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DIGITAL SIGNAGE EXPO 2011
SPECIAL EDITION

It's the Taking Part that Counts

By Neeraj Pendse, Global Business Development, TE Touch Solutions

Digital Signage has become big business; over \$1B of digital signage displays were shipped globally in 2010. While marketing and advertising in retail are leading applications, there is demand from all sectors. As the business matures, companies are realising that there is another opportunity: interactive digital signage. Typically, interactivity is implemented with touch. But, there are many other interactive technologies available.

In today's world of media overload, marketers are looking to engage consumers in more meaningful ways. Interactivity can drive significant enhancements to this goal:

- Interactivity gives a feeling of 'control' on what consumers see – they are seeing what they want rather than what marketers think they want. The result is elevated user engagement.

touch display allows you to find your destination. It even suggests a restaurant and presents you a coupon via text message on your mobile phone.

That touch display is not only useful for the customers, it also allows advertisers better ability to target their consumers. The mall is able to take advantage of higher rates for interactive advertising. Clearly a more engaging signage application.

Interactive Technologies

Interactivity provides deeper engagement with your audience, but it also forces you to make a tradeoff between quality and quantity. It is critical to think about your signage environment and deploy the right technology. The diagram shows a comparison of interactive technologies based on the

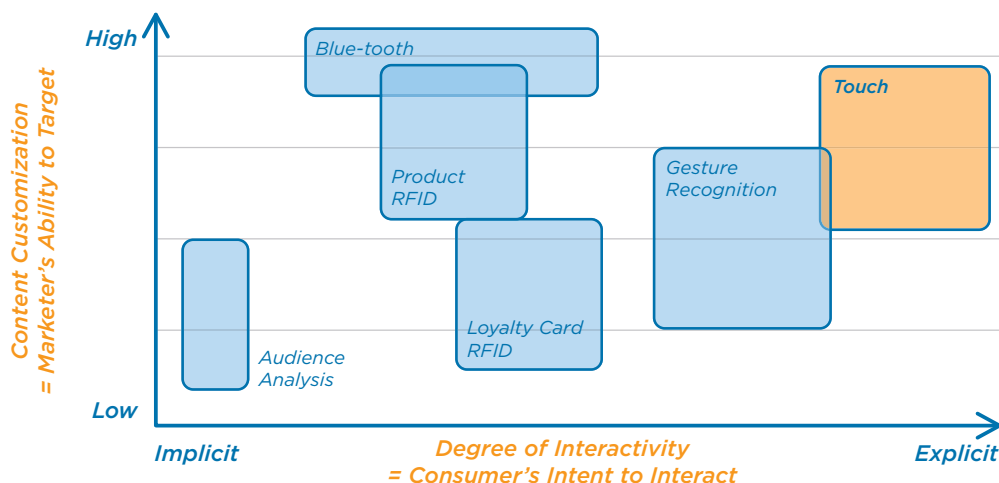
Touch is on the other end of the spectrum – explicit interactivity as the user makes a conscious decision to approach the sign and touch something. This also means that, the ability of the marketer to target is very high, within the confines of content available. There are many technologies available to implement touch, but few are suitable for the rigors of public use.

In our shopping mall example, an optimal deployment would be a combination of audience analysis and touch. Advertising and content sensitive to the demographic will be shown when no one is approaching the sign. As soon as a person approaches the sign, the interface changes to cue the user for touching and selecting.

A number of trends in the market



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- Interactivity can deliver value-added services (e.g. closest restaurant locations in a mall, suggestions for complementary products in a store).
- Interactive technologies can record people's preferences and even observe human behaviour in the environment, providing valuable metrics to marketers.

Imagine walking into a shopping mall. Digital signage displays are widely present, both within the stores and outside. These displays are primarily advertising and marketing; often you find it somewhat overwhelming. You are looking for directions, and you find a 55" display showing a crisp map of the mall, replacing the old static sign. The

marketer's ability to target versus the intent of the user to interact. At one end of the spectrum is traditional, one-way digital signage – limited ability to target and no interaction possible for the user. A technology that can allow interaction on a subtle scale is audience analysis. A camera mounted on the sign is silently surveying the environment, and adapting messaging (e.g. when it 'sees' more women, it might show a fragrance advertisement while teenage boys might get a computer game). Other technologies such as RFID, mobile (bluetooth and text based) and gesture recognition have varying degrees of interactivity.

are making this a great time to deploy interactivity. First, stores are looking for ways to engage a tech-savvy generation as they fight their online competitors. Second, thanks to smart phones, the audience is already trained.

Finally, interactive technologies suitable for public environments are becoming cost effective.

In the future when you visit a shopping mall, you will see more things that are looking at you, that you can wave at, and that you can touch.

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