

## Audience Connects Students to Continuing Education

Digital signage helps keep students at one university informed about class schedules and campus events.

By Louis M. Brill  
Contributing writer,  
DigitalSignageToday.com

Sponsored by



### The players

**Capital Networks Ltd.**, established in 1991, has roots in the demanding broadcasting and cable TV industries, specializing in local news and automated playback systems. In recent years, its flagship Audience software platform has been selected for various digital signage installations of all sizes. Capital Networks also supplies media products and services into 14 industry segments on six continents and has a worldwide authorized reseller channel for distribution of its software-based media products into the international audiovisual community.

**Matrix Video Communications Corp.** was incorporated in 1994. With offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon, Canada, Matrix Video is a diversified video communications company that specializes in the areas of video conferencing, digital signage, Web streaming, editing and production. Matrix Video provides a wide range of broadcast and audio-visual equipment to the health, government, corporate, education, broadcast and production markets throughout the Canadian Western Provinces, and also is an authorized reseller of Capital Networks Audience software products. The company initiates project design, installation, training and support for Audience-based software installations. Matrix Video serves its customer base as a technology partner, a system integrator and supplier and specializes in designing, integrating and installing audio-video communications solutions for its clients.

**Northern Alberta Institute of Technology** is a post-secondary education learning center offering more than 250 programs, including 35 apprenticeship trades, as well as more than 1,400 continuing education courses. NAIT is the largest apprenticeship trainer in Canada. The school system offers two unique degrees in its nine schools, and provides course-specific instruction to more than 84,400 students each year. The institute has a 95-percent graduate placement rate.

### The problem

As students who were enrolled in the continuing education program at NAIT arrived at the various campuses on weekends and evenings, many of them relied on a Web-based class scheduling system to find their classroom start times and the classroom locations. With such a large number of courses and locations, students would frequently have difficulty finding their classes on time.

### The solution

NAIT saw an opportunity to establish a digital signage information display system as a solution to providing its students with up-to-the-minute class scheduling information.

The digital signage system commissioned by NAIT was developed and installed by Matrix Video. The system included a network of LCD screens and a client-driven content message system that was distributed to NAIT's continuing education program areas located throughout its main campus and two satellite campuses.

As explained by Matrix Video account manager David Brunning, the NAIT Information Display System topology consists of a master PC workstation which controls dis-



*NAIT installed digital signage with up-to-the-minute class scheduling information in areas easily accessed by students.*



**WELCOME** 7:59 AM  
WEDNESDAY JUNE 3

**0102A- ALUMNI CONFERENCE ROOM**

9:00-11:00	Hospitality Leadership Meeting
11:00-1:30	Business Plan Meeting 2009-2010
2:00-3:00	CDC Meetings Summer Schedule
3:00-4:00	Communications To Degree Students

**0102F- PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE ROOM**

11:00-12:00	2010 Viewbook
12:30-3:30	CYTO Faculty Meeting
.	.
.	.

**REGISTRAR'S** [.nait.ca/scholarships](http://www.nait.ca/scholarships) **Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday - 8:00am to 4:30pm.** **APPRENTI**

*The digital signage network now serves as an all-purpose student communications system.*

tributed small-form factor PCs driving a total of 13 LCD public display screens. All systems are connected on the NAIT corporate IP network. The screens are deployed at various heavily trafficked campus locations, enabling each evening's students to get last-minute information about their classroom locations and classroom start times.

To coordinate content creation and delivery to the Information Display System, a complete Audience software suite was utilized, including creation, management, communications software and player software. As well, Audience Billboard with Audience Web portal was added to post and manage messages to the student community. The Audience-based Information Display System was installed by Matrix Video at NAIT in September 2008 and has been well received by students and staff; in fact, it has been in constant use since then. Access to providing new content is very inclusive, as qualified users are able to post continuing education messages on an ongoing basis using the Audience Billboard Web-based application.

### The results

Carl Enright, director of the NAIT continuing education program, says because of the popularity of the continuing education program's Information Display System, its original use has expanded from just classroom start times and classroom locations to an all-purpose student communications system.

"The IDS digital sign system now includes postings about exam schedules, campus sport scores, locations of instructor offices, NAIT News (updates on student and school activities) and is also a part of the Security Alert campus system," Enright said.

Enright is more than pleased with the digital signage system, as it has not only expanded into a more sophisticated campus news and activities "ticker," but also it has physically grown from its original nine LCD displays to 13 campus locations. Enright believes over time, as more of the students and staff come to depend on the Information Display System, it will evolve into an NAIT knowledge system.

As for the effectiveness of NAIT's current digital signage system, Enright said, "Prior to the IDS installation, our department handled many student complaints, primarily, 'where is my classroom?' Now, with this digital sign system in place, this year to date, we only handled about six complaints, which is incredible."

**About the sponsor:** *Capital Networks Ltd., established in 1991, offers digital signage technology to 14 industry segments in six continents. The company, which has its roots in the broadcasting and cable television industries, provides content management services, production and creative services and technical support. Capital Networks also developed the Audience platform, that runs on contemporary PC hardware and graphics cards and is used in a wide range of industry segments.*