



ARTICLE

LinkNYC kiosks improving quality of life in the Big Apple

Link shared its feedback on how its digital signage kiosks aren't just providing services, they are also boosting quality of life for residents.



Photo courtesy of Link.

July 26, 2018 | by [Bradley Cooper](#) — Editor, *ATM Marketplace*

Editor's Note: An earlier version of this story ran on *Digital Signage Today*, a sister publication of *Retail Customer Experience*.

In 2016, New York City went through a major smart city upgrade, as Intersection deployed multiple Link kiosks. The city replaced older phone booths with these kiosks, which offer free Wi-Fi to the public, as well as advertising and wayfinding.

The kiosks also allow customers to make free nationwide calls or report emergencies. There are now more than 1,600 kiosks in all five boroughs of the city. Digital Signage Today spoke with Ruth Fasoldt, director of community affairs for Link, to see how these devices are transforming the city and improving lives.



Ruth Fasoldt cites numerous benefits that the LinkNYC kiosks have provided New Yorkers.

Digital Signage Today: What are the main features the kiosks offer?

Fasoldt: LinkNYC is the first-of-its-kind communications network replacing the city's payphones to build the world's fastest and largest free public Wi-Fi network. Since Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the public launch of LinkNYC in early 2016, more than 1,600 Links are active across all five boroughs, with thousands more set to be deployed over the next several years.

In addition to free Wi-Fi, Links offer free nationwide phone calls, a dedicated 911 button, device charging, and a tablet to access maps and city services. Link's services come at no cost to users or taxpayers because Link generates its

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gigabit Wi-Fi service, with tens of thousands of users joining the network each week. The network also sees more than 250,000 free phone calls made every month. Using the tablet, people can access maps and directions on the go.

Along with ads that keep LinkNYC's services 100 percent free for users and taxpayers, the digital displays feature useful and enriching content, including community board meeting updates, real-time transit and weather information so people can make more informed decisions about their day on the go, PSAs, fun facts about NYC, historic photos and more. The screens are also used for emergency messaging, for instance, in an extreme weather event. We see tweets and Instagram posts all the time of people capturing our content and sharing it with others.

Digital Signage Today: How does LinkNYC deal with issues such as people loitering by the kiosks or watching inappropriate content in public?

Fasoldt: Back in 2016, there was an issue with some kiosks having long-term users. The LinkNYC tablet is meant to be an on-the-go resource, so the web browser was removed from Link tablets in September 2016, in exchange for curated content on the tablet, and loitering complaints dropped 96 percent immediately.

Digital Signage Today: What type of ads do the kiosks display?

Fasoldt: LinkNYC has a very high caliber of advertisers across categories — from Samsung to Delta to The Gap and The Met.

Utilizing DOOH to its fullest and breaking from the norm of basic, static ads, Link kiosks offer the ability for advertisers to display unique, dynamic ads. From weather and transit, to sporting events, movie times and more, Link ads can change based on real-time information and updates, keeping advertisements relevant and consumers engaged.

During the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, for example, NBC partnered with Intersection to display Olympics content and coverage on LinkNYC screens, highlights, prime time previews, real-time medal counts, athlete bios and more. This digital OOH content campaign was the first of its kind for the U.S. Olympics broadcaster.

More recently, Intersection pioneered another first-of-its-kind campaign, partnering with Disney and Marvel to promote "The Avengers: Infinity War." On the movie's launch weekend, LinkNYC screens displayed ads for the blockbuster, as well as the closest theater location to each kiosk and the next show time, so that passersby, if inspired by the ad, could easily catch the next showing.

Digital Signage Today: Do the kiosks use any analytics?

Fasoldt: We have stats on usership, how often different services are used, the busiest Links and more. We have also made strategic use of our network capabilities like dayparting (for example, we increase transit info on our displays during peak commuting hours), geotargeting (playing historical photos in their place of original capture), and network flexibility (during Women's History month, we displayed facts about women's suffrage along the route of the women's march).

Digital Signage Today: Do you think smart cities will start to pop up everywhere?

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Bradley Cooper has been editor of Digital Signage Today since 2016. His background is in information technology, advertising, and writing.

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