

Digital Signage: Interactivity Transforms Consumers

A recent report from market researcher iSuppli reveals what anyone who uses the latest electronic gadgets intuitively knows. People love to touch screens, interact with technology and get the results they desire. From Apples popular iPods and iPhones to most of the GPS navigation devices on the dashboards of many cars on the road today, touch screens are becoming the de facto way folks like to interact with technology. Perhaps you have a friend like mine who is a control freak. If so, then this technology is just what the doctor ordered.

Its perfectly understandable why there is this universal interest in the concept of control. After all, without a pretty clear idea of whos in charge, problems would likely go unsolved, resources would be wasted and societies would devolve into anarchy. On a personal level, too, the question of control is equally important. Who doesnt value liberty having the freedom to take charge of ones own life to achieve the personal, professional and spiritual goals of ones own making? This fundamental human desire gives rise to what we see in our world and has contributed in no small part to the many of the most noteworthy twists and turns in the lives of individuals, nations and entire empires.

Thus, it should be no surprise that when it comes to technology control is of paramount importance to consumer adoption and success. Look no further than the overwhelming popularity of Apple Computers iPod, iPhone and iPod Touch for some of most recent examples of the power of scratching that itch for control. And that desire to reach out, touch a screen and control a technology shows no sign of abating.

Fortunately, good news is at hand literally. A recent forecast from market research firm iSuppli shows that by 2013 global shipments of touch-screen display modules are expected to double, or 833 million units. By way of comparison, in 2008 worldwide touch-screen module shipments will reach 341 million units, about \$3.4 billion in value, according to the research organization. At symposium in Los Angeles last month put on by the Society for Information Display, nearly 60 companies promoted their particular touch-screen sensor technology.

When coupled with digital signage technology, such touch-screen sensors can transform ordinary linear digital signage content (in other words, a succession on visual and audio elements presented one after another) into dynamic, interactive content that lets the public seek out the information about a product they desire. Interactive digital signage combines the best of the kiosk world namely touch-screen interactivity- with the power of consistent messaging delivered when the sign operates in a traditional linear mode.

The situation will be exacerbated as cable TV gets more interactive, IPTV rollouts with on-screen hotspot links and over-the-top video (video delivered via Internet broadband connection) blurs the line further between whats a television and whats a computer. The good news for digital signage marketers is that a variety of interactive technologies are being integrated into some of todays digital signs, giving them touchscreen capabilities and freeing them to combine the best of the kiosks world with the strengths of digital signage.

Even the monolith of linear program presentation the television industry- has been forced by technology to re-evaluate its business model and begin making the transition from so-called appointment TV to the anything, anytime model of video-on-demand. Spurred by DVRs, VOD, pay-per-view, IPTV, and cable television, those whose business it is to generate revenue from commercial television sales are working hard to develop a business model that makes the most sense. While all of the details are being hammered out on a daily basis with each new media sale, its safe to say the future of TV will be built on interactivity.

Winning the race to influence consumer-purchasing decisions soon will mean digital signage content producers soon will be forced to add interactivity. While there certainly will still be a place for traditional linear digital signage content, its hard to imagine a future in which interactive hybrid digital signs arent at the least an important addition to the marketing mix.

Simply put, to compete in the battle to influence the buying decisions of consumers, digital signage content producers will soon be forced to incorporate interactivity into their presentations just to stay competitive.

About the Author

David Little is a digital sign enthusiast with 20 years of experience helping advertisers use technology to effectively promote their unique marketing messages. For further [digital sign insight](#) from Keywest Technology, visit our website for many helpful tips and examples.

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