A FASTER, SMARTER SIGN OF THE TIMES

Verizon's M2M Management Center monitors and manages digital signage connections in real time without delay

It's a mark of the perceived value of digital signage that users have endured its infamous shortcomings so patiently. Watching the medium's rapid reinvention by wireless technology, old hands can reflect ruefully on the breakdowns, high costs and nonexistent monitoring capabilities they've long tolerated. All good things in all good time, as Jerry Garcia advised. When simple announcements in red capital letters first appeared on LED boards, an advanced engine for digital signage like Verizon's M2M Management Center could hardly have been foreseen. Just having your basic "reader boards" out in the field, haphazardly flashing grocery bargains and public-safety alerts, was considered progress.

Click forward to a dramatically different environment, fueled by robust machine-to-machine (M2M) connectivity on a platform like the Verizon 4G LTE wireless network. The initial effect is pure problem solving, as a single interface allows any digital signage originator to monitor, manage and swiftly customize their remote displays—in real time and reliably.

"Verizon's proprietary platform, the M2M Management Center, delivers solutions that are changing and energizing the digital signage market," says Alexandra Sneed, the company's manager for retail and hospitality solutions. "You're talking about a segment of the communications spectrum that is well positioned, especially now that its creativity can really flourish."

Of all the emerging benefits, high capacity and network intelligence likely rate highest. Digital signage, though dependent on fast delivery of content, is a high-bandwidth medium historically prone to clog-up and slowdown. "With Verizon M2M on the 4G LTE network," comments Sneed, "we've taken the bandwidth issue off the table." Outbound capacity is complemented by inbound confirmation, she explains. Even if a given digital signage system had—apparently—never hit a bottleneck, discerning that—or knowing much else about transmittal and delivery—was never before possible. "Someone trying to manage all these units had no way to see if they were up or down," says Sneed. "They also couldn't know how much data they were using for each connection, which meant they were unable to track and control costs. This portal allows our enterprise customers to manage and visualize thousands of on-site units."

The new technology offers richer graphics and real-time content alterations, two major improvements for digital-signage programmers to exploit. For a system designer, wireless is an easy way to target optimal locations within airports, concert halls, university campuses—anywhere foot traffic represents a desired demographic. Even though legacy systems are not particularly bulky, the installation and repair of digital signage—running off a hard wire—has been known to require that store walls be knocked down. Once up and running, wired systems "can put a strain on your IT team," says Sneed, who has firsthand experience with this problem in her former job as a retail chain manager.

Far beyond problem solving, the big upside for digital signage is that marketers can now extend brand messaging and action calls to the point of sale using sophisticated, customized content. Sneed sees consumers moving away from the old pattern of forming intentions to purchase while at home watching television or reading a glossy magazine. In the emerging model, people will crowd-source a recommendation while mobile; more and more, people will engage in the entire end-to-end decision process while mobile. After they locate stores, they might access real-time information on which one has a stock of their desired item, and then use GPS guidance to travel to the venue.

Location-based social media will increasingly fuel this model, while the digital signage business stakes its own spot on the landscape. Along the way, there is expected to be a merging of traditional digital signage with kiosk-style hardware and smartphones. For example, in the sea of floor space at a casino hotel, such "Omni channel" coverage could take an arriving guest through a series of purchase opportunities—spa treatment, show tickets, fitness class—without the need for a staff member to locate the guest, present offers and answer questions about products and services. ●

THE BUSINESS WITH THE BEST TECHNOLOGY RULES

SUSIE'S MACHINES THINK ABOUT HER BUSINESS AS MUCH AS SHE DOES.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE

FLEET MANAGEMENT

SMART VENDING

MACHINE TO MACHINE

NETWORK

SECURITY

Verizon technology helps keep product in stock and customers happy. Machine-to-machine solutions enabled by Verizon let you link trucks, vending machines and suppliers. So your vending machines can be refilled the moment stock is low. And digital signage can be updated in real time to alert your customers of new offers. Machine-to-machine solutions enabled by Verizon technology get your machines thinking harder for your business.

THE BUSINESS WITH THE BEST TECHNOLOGY RULES.
Visit: **verizonwireless.com/m2m**

LEARN HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS WITH VERIZON TECHNOLOGY.

verizon