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The New Media: Information Kiosks

Delivering a Multimedia story to the desktop is close to becoming a "beaten path." But how do you bring the CD-ROM out to the point-of-purchase? Or to the reception area of a busy workplace? Or perhaps to a concourse in a mass transit terminal? A cousin of the automated teller machine, the interactive Information Kiosk is gradually becoming a communications fixture in many of these venues.

Advantages

- Puts your story in public places.
- Helps a large institution tell a long, complex story to its constituents at locations where they are ready to inquire and learn.
- Interactivity, via trackball, keypad, touchscreen, printer mechanism, etc.
- Enclosure protects sensitive computer gear and can be designed to attract users and dispense literature at the same time.
- Kiosks are typically untended, freeing up your personnel for other tasks.
- Flexibility to update messages (also see opposite column).
- Perfect for trade show applications and P-O-P.

Disadvantages

- Economies of scale discourage one-size-fits-all production.
- System reliability, or unreliability in some cases, affects image of message sender.
- Presentation must be well matched to the environment in which Info Kiosk is located (e.g. do you want people to linger? Or to move along?).
- Updating an Info Kiosk message requires more logistics than other New Media.
- Again, the New Media "generation gap" is a factor.

Info Kiosk at Work

United Health Services and Giant Markets have partnered on a dozen Info Kiosks at all Broome County Giant locations. These Kiosks present delicious yet healthy recipes, including hard copy printouts, to busy Giant shoppers. For its part, UHS presents health tips and information about its health care system to the shopper who is reviewing recipes, using the interactive computer screen in the kiosk, as well as the printouts. Fred Riger Advertising coordinated with Giant's ad agency and vendors to program the Info Kiosks with UHS video, print messages and signage. We also helped to organize a "zoned" literature program that correlated UHS primary care providers with neighboring Giant locations. Updates at these Info Kiosks will include a physician directory and an offline sampler of the UHS Internet World Wide Web site.