

# AUTOMATED SELF-UPDATING CONTENT IS THE **NEW** TREND IN DIGITAL SIGNAGE



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## **Automated self-updating content is the new trend in digital signage**

Digital signage is evolving and nowhere is this more evident than with specialized content. Gone are the days of having to manually research and repurpose your digital signage data. Screen networks are now powered by social media and content is delivered in real-time, saving countless hours of manual data collection, manipulation and updates.

### **The future of RSS**

In the beginning, we had RSS feeds. These text-only news feeds provided signage operators with an automated content solution that was very easy to implement. Soon, networks began to add news tickers to their screens as a means to create more dynamic programming and take advantage of continuously updated news and information. Unfortunately, text only gets you so far, so operators started to look for a better solution.

This led to the introduction of Media RSS. These types of feeds combine text with links that point to images and video stored on remote servers. Linked media and text are updated without the need for any user interaction, making this content totally maintenance-free. The simple delivery method is the same as traditional RSS feeds which might explain why Media RSS's popularity has grown.

### **Where to find great commercial RSS feeds**

Various third party content providers offer RSS and Media RSS feeds that are updated several times a day. These feeds are ideal for use in digital signage because they are licensed from major news sources like Associated Press or Bloomberg. Raw data feeds deliver content in a common simple format (such as XML), but you can also purchase fully-rendered content that includes professional transition effects and bold graphics, suitable any type of venue. And, the feeds are automatically updated by the service provider so nothing else is required from the operator.

### **Social Media is hot!**

The movement towards automated content delivery has recently evolved to include social media feeds from Twitter, Facebook and Google. In fact, it has never been easier to push real-time news and information to large groups of people than with Twitter.

Recognizing the extra value in this constant flow of information, many companies have become quite active in social media. And since the platform has become so popular, adding a corporate or HR Twitter feed to digital screens makes a lot of sense.

The challenge now is how to tap into this flow of social media messages so you can channel it to your screens and tablets with a minimum amount of time and effort (and cost!).

Until recently, publishing social media content or media RSS feeds required some custom programming and a fair bit of data manipulation. This meant involving the IT department or hiring



a contractor to build a custom application that would be able to interact with the social media company's API. Extra steps were required before these feeds can be displayed in a digital signage system because not all social media sites publish this data in a standard way, like XML.

However, it doesn't have to be that way. Users can access multiple types of feeds—including media RSS and social media—without the need for extra programming or external manipulation. They can easily publish maintenance-free content, very cost-effectively, without involving IT staff or contractors. New digital solutions software has the ability to parse data feeds, making the content readily available to non-technical users.

### **What about company-generated data?**

Corporate databases and automated systems can also be a great source of data for digital signage screens. Nutritional data and allergen information can be displayed (in compliance with menu labeling regulations), while localized data—such as bus and train schedules—as well as special promotions can be consistently updated in real-time, creating the feeling of a “personalized” experience for customers.

Here are some examples:

- Nutritional Data
- Recipe Information
- Transit (Bus and Train) Updates
- Weather-related Promotions
- Day Part Promotions
- Members-only Specials

All of our digital solutions are able to generate a flow of information that can be redirected to a screen network, feeding the system with maintenance-free content that is purposeful and timely.

Best of all, this data can be used to enhance and supplement other media shown on screen by using templates and ticker overlays.