

Purdue University Connects with Staff, Faculty, and Students across Campus with CoolSign Digital Signage “Unlimited”

The Challenge

Purdue University is a major research institution known for discoveries in science, technology, engineering, math, and beyond. Located in West Lafayette, Indiana, the university has an annual enrollment of 40,000 and an international enrollment that often ranks among the top public universities in the U.S.



Purdue’s widespread adoption of digital signage technology began with the decision to find an alternative to using the table tents in dining facilities as a means of communicating with students. Approximately 11,000 students reside in university housing, and Housing and Food Services (HFS) had been using as many as 70 table tents throughout dining facilities each day to provide them with timely information.

“We needed a greener, more flexible, more engaging, and more cost-effective solution, and digital signage met all those criteria,” said Thomas Bunton, Associate Director of IT for housing and food services at Purdue University. “If we were to invest in a digital signage system, we knew we’d also need to choose a solution that could, as a single platform, eventually replace the 50 different signage systems and 30 different technologies, many outdated, in use across the campus.”

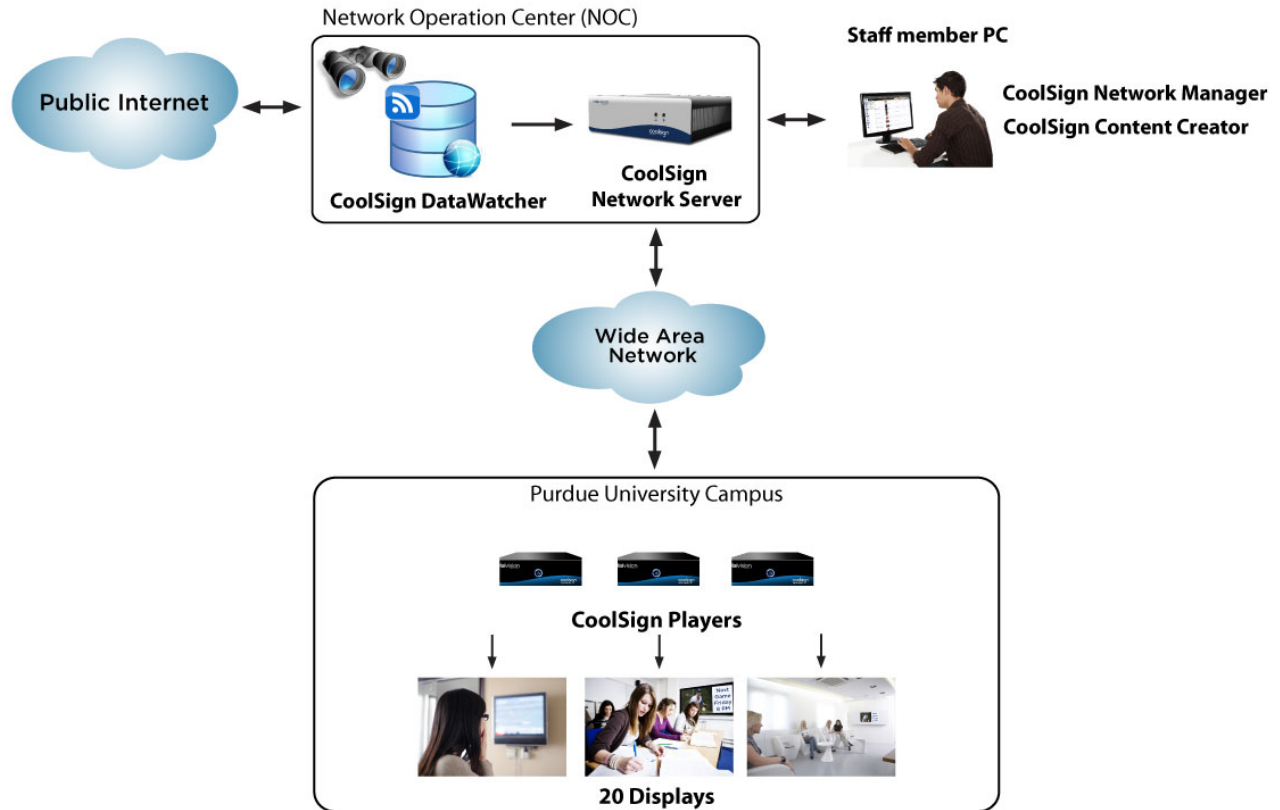
As Purdue explored different digital signage options, they looked for an attractively priced enterprise-class system that would scale well, allow users to join their players to the network and manage their content remotely, and enable the management and display of both shared and private content. For the sake of security, a solution was required that could integrate with the university’s ID and authorization system. For the sake of flexibility, it was also necessary that it support a variety of media types and content, interface with different data sources, and allow university departments and facilities to use existing displays and PCs rather than proprietary displays and players. Finally, given the size of the university campus, which incorporates hundreds of buildings, they needed a resilient solution that would operate even in the event of network failure or similar issue.

The Solution



After evaluating many digital signage solutions, Purdue University chose CoolSign, beginning with three 46-inch displays in their major dining facilities. University residences quickly saw that digital signage would be great way for them to communicate as well, so the CoolSign installation very soon grew to 20 displays. Since the completion of these installations, university schools, departments, student organizations and other groups across campus have are expanding on the CoolSign system, which demonstrates that they realizing their goal of implementing a centralized enterprise digital signage solution.

Though CoolSign provides a single platform for signage, it allows a decentralized “client” base to plug in, manage playlists and present their own content to their target audiences. Because users are accustomed to viewing digital signage as a set of individual presentations rather than an network of interconnected systems that can remotely manage and schedule content, it is often necessary to pause and explain to users that this system eliminates the need to go around to each display with a USB storage device or content disc when they want new content displayed. Control at individual screen level provides just the tools users need while only requiring technical competence that matches those tools.



Other campus users, including Purdue Athletics, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Office of Student Affairs, produce their own content. They also have access to the continually updated collection of university messaging created by the Purdue Office of Marketing and Media, as well as to data-driven subscription features such as news and weather tickers. When client-specific content isn't being displayed, the system can default to the university-wide messaging. Likewise, in the case of a special event, such as the naming of Purdue University Professor Ei-ichi Negishi as a Nobel Laureate in chemistry, they can use their digital signage solution to get the news out within a matter of minutes.



For convenience, a simple naming convention is used to segregate client-created content, which users simply drop into a playlist. Routine tasks can also be automated, such as the pulling of content from regularly updated databases or documents. The menu for Purdue's dining facilities, for example, is updated daily by staff and its content automatically grabbed and displayed on the appropriate screens at scheduled times by the CoolSign system.

The Result

Purdue University now enjoys the benefits of a greener, more flexible, more engaging, and more cost-effective digital signage solution that keeps them in constant communication with their faculty, staff, and students. Haivision's CoolSign has provided them with a single platform for signage, allowing them to personalize their content and give their target audiences access to continually updated university messaging across all campuses.

Purdue University is continually focused on providing students with the information they need to know and the information they want to know. Going forward, they plan to build on this system by incorporating more social media elements into their digital signage content and adding interactive features that further enhance the student experience.