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Digital Signage Content Ideas and Sources

DIGITAL SIGNAGE WHITE PAPER



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We're here to help! If you have any questions about your application or our products, please contact us at **800.572.4935** or **salesteam@visix.com**.



So now what? You have a digital signage (DS) system, but aren't sure what to do with it.

No matter how sophisticated your system and how committed the people are who run it, it's easy to get into a rut, particularly if your organization has limited access to creative professionals like graphic and AV designers.

This is a real risk because content that's stale is highly conspicuous on DS and can undermine your investment. Seeking out new sources for content can keep your DS system engaging and new long past its initial launch. Look within your organization for information you can share with your audience.

Content Ideas List

- Announcements
 - Date and time
 - Tickers
- Weather and Traffic
 - Alerts
- PowerPoint
- Webpages
- News headlines
- Videos and animation
- Print marketing
- "How to" instructions
- Loyalty programs
- Images and graphics
- Community/industry news
- Event schedules
- Stats and charts
- Wayfinding
- RSS Feeds
- Polls and surveys
- Social media
- Shuttle mapping

- Audio
- Streaming video
- Television feeds
- Advertising
- Business hours
- Visitor welcomes
- Speaker bios
- Lectures
- Contests
- Staff/student profiles
- Press releases
- Volunteer drives
- Entertainment programs
- Event promotions
- Stock updates
- Sports scores
- Kudos and feedback
- Awards and honors
- Health tips
- FAQs
- Donor thanks

- HR and benefits
- Out of office schedules
- Birthdays/anniversaries
- Club meetings
- Menus
- Holiday closings
- Internships and scholarships
- Test schedules
- Pool hours and location
- Safety tips and milestones
- Article highlights

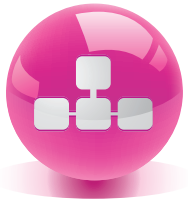


Intrinsic Social Motivation Applied to Digital Signage

It's always important to consider a DS strategy before you create any content. In Jay Deragon's article *Intrinsic Social Motivation*, he discusses how people are driven and provides six factors that enhance individual growth utilizing social media forums. Expanding that to digital signage can help us understand the motivations behind audience participation, and how that might apply to your DS program.



The Learning Factor – People are drawn to the new and exciting – they want to learn things and see how they fit into their lives. Content creators must keep information fresh on their digital signs to draw viewers in. It's this freshness that keeps your audience learning.



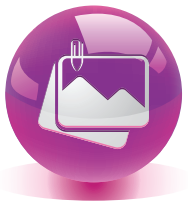
The Connection Factor – People love finding connections, both with people and with information. By knowing your audience and learning what connections they have in common, you can provide better and more relevant content.



The Affinity Factor – People also like to find associations and similarities with other adults. This encourages content creators to find ways to use DS to promote events, clubs, causes and other affinities for their audience. Think of it as using your digital signs to create your own club.



The Business Factor – DS provides a huge opportunity for organizations to broadcast announcements to large audiences. This makes people feel more informed and included in the business process. Is there a way to use DS at your location to generate revenue? Can it be used for employee spotlights, training or benefits updates? The opportunities are endless.



The Creative Factor – Good design and creativity is paramount in DS design. Presenting new ideas or existing ideas in new ways (Texting Polls, QR Codes, etc.) keeps your audience captivated and motivated.



The Expectation Factor – People expect that they'll receive something for their participation. Making sure content is useful to them, and including kudos, recognition and coupons or giveaways, can increase participation and help satisfy those expectations.



14 Digital Signage Content Ideas Expanded

You may not realize how much ready-made DS content you have available to you. With a little sleuthing and cooperation from organizational teams, you can mold existing resources into content that's dynamic for your audience and a timesaver for you.

1. PowerPoint

Your department teams work hard to prepare PowerPoint presentations that contain valuable information for the rest of your organization and its audiences. Import PowerPoint slides or whole presentations – select, schedule and deliver them in just minutes.

Human Resources can often provide great training and productivity slides. Marketing teams are rich in presentation materials, and can contribute templates and backgrounds for you to use.

If you have the latest revenue figures, employee of the month stats or schedules – why not share them?

Modern cloud-based (Software as a Service, or SaaS) presentation software, such as Prezi, can also spice up slides and engage your audience in an eye-catching, up-to-date manner by combining still slides with embedded video and audio files, and video transitions (see <http://prezi.com> for more information and examples). Since it's on the web, you just need to show the webpage on your screens.



2. Webpages and Web Graphics

If your software lets you create webpage messages, you can point to any URL and display it on your screens. Why recreate an event calendar if you already have it on the web? This is also a good way to pull in current weather or traffic, and post social media or survey results.

Does your organization have a website, a student portal, or an intranet? Pull in text and graphics from them. Marketing and Communications teams can provide JPEG, GIF and Flash files that make great DS messages.



3. Video and Flash

Video is the best medium for communicating a large amount of information or a complex idea in a short timeframe, and it's a great way to grab people's attention. This is especially important when you're trying to pull focus to DS in bustling, high-traffic areas. Movement draws the eye, and juxtaposing video near static communications will ensure higher readership rates for messages.

Video topics might include:

- Welcome video in lobby
- Safety videos
- Training presentations
- News and sports channels
- Entertainment programs
- Recruiting videos
- Town Hall addresses
- Lifestyle spotlights
- Community appeals
- Product demonstrations
- Special promotions
- YouTube channels



4. Print Marketing

Why not convert those handbills to messages? If you're printing posters or direct mailers, how about publishing them on your DS system? It's fast and easy to convert print to pixels.

It's a good idea to share any outbound marketing with internal staffers so that everyone, from reception to the warehouse, will know about your current promotions and be able to talk about them and direct inquiries to the appropriate person in your team. With a little creativity and cooperation, you can turn your print campaigns into exciting content for your DS system.

If your creative team gives you a graphic that doesn't meet your specifications, use some simple photo manipulation software to resize and rearrange the layout into a useable format before importing.

5. "How To" Topics

Just a quick sentence or a few bullet points of "how to" info goes a long way to make your DS a trusted resource. Don't be afraid to go outside of daily business topics. Think about what interests people – from Excel tips to health advice and recipes – you have a virtually limitless pool to draw from.

- Software training
- Internet or intranet tips
- Community resources
- Technology help
- Study tips
- Health topics
- Recipes
- Lifestyle hacks

Remember to keep messages clear and concise. If you have a series of tips or complex instructions, try referring readers to web resources for more in-depth detail, or deliver tips in a serial format.



6. Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs are traditionally structured as marketing efforts that reward, and therefore encourage, loyal **buying** behavior. Why not use this proven technique to encourage loyal **viewing** behavior?

Instigating a loyalty program will allow you to both learn about and reward your audience:

Educational

- Allows you to build a viewer contact list
- Enables collection of basic audience demographics
- Monitors trends and preferences
- Reveals which communications are working and which need adjustment

Inspirational

- Let's viewers know that you care about their opinions
- Encourages audience participation and feedback
- Rewards viewers for loyalty to your communications
- Continues to build relationships and open communication channels

One simple method is to invite viewers to register for your loyalty program and then integrate contests and rewards for those members in your DS messages. Including action items, such as "The first Rewards Club member to call extension 230 wins a Starbucks gift card," will give you a vehicle to measure viewing patterns and participation statistics.

Because this is the only place where participants can gain those rewards, they will become more loyal to your communications portal. Also, because winners are restricted to loyalty program members, other viewers will be encouraged to sign up.



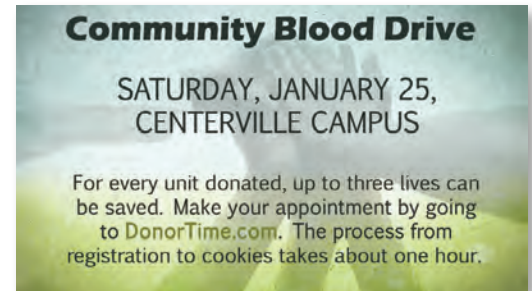
7. Community News

Does your organization partner with the local community or charitable groups for fundraising and special events? If so – spread the word with your DS system.

Build a true feeling of community by involving your audience in your non-profit activities. Create interest and let viewers feel included in charitable programs by delivering “community communications”. A message with basic information and directions for participation can help spur audiences to action and keeps your viewers informed about your civic efforts.

Even if your organization isn’t formally involved, you can still collect and advertise community programs from event calendars, publications and web resources. Choose topics from your geographic community, your industry, or your favorite charitable clubs.

Remember to keep messages clear and concise, and start communications at least one month before an event or deadline. Repetition is key to gaining mind-share, and to get viewers to remember and respond to your appeals.



8. Event Schedules

Every organization has meetings, conferences, training or some event that requires an itinerary or schedule. Why not publish your schedules on your DS system?

Event schedules posted to digital displays allow for real-time updates that printed notices can’t economically match. Messaging systems can be paired with industry calendar and scheduling programs to automatically update displays throughout the day for timely and convenient delivery of agendas.

You can organize your schedule messages by date, topic or room – whatever system makes the most sense for your facility and your audience.

Expand your ideas of event scheduling. Instead of just posting meeting times, consider posting significant benchmarks and entertaining content for the day, month or year:

- Visitor itineraries
- Speaker bios
- Wayfinding information
- Break schedules
- Registration deadlines
- Travel and transportation schedules
- Weather and news
- Traffic and shuttle schedules

If you have event descriptions or instructions, deliver these in separate messages (perhaps in simultaneous windows) or refer viewers to the web.

9. Data Visualization

Data visualization is simply turning data into graphics.

The most ubiquitous data visualizations are pie charts, graphs and tables. Other popular sources for visualization include maps, news, processes, connections, websites, timelines, and even music. The newest types of visualization are infographics (see websites such as <http://visual.ly> and <http://infogr.am> for examples and easy-to-use web-based creation tools). You can visualize data, strategies, information, metaphors, or concepts. Regardless, all visualizations should summarize data, support and strengthen the information’s relevance, and communicate relationships in a fast, intuitive way.



People respond to visual measurements of progress. By showing how much has been achieved or how far there is to go, you can trigger various emotions and actions in people – motivation, competitiveness, charity, closure, desire for closure, a sense of pride or accomplishment, etc.

Performance statistics are also a popular data set for visualizations delivered on DS. These types of visualizations can capture a wide variety of information - call center statistics, registration numbers, event attendance, poll and survey respondents, program contributions, sales, and more.

However, since DS is a dynamic medium, you may want to use more than static graphics to convey a message or data set to your audience. One terrific example is the energy dashboard from Lucid Design Group. This interactive visualization constantly updates and displays simple graphic representations of a building's electricity, water, heating and cooling energy consumption. If people can see the resources they're using, they can adjust their behavior accordingly to reduce consumption.

10. Interactive Wayfinding

Interactive wayfinding maps on digital signs can lead your visitors through your facility and give your audience a convenient one-stop source for information. Just consider these benefits...

- Interactive wayfinding is "Self-Service" and reduces the requirement for staff to help direct visitors to their location.
- It offers a more positive visitor experience by reducing frustration so visitors are more likely to return.
- With complex path mapping, you can provide the options to print directions or send them to a mobile phone.
- Searching an interactive directory instead of a static list allows people to filter large lists of names alphabetically, by department, position, etc.



Most interactive maps are custom builds, but some vendors offer plug-n-play solutions that either let you create within the software or use Google Maps to provide localized wayfinding.

11. Data Feeds

Data feeds are the most efficient way to present up-to-date information. Topics that are continually changing, such as breaking news, weather and stocks can be routed automatically to your digital signage system as messages or tickers. Because data feeds are delivered via RSS, you can deliver to any RSS-enabled device, including displays, desktop messengers, email inboxes, smartphones and other portable devices.

If you don't have the capability to receive data feeds, you can make your own. Grab headlines from sources on the web or from local and industry publications and advertisements. Any information that is relevant to your audience makes for engaging content:

- Current News: www.usatoday.com
- Weather Forecast: www.weather.com
- Industry Headlines: Visit association websites
- Entertainment: www.comcast.net/entertainment
- International: www.bbc.co.uk/news
- Sports: espn.go.com
- Business and Finance: online.wsj.com/public/us
- Quotations: www.quotationspage.com
- Health Topics: www.webmd.com
- Today in History: www.history.com/tdih.do

12. SMS Polls

We've all seen American Idol ask viewers to text their vote for the next pop star using their mobile phones. Well, you can use the same technology to poll your digital signage audience. It's not just a great tool for voting, it's also a terrific way to measure ROI and get audience feedback.



You can use SMS voting to poll on a number of topics, like:

- General surveys
- Audience choice polls
- Silent auctions
- Training comprehension checks
- Town Hall responses
- Fund raising pledges

First you need to secure a polling plan with one of the many online providers. A popular system is PollEverywhere.com, which works with SMS texting, web surveys and Twitter. Plans are based on the maximum number of responses you want to allow for an individual poll, and it's free if you only need to collect a small number of votes. Also, semester-long plans are available for K-12 and higher education customers.

Creating an SMS poll for DS isn't much different than creating any other message. Simply design your message with the question, the phone number where people send their votes, and a list of options with their corresponding SMS codes. Viewers just see your message and send a text message. It's that easy.

Polling services can also send a reply message directing voters to a URL where they can see the overall results. Or, you could schedule the results webpage in your DS playlist to let your audience track results on screen as votes are received.

13. Social Media

Whether it's Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or Google+, you can build community and boost participation for one or all of your social media sites by incorporating them into your DS.

Many of the social media sites have either RSS feeds or simple APIs to allow you to pull your posts into a digital signage playlist. If you want to show your whole page, try using a webpage embed function. You can either go full-screen or simply include them in traditional layouts.

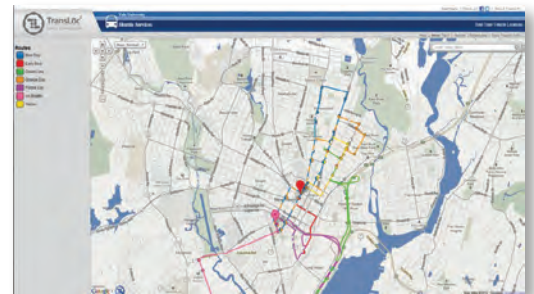
By advertising your social media efforts, you not only create buzz and excitement around your posts, but can attract more followers and entice people to participate on the sites.

- Advertise social media efforts
- Automate content for time-savings
- Boost participation and awareness
- Run contests to track ROI
- Include QR tags for instant access via smartphones
- Design full-screen layouts for impact
- Insert feeds into traditional layouts

14. TransLōc Shuttle Mapping

DS can be a major asset to transportation managers, especially on college campuses. Incorporating real-time shuttle and bus maps not only provides useful information, but boosts campus safety and comfort by allowing riders to wait indoors for their ride.

TransLōc is a next generation passenger information system. It offers riders a safe, comfortable, and convenient wait for the bus and gives transit operators a more efficient, more appreciated transit system.



Transit Administrators get:

- a real-time view of their transit system
- insightful reports
- fewer complaints
- less radio chatter
- a better way to promote important announcements
- a turnkey solution
- a more efficient, more appreciated transit system

Riders get:

- to see their buses (actually moving) online
- a detailed map
- estimated arrival time
- access via mobile phone
- more time to relax, work, or grab some coffee
- a safe, comfortable, convenient transit experience

Find out more at <http://transloc.com>.



Digital Signage Content for Your Environment

Whether they're commercial, non-profit, educational, or service-oriented, organizations are using DS to break through the barriers of audience attention span, information overload, and even language and literacy.

Here are just a few types of messages you can deliver in your environment:

Corporate and Manufacturing:

- Promote events and HR information
- Supplement promotions or product announcements
- Boost morale with awards and recognition
- Share emergency announcements such as extreme weather
- Incorporate live information like news and traffic
- Broadcast performance and inventory statistics
- Display industry news or other RSS feeds
- Post changing stock updates and rate information
- Manage call center traffic with on-time data
- Supplement training and education programs
- Promote community outreach and partner programs
- Personalize visitor greetings
- Show event schedules with on-time updates
- Share quotes, history or "how to" messages



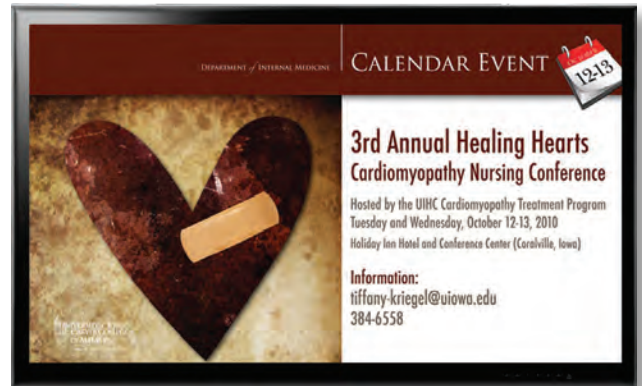
Schools and Universities:

- Post current event schedules and special events
- Deliver instant emergency announcements
- Announce changes to course schedules
- Personalize visitor greetings, welcome notices and guest announcements
- Advertise bookstore, café or other campus shop offerings
- Post daily menus or create stunning menu boards for catering offers
- Broadcast educational programs or remote lectures
- Show guest speaker or lecturer bios
- Post administrative announcements and registration schedules
- Advertise volunteerism and community outreach programs
- Share sports information and game schedules
- Provide interactive wayfinding and directories
- Include social media pages or posts to build your following
- Show live shuttle routes and bus schedules



Healthcare Organizations:

- Generate revenues with targeted advertising
- Welcome visitors with personalized messages
- Show health tips and class/group meeting schedules
- Thank your patrons and encourage philanthropy with donor boards
- Show pharmacy information or local partner locations
- Advertise gift shop products and special offers
- Advertise upcoming events and vaccination schedules
- Promote community outreach and partner programs



Hospitality and Convention Centers:

- Welcome groups with personalized messages
- Generate revenues with advertising
- Promote loyalty programs and registration benefits
- Show break schedules and "quiet zone" locations
- Advertise upcoming events and entertainment schedules
- Feature keynote speaker bios or employee spotlights
- Share emergency alerts and live weather and traffic information
- Show wayfinding and room availability



Retail:

- Generate revenues by advertising at point-of-purchase and point-of-service displays
- Promote loyalty programs and registration benefits
- Run entertainment programs that target niche groups
- Advertise upcoming events and product release schedules
- Promote customer service, gift programs and warranty programs
- Display store layout, shopping guides and other helpful store services



Worship:

- Promote volunteer and missionary opportunities
- Personalize messages for visitors
- Promote upcoming events with detailed schedules
- Share sermon highlights and hymn lyrics to encourage participation
- Advertise video, audio and bookstore offerings
- Promote community outreach



Content Creation vs. Content Curation

Instead of always having to start from scratch, why not gather content in advance – curate it – so you have a stockpile to draw from when you need ideas?

Content curation is simply finding, compiling, and presenting groups of content organized by subject matter. As you find interesting articles, videos, graphics, blogs, quotes – anything online that might be of interest to your viewers – gather it together by topic and store it for later reference.

You can use simple browser bookmarks to keep track of content, but why not make it a bit more interesting and easier to navigate? There are several popular sites that offer free curation like PearlTrees, Pinterest, and Bundlr to help you store and organize web content.

We've used Scoop.it to create four curation pages that give you lots of tips and sources for design inspiration, design software tools and online generators, and sources for free fonts, graphics, videos and music:

- <http://www.scoop.it/t/design-elements>
- <http://www.scoop.it/t/fun-with-fonts>
- <http://www.scoop.it/t/design-inspiration>
- <http://www.scoop.it/t/software-generators>

When you decide to turn your curated content into DS content, just draw from your library and make sure you add your own context to the topic to make it relevant to your viewers. You can also allow your employees access to certain curation pages, giving them a chance to participate.

You don't need to hire expensive consultants to give you content ideas – by leveraging the information and talent that already exists in your organization and the ever-increasing range of web-based tools available, you already have as much content as you could ever want.



Want to learn more? Contact us at salesteam@visix.com.

