dynamax

Provided courtesy of Dynamax

Digital Signage for Healthcare

More than just a screen. It's a sign that you care about your staff and patients.
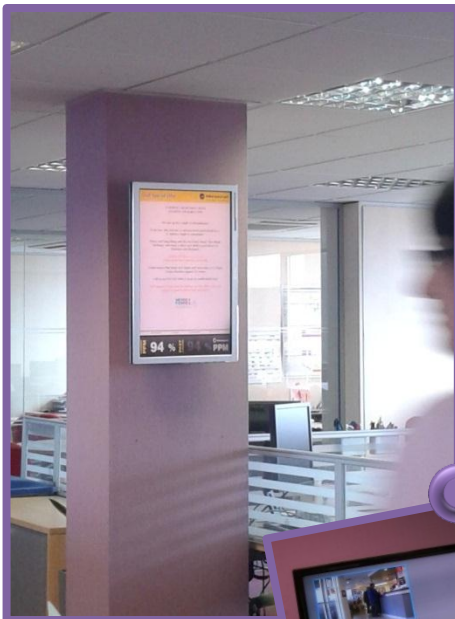
Learn to do more with less!

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Quick facts:

- UK's health secretary puts ''technology revolution'' at the top of NHS's priority list (Source: HealthBusinessuk.net);
- NHS acute trusts set to spend £800m/year on health IT by 2015 (Source: HealthBusinessuk.net). The total IT spend will grow by 4.2% between 2012- 2013.
- NHS might become paperless by as soon as 2015 (ehealth INSIDER);
- Fewer doctors to be trained in the future. The number of medical students will be reduced by 2% (The Telegraph);

British health think tank, the King's Fund notes that in the past decade the National Heath Service has registered a progress but ''treacherous waters'' might lie ahead because of the last years' cuts in budget.

Jeremy Hunt, UK health secretary says:

" *Patients, especially those with long term conditions… want more joined-up care and much of the solution is in better use and sharing of information.* "

CHAPTER 1: The case for digital communications

Data from a recent research conducted in the UK shows that patients' experience of using a GP's services affects the quality of their care. The more experienced they are, the better the final result, the more satisfied they are with the service, the higher the outcome score (QOF) and the greater the financial reward received by the GP.

But in order for patients to develop a record of experiences with the GP[1], those must be positive. As expected, negative experiences lead to fewer interactions and Mr. Hunt seems to imply that effective communications hold a key role in reaching this triple goal (better usage of services, patients satisfaction and more funding).

[1] GP (general practitioner)- a medical practitioner who treats acute and chronic illnesses and provides preventive care and health education. The British equivalent of a family physician.
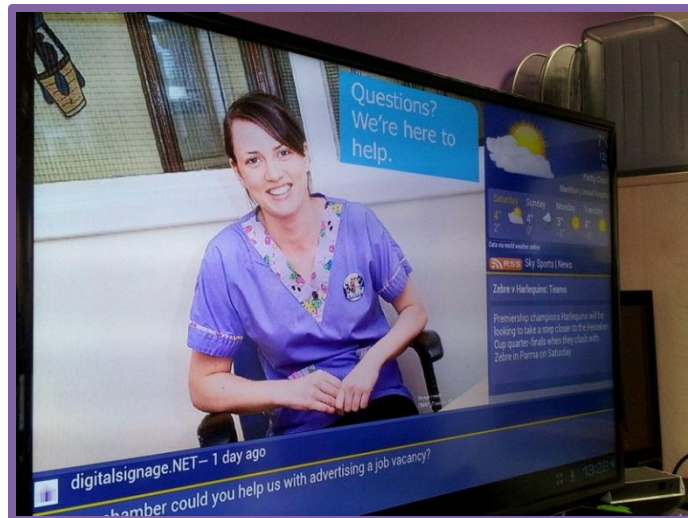
Why digital signage?

Digital signs (or digital signage) allow you to send targeted messages to one or several locations from a central point be it the Communication or Estates department or simply from your reception desk.

Here are the advantages of digital signs over static posters:

- Information can be streamed in real time from online sources (websites, social media) to display the latest news automatically;
- They can support videos;
- They can be updated almost instantaneously at no additional cost;
- Digital signs can be centrally managed but one can give a certain degree of control to staff members from remote locations;
- Messages can be posted automatically on certain dates and at certain times with no human intervention;
- Messages can be automatically deleted from your playlist so no outdated ones are posted on the screens.

Screen run by our software,
digitalsignage.NET

Digital signage can be used to:

Display time-critical and instant announcements

Inform about news and events to create a sense of community

Educate and reassure patients and visitors.

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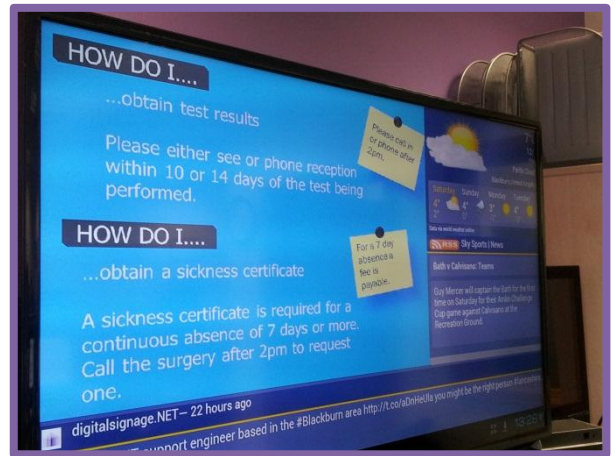
CHAPTER 2
Digital signage content

Example of digital signage messages

A screen can support a multitude of messages in a variety of formats. Here are just a few examples that our friends at Digital Signage Connection are suggesting:

- Reminders- remind patients to take their medication as prescribed, register or show up for their flu jabs. These messages are appropriate for screens in waiting rooms and reception areas.
- Staff messages- keep your staff informed about key matters so patients are offered a high- quality service. These type of messages can be displayed in employees break rooms along with other communications deemed important;
- Key healthcare matters (hand hygiene procedures, the effects of certain medication etc.) and terminology (what is the norovirus, etc.);
- Way- finding information- present how and where key locations of your establishment are to be found;
- General information about opening times, home visits, appointments

procedures etc.

- Adverts of pharmaceutical products. According to Screenmediamag, digital displays are twice as effective than printed communications and they enable institutions to generate revenue.
- Reassure patients. Some people might feel uneasy about a consultation or nervous about their blood test results. Display messages that would have a calming effect.

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Digital signage content types

With digital information displays you are offered a great deal of freedom as to what content formats you want to display. Use the ones you feel comfortable with and repurpose existing content (archived videos and photos).

These are a few content types that digitalsignage.NET, our digital signage software allows you to display:

- Video (AVI, MPEG1/2, MPG, MOV (H264), MOV, WMV);
- Live video: Composite video, S-video, Exterity via player plugin. Share live footage from important events with those in your locations.
- Images: JPG's. You can also use PowerPoint presentations but you must convert those into JPG's to be able to display them.
- HTML5 widgets- news, weather, calendar, Twitter. These allow you to display real- time information from a variety of sources and complement your communications.

The 'content is king' idea is only half of the story. Relevant, fresh and timely content is what triggers responses and generates ROI.

digitalsignage.NET allows you to send the right information to the right location, at the right time, to the right people with just a few mouse- clicks, thanks to its scheduling feature.

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Sending the right type of information

Besides the difference in content between your message in the lunch area and the ones in the waiting room or the reception, your communications must differ in terms of length as well.

Your staff and patients will never watch long videos shown on screens in corridors, so it's never a good idea to use this type of media in locations with low dwell- times. Short, snappy messages are best to show in areas people where people don't spend much time in.

However, waiting rooms are suitable for longer communications, so videos are a good choice for this environment. Don't miss the chance to present your services, news and other general information while patients have quite a bit of time available.

If you respect the rule above, you should be on the safe side in terms of files formats and length.

> **"Moving people read static messages and static people read moving messages"**
>
> Stephen Beasley, Fitch

Tip

Your entire project should be built around your message.

Begin by asking yourself these two questions:

1) What are my goals? What do I want to achieve by using digital signage?

2) What do I want to communicate in order to achieve my goals?

Answering them will make it easier for you to measure your digital signage system's ROI.

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After deciding what you want to achieve by using digital signage, the next thing to do is put a system in place to check if your goals are being achieved or not.

Your goals can include but are not limited to|:

- More informed patients
- Reduced workload for staff as the screens can take on the role of receptionists
- Increased sign- up for the services provided (flu jab registrations);
- Lower appointments cancellations;
- Fewer complaints;
- Lower print and other communication- related costs
- A more efficient communications system.

Now that your goals are established, decide what measurement methods you're going to use.

Give the system a couple of months to prove its worth and then assess the results. You can:

- Conduct surveys and compare results before and after a digital signage system was installed;

- Check and compare records (of appointments cancellations, complaints, sign up rates etc.- before and after digital signage);

CHAPTER 3
The ROI of using digital signage

- Ask staff for their opinion about the digital signs and their effects. Have they helped them in any way?
- Monitor the patients' awareness of the screens and the time they spend watching them;
- Compare print costs- before and after;

The next step after collecting the results is adjusting your tactics accordingly.

Your digital signage software should give you the freedom to experiment with different content types and days/ hours combinations.

Image credit: sheepishme, Flickr

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CHAPTER 4
Your solution- what you need to purchase

In its simplest version, a digital signage system has three main elements:

• **The content**- the message you will display on your screen. Your content files can be anything from videos, images, RSS feeds, widgets etc.).

• **The software**- that delivers your content to the media player(s) that powers your screen(s). It also allows you to schedule your content to play at certain times of the day and days of the week and check if the system is working properly. It can be hosted in the cloud or on your own premises (see next section).
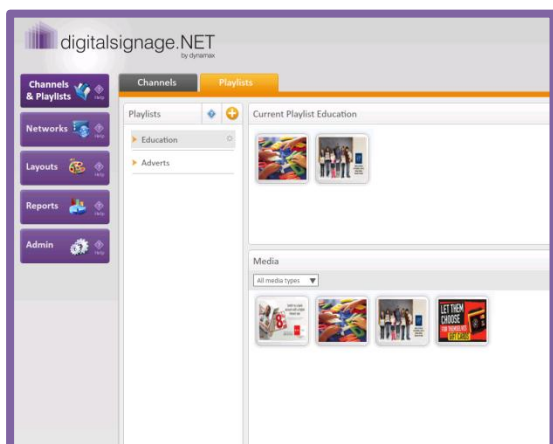
The **hardware**: the **screen itself** (LCD's, 10" digital photo frames etc.) and the computer or **media player** that stores your content and sends it to the screen(s). You need one media player only if you'll show the same content on all your screens and several for different content on different screens.

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- The installation. Your screen needs to be wall mounted and media players need to be configured. This is usually the job of audio- visual integrators, specialist companies that assemble all the pieces of the puzzle together.

- The support. Make sure help is available when you need it- whether software or hardware- related. This can be provided by the AV integrator, the software vendor or both. Sometimes, the support can be free. For example, we offer free email support for our software, digitalsignage.NET.

Clarify these aspects before the actual start of your project. Decide about your goals, the messages you are going to show and whether you are going to personalise them based on the screens' location. Choose the screens' emplacement, the type of screens and media players you will be using and the software that will run the entire network.

Many of these decisions are simplified by the collaboration with an integrator (especially the choice of hardware and software).

CHAPTER 4
Your solution- what you need to purchase

We have partnered with a number of such companies that can assist you with your project and that are located throughout the UK and some in South America.

A selection of them are listed here.

> **Tip**
> Place your screens where the audience you want to target (patients, staff, visitors) is most likely to be found.
>
> Ensure that mains outputs are available in the near by area.

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The software

The digital signage software is that critical piece of the puzzle that allows you to upload, schedule and display your messages on your screens, with the help of media players.

The rise of cloud- computing has made digital signage available to organisations of all sizes, as it drove its costs down.

Here's how the system delivers your message to your screens, via the cloud.

After you upload, scheduling and publish your media files, **these will be loaded** onto the **cloud** (i.e. Internet) then **redirected to the media players you've selected**, that will store your files and **send them to their associated screens.**

The entire operation takes virtually seconds allowing your message to appear on your screens in almost real-time.

Sign up to digitalsignage.NET for free!

Cloud- based digital signage

Your data

Media player

Your PC

Screens in your locations
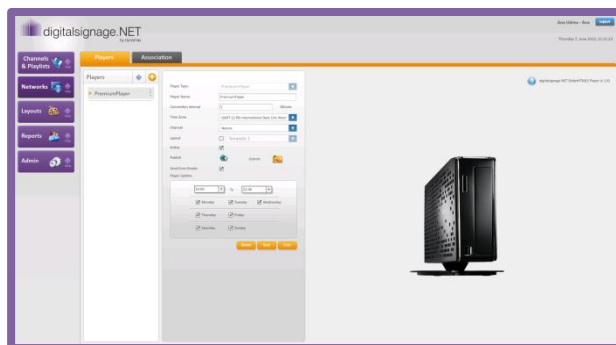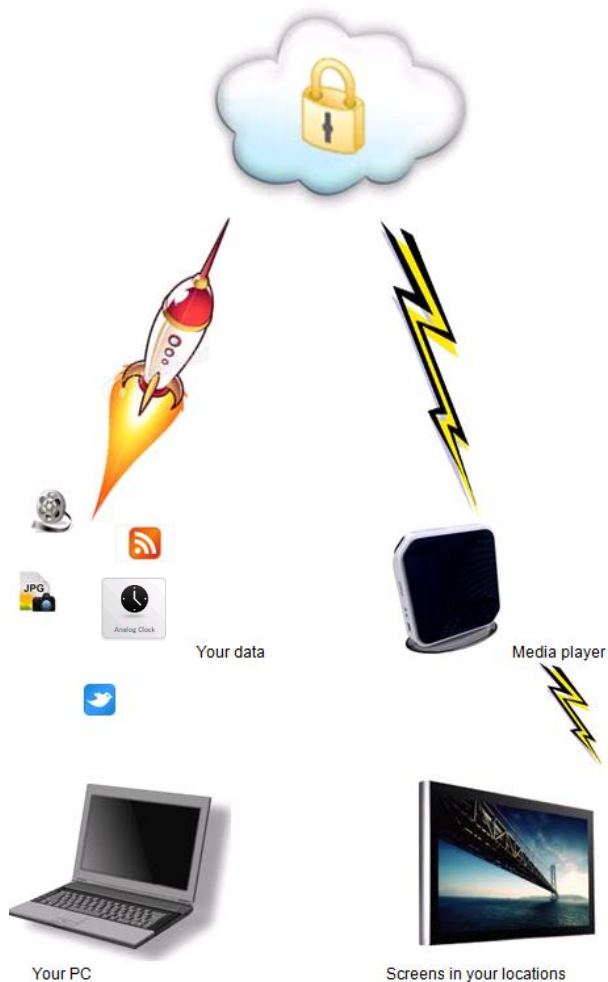
Should you host it or should it be in the cloud?

A hosted digital signage system implies that you will have to buy the server software (thus owning it), build your servers and maintain them. The advantage is that the system is highly secure, as nobody outside your organization has access to your servers.

The downside is that you have to become a specialist in the chosen digital signage software; you are the one maintaining it as you will be maintaining the servers too, an operation that takes time, effort and money.

Cloud- computing on the other side, reliefs you from the task of maintaining servers, backing up data, worrying about band width or data storage. The vendor will be responsible for these.

Thus the technical knowledge and effort required of you will be minimal. Most vendors offer free, automatic updates of the software which is rarely (or never) the case for an on-premise one.

The advantage of premise- based digital signage software is that it is usually more sophisticated than its cloud- based counterparty.

The advantage of cloud- based systems is their quick and cost-effective set up (as there are no licenses or servers to buy and install). All you have to do is create your digital signage software account, buy your hardware and then install it, besides creating your content.

Whatever your choice make sure it suits your establishment's needs.

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Going beyond technology and content. Considering the context

As you probably know by now, impactful communications don't rely on visually appealing content or the latest technology only.

Ensuring that this is delivered when, where and to whom it matters is critical. Patients aren't interested in staff messages and announcements about outdated events are useless at best.

Putting your message in context means making it meaningful to a particular target audience. That is why we recommend that you don't display the same message on all your screens, but you personalise it based on:

- The screen's location;
- Your interests of your audience;
- The time of the day;
- The day of the week;
- Seasons, special events or celebrations.

The worst thing you could do with your digital signs system is showing the same information day-in and day-out, irrespectively of who is seeing it.

The best thing you can do is ensuring that your communications are relevant to those watching your screens and that the way you are using the system enables you to meet their goals.

Leverage the flexibility that digital signage offers you and don't use the signs as you would use printed posters.

Tip

As yourself the question:

''What messages would the different target groups be most receptive to in different contexts (when waiting to see their doctor, visiting/ treating a patient)?''

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''The way we use technology has profoundly changed society. But the NHS has not kept pace.'' Jeremy Hunt, UK health secretary.

Whether you agree with this statement or not and whether this holds true where you are or it doesn't, it is certain that technology plays a major role in enabling medical staff to deliver a better patient experience.

Communication is key to a smooth running of day- to- day activities and routine procedures. Digital signs allow you to answer your patient's FAQ's, clarify staff procedures, deliver general healthcare information to visitors when they're most receptive to these type of messages.

Reducing costs

Your digital signage system is a more cost-effective alternative to printed signs too. They don't deteriorate as quickly, can support incomparably more messages and can be refreshed with new information at 0 costs. If you have the possibility to display advertising, then they can also become a revenue- generating tool.

Their ROI is more measurable than that of static signs allowing you to test, measure and adapt your communications quicker.

Conclusions

All elements are important

The software's 'magical' element is the fact that it allows you to manage your screens and content from any place in the world, provided that there is an Internet connection available.

But the quality and style of the screens and the visual appeal and relevance of the content are equally important.

One element is useless without the others. The software without the content or the screens without the software are not going to help you much. So you need to choose and plan all these aspects carefully and well- in advance to be able to set up a successful, scalable and lucrative digital signage solution.

Prepare yourself for the future by experimenting with the technology at zero costs for you. [Call us today for a free consultation!](#)
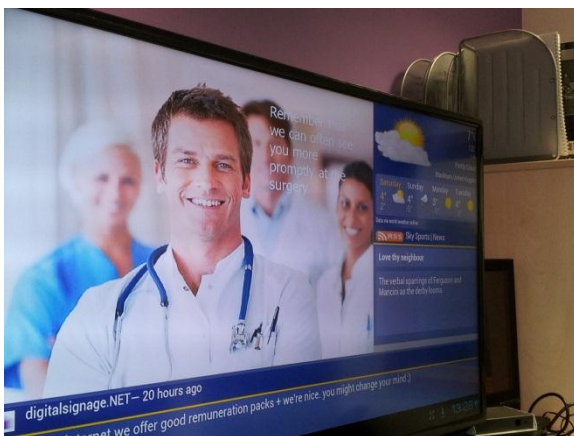Or [get a digitalsignage.NET account.](#)

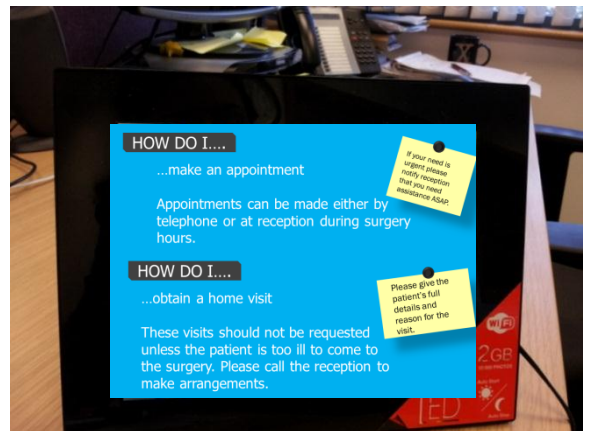# Examples of digital signage applications

Image credit: Fotos Gov/Ba
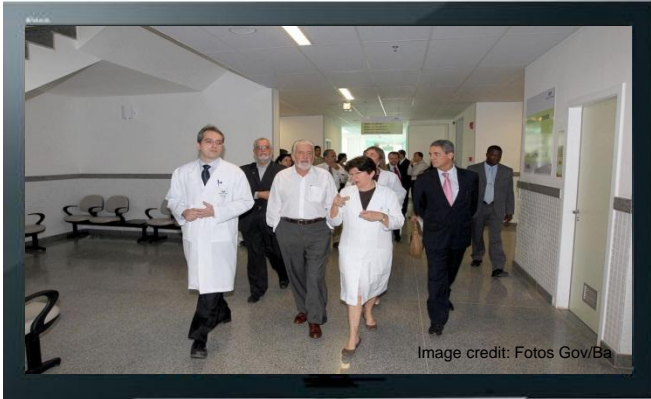
Use an original Time Capsule to present your institution's history by displaying images from the past and present.

Candy for the eye. Video walls are eye-catching and suitable for large areas.

One single screen can support a multitude of messages during its lifetime.

Opening times
Mon- Fri
8:30 am- 6pm
The next Patient
Participation Group Meeting
-   13 January 2013 – 2pm

HOW DO I....
...make an appointment

Appointments can be made either by telephone or at reception during surgery hours.

If your need is urgent please notify reception that you need assistance ASAP

HOW DO I....
...obtain a home visit

These visits should not be requested unless the patient is too ill to come to the surgery. Please call the reception to make arrangements.

Please give the patient's full details and reason for the visit.

digitalsignage.NET allow s you to schedule and display the content
on your photo frames
remotely relieving you from the task of updating images via USB drives.

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Put your knowledge to work and take a tour of our digital signage application.

All you need is a standard PC or Mac, an Internet connection and a few photos, videos and RSS feeds to upload and schedule and you're all set.

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