

Indiana University

Indiana University Deploys Digital Signage System

The number of digital signage deployments on university campuses in the U.S. has skyrocketed during the past few years. Much of this is due to dramatic price decreases of flat-panel displays and other computer technologies. New requirements for campus communications such as security, way finding, news, weather and campus events have also driven the acceptance of this new technology.

In 2008, the Auxiliary IT Services group at Indiana University (IU) Bloomington realized that digital media was the way of the future for campus communications. Led by Aaron Sudduth, Senior System Administrator of IU's Auxiliary IT Services, the team sought out a digital network solution to distribute information in a greener and more efficient manner.

"Digital media is not only modern and eye-catching to students, but it's less of a hassle than printed materials," Sudduth said. "It's less expensive in the long run because you don't need as much paper, and it turns around information much faster than traditional signs."

After a competitive RFP process, Sudduth and his team determined that Digital AV, a digital signage company based in Fort Wayne, Ind., specializing in software and hardware development services for digital signage applications, was the right choice for the university. With the aid of Digital AV, IU's Auxiliary IT group installed 30 40-inch LCD monitors and computers across campus powered by Scala digital signage software. The complete installation took less than one year to accomplish, with the network being fully operational in spring 2009.

"Indiana University's digital signage network is among the largest academic deployments of Scala to date, and it makes use of virtually all of the new technological

advances found in the updated Scala platform," said Tom Johnson, CPMR, president of Digital AV, a Scala Certified Partner.

Using Scala software on the university network, IU Auxiliary IT now has the ability to drive more than 30 channels of individualized content to numerous screens all across campus. Currently, LCD monitors are located in all 12 campus dormitories, food service areas, parking operations and the IU Memorial Union Building.



Additionally, one digital signage channel is tied directly to the TV cable network within the Memorial Union hotel to display meeting announcements and other upcoming events in each meeting room.

The software's flexibility has shifted much of the burden of daily content creation away from Sudduth and the IT team, as the remote templates are available via the university network all across campus. Each monitor location can be

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remotely accessed through the Scala Content Manager on the university network and then plays specialized custom content templates.

“It’s kind of like a fill in the blanks and publish concept, and allowing external departments responsibility for creating and approving their own digital content is very cool,” Johnson said.

While Sudduth has ultimate control of system-level (IT) issues, the IT managers select which employees have access to the content management software and at what level. Because the responsibility for uploading and maintaining content is effectively outsourced from IT, external specialized information can be distributed and approved more quickly than ever.

Individual departmental marketing personnel work with individual students who request content to be included on the digital signage network. In most instances, they fill out an online form within the software containing the information they wish to broadcast at various locations. If approved, the system uploads the information onto the university templates and schedules it to play at various times.

For example, the Indiana Memorial Union houses various student groups that might be interested in promoting their meetings, events or other local information. They can now go online and access the content form from the Scala Content Manager on the University network.

The users can access a Web-based template that can be used by any authorized Web browser to input the content into a Microsoft SQL database. This ability to remotely access the system brings great functionality to the system and is one of the most powerful components built into Scala Content Manager.

“Scala software allows a variety of users to log on to the system through the campus Web portal to create and control content from various locations both on and off campus,” Johnson explained. “It allows authorized users to access template screens without requiring content management and designer software at each player location.”

According to Sudduth, the response to the new digital network has been positive. “It’s evident that the marketing departments have been able to reduce the cost of printing, and the real return has been on getting information to students and staff much faster,” he said.



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Moving forward, Auxiliary IT would like to integrate digital signage with IU's emergency alert system, which is currently set up to send emergency text and e-mail messages to students on the go. Additionally, IU plans to investigate ways to harness this technology as a digital way-finding system for the Student Union.

"Being able to touch a monitor and have it tell you how to get to Starbucks or to the bowling and billiards in our large student union would be cool," Sudduth said. "We feel we could really utilize this kind of digital system on campus."

About Indiana University

Indiana University is located in the state of Indiana. The university has more than 99,122 students on its eight campuses across the state. IU is internationally known for the quality of its academic programs and attracts students from all over the world. IU's original and largest campus is located in Bloomington, which has the most international students — more than 4,000 students from more than 125 countries. IU plays a key role in the economic and social well-being of Indiana residents, offering educational, cultural and financial benefits to the state.

Where can you see a digital sign at IU?

- **Dormitories:** These monitors stream campus information and RSS feeds from the IU news room. This can include data such as time, weather, student updates, food services and trivia. They may also update students on dorm closures and other important items such as move-in/move-out dates.
- **Dining Halls:** Signs provide information regarding times the campus eateries are open, menu changes, and how to roll over points on student meal plans.
- **Parking Operations:** Signs explain various types of parking permits.
- **Student Union:** Monitors advertise upcoming student events, as well as activities sponsored by campus organizations. They may also stream network channels for entertainment purposes when appropriate.

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About Digital AV

Digital AV (www.digital-avd.com) is the largest digital signage company in the Midwest, focused exclusively on digital signage applications. Located in their 3,000 sq. ft. technology center in Fort Wayne, Ind., they specialize exclusively in digital signage development and services. Areas of expertise include deployment of DS software, hardware, content development, managed software services and network management. DAV is a fully authorized and Certified Partner for Scala Inc., LG Commercial, Premier Mounts, Equus Computer, and many other quality lines of professional AV and DS products. Display mediums include LCD and plasma displays, LED display tiles and video walls, plasma walls, front- and rear-projection systems and other specialty displays. Deployments include universities, corporate communications, hospitals, convention centers, museums and retail stores. Additional case studies are available at www.digital-avd.com. Call (260) 485-5400 or e-mail experts@digital-avd.com.

About Scala Inc.

Driving more than 300,000 screens worldwide, Scala is a leading global provider of digital signage and advertising management solutions. Scala is the world's first connected signage company, offering the leading platform for content creation, management and distribution in digital signage networks and the first unified platform for advertising management of both traditional and digital signage networks. The company's digital signage customers include Rabobank, IKEA, Burger King, T-Mobile, Virgin MegaStore, Warner Brothers, The Life Channel, Rikstoto, Repsol, NorgesGruppen, Audi, ECE Flatmedia, Kaufhof (Metro Group) and thousands more. Advertising management customers include CBS Outdoor, Clear Channel Outdoor and Magic Media, among others. Scala is headquartered near Philadelphia, USA, and has subsidiaries in Canada, The Netherlands, France, Norway, Germany and Japan, as well as more than 450 partners in more than 60 countries. More information is available at www.scala.com.

