

2 What Is Digital Signage?

Digital signage provides dynamic real-time, near-real-time, or non-real-time information that may be individually adapted to the location, time, situation, and who is actually watching the screen. Using simultaneous screen elements such as regions, layers and tickers (or “crawlers”), several messages, originating from different sources (and places), may be combined on one single screen. Though providing information in a fully automated way, the medium also allows for interaction with the viewer, using touch screens or other means of user control.

—Lars-Ingemar Lundstrom, author, *Digital Signage Broadcasting: Broadcasting, Content Management, and Distribution Techniques*, by NAB-Focal Press

The description of modern digital signage contains a handful of key ingredients. Most who follow the industry agree these generally include at least:

Digital hardware displaying **digital software** (in the form of both on-screen content and software control systems), featured on **screens that are thin and come in many sizes, offering constantly changing and refreshed content**, often shown on **many regions of a single screen**, capable of **delivery instantaneously** via satellite and the Internet, from a server or personal computer (PC), close by or on the other side of the globe, intended to be particularly **relevant and helpful** to consumers aimed largely at **out-of-home audiences** who are frequently **moving from place to place**, yet are often **held “captive”** by a particular situation, event, or environment.

The optimum introduction to the topic, “What Is Digital Signage” includes each of the key elements below: history, forms, technology, software, hardware, installation, maintenance, key players, trends, challenges, and opportunities. Together, these elements make up a mosaic of a remarkable new communications device—indeed, some have called digital signage a “killer application.” The picture that represents this new business is a vibrant one, and huge sums of resources, as well as significant consumer perceptions, will shift because of it.