

WHITE PAPER

chrome for digital signage



Chrome for Digital Signage

Chrome is quickly taking its place as the operating system of choice when it comes to managing a digital signage network.

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Device Management

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Deployers of digital signage have a number of options when it comes to choosing a platform on which to build their network. Windows is the most commonly used system, although licensing fees can add up quickly. Apple's iOS has a reputation for stability, but it doesn't play well with HTML5 and isn't likely to run on non-proprietary hardware. Linux is free and open source, but its complexity and steep learning curve will likely require the support of a dedicated IT staff.

One of the more recent entries into the digital signage space is Google's Chrome. And while the growth of Chrome has been slow and steady, that growth has been picking up steam as more and more deployers adopt it to run their networks.

Ease of device management

Google's Chrome OS was first introduced in 2009 as an operating system based on the Linux kernel and designed by Google to work with both installed applications and those that reside in the cloud. The system is more stable, boots faster and takes up less storage space than some of its competitors.

Chrome OS offers a number of features that simplify the operation of a digital signage network.

The Chrome OS is a managed system. Once a piece of Chrome hardware is enrolled in a domain, all settings and configurations are automatically downloaded, meaning new hardware can be installed and activated in minutes without the need to install additional software or spend time configuring that hardware. That feature allows the network to be

easily scaled up as the business grows. An administrator needs only to enroll a new piece of hardware, and all settings, policies and configurations are automatically downloaded.

Salem, Massachusetts-based Right Media Solutions, for example, recently completed a full network upgrade of 3900 Chromebox media players for a national retailer with a presence in all 50 states. After piloting the project in 300 initial locations, the RMS team was able to complete a full network rollout in just seven weeks.

Any Chrome device can be turned into a media player for digital signage via the system's Chrome Kiosk mode, which locks down the device for single purpose use and restricts device usage to its intended purpose. Kiosk mode is a fullscreen mode that displays no address bar, no title bar and no tab bar.

Businesses that use Chrome OS for signage and kiosks can also use those devices as Bluetooth low energy beacons to pass along web addresses to nearby customers.

Chrome Management allows administrators to access hardware functions from anywhere, even a mobile device. Administrators can perform tasks including controlling volume, rebooting a piece of hardware and performing screen captures, all from the management console. Automated reporting features provide notifications if any device experiences an issue.

In addition, Chrome OS was built with an emphasis on security, eliminating the need for anti-virus software. Features include verified boot and data encryption, preventing malicious software from infecting the system and/or unauthorized users from gaining control of the hardware.

Chrome OS updates automatically, eliminating the need for administrators to manually apply patches or updates. The timing and distribution of patches can be controlled via the management console, allowing administrators to schedule those tasks to take place in the middle of the night or at other times when usage is lowest.

And because Chrome hardware for digital signage is built to be energy efficient, they help lower costs without compromising performance.

Flexible content control

While ease of hardware management is a critical component of operating a digital signage network, it's only part of the equation. Just as important is ease of content management.

Content Management Systems (CMS) built for Chrome allow deployers to schedule and display content across their managed Chrome device network, making it easy to show web content. During the initial setup process, administrators create schedules and specify the URLs for content that will be displayed according to the schedules. Content can be tailored to groups by city, specific location or even individual screens, with the ability to easily daypart content as desired.

Chrome Apps let content designers use HTML5, CSS and JavaScript to deliver an experience comparable to a native application, with exceptional streaming and playback quality. And if a deployer chooses to change their approach for the network “powerwashing,” or erasing existing apps and resetting a device to factory settings, it can be accomplished quickly and easily.

With a digital signage network potentially costing thousands of dollars depending on the size of the deployment, though, some of the biggest concerns for operators are reliability and “future proofing,” or the ability of the operating system to incorporate new features as they are developed and keep up with changing times.

Although Chrome devices are relatively new entrants into the digital signage arena, they have already developed a reputation for reliability, resulting in increased network uptime and reduced maintenance costs. And because Chrome OS is updated automatically, new features are incorporated as they are developed.

In short, Chrome is an excellent option for digital signage network administrators who desire reliability, performance, ease of management and low operating costs.



About the sponsor:

Right Media Solutions offers turn-key digital signage solutions by developing plans, procuring and testing equipment, implementing the roll-out and providing on-going support services. The company's headquarters near Boston provides a unique layout that allows it to offer warehouse and logistic solutions while simultaneously providing testing and development centers. Additionally, RMS provides data analytic services to ensure your signage is effective and optimized.

Through the development of interactive content and dynamic digital signage media, RMS is driven to enhance brand awareness and create deeper consumer experiences that translate directly into increased revenue and customer satisfaction. Our creative team can develop messages that drive your brand. We develop content for video walls, menu boards, wayfinders, video displays, interactive kiosks and mobile platforms.