

The Freeway Digital Screen Information System in Education

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

Executive Summary

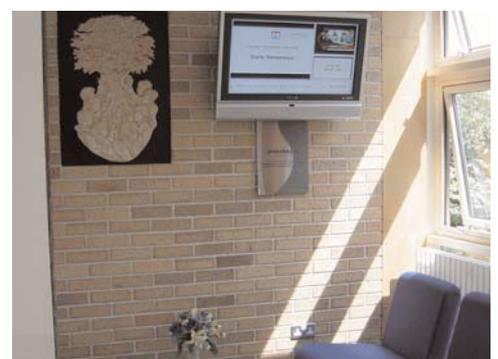
Spend even a short amount of time in a School, College or University and you will very quickly notice the amazing array of things happening all around you. So many people going to so many place to do so many different things numerous times every day. Stay more than 5 minutes in the main Reception Area and the range of questions, requests and requirements raised will astound you. The fact that all this works well is a great testimony to the people who run it, drive it, motivate it and populate it. However, there are way to improve this to make it more efficient.

Communications has long been a key element in the success of any organisation. Teams of people are more likely to achieve their objective if they all know what their objective is and the plan of how they are all going to get there. The question is therefore, how do you keep an extremely diverse group of people - staff, teachers, pupils, students, parents, visitors etc. all appropriately informed with the information that they need? To solve this problem, many Schools, Colleges and Universities are using the Freeway Digital Screen Information System.

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 benefits clearly delivered.

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

There are numerous different people in a School, College or University - Teachers, Lecturers, Staff, Pupils, Students, Visitors, Parents, Governors to name but a few. Each person could have a different reason for being there but what is common amongst them all is that they need to know what is going on, what special current issues there might be and what effect this might have on them. The challenge of all this is how can each person be informed in an appropriate manner and to an appropriate depth.

In today's modern world there are two clear factors about communications and communication messages. First of all, each individual is subject to around 3,000 communication messages every day. Equally it is imperative that individuals know and understand current and future issues and know how they can contribute to their resolution - communications is clearly key in helping people to work more effectively together. Fortunately there is a solution to this complex problem

There are several ways to ensure that communications 'get through'. First of all, the chances of communications 'getting through' are greatly enhanced if these messages are delivered in an entertaining and involving way - witness the difference in reaction between a traditional pin board with paper notices and a monitor screen with electronic media - a dramatic improvement in reaction and attention is given to the electronic screen. Secondly, the chances of the communications 'getting through' are also greatly enhanced if the communications being sent are directly relevant to the recipient. This means that communications will need to be different for different audiences.

The Freeway Digital Screen Information System addresses both these issues in a practical manner and thus offers a powerful communications tool. First of all, the Freeway System can be used to deliver a wide range of different media including - PowerPoint presentation, Video and Audio clips, Flash video files, live TV, live news feeds, live internet pages, instant scrolling (ticker tape) messages, clock, calendar and logos. The use of this wide range of media helps to create interesting and involving displays which in turn captures audiences. Secondly, if screens are situated at different locations around a site, say, Reception, Dining Room, Library, Staff Room and Main Hall, each screen can be used to deliver the same or totally different information at the touch of a mouse button. This means that the various elements of the communication can be created and delivered to target its audience.

Freeway Information Screens in Reception



Typical communications delivered in this area include;

- > What to do if you are a visitor.
- > Who the key people are in the school
- > What special events might be happening eg. Fire Drills etc.
- > Information about the place
- > Specific information for staff and students
- > Instant messages for anyone onsite

Freeway Information Screen in The Sports Hall

In addition to conventional screens it is quite possible to use the Freeway System in a more flexible manner. In this application, the Freeway unit was installed in the Sports Hall. Additional elements included a long throw projector, a large electric remote-control screen and an audio system.



Typical uses of the system in this area include

- > normal communications for the people gathered in the Hall
- > a presentation system for a larger audience when the Hall is used as a meeting venue
- > an audio system with wireless microphones for use by the sports staff when training students

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

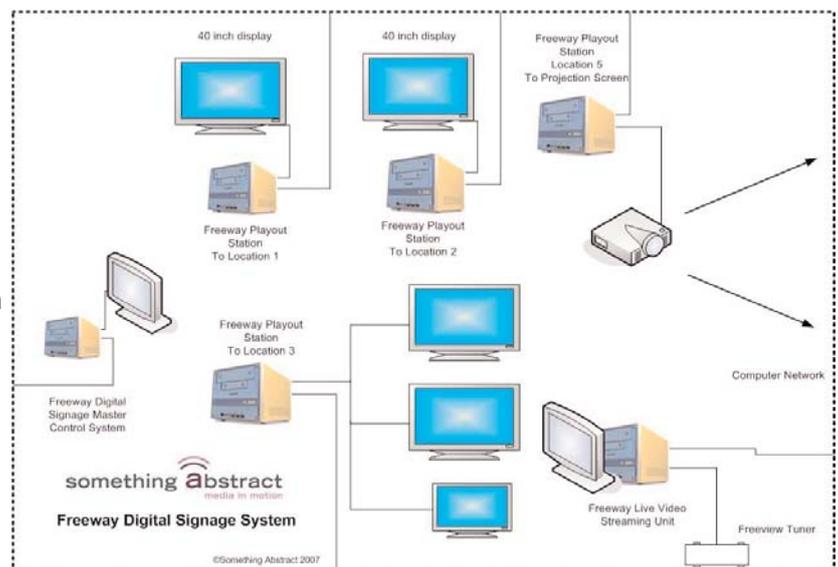
This is an optional workstation which takes in live video and audio, perhaps from a Freeview tuner, and streams it out across the network. Once streamed out across the network, the live video/audio feed can be picked up and played out by any of the Playout Units.

Conclusion

The Freeway Digital Screen Information System is a powerful and effective communication system which can be used to communicate to target 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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