ScreenMedia Expo Round-Up

Written by Geny Caloisi
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ScreenMediaExpo (5th edition) in London was a busy show with over 3,000 visitors and 120 exhibitors.

Christie was showing its new signage specific product, MicroTiles. Intel was showing how its chip can fit in the Digital Signage (DS) ecosystem with a plethora of partners sharing the stand and demonstrating their solutions. Harris Broadcasting, continues venturing from the broadcast industry going deeper into the DS market. Sony was showing its Ziris product line and NCR showcasing its Netkey digital signage solution, a software that helps companies develop, deploy and manage networks of digital signs and interactive kiosk solutions. A big player missing from the show stands was Samsung.
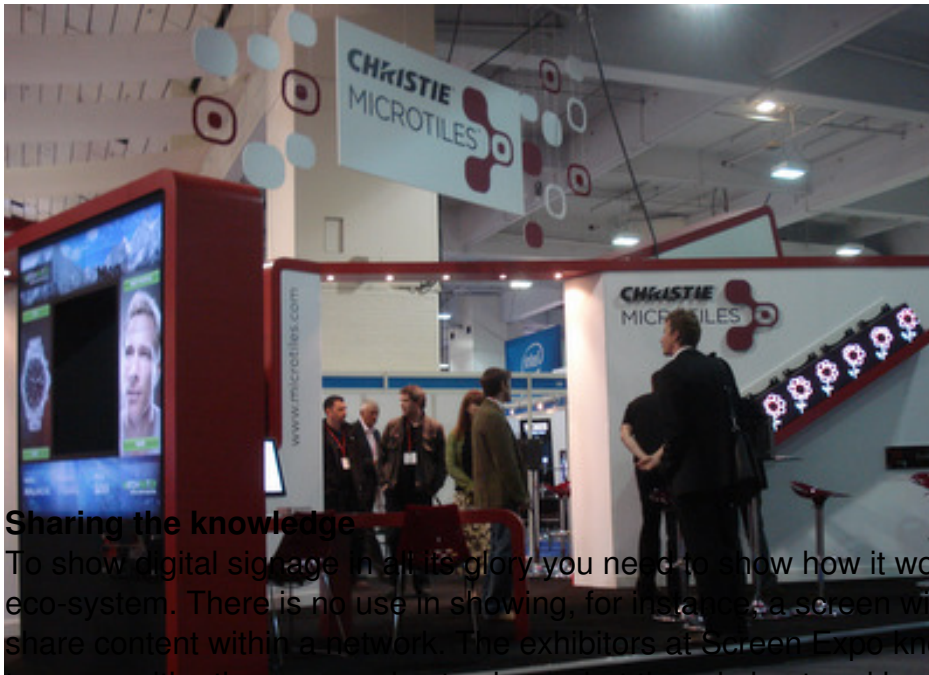
Sharing the knowledge
To show digital signage in all its glory you need to show how it works within its digital eco-system. There is no use in showing, for instance, a screen with no content or capacity to share content within a network. The exhibitors at Screen Expo knew this and several chose to team up with other companies to show what they do best and how they fit with each other.

Intel was one of these as was MiniCom Digital Signage, who also runs the Digital Signage Showcase (DSS) providing on-floor education to the end users and integrators. DSS presented an end-to-end solution, giving a bird´s eyes perspective on how to plan, create, rollout and operate a full scale digital signage solution, covering from content creation to measurement.

Minicom also runs the known Digital Signage Experts Tour on the show floor, with the goal to

give an overview of the show highlights along the food chain of the typical digital signage application.

As previously announced by **rAVe Europe**, Minicom showed the first Remote Device Management solution with Proof of Performance capabilities. The solution features a unique Media Feedback Mechanism for Proof of Performance so advertisers in DooH networks can validate and audit advertising for quantity and quality of the broadcasted ad.

Where are the creative agencies?
Something that was missing from the exhibitors at the show was creative agencies that would actually put interesting content in the right format for signage. Pink Banana was showing some of its creative material in the Bus outside the expo.
Creative agency Amigo Digital also had a stand, which was manned by manikins looking into a huge Panasonic screen. Digital production company Grand Visual was also at the show.

Some companies commented that creative agencies had visited the show asking what they needed for DS, which is excellent news since this means that the end user is asking about this.

For next year it would be nice to see a stronger presence of the creative side on content creation.

However; two companies came to the rescue with an interesting proposition for people needing to fill their screens fast. One was Doohstuff, which provides images to use on signage background or to be used as icons. Piet Hein Goosens from Doohstuff, explained that, unlike Getty Image, where the customer is charged by the way and the frequency in which the image will be used, Doohstuff offers unlimited use of the photographs bought, no questions asked. 'This is a much more convenient deal for customers,' he remarked.

Doohstuff is a Dutch based online content database with a 100 per cent focus on digital signage. All people can search in our database for up to 100,000 HD clips, 2.5 million stills and the weather news from the entire globe. Next to this Doohstuff provides editing and consultancy services to upgrade every screen worldwide.

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A promising company highlighted at Rave - and creating some stirs at Screen media Expo 2010 - was Flypaper Studio. Flypaper provides a simple to use Flash Content Creation Platform that can very quickly turn a simple presentation into an interactive signage solution with no previous programmer knowledge needed.

In fact, at the show, Turkish company Digital Panorama (www.3dpros.com) which was exhibiting at the Intel stand, went and bought the Pro software from Flypaper and on the second day of the show it had an interactive presentation on a touch screen using Flypaper's tools and its interactive solution. Digital Panorama will be opening an office in Leeds by June, offering its 3D content creation, management and delivery of interactive messages.

With the creative agencies not having a big presence at the show floor, Screen Media Expo had a space for the advertising, marketing and communications professionals to meet, learn and do business at the DOOH Expo – a dedicated show-within-a-show for the digital out-of-home media community. No technology there, just a space for networking.

From 2D to 3D and into the 4th screen
At this year's Screen Expo there was a lot of hype about the implementation of 3D for DS and the increased use of the 4th screen, that is the mobile phone, for audience engagement.

Various sceptics doubt that DS will ever go 3D. 3D ready screens are inefficient for DS with only one of two hot spots. If companies opt for stereoscopic images, people will be unlikely to want to wear 3D glasses when shopping to enjoy the advertising.

However research company Futuresource, on the Futurology conference, said that the DS industry should watch out for 3D. '3D is a hot topic in the tech world at the moment,' said Futuresource researcher Mike Fisher, '3D is impacting the end user market driven by the 3D cinema phenomenon.' He said that 3D is definitely getting into our living rooms with a forecast that by 2014 all 40in and above flat panel TVs sold will be 3D ready.

'3D will be used for entertainment, not to watch the news,' Fisher clarified, 'but the way that the public interacts with 3D images is changing and DS needs to start thinking about this medium for brand immersions and other marketing experiences.'
3D, according to Futuresource, could be a game change for DS that will provide value-add to

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customer's campaigns.

Ivan Franco, from YDreams, also thinks that the intuitive interaction that augmented reality provides is here to stay and grow. YDreams has been involved in projects with giants such as Coca Cola and Adidas where they created an immersive brand experience, which also used mobile phones for interaction.

On the content creation side, companies such as Zero Creative (3DZignage) and Magnetic 3D offer fully web-based and interactive 3D digital signage for glasses-free 3D digital content. Magnetic 3D, a global provider of glasses-free 3D display and 3D digital signage solutions, is working with Signagelive, a Software as a Service (SaaS) digital signage platform, on this project.
The 2010 event attracted first timers such as Intel, and new themes including mobile integration and 3D arrive new to the show.

More ScreenMedia Expo news