

City marketing: Digital signage in the form of outdoor information columns for towns and municipalities



Photo: digital outdoor columns in Coventry

About Coventry and Rushmoor

The city of Coventry is situated in the West Midlands right in the heart of England and is said to be the town farthest from the coast.

The city was founded in the 11th century as the site of a Benedictine abbey. These close ties with the clergy remained intact over the course of the city's thousand-year history and had a lasting effect on the cityscape, which is dominated by Coventry Cathedral and several significant churches. Today, more than 330,000 people live in the city.

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About 180 kilometers further to the south and in the immediate vicinity of London is the English borough of Rushmoor, consisting of the two towns Aldershot and Farnborough. The population has rapidly quadrupled in the last two decades due to the favorable location, and in the meantime it has reached more than 90,000.

Coventry and Rushmoor are industrial towns that are implementing a comprehensive digitalization strategy by installing outdoor information columns. In the course of the structural change, the aim was to modernize the townscape and create services to invigorate the tourist industry and commerce.

City marketing with modern customer communication

Coventry and Rushmoor use a total of 22 double-sided touch-sensitive outdoor information columns with 46-inch or 55-inch screens, which are installed at strategic positions within the inner ring roads. These information terminals use digital wayfinding from kompas wayfinding and kompas. Thus, guests and residents can gain interactive access to the towns and receive information about where to go shopping, where local authority offices are located, and which places of interest and museums can be explored. Via the intuitive logo cloud and a free search option using keywords, all relevant information about the towns can be called up quickly and easily. The kiosk mode provides further information such as nearby parking spaces, texts about places of interest, the nearest restrooms, restaurants, bus stops, bicycle stations, taxis, and events. If the columns are not in use, they switch automatically to the digital-signage mode with advertising.

Technology and concept requirements

Besides rapid installation, one of the greatest demands placed by these towns on the digital-signage software used was that the players and their content must be as intuitive and easy to control as possible. kompas digital-signage software is especially suited to the management of large national networks, but it also works very well on a smaller scale. kompas

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makes it especially easy for the operators to monitor the operation of the individual players and to manage and customize the playlists. The digital signage software can be installed quickly and easily via the web browser and is ready to use in only 10% of the time required by the competition (about five minutes).

To guarantee the visitors and residents of the towns a 24-hour service, the solution implemented was expected to run without downtime as far as possible. The Kompas software, which is based on the Linux operating system, runs stably, adheres consistently to a "no blue screen" policy, and handles dynamic content, poor networks and impaired reception intelligently.

In addition, for this project a special highlight was integrated into the software: the mobility mode. This enables wheelchair-bound persons and children to use the system as well by simply pressing a button to lower all the controls. To cater for the towns' international visitors, all content is available in several languages.

As the columns in Coventry and Rushmoor are installed only outdoors, there were also special requirements on the hardware design. The use of an adapted cooling system and air vents allows the information terminals to work smoothly at temperatures between -30 °C and 55 °C. Safety glass protects against vandalism but is still touch-sensitive and also works in direct sunlight. As a further safety measure, all the columns' maintenance covers are locked and accessible only to authorized personnel.

Shemala Evans, project manager for Coventry had the following to say about the project and the decision in favor of Kompas and Kompas wayfinding:

"With this project, we in Coventry are treading new ground with regard to customer communication: Citizens and guests gain access to our city, receive information about where to go shopping, where local authority offices are located, and what places of interests our city has to offer. This

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project is a milestone and will attract attention well beyond the borders of Great Britain and show how city marketing, city administration, museums and local businesses can work together to shape the digital revolution in inner-city communication to the advantage of all parties and thus provide an enhanced service to the citizens and visitors."

All the advantages at a glance

- Simple and centralized coordination of the display content
- Intuitive wayfinding for all places of interest via the logo cloud
- Advertising shown as soon as the column is not in use
- Mobility mode for wheelchair-bound persons and children
- Dynamic content such as weather, news and Twitter
- Choice of several languages
- Value-added for visitors and residents

About Digital Signage

Digital Signage describes digital media content for advertising and information systems such as electronic posters and traffic signs, instore marketing, digital door signs or large-scale projections. Digital Signage is increasingly being used in public spaces such as railway stations, airports and shopping centres. dimedis is among the leading Digital Signage providers in Germany. Our Digital Signage software kompas is the driving force behind more than 5,500 players across the country.

About kompas wayfinding

The kompas wayfinding system provides visual, easily comprehensible directions to visitors of shopping centres, large stores, hospitals, public service buildings and so on. It is designed to be spotted and instantly recognized as a visitor information system even from afar. The system features a simple, multilingual touchscreen interface, where users can just touch an icon to select their destination, or search for it by using the on-screen keyboard.

kompas offers a unique way of guiding visitors and customers to their

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desired destination. Kompas wayfinding stores and evaluates all of the search terms entered by its users over time. Thus, it is not just a simple visitor information system – Kompas wayfinding also works as a powerful planning and marketing tool, providing important feedback to its operators about what people are actually looking for.

Further information: www.kompas-wayfinding.com

About Kompas

Kompas, developed by the experts in digital media distribution at dimedis GmbH, is one of the most powerful and flexible Digital Signage systems on the market. Kompas offers Digital Signage users an intuitive interface built around drag-and-drop usability. More than 5,500 players in Germany alone are controlled by Kompas, making it the driving force behind one of the largest advertising networks in the country. The Kompas software is stable and relies on HTML5. Another part of the Kompas family of products is the award-winning Kompas wayfinding.

Kompas received the VISCOM Digital Signage Best Practice Award in 2008, 2011 and 2015. And the POPAI Digital Award Gold for "Best Digital Media Technology" in 2011. For more information please visit: www.kompas-software.com

About dimedis

dimedis stands for digital media distribution. Founded 1996 in Cologne, the software company is specialized in trade fair- and digital signage solutions. FairMate is a visitor management solution and Kompas a digital signage and wayfinding system. The customers are amongst others Messe Düsseldorf, Koelnmesse, Stockholmsmässan, Messe Stuttgart, Reed Exhibitions Deutschland, Schalke 04, Borussia Dortmund, Bosch, Snipes, a chain of supermarkets in France called "Casino" and shopping malls from ECE, SEC, mfi and Abu Dhabi Mall. More than 50 employees currently work for dimedis.

For more information please visit: www.dimedis.eu or blog.dimedis.de

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