sonybiz.net/digitalsignage](http://www.sonybiz.net/digitalsignage)





Connect your  
message  
with your  
audience

It's no accident leading UK  
retailers and supermarket  
chains choose Scala to  
drive their digital signage  
networks.

It's proven, and it works.

# InfoChannel5<sup>®</sup>

POWERED BY SCALA 

Over 70,000 licenses globally and  
a network of software engineers  
and technology partners providing  
solutions and support for even the most  
demanding applications, makes choosing  
Scala the sound choice.

To find out more about **InfoChannel5**,  
or download a fully working demo of  
**InfoChannel Designer**, visit

[www.scala.com](http://www.scala.com)

Or call **Scala UK** on:

**020 7043 5908**



*Scala's InfoChannel5 software  
releases your designers creativity  
– and gives you absolute control  
and flexibility over content  
scheduling and delivery.*

NO LIMITS. NO BOUNDARIES

**SCALA** <sup>®</sup>  
broadcast multimedia

[www.scala.com](http://www.scala.com)

United States | The Netherlands | UK | Norway | France | China | Japan

Scala UK  
Tel: 020 7043 5908  
[info@scala.nl](mailto:info@scala.nl)