

Displaying innovative intentions

As the Dooh market continues to boom, *Rob Lane* assesses the innovations and improvements that are broadening the influence and effectiveness of today's digital display technologies.

A number of key developments have been informing the growth of the Digital out of Home (DooH) market over the last few months, with more sophisticated interactive content and data capture and analysis perhaps the most influential elements. At the same time, expansion in screen sizes, the proliferation of LED, demand for smaller pixel pitches, and new technologies are also influencing the market.

"In 2018 we saw a huge shift towards LED displays for both indoor and outdoor signage across multiple verticals," explains Mark Childerhouse, director, Pioneer Group. "The versatility and scalability of the product compared to an LCD display provides companies with a much larger seamless canvas with the added bonus of incorporating curves or turns easily."

Says Ross Burling, Absen Europe OOH sales manager: "LED provides the ultimate digital canvas. This gives greater creative freedom and flexibility to advertisers, allowing them to reach and connect with new audiences in a far more engaging way. LED delivers a powerful punch with its high-brightness and vibrant colours."

"2018 was a good year for LED," agrees Keith Dutch, managing director at Peerless-AV EMEA. "The technology will continue to see huge growth into 2019 and beyond as more organisations change from LCD, especially in the corporate and retail environments."

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Unilumin: Krasnodar Stadium in Russia

LED installs are growing rapidly, with this side of the market set to advance further with more micro and nano LED offerings providing smaller pixel pitches, better contrast and improved surface finishes.

"As the pixel pitch reduces to sub-4mm for outdoor LED so too we will see more LED springing up in transportation hubs, shopping centres, on building exteriors and many other outside advertising hot spot locations," he says. "We have seen continued requests for smaller pixel pitches, especially for commercial and retail applications."

There appear to be two main factors informing the popularity of LED screens with a narrow pixel pitch: improved performance and reduced cost.

"The product's performance is getting better all the time," says Steve Scorse, vice-president EMEA, Unilumin. "The latest Narrow Pixel Pitch LED displays allow closer proximity viewing and higher resolution in smaller sizes suitable for smaller retail



Absen: An LED digital canvas with vivid colours and brightness

spaces."

Data capture, of course, is a huge driver for the market, and as more and more sophisticated processes are introduced the use of data is set to mushroom in the coming months.

"A key aspect of DooH is the data you can collate, whether that's number of views, dwell time or viewer data," explains Eliot Fulton-Langley, solutions architect at CDEC. "What will be

bigger in 2019 is the dynamic element of this, adapting content in realtime to suit the person viewing it.

"This joined-up approach to DooH where signage, content, analytics, database and PoS systems are all of importance and work together to give a complete view of how your content is performing has been shown to better engage viewers and increase engagement."

Social media use in LED

Social media also has a huge part to play. The encouraging of content sharing and interaction is expected to increase, with the retail sector taking the lead. Other verticals are expected to follow suit.

"I would say a key trend is the use of data to create very agile advertising," says Emma Bigg, director at Octavius RE. "When you have the ability to update your message in realtime you can react to multiple inputs such as weather, audience demographic, location and traffic. This gives you a very dynamic medium that can be tailored »

for maximum impact.”

Bigg gives the example of Smirnoff, which ran a series of cider ads that were only triggered if the temperature went above 20 degrees, and motorised billboards in the US that physically rotated according to the main flow of traffic started: “This was the start of nuanced OOH advertising which has been the precursor to DooH.”

Compared with a traditional media display, of course, digital media can achieve a more creative effect, meeting today’s demanding customer requirements by connecting to the internet and encouraging interaction.

Engagement technology

Other technologies are also coming together to make DooH even more dynamic and creative, combining with the growth of narrow pixel LED and the use of data. These include new dual-sided display products such as back-to-back OLED/LCD signage for in-window and retail applications, motorised LED installs, indoor kiosks and true interactive window displays from Finland’s Selyo Live – alongside the growth in AR, VR, gesture recognition and personal device interaction.

“DooH in all verticals is becoming much more creative and engaging on a big scale, without compromising on image quality,” says Childerhouse. “With companies recognising the added value of digital signage even more, we’re also starting to see the integration of VR directly into digital signage applications to engage the user.”

Users are now being given the opportunity to engage in fun interactions with a brand via virtual reality, at their own leisure, improving the shopping experience through digital signage.

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Elliot Fulton-Langley
Solutions architect, CDEC

Adds Childerhouse: “We recently worked with Play Retail to roll our virtual nail pods for OPI, which simulates the polish on the shoppers fingers, without the hassle of trying the colour on your nails. This kind of shopping experience which is both entertaining and useful is a definite trend for 2019.”

In retail, there has been a marked increase in the use of exciting, innovative visual installations and more subtle content that influences rather than sells – dovetailing with the omnichannel or ‘hybrid retail’ high street (r)evolution.

“The key word is ‘omnichannel’,” opines Bigg. “This holistic approach to off- and online advertising using all tools available to create a seamless experience for a customer is a major trend. Beacons or other interactive mechanisms in a physical installation link the install to a user in a very personal way. From tailoring the messaging, to making sure consumers receive targeted offers and information - this is transforming the retail experience.”

The use of in-store advertising is important too. DooH not only helps to get customers through the door, it enhances their experience in the store and forms part of a strategy to build a long-term relationship and improve brand loyalty.

“A few years ago, many might have questioned the relevance of in-store advertising as you have the product right in front of you,” says Bigg. “But many brands are using a more creative approach with digital content and creating influencer/aspirational pieces that are about marketing the brand, rather than a specific product. It’s a brave new world.”

This brave new world is set to be influenced by a growing number of new technology applications, broadening the influence of DooH outside its traditional retail vertical.

“Whilst this kind of technology is widely used in retail and public spaces (realtime demographic based advertising), PTS has been involved in a number of interesting projects integrating these concepts into the corporate sector for monitoring internal comms strategies, and the higher education sector for timetable and notification acknowledgements,” explains Dan Watson, senior consultant at PTS Consulting.

“DooH is only going to grow in popularity across more verticals,” agrees Fulton-Langley. “Content will also become more interactive and I expect to see more innovative campaigns designed to catch the eye, perhaps embracing AR and other emerging technologies.”

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For example within education in particular, if the content can engage an end user in to providing feedback, such as voting, or where the data collected can provide information – such

as on room utilisation, actual take-up/ attendance for a taught session – this information can save an organisation time in manual data collection.

DooH innovations

When it comes to DooH innovations of note that could influence wider sectors, Electric Vehicle Media Charging Stations kiosks outside shopping centres are set to incorporate advertising alongside free EV charging. High-brightness, high-resolution, all-condition displays technologies also have a part to play – as do screen coating innovations.

Set to enhance LED product solutions, Coating on Surface (CoS) is a special manufacturing process for LED surfaces. The LED surface is coated with an optical material to protect the display from the environment, with additional benefits of further improved viewing angles and even reduced image fatigue in situations where prolonged viewing is a factor.

Meanwhile, Finland’s Selyo Live is set to introduce its new antibacterial surface spray at ISE 2019. A liquid sprayed on to the glass surface, the innovation leaves a ‘safe surface’ that keeps germs at bay. The glass can be cleaned with the same product, ensuring it remains antibacterial.

Over the next 12 months we should witness the improved connection of content, displays and digital eco-systems to create DooH with better RoI and more interesting experiences for end users. The growth of more effective technology partnerships within digital signage should see DooH being integrated at the beginning of infrastructure projects, alongside IT facilities and Wi-Fi – rather than being a bolt-on – making it more of an integral part of the user experience. ■

LEICESTER CITY FOOTBALL CLUB



Pioneer LED displays are at the heart of the shopping experience at Leicester City FC. Fans are now provided with stunning club visuals from the moment they enter the store via a 5.1m x 2.9m 4mm pixel pitch curved videowall. Further LED screens include a 3.5m x 2.9m 2.6mm pixel pitch LED display located in the kit area of the store, and four individual 1m x 2m LED displays embedded between shop fittings which promote the Fox and Crop clothing line. Working with the architecture of the building, Pioneer also engineered four-sided LED displays to be fitted around column infrastructures. These were then encased in metal cages to complement the industrial finish of the interior. All of the LED displays are driven via a Colourlight control system. Other display technologies were used behind tills and mounted in 14 gondola fittings mounted back-to-back at eye level, dedicated to in-store product promotions.