Scala system hosted by Finance and Administration IT.

Scala (website scala.com) is commercial signage software originally purchased 5 years ago for use by Campus Dining Services for their Menu signage at the dining Halls. It has since expanded to be used by Libraries and Student Stores. This summer we are adding signs in Public Safety and Facilities shops.

We are running 35 player computers with 50+ connected screens.

Worldwide Scala is used at numerous locations for digital signage, information kiosks, and restaurant ordering. Examples: Shell Oil Convenience Stores, Megabus Buses, Tommy Hilfinger, University of Toronto, Indiana University, Naples (Italy) Airport, Istanbul Ataturk Airport, Carnival Curise Ships (Wayfinding signage), Krystal Restaurants, Ikea stores TV channel, HSBC Banks,

Scala is Windows player computers designed to be on 24-7 that poll a central server for content rule changes on a schedule, usually every 90 seconds or so. They can run VB and python scripts locally to set parameters and dynamically display information. They can play video files, Image files, and display websites for a set amount of time on a schedule changing what displays by time of day and by external input conditions. F&A IT has a Cable TV stream that is tuned from a central tuner and used to steam UNC related content when important event are happening around campus (football, basketball). We are not doing touch-screen interactive on campus yet, but that is a possibility.

Technology – Windows players calling home to IIS/TomCat server (already hosted by F&A IT). Designer software for creating more complex content and scripts. Content Manager via Web site (soon Onyen based) to upload and schedule content for display.

For content management, it is generally website skill placing items into a playlist and managing a schedule. For more complex work, some programming skill is used.

Costs - Signage 24-7 grade computer plus signage 37” 24-7 grade monitor and wall mount is running about $1800. Then you add the facilities electrical install and ITS networking install charges. Thanks to one of the top US Scala salesman being a UNC grad based in Burlington, we have a fairly low annual cost for what we deliver, about $200 per player computer.

Finance and Administration’s Communication group is looking at providing a design/service bureau for the signage. Those details are not going to be ready until Winter, but let us know if you are interested.

Pros and Cons –

Most signage content is cached locally at the player computer defends against network outages. The server sends notices when players are not checking in regularly.

Commercial software.

F&A IT checks and repairs the players from Remedy tickets. Manages a separate VLAN. Also doing managed patches.

Cons, higher than many startup and subscription costs

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