

The Freeway Digital Screen Information System in the NHS

The following information is based on Freeway systems delivered and installed in numerous hospitals in UK. Whilst it does not apply to any one hospital in its entirety, all the information shared here has been drawn from experience.

Executive Summary

Spend even a short amount of time in any hospital and you will see a vast range of people, from all walks of life, passing through the doors. However, despite their diversity, they do all have a few things in common. First of all, they are perhaps not at their best as they are either there for a medical examination, treatment or they are there to support a friend, relative or loved one in need of, or undergoing treatment.

What can also be observed is that they are in need of information, some of it quite basic - if you already have an X-Ray appointment you do not need to queue here at the main reception, if you are undergoing long-term care then you can go directly to your usual waiting area, if you have a relative or friend who has just been brought into A&E, then you should proceed directly to A&E where the people at the A&E Reception will be able to assist you, remember to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and use the gel alcohol rub before and after visiting any wards, if this is your first visit to the hospital then do please register with us at the main reception etc.

A vast amount of valuable staff time is spent delivering and handling these communications and whilst important, it is not necessarily good use of their time. Additionally visitors also waste time waiting in the wrong queues or going to the wrong location only to be told that they can immediately proceed to an alternative location. To solve this, hospitals are now increasingly using the Freeway Digital Screen Information System to communicate this and a whole range of additional targeted communications to a wide and varied audience. This means that visitors to the hospital are appropriately informed and staff are able to focus on more personalised and specialised needs.

The Freeway System consists of large screen displays, anything from one screen upwards, situated at key points around a building or site. Each screen can play out a range of material including PowerPoint presentations, video clips, live Video & Audio, live news headlines, ticker tape messages and many other items too numerous to mention. Additionally, each screen can be set up to play out different material which means that the communications played out by each screen can be targeted at its respective audience.

Operationally, the Freeway system has been specifically designed for ease-of-use with over 95% of installed systems being operated by non-technical staff every day. Additionally the cost of a Freeway System is modest in comparison to the vast amount of staff time saved, the reduction of visitor confusion and increase in visitor satisfaction



The Freeway System is an effective way to communicate to different audiences in different locations with a variety of different messages. Add to this the simple control system and it is clear why so many different organisations are opting for this powerful solution.

Introduction

Hospitals are confusing places for visitors. 10 or more different receptions in numerous different locations, waiting rooms, numerous different types of staff, some people able to advise and others not.. Not surprising considering the fact that some hospitals handle some 30,000 Planned and Emergency operations, 40,000 A&E Attendances and 150,000 Outpatients on an annual basis.

This confusion means that the first feeling that a visitor experiences is bewilderment. To solve this, a visitor will spend time in a queue and will then ask a member of staff for help. Observing this for any length of time clearly shows that a lot of staff time is spent reassuring, informing and directing when their time might be more usefully focussed on delivering more specialised and less routine help and information.

This is why an increasing number of hospitals are using the Freeway Digital Screen Information System to deliver those messages which are more appropriately delivered in this way. Doing this means that visitors are able to receive relevant information immediately on arrival reducing stress and increasing understanding and relieving the staff from delivering routine information many hundreds of times a day.

Following the initial contact, a visitor is often then directed to another waiting area where they may have to wait for a longer amount of time. This waiting time is often not used in any way whilst it could instead be used to inform and indeed entertain. Again the Freeway Digital Screen Information system could be used in such locations to deliver this information whilst tying up the minimum amount of valuable staff time.



Freeway Information Screens in Reception

Typical communications delivered in this area include;

- > Location and functions of each of the main reception areas
- > Directional information to main locations
- > Who needs to come and register at the main reception
- > The importance of washing your hands thoroughly with soap & water and using the provided alcohol gel.

Freeway Information Screen in A&E

Typical communications delivered in A&E include;

- > the importance washing your hands
- > the alternatives to waiting in A&E
(studies have shown that A&E departments are regularly visited by people who would be better served visiting their GPs or going to another hospital's Minor Injuries Unit (MIU))
- > the people whom you will be seeing as you progress through the A&E system
(many people do not understand the process of triage etc. and will assume that the first person whom they see after registration will be the person who is treating them)
- > current waiting time
(the Freeway system allows the main messages being delivered to be controlled centrally whilst local updates can also be implemented. In A&E this means that the messages outlined above can be set up centrally whilst the people at the A&E reception desk can update the 'current waiting time')
- > current news headlines (delivered via RSS Text format from a news source of your choice)

Freeway Information Screen in Long Term Outpatients such as Cancer Treatment



Typical communications delivered in such areas include,

- > the importance of washing your hands
- > the support organisations who might be able to assist in a difficult time
- > the various fund raising activities which are currently being undertaken
 - o these can be in the form of PowerPoint presentations
 - o Still pictures can be included with PowerPoint presentations
 - o Video/Audio clips - video/audio clips can be played within the Freeway system

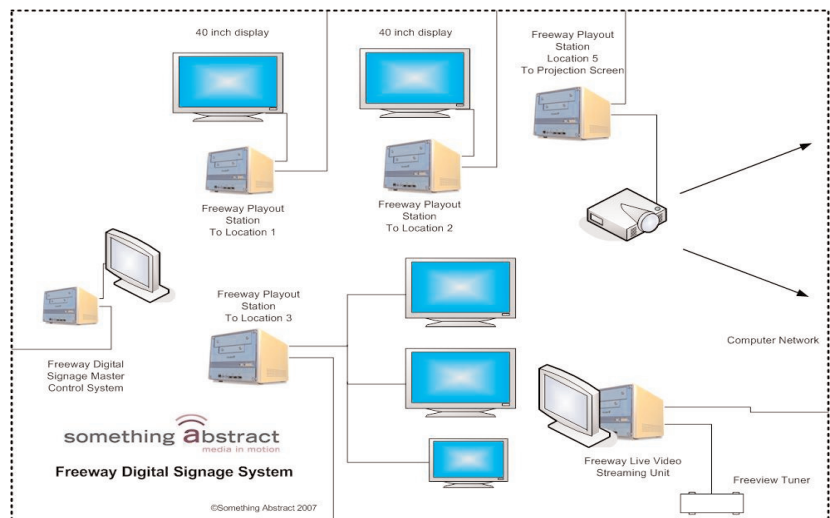
The Freeway System

The Freeway System consist of 3 main elements.

- > Master Control Workstation
- > Playout Unit
- > Live Video/Audio Streaming Unit

Master Control Workstation

The Master Control Workstation is the main central point of control for the Freeway System. It is this unit which acts as the central reference point for all the playout units and is also where the central control commands for what is to be played out to each screen is generated.



Playout Unit

A Playout Unit is the unit which feeds a screen and these are normally located all over a site. These units take their commands and actual playout media from the Master Control Workstation.

Live Video/Audio Streaming Unit

This is an optional workstation which takes in live video and audio, perhaps from a Freeview tuner, and streams it out across the network. Once streamed out across the network, the live video/audio feed can be picked up and played out by any of the Playout Units.

Conclusion

The Freeway Digital Screen Information System is a powerful and effective communication system which can be used to communicate to targeted audiences in a variety of locations. It offers a flexible, cost-effective and scalable solution with an easy-to-use interface.

Contact Us Now

Contact us now to find out how the Freeway System could be used in your organisation or to arrange for a demonstration of a system at your location.

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