InfoZone: Digital Signage for Schools, St-Petersburg
Driving the Digital Transformation of the 21st-century School

| Digital Signage | Education | Digitalization | 21st-century school |

Students are digital natives.

Using technology in the classroom isn't just about digital devices in class—it relates to anything that facilitates an interaction between teacher and student. Want to convey important information to children and students? Speak to them in their digital language and redefine the way your message is delivered. Few examples can serve better to illustrate this than the extensive introduction of digital signage across schools in Russia's second city, St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg is the nation's pioneer in enabling state-of-the-art digital transformation of its schools. The city's administration has trusted SpinetiX digital signage technology for more than 7 years now to cater to the pedagogical, educational, social, and informational needs of the 21st-century school. With an ever-growing fleet of more than 400 digital signage locations, called "InfoZones" distributed in schools across 17 of the 18 city districts, SpinetiX technology has become the standard in digital signage for education in St. Petersburg and beyond.

Project Scope & Challenges

The St. Petersburg's Committee for Education was looking for ways to build and encourage dialogue with high-school students when planning to equip educational institutions throughout the city. The project was tasked with answering the following challenges:

- **Provide a multifunctional visual channel of communication** where students, teachers, and parents are informed about school curriculum and events on the go
- **Serve as an auxiliary means for cultural education** and career guidance for students
- **Create a unique social setting** where students and teachers come to seek for information and exchange ideas with each other
- **Inspire and involve students in the process of creating media content**
- **Promote a healthy lifestyle** and advertise cultural and sporting events
- **Ensure safety of school grounds** by serving as a notification and alert system in case of emergency
- **Reduce environmental and financial impact** with content automation and by reducing costs for flyers
- **Use existing local networks** without requiring deployment of new cyberinfrastructure
- **Must be designed to operate 24/7** with minimal maintenance required
- **Use centralized content management system**

"The InfoZone project allows children to perceive the content on the screens with interest, but equally importantly, to also take part in the content-creation process."

Alexander Valerievich Ksenofontov
Deputy Chairman of the Education Committee of St. Petersburg

Solution

Initial plans for an educational TV channel broadcast across schools were deemed ineffective in terms of financial investment at the district and city levels. To answer the challenge, a simpler information-point based digital signage model, proposed by SpinetiX Certified Gold Dealer TEKO won the hearts and minds of the city administration as a more effective and budget friendly means of communication. The solution is based on deploying a series of digital info zones throughout public areas of schools and steps on the SpinetiX Complete Digital Signage Solution including the SpinetiX HMP media players for content distribution and Elementi digital signage software for content management.

SpinetiX HMP Players – Easy to Scale, Robust, Reliable

Since its inception in 2014, the project has grown to more than 400 info zone installations in schools across 17 of the 18 city districts of St. Petersburg. The project has thus benefited from multiple generations of SpinetiX HMP players – some of which are still in operation after 24/7 use for more than 6 years!

Known for their versatility, the SpinetiX HMP players are compatible with information display facilities already available at the time of the project deployment. To equip the rest of the info zone points, new screens of various configurations, sizes, and types were used – including a large transparent LED display at the entrance of the city's engineering and technology school.

As all HMP players are compatible with the centralized content management system, when the system is expanded to accommodate new players, or in case of screens being replaced with newer models, the same content management system remains in place. This is extremely convenient and cost effective.

Flexible Centralized Content Management with Elementi Digital Signage Software

Elementi digital signage software by SpinetiX is used to create and configure content, as well as schedule and distribute it to the geographically dispersed network of schools throughout the city. While centralized in nature, the content management system is flexible enough to accommodate screen content from multiple players and institutions. This includes district and municipal administrations but also teachers and students in individual schools. All content is prepared in Elementi. As a rule, after the commissioning of the info zone, a person responsible for content creation and editing is appointed from the school's staff.

This could be a teacher, a librarian, or the school IT specialist. In some cases, SpinetiX partners train a school's content specialist on creating content with Elementi after which they are autonomous to create and distribute screen content on their own. Digital signage widgets included in Elementi are used to create a multilayered screen content with multimedia playlist zoning, using images and videos available remotely. The school director or the teaching deputy are, in most cases, responsible for approving the content to be broadcast.

Students are Content Contributors

It is important to inspire and involve children in the process of creating school content. In a selection of schools that are already equipped with media labs, students create their own content - reports and interviews about school life, which are broadcast on the screens of the InfoZone system.

Watch the video:
"Student interview with SpinetiX CEO Francesco Ziliani"

InfoZone Uses & Locations

InfoZone points are always located in public well-frequented spots for maximum exposure. This is usually the main hall or entrance area of the school. An InfoZone can consist of a single LCD display, but sometimes includes a video wall, a kiosk display, or an LCD screen. Content may differ from location to location, depending on whether the school disposes with one or multiple InfoZone points – for example, different class schedules on different floors.

Entrance and School Museum

Interactive kiosk installed at School N°406 in Pushkin district. Displays basic information about the school, regulations, information for students and parents, and more. An identical installation with different screen content is used at the school's museum.

Assembly Areas

These types of InfoZone points include a professional panel along with a decorative stand with LED backlighting. The stand itself shows a map and encourages students' curiosity about geography.

Halls and other Floor Areas

Otherwise monotonous wall areas in the halls become colorful multimedia zones that immediately catch the eye. This thematic and educational corner at School N° 777 is dedicated to traffic rules and road safety. Pictures and short videos explain the road safety rules.

Broadcast Zones

A videowall at School N°690 allowing for broadcasting live and recorded news feeds from both the local school TV and the district department of education.

Transparent LED Welcome Screen

The Engineering and Technology school benefited from a large welcome screen at the school welcome and assembly area where text and image can be equally spectacular.

Class Schedules

Class-schedule screens are located throughout corridors on different floors, linked to the school's information system and are combined with other InfoZone locations, serving as bright islands of knowledge and guidance throughout school campuses.
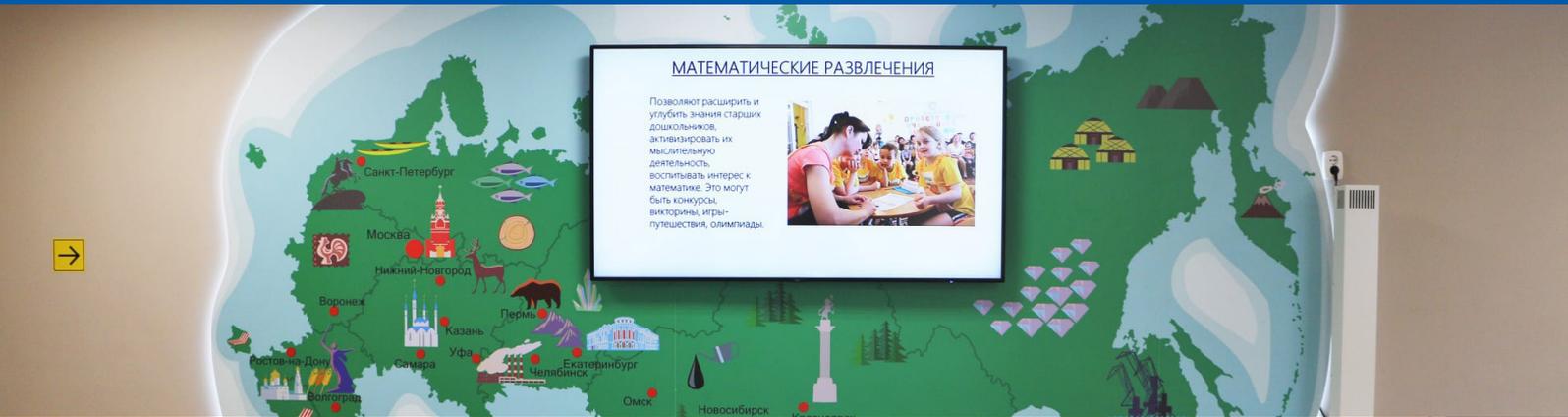
Results

Digital signage is now a proven technology

Thanks to SpinetiX, digital signage is now a proven technology used to solve pedagogical, educational, social, and informational challenges in schools across the city of St. Petersburg. SpinetiX technology has become the standard in digital signage for education in the region and beyond.

The project contributes to innovation and student development

The InfoZone project is part of a comprehensive strategy of the city administration to establish its schools as incubators for innovation. The result is a full-fledged educational environment for the development of creativity in which students can grow and show their talents by creating inspiring content for their peers to see.

A centralized solution that is easy to use by individual schools

The end client has highlighted the ease of use of Elementi software and its intuitive interface against the backdrop of a large set of processing and customization software tools and an extensive library of data-driven digital signage widgets.

A scalable future-facing project that continues to grow

The solution is as easily implemented in the city with a developed IT infrastructure and high-speed Internet as it is delivered in regions with a broad geography of remote points of broadcasting and unstable Internet.

Back in 2014, the project began with the deployment of information zones across a limited number of schools. The project has since been deployed across 17 of the 18 city districts – and now features more than 400 information zones. This was possible due to the ability of the SpinetiX HMP players to scale, the use of one system for every type of display, and the reliability and fault tolerance of SpinetiX equipment.

Partners

TEKO – Project and build Integrator
DSTools – SpinetiX Distribution Partner in Russia

Project Awards

**Winner - St. Petersburg School 2020 competition
in the nomination "Educational Organization Management"**

Best Solution for Education 2018

**Grand prix - competition "Creating the Future"
sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation**

Winner - national prize Pro-Integration Awards at Integrated Systems Russia 2014

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