Metro Toronto Convention Centre makes NEC displays the “centre” of attention

Quick Facts
Facility: Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Challenge: Clearly display wayfinding information to large groups of people
Solution: 46” MultiSync LCD4610
Date: Fall 2005

Large events where foot traffic is extremely high, such as trade-shows, banquets and business meetings, require a well-organized facility. Many visitors who attend these types of venues do so infrequently and may be unfamiliar with the building’s layout or floor plan. This issue makes real-time wayfinding technology imperative to help direct visitors to their proper location.

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) is the largest convention and tradeshow facility in Canada with more than 600,000 square feet of exhibit and meeting space. The MTCC, which hosts groups ranging from 40-40,000, consists of two large buildings, creating a dire need for digital signage displays to help direct its thousands of visitors each year.

The Challenge
Every year the MTCC hosts more than 750 unique events and welcomes more than two million visitors. Previously, the MTCC had used six large LED screens for wayfinding. After eight years of using these screens, the MTCC’s technology department made the decision to upgrade its large-screen monitors to display brighter and crisper images. The goal was to replace the LED screens with displays that would be legible from across the corridors and rooms of the MTCC and quickly assist attendees.

The Solution
In its evaluation of digital signage LCDs, the MTCC’s IT department found that NEC out-performed other display brands in image quality and durability, and felt that LCD technology that would be a wise investment for the facility. The MTCC traditionally used LED displays for wayfinding, however this technology limited the screen’s content to a monochrome color scheme and text to one language. Making the switch to LCD technology from LED proved to be beneficial because these obstacles were eliminated when using NEC LCDs.

“The convention centre needed displays that had the ability to run seven days a week and up to 18 hours each day,” said Bill McDonald, the MTCC’s director of technology. “Almost any display would look good on the first day. We needed durable monitors that would maintain their crisp, lifelike picture five years from now. We were looking for monitors that would maintain their quality for the long haul and be adaptable to new emerging technology.”

The MTCC integrated 23 46” NEC MultiSync LCD4610 large-screen displays throughout the two facilities. The original order consisted of 19 displays, however, the displays were such a success that the MTCC purchased an additional four units. The displays are arranged in dual configurations in 10 locations.

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre, which houses more than two million visitors at 750+ unique events each year, relies on NEC’s MultiSync LCD4610 for wayfinding across its 600,000+ square feet of exhibit space.
throughout the Convention Centre, one directing for the north facility and the other for the south. The remaining monitors rotate screens, directing visitors to both north and south building events. In December 2006 the project will be complete, consisting of 13 different locations using NEC displays.

The graphics and content are managed by Omnivex software, and the MTCC technology department believes the combined capabilities of NEC and Omnivex can’t be matched. “Before using NEC, we used Trans-Lux LED displays,” said McDonald. “The combination of NEC and Omnivex is perfect because we were able to stay with Trans-Lux as the master integrator that installed the whole system which works better than we imagined.” Each display is managed individually and real-time updates can be displayed on the screen with a targeted message for each area depending on currently attending companies and guests.

The MultiSync LCD4610s are used strictly for wayfinding and displaying visiting companies’ logos. Guests of the MTCC have noticed the positive impact the displays have brought to the center and have commented on the accessibility of navigating throughout the large facility. “The NEC monitors have accomplished their goal,” said McDonald. “Guests are able to locate their events easier and respond to the real-time updates that are broadcast on the displays.”

Compared to older backlit boards (bottom), the bright, crisp and glare-free screens of the NEC MultiSync LCD4610 make it easy for passerby to view vital information on where they need to go within the convention center.