



Why Digital Signs?

Do you ever feel like there are screens everywhere you turn? In stores, hotels, car dealerships, and even on the side of the highway, digital signs are everywhere. There's even a place for them in the school setting.

Inside a school, digital signs can provide information such as announcements, directions and wayfinding, upcoming events, and security alerts. As school administrators think about using digital signs, it is important to consider three phases of implementation: planning, design, and engagement.

PLANNING

When a school begins planning to use digital signs, it is important to consider who needs to be involved. The digital sign planning team should include members from the administration, IT department, maintenance staff, and security. Other key members of the team will be those people who will be responsible for creating and updating content.

As with all technology, implementation of digital boards should be driven by the need to communicate information, not just the desire for shiny things. For this reason, one of the main priorities for this team should be to figure out what content will be displayed on the signs. The team should also plan a two-year budget that contains funding for hardware and software, as well as maintenance of the devices and future upgrades. In addition, consider where the displays will be located – is there existing power and data in these locations, or will new cables need to be run?

DESIGN

Most content management software allows the user to show multiple windows at the same time. This means that a digital board in a school could always show today's weather and the lunch menu while also scrolling through a list of upcoming events and the most recent scores from the school's sports teams. Digital signs could also display a school map or other directional information to help visitors find their way.

Consider having multiple content creators – this will take the burden off one person to constantly update the information. Teachers and even students can help fill this role. Including a “classroom of the week” section on the digital sign allows teachers to take ownership of the program and show off their students' work. It also gives students a reason to feel proud of what they are doing in the classroom.

It is also a good idea to share design best practice tips to anyone who will be creating content. These could include things like how much and what type of content to include, a brand pack with fonts, colors, and logos, and acceptable file formats for content. This will help prevent any confusion as more people begin submitting content.

ENGAGEMENT

Keeping content up to date is the most important part of running a digital sign. Interesting and relevant information draws people's attention and keeps them engaged for a longer period of time. Most content management software has built-in options for scheduling start and end dates for individual items, which helps prevent a content manager forgetting to keep things updated. A best practice is to cycle between eight and ten pieces of information every ten seconds or so.

Another way to engage people is with a call to action. There are many ways to accomplish this. For example, people could interact with the sign, visit a website, scan a QR code, or turn in a form that they found out about via the sign.

Do you need more help with digital signs? Contact S3 Technologies at help@mys3tech.com!

Sources:

“Digital Signage White Paper | 13 Steps to Success.” Visix, 25 Mar. 2019, www.visix.com/resources/white-papers/13-steps-successful-digital-signage/.

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