AT ISSUE
What changes have you seen in digital signage hardware configuration in the last year?

ANGELA TANG
MARKETING MANAGER, AOPEN

Digital signage hardware has always grown incrementally year-over-year, such as CPU and overall speed performance. For everyday digital signage, these increases don't have a big enough impact to make most those who use them want to upgrade. Adding significant value to a media player such as increasing video output to support three or more displays is the key to getting installers and business owners to take notice, particularly in the quick service restaurant industry.

There has also been a move to differentiate digital signage with the addition of bundled services. Competition in stand-alone players has increased substantially. The addition of bundled services such as remote monitoring, content creation, support and maintenance is providing extra value to businesses that do not have dedicated staff to support digital signage installations. This trend should continue in the foreseeable future. We are seeing more and more calls to think outside the proverbial box.

KATHRYN GASKELL
PRODUCT MANAGER, CHIEF

Several major factors driving the bracket and mount industry are thinner displays, ultra-narrow and no bezel displays, and video wall installations. Video walls in particular are getting bigger and more elaborate, requiring a range of features that can accommodate those demands. Displays are also increasing in size, and interactive panels are becoming common—both of which require larger and more rigid solutions.

Narrow bezel displays are increasingly common for video walls and multi-display configurations of any size, so mounts that can align many screens for a seamless installation is an aesthetic must. To do that repeatedly and effectively, a wide range of adjustment capabilities is necessary.

End users appreciate fast installation and quick service, which requires mounts that are adjustable and easy to install. Security is also a priority for end users who want to make the most of their investment in AV solutions.

A.J. SHELAT
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES, HALL RESEARCH

Over the last year we have seen an increase in digital signage installations as the expectation to include digital signage is incorporated into many newer and/or remodeled spaces. For some of our customers digital signage has become a proven revenue generator, so those projects have become a no brainer. The two classic installs are those with a digital signage player behind the display and the other being installs that utilize extension products.

As the cost and size of digital signage players has shrunk, become more powerful, and software licensing fees have gone down, there has been an increase in installations where the players are being put right behind each display. For installs where an IDF is being used to centrally locate the DS player(s) we have seen a substantial migration from VGA extenders to HDMI extenders. Both extension over Cat-6 cable for distances up to 500 feet using the HDBaseT Chipset, and the Javelin Active Extension Cable which can extend 4K to 200 feet, are commonly used. I believe this is being driven by end-users who are demanding HD video and looking to utilize the latest in technology. With the introduction of new extension technologies the integrator and service providers are able to deliver on those expectations.

> Video walls in particular are getting bigger and more elaborate, requiring a range of features that can accommodate those demands. Displays are also increasing in size, and interactive panels are becoming more common—both of which require larger and more rigid solutions.
>
> —Kathryn Gaskell, Product Manager, Chief

BRUCE NEFF
PRESIDENT, LED3

LED displays are becoming more commonplace in the display integration market. Tile resolutions continue to improve as price points become more competitive. Reductions in tile weights, improvements in power and data distribution, and higher resolutions have made installations easier to configure and install. Along with improved resolutions have been increased contrasts and enhanced color balance. All of these improvements allow integrators more options when specifying LED displays to their customers.

DREW TAYLOR
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, LIGHTWARE USA

At Lightware USA, our products are always pushing the envelope when it comes to bandwidth. This past year, we've seen a strong drive for more HDBaseT solutions, 4K solutions and support for upcoming video formats such as DisplayPort 1.2.

Video extender solutions have really been popular for Lightware. Our clients consistently are looking for Cat6, Multi-Mode, and Single Mode Fiber extender solutions that are compatible with Lightware matrices and for point-to-point applications. Lightware's extenders are able to extend video, audio, USB, RS-232, Ethernet, and IR for a range of distances up to 10km—all of which are future-proof solutions that our customers demand.

BRIAN MCCLIMANS
VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, PEERLESS-AV

The biggest change I've seen in terms of digital signage hardware configurations is with media players. We're now seeing digital media players with options like Android, smaller form factors, 4K, and the newest entrance, Google Chromebox, all of which are standing to change the landscape of digital signage in the future.

JENNIFER DAVIS
VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING, PLANAR SYSTEMS

Changes include more video walls replacing single displays (or static ads) as well as larger displays (70", 80/82") and the beginning adoption of 4k resolution in 84-inch and 98-inch sizes.