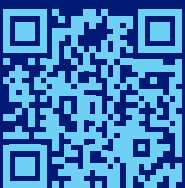


Mvix

Content Rich Digital Signage

DIGITAL SIGNAGE SOFTWARE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS



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1. Introduction

One of the most popular uses of digital signage is in schools.

K-12 schools and college campuses are more tech-savvy than ever before. Digital teaching tools are the norm: laptops, tablets, and yes, digital signage.

Schools need to effectively communicate with the students, parents, teachers and staff. In order to do so, schools need innovative tools to inform, educate, and engage with all of these audiences quickly and easily. Digital signage is the solution.

But, digital signage is only as effective as the software powering it. Schools that want to make the most of their digital signage investment need to find the right software to power their systems.



2. Digital Signage in Schools

Digital signage screens that are strategically placed around the school can completely change the way the administration communicates with its students and teachers.

The digital signage network can include multiple screens in one school, or multiple screens in different schools within a district. With the right software, administrators can easily share messages and alerts with different schools all at once. Digital signage can be placed in multiple school locations such as in:

- Classrooms, as a teaching tool, replacing clunky digital projectors
- Common areas, lounges or any other place where students assemble
- Hallways or lobbies to aid in navigation, particularly in larger schools
- Teacher's lounges and offices to support staff communication
- School entrances to display welcome messages and a list of events
- Cafeterias to display menu boards and display nutrition information

For a digital signage network with these many screens, being able to manage the content, playback schedules, and users who have access to the network is crucial. All of these activities are controlled within digital signage software, making it the most important piece of a digital signage network.

3. Your Guide to Digital Signage Software for Schools

The great thing about digital signage is its flexibility. Its limitations don't come from the hardware itself, but rather from the software used to power the network.

Fortunately, users are spoiled for choice these days when it comes to digital signage software. There are plenty of providers on the market, many of whom specialize in specific niches, such as schools, retail, hospitality, or healthcare. In a twist, it's time for K-12 administrators to do some homework—starting with a review of must-have features for digital signage software for schools.

Dynamic Content Options

“Dynamic content” refers to content apps and data integrations that are native to the digital signage software. Examples include weather, news, event listings, YouTube, social media, emergency alerts, and more. Look for software with plenty of content options that update automatically - this will make content management seamless.

Remote Management

Any digital signage software that's worth its salt will have remote management. This means being able to manage the network from any computer with internet access. The advantage is that administrators are not locked to a single PC. Instead, they are able to update the screens even when they're away from their desk.

Content Scheduling and Programming

The software should enable schools to set up custom content rotations and schedules. For example, it should be easy to set up a content schedule for the week i.e. what content should be displayed at which screens/school during different times of the day.





Network Monitoring and Reporting

This benefit is more on the administrative side. It could be daunting to keep tabs on many connected screens, so digital signage software should include network monitoring tools that report the status of each screen. Reports include what content was displayed, which screens are online vs. offline, which users accessed the network, and more.

User Access Control

This is particularly important for larger school districts that would have multiple operators managing the signage. The signage software should have user access controls that limit who can make changes to the content and who has publishing rights. For K-12 schools, this security is certainly necessary.

Scalability

“Scaling up” determines how easy it is to add new screens to the existing network, add new content, and add new users. It also means being able to control video walls, digital signs, and kiosks from the same platform. Make sure the software will fit current needs and will be able to grow as the school grows.



4. Types of Content for K-12 Schools

The above rundown describes which features to look for in digital signage software for schools. But what about the content itself? The right digital signage software will have standard content apps and more advanced content options to meet the school's communication needs. Below is content typically displayed in a school:

Maps and Wayfinding

For larger schools, navigation can be an issue. When you have multiple floors and countless classrooms, it can get tough for guests and visitors to find their way. A wayfinding app in the software will display fully-realized maps of a school to guarantee everyone gets to where they need to go with little frustration.

Emergency & CAP Alerts

One of the biggest advantages of always-connected digital signage is emergency messaging. Make sure the software integrates with CAP alerts and includes templates of emergency messages that are triggered to automatically show in the event of an emergency, Amber alerts, active shooters, fires, or gas leaks. You can even integrate these triggers with your wayfinding app to automatically display escape routes, fire exits, or tornado shelters during these emergencies.

Videos

On a lighter note, you can program your digital signage to play specific videos from curated playlists—educational or otherwise. There are plenty of great educational clips online, and administrators can even design their own. Use these engaging videos to draw attention to key concepts and keep ideas front and center in student minds.

Social Media

Social media is a big deal for students closer to the 12 side of K-12. Displaying these post on digital signage screens is a great way to get their attention. Software should automatically pull posts from social media feeds and display them via live feed. With the right teacher at the helm, this type of strategy opens the doors to all kinds of new strategies for keeping students engaged.



Custom Templates

We mentioned how flexible digital signage software for schools can be; this is exemplified by the wide variety of custom templates available.

Schools can take these templates and design completely personalized content to suit their students. For example, an elementary school could coordinate a series of “student spotlights” that give high-achieving students a chance to discuss their lives or interests.

There’s no limit to what schools can do with these custom templates. All it takes is a little creativity to build a messaging strategy that’s completely unique to your staff.



5. Choosing a Software Provider

While software is the most important choice, administrators should pay attention to the provider behind the service. Do some research on quality providers and keep an eye out for the following issues:

Quality of work – Look at the provider’s experience and past projects. Look at their testimonials and keep an eye out for those that are detailed. Look at their negative reviews as well - this will be a big indicator of the level of service you can expect from them.

Cost – Schools have budgets to keep. When reviewing costs, don’t go with the cheapest. Instead evaluate the cost against the expected ROI. Keep costs in mind, but be aware that cost and quality aren’t always correlated.

Size of the project – It’s important to find a provider capable of meeting the project’s needs. This is no problem for small installations inside a single school, but what if you’re considering signage across an entire school district? A small provider may not be up to the task.

Specializations – As noted above, some providers specialize in certain industries and facilities, such as hospitals, hotels, or restaurants. Educational applications are pretty common, so you shouldn’t have trouble finding one to do the job.



6. Conclusion

Overall, the digital signage question isn't "does my school need signage?" That may have been a debate ten years ago, but today, schools that aren't digitally-integrated are falling behind.

A key concern for administrators and teachers is facilitating an effective learning environment. Digital signage software for schools supports engagement, and strengthens communication. These can be big advantages for attracting higher levels of enrollment (and increased funding from benefactors!)

If you're considering a digital signage investment, start with the above guide and work from there. A digitalized teaching environment is at your fingertips—all you have to do is take it.