

CAMPUS DIGITAL SIGNAGE POLICY

Ball State University

FINAL v6.4—Approved by Cabinet April 15, 2010

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this policy is to address technical, content, and architectural specifications for how digital signage is chosen, designed, installed, and managed at Ball State University. Interest in the technology has grown among campus units due largely to rapidly dropping costs and the effectiveness of digital signage for conveying information. Digital signage has the potential to dramatically enhance the experience of Ball State's students and visitors, as well as to emphasize the physical beauty of the campus, in which the university has invested heavily.

Using digital signage to achieve these objectives requires a consistent, campus-wide approach to user interface, terminology, visual standards, and information verification. The philosophy behind this policy, which is managed by an implementation committee composed of campus units with expertise in related disciplines, is not to be proscriptive, but to ensure the best possible experience for visitors and the campus community.

The committee is charged with approving digital signage plans developed in collaboration with university units, addressing issues (discussed in more detail on page 4) including interior design, technical specifications, budget, target audience, external advertising, and content. This document provides a framework to guide the committee in implementation. Members of the committee, detailed on page 3, each govern their own area of expertise with regard to digital signage plans, and all must approve portions of a plan related to their disciplines for implementation to proceed. Because this area of interest in new and evolving, disagreement regarding approval of a digital signage plan is handled through escalation to the appropriate vice-presidential or Cabinet level, as described on page 5.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, a **digital sign** is any permanent or semi-permanent electronic display device, interior or exterior, that delivers content in any public space.

This policy addresses digital signage of three types:

- **exterior signage**
- **interior signage: facility-wide**
- **interior signage: departmental.**

It is anticipated that as technology continues to advance, modifications to this policy will be necessary to accommodate the differing requirements for each type of digital signage; at this time, a single approach governs all three.

For the purposes of this policy, **content** includes all visual or audio messaging conveyed by a digital sign. Ideally, all digital signage will include some amount of **university content**; every

sign will likely also include **local content**. University content will be created and provided by University Marketing and Communications (UMC), while local content will be based upon an approved digital signage plan. As long as local content is consistent with the approved plan, UMC has no role in this area.

EXCLUSIONS

Digital signage that is an intrinsic component of an athletic event, theatrical production, work of art, or cultural event is beyond the scope of this policy. Scoreboards and set pieces, for example, are excluded, though digital signs used in a concourse or lobby are not.

This policy is not to be construed as applying to display devices in non-public spaces, such as classrooms, conference rooms, or individual employees' offices, but does apply to public-facing displays in reception areas.

CAMPUS-WIDE APPROACH

The university is working toward a single campus-wide enterprise architecture integration (EAI), and the digital signage policy is aligned with that goal.

All digital signage must be compatible with the university's selected signage solution, from Cisco Systems, which serves local (departmental or facility) and university-wide content to display devices. This approach simplifies management and training, encourages a consistent user experience across campus, and allows digital signage to be used to convey critical information in the event of a campus emergency.

Subsequent sections of this policy address procedures for bringing previous signage installations in to compliance with this policy through integration with the Cisco system.

IMPLEMENTATION PARAMETERS

All digital signage will:

- be aligned with university branding
- consistently apply campus-wide information architecture, visual style, and terminology for digital signage
- display both local content and (potentially minimal) campus-wide content
- be consistent with the architectural setting in which it is placed
- be compatible with and utilize the enterprise system.

External advertising requires a university contract approved through the standard process in Business Affairs. This ensures that proposed advertising does not conflict with existing contractual obligations. External advertising appropriate for digital signage includes ads for institutional-level sponsors and ads for sponsors of specific conferences or events. Business Affairs coordinates with the relevant vice president and University Marketing and Communications to ensure that advertising content is appropriate. In most cases, advertising will not be appropriate.

The University Teleplex advises campus units regarding technical requirements for compatibility with the enterprise system.

Ultimate responsibility for the content posted to digital signs lies at the department head level, not necessarily with the employee who posts content and manages the sign.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The committee is composed of representatives from administrative units with the appropriate expertise to administer this policy—University Marketing and Communications, Information Technology, Facilities Planning and Management, and Business and Auxiliary Services (as needed)—appointed by the vice presidents responsible for those areas. The committee is responsible for working with campus units in planning and implementing their digital signage.

University Marketing and Communications: Manages campus-wide content and determines a standardized approach to user interface, terminology, and information architecture. UMC is responsible for managing publisher access to the digital publishing system, approving wireframes for signage, and serving as the interface between campus constituents and the committee.

Information Technology: Approves hardware purchases to ensure compatibility with the enterprise system; manages campus-wide resources required for digital signage, including servers and network infrastructure.

Facilities Planning and Management: Approves architecturally appropriate physical installation and placement of digital signage devices. The size and related budget of the implementation will be considered. Plans should reflect a balance of need and sound fiscal stewardship.

Business and Auxiliary Services: As needed, approves university contracts for external advertising.

This committee will establish a power users' group to provide input and advice on the implementation and continued evolution of this policy.

OTHER ROLES

Client campus unit: Provides, updates, and maintains local content within established framework. Unless otherwise stated, campus units are responsible for the costs of installation, including purchasing and maintaining the appropriate hardware (display and player device), required facility modification, and ensuring adequate security for devices.

Ball State Teleplex: Develops multimedia content, signage wireframes, and templates at the direction of University Marketing and Communications. Consults with campus units on technical requirements and hardware purchases.

Purchasing: Monitors purchases of digital signage systems. The implementation committee must approve installation, as well as any hardware purchased to ensure compatibility with the university enterprise system.

PROCESS FOR ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION

1. To begin work on a digital signage project, contact the associate vice president of University

Marketing and Communications. The digital signage implementation committee will work collaboratively with a campus unit's vice president or his or her delegate on deploying a digital signage installation.

2. Working in collaboration with the committee, develop a digital signage plan. All digital signs must operate under such a plan. Those approved by the committee will address:

- interior design (appropriate installation with hidden cabling—Cat 6e cabling is required—and consistent with architectural setting)
- technical specifications
- budget, including costs to client campus unit and required use of university infrastructure, such as network bandwidth (The size and related budget of the implementation will be considered. Plans should reflect a balance of need and sound fiscal stewardship.)
- target audiences (students, visitors, etc.) and the information to be conveyed (news and events, way finding, brand experience, etc.)
- content plan, including any advertising for students groups or campus units (Most signage will have a wireframe that includes both “local” and university-wide content. University-wide content will inherently promote news and events from across campus and be managed by UMC.)
- external advertising plan and parameters, if any. (Defined parameters and purpose of advertising in detail—for example, advertising for sponsors of conferences or events.)
- draft/proposed wireframe
- device security (In facilities where signage is visible and expected to be active 24/7, appropriate IT employees will require 24/7 access to the display hardware for support purposes.)
- identified publishers who receive training before access is granted (UMC reserves the right to revoke publishing rights based on failure to follow established digital signage plan or this policy document.).

A sample plan is available from the implementation committee.

3. Purchase system components and complete publishing training. Meanwhile, the Ball State Teleplex, in conjunction with the implementation committee, will begin work on any necessary multimedia components or templates/wireframes.

4. Request installation of purchased components.

5. Activate digital sign (publishing permission granted).

AFTER INSTALLATION AND ACTIVATION

1. Maintain local sign content in accordance with this policy and the approved digital signage plan. The academic department chair or campus unit director in question is responsible for all posted content.

2. Inform the digital signage implementation committee through UMC of needed maintenance, expansion, or modifications.
3. The digital signage implementation committee will monitor all digital signage installations and make recommendations to the cabinet regarding appropriate use in accordance with the approved digital signage plan.
4. To update or modify an existing digital signage plan, contact the associate vice president of University Marketing and Communications. The digital signage implementation committee will work collaboratively with a campus unit's vice president or his or her delegate on such revisions following an expedited version of the process outlined above for initial implementation. Each sign's plan should be updated before changing content or changing the use or content of the signage.

ESCALATION PROCESS

Decisions of the digital signage implementation committee may be appealed. Such disputes will be handled with the vice president who oversees the campus unit in question. If no resolution can be reached, if necessary, the decision will be discussed by the cabinet.

MIGRATION/POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Pre-existing campus digital signage is subject to this policy. A good faith effort should be made to bring such installations into compliance to the extent possible within the restraints imposed by technology and financial considerations. However, digital signage installations that predate the approval of this document by the cabinet need not be taken down due to imperfect compliance.

Campus units that deployed digital signage in the interim period between approval of this document and the adoption and deployment of the campus-wide enterprise system from Cisco did so in collaboration with the digital signage implementation committee under the following restrictions:

1. Two digital signage system options were available: Harris Infocaster or a custom solution implemented by the university's Digital Corps.
2. Now that a single university-wide enterprise system has been selected, such signage installations are required to adopt that system and enter full compliance with this policy in a timely fashion. Through the digital signage implementation committee's role in the procedures outlined above, the Teleplex ensured that *screens* purchased for digital signs deployed during the interim period met the requirements to be used with the enterprise system. However other hardware (such as computers and video cards), software, and services purchased may need to be retired due to lack of compatibility with the selected system. The campus unit in question bears the forfeiture of the investment in an interim solution and all additional expenditures required to become compliant with the enterprise system.