Screenly "Reinvents" Digital Signage
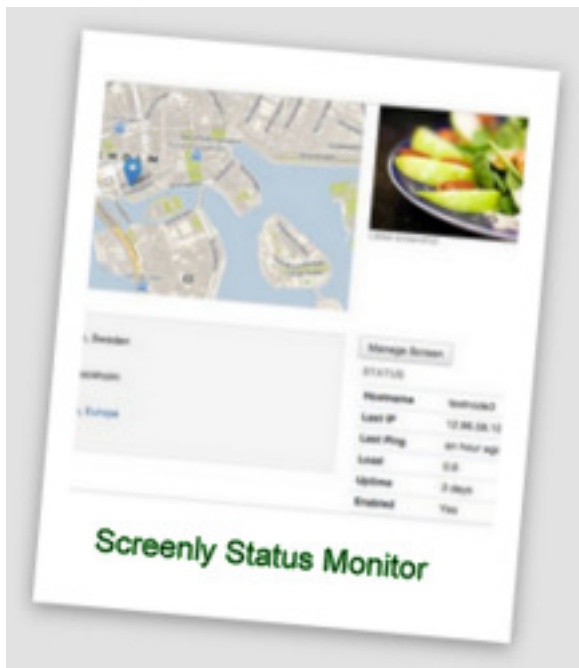
Written by Bob Snyder
30. 05. 2013

WireLoad is a software developer with a taste for **Raspberry Pi**, the tiny credit card-sized computer capable of displaying full 1080p videos and images. Their website tells their story:

"When we analyzed this market we noticed most of the products fell into one of two buckets:

- *Bloated and overpriced embedded solutions with decent functionality.*
- *Home-made solutions (that were often buggy and reliant on Adobe Flash).*

What we wanted was an affordable, modern and lightweight solution, but there weren't any around. When the Raspberry Pi was announced, we had an 'aha' moment. This was what was needed to reinvent the industry. At only $35 it was accessible for everyone. Not only that, the hardware was powerful enough to support full-HD playback.

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After spending a few months on the waitlist, we got our Rasperry Pi last summer and got busy cranking out a prototype. The result is a product that we call Screenly – a turn-key digital signage solution. All you need to manage it is your web-browser."

That's their story or at least the beginning of it. They've developed two versions. **Screenly OSE** is Open Source (Raspbian, a Debian-derived Linux) so anyone can install, modify and use it free of charge.

All you need to install Screenly OSE is a Raspberry Pi and a TV. Screenly OSE works only for a stand-alone setup.

Screenly Pro is their commercial solution designed for users who want to manage multiple nodes (or screens). It runs on the same hardware as Screenly OSE, but it provides you with a central interface. Screenly Pro also provides other benefits such as system hardening, node alarm/health and more.

Screenly Pro is in Beta. And wireless is not supported yet on either version (users need a wired DHCP Internet connection). So there's more work to be done.

Will low-cost hardware and a per month SaaS service cause the market disruption that makes your eyes water?

You can practically hear the chuckles from the incumbents. Big players in the industry will hardly notice Screenly. For the same reasons big business shunned Macintosh computers for decades. **The Screenly revolution, if there is one, will come from the usual hotbeds of Open Source: education, non-profits, community organizations and wily small business.**

Their competition for this grass roots business will be low cost Android solutions in this entry-level market. No matter which wins—both will funnel growth into the bottom tier of the user base. As those users get more sophisticated, they will want to move up to the next tier, creating a bigger and bigger sales pyramid that represents the digital signage marketplace.

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Go **Screenly**