

## **University of British Columbia Reaches Across 2 Campuses, a Remote Learning Center, and Hospital Affiliates with CoolSign's Campus Signage Unlimited**

After experimenting with a pilot project for digital signage, the University of British Columbia selected Haivision's CoolSign software-based solution for its 'Campus Signage Unlimited' program and advanced functionality. On April 1, 2011, the university went live with its CoolSign-powered digital signs, which are primarily used to push UBC branded material to an extensive network of staff and student-oriented displays across the province of British Columbia.

### **The Challenge**

The University of British Columbia (UBC) is one of Canada's most renowned and established advanced learning institutions. The university is home to 50,000 students spread across two major campuses: the Vancouver campus at the tip of the Point Grey Peninsula and the Kelowna campus in the Okanagan Valley. While most students are located at either the Point Grey or the Okanagan campus, UBC has an even wider demographic and geographic span across beautiful British Columbia with its Robson Square center for continuing education, host to over 45,000 students and staff, and three affiliated teaching hospitals throughout the province.

With the university's extensive geographic and demographic network, an efficient centralized communication system connecting campuses was a real challenge. According to Senior Systems Analyst for UBC, Wilson Lo, being able to communicate centralized information to students, staff, and visitors is of top priority for the university. The urgency of this need was made apparent a few years back when, in the face of a particular incident, the university was unable to properly deliver an emergency warning message. The conventional way of communication was ineffective at a time when it mattered most.

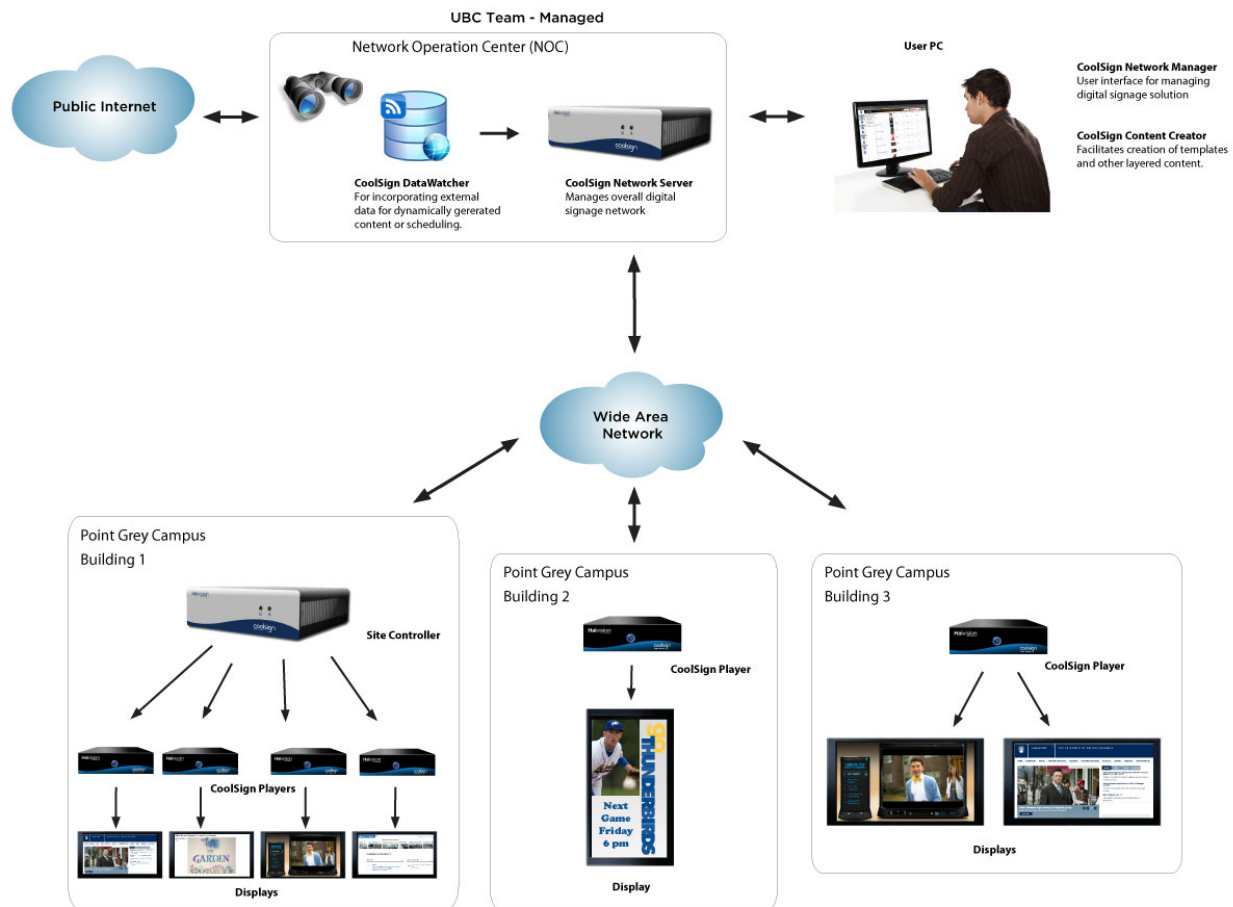
### **The Solution**

UBC specifically needed to address the issue of emergency messaging. With the added benefit that digital signage brings of sharing a variety of system-wide and departmental messaging from a central service point, the UBC team took a phased approach to vendor selection. The university supported a 6-month trial servicing various locations at their Point Grey campus where they experimented with the capabilities of the system. Important was the ability to support emergency messaging, campus wide branding and departmental information, and to scale to the needs across multiple sites and affiliates. Ultimately, the UBC team found CoolSign an excellent solution with exacting content control and unlimited scalability. Also significant was the availability of Haivision's "Campus Signage Unlimited" program for the CoolSign technology. This program allows educational institutions unlimited access to all CoolSign software and licensing for a low fixed fee - in stark contrast to most other vendors that have per screen charges. Live from April 1st, 2011, UBC is using CoolSign to push scheduled or triggered content to over 300 displays.



By taking advantage of the Haivision's 'Campus Signage Unlimited' program, UBC has unlimited access to CoolSign servers and players. As the network expands, each department can take advantage of the scalable CoolSign architecture and freely light up digital signage in their area. According to Lo, this was one of the major strategic advantages that CoolSign was able to offer over its competitors. "Without the fixed-fee model offered by Haivision," Lo notes, "UBC may not have necessarily chosen any digital signage solution." The educational pricing model gives the university the chance to experiment with digital signage at a low financial risk.

In addition to its highly competitive price point, the UBC digital signage project team recognized that Haivision's CoolSign signage solution as a clear leader in the industry, especially for its advanced product functionality. "CoolSign is intuitive to use, easy to maintain, and scales well," Lo credits. With the Network Server and Network Manager, the team is able to manage and control content in a central repository without having to build individual infrastructure with each new unit. For the UBC team, these tools are essential in facilitating the delivery of information to its audiences. With CoolSign's DataWatcher, the university is able to create a bi-directional engagement with its community and, most importantly, its students.



## The Result

Haivision's CoolSign solution has enabled the University of British Columbia to meet its initial need for centralized emergency communication. Emergency messages can now be pushed through to any and all players at any moment. In addition, the digital signage team recognizes several other ways in which the product can be used: for instance, sharing general news items, showcasing event information, and much more. Lo continues to explain that CoolSign allows departments to get creative and explore with digital signage by pushing content that is unique to their interests. Students are also given the chance to get involved.

With CoolSign Content Creator and Network Manager it is easy for students to create, upload, and submit their work for scheduled play-time. Thus, the CoolSign deployment is educational as well.

While UBC is still in the early stages of its use of digital signage with the CoolSign solution having lit up 300 displays across the campuses, there is already a lot of talk about future expansion. "Within a year the whole project has moved quite quickly, from pilot to deployment," explains Lo, "and we expect the project to move just as fast in the near future." Lo already foresees CoolSign capabilities being used with mobile development, pushing content to mobile devices. For instance, students and staff would be able to connect social media to physical locations (e.g. foursquare, twitter, etc.). He even discusses the possibility of creating "digital channels" where media can be integrated within institutional repository.

For the small team at Point Grey in charge of managing the digital signage project at UBC, CoolSign has been "highly satisfactory" on multiple fronts. The project is a new and exciting venture for staff and students alike, across all of UBC's departments and affiliated units.