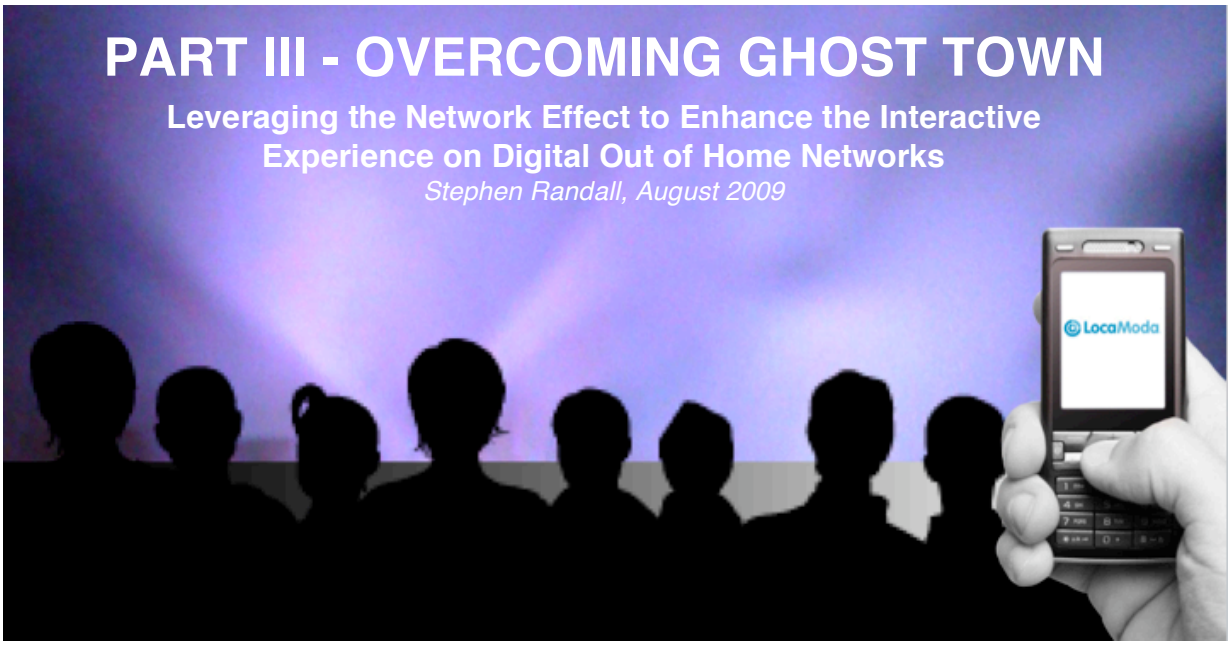
LocaModa

PART III - OVERCOMING GHOST TOWN

Leveraging the Network Effect to Enhance the Interactive Experience on Digital Out of Home Networks

Stephen Randall, August 2009



Introduction

The success of engaging users via interactive social media on Digital Out of Home ("DOOH") displays is highly dependant on location, audience and the context and user interface features.

This is part 3 in a series of 4 white papers focused on helping brands, advertisers, digital out of home ("DOOH") network operators and event planners understand the strategic impact of mobile and social interactive media beyond the web and to navigate some of tactical issues of bringing it to screens in public spaces.

NOTE: The 4 white papers are:

- *PART I - The Different Capabilities of Interactive Mobile & Social Media on Digital Out Of Home Systems. Not All Systems Are Created Equal.*
- *PART II - Building an Interactive Digital Out of Home Experience. Basic Considerations for Mobile & Social Interactivity on Digital Out of Home Networks.*
- *PART III - Overcoming Ghost Town. Leveraging the Network Effect to Enhance the Interactive Experience on Digital Out-of-Home Networks.*
- *PART IV - Dealing With F**K and Other User Generated Content Challenges for Digital Out-of-Home Networks.*

Two earlier white papers also cover some general issues for mobile and social applications on Digital Out-of-Home networks:

- *Making The Most of Mobile Marketing: Leveraging Mobile and Social Networks to Amplify Response Rates From The "Connected Class."*
- *The Disruptive Effect of the Internet and Mobile Phones on Out of Home Digital Media - Bill Collins and Stephen Randall, 2007*

Contact loca_info@LocaModa.com for a copy of any of the White papers.

How Not To Gatecrash An Empty Party

A DOOH screen in a bar inviting patrons to send a text or photo is a very different proposition as compared to a screen at a pop concert or conference offering the same features.

The context of the pop concert will inherently attract messages about the event and the performer. The bar screen doesn't have the same compelling environment or rationale to engage.

Many text-to-screen applications do not have the luxury of running in locations that are crowded every day, and the worst user experience for user generated content ("UGC") is to metaphorically crash an empty party. A screen with no messages or old messages is a poor advocate for participation. This "Ghost Town" problem can be cured by leveraging other messages from locations that are contextually connected to each other.

Assume a typical bar has an average of 100 visitors every day and an average dwell time of one hour. Also assume that a text-to-screen application in that bar attracts 5% of

the bar's visitors to interact with the screen at least once – i.e. there will be 5 messages sent to the screen every day.

Clearly the above scenario does not result in a very active screen and may not therefore be a particularly compelling user experience. But, if the bar's screen were part of even a small network of 10 locations, we can help the Ghost Town problem. If each screen in the network is set up with a localized CTA (see Part II - The Different Interactive Capabilities of Mobile & Social Digital Out Of Home Systems: Not All Systems Are Created Equal), every message in the network can be displayed on every screen, and additionally can be displayed with localized information to enhance the user experience. For example, each screen could display "*RedSox rule*, sent by GreyShark to GameOn, Boston" or "*Yankees are great*, sent by BlueMonkey to EastEnd, NYC," etc. Having localized conversations in this manner typically spurs on further engagement.

Feed Me, Tag Me, Text-2-Me

If a location is NOT part of a larger network, or does not have the luxury of a large and engaged audience, the concern about Ghost Town can be addressed by displaying messages from other *publicly* available sources on the web such as Twitter, Flickr, or other web-connected applications such as LocaModa's Wiffiti or Jumbli.

A capable DOOH messaging system can tag messages that the event planner/network operator wishes for their location(s). For example, tagging Twitter messages with the names of the local baseball or football teams, the city, state, politician, etc, can produce more than enough live messages for the system to digest. The system must be able to prioritize messages from the web and messages sent directly to the location (via mobile phones or dedicated websites). Now a screen can have hundreds of live messages from the web, plus a few live messages sent directly to the location.

Wiffiti is LocaModa's social messaging application for DOOH. The application has been used in thousands of locations, concerts and conference to engage audiences and display tagged messages.

Example Wiffiti screen for cafés tagged "Good Morning" *Messages display where they were sent from (web, Twitter, mobile) and messages with tags are highlighted in green to help the viewer understand the context of why those messages are being displayed.*

Wiffiti screens subscribe to messages from mobile phones or the web, either sent directly to the location (e.g. *@JOESBAR Buy me a drink someone!*) or according to tags (i.e. displaying all messages from Wiffiti screens and Twitter/Flickr feeds referencing a particular word or concept). For example, tags could pull all text messages including the term *RedSox* or photos from Flickr (that have a Creative Commons license) tagged *"smile."*

DOOH systems that support tagged and live mobile messages must also be able to adequately filter (as well as moderate and curate) the content. See Part V - *Dealing with F**K And Other User Generated Challenges for Digital Out Of Home Networks* for more information.

LocaModa's text-messaging game, Jumbli, works as either an Interactive Broadcast CTA or Interactive Localized CTA (see *Part II - The Different Interactive Capabilities of Mobile & Social Digital Out Of Home Systems. Not All Systems Are Created Equal*) and leverages a number of the above strategies to garner an average of 30,000 plays every day. The game can be played from the web (Facebook, Jumbli.tv), via any mobile phone (using texting) and via the Jumbli iphone application. Jumbli runs at participating DOOH networks in bars, quick

serve restaurants, movie theatres and public spaces such as Times Square. The game displays the player's mode (web, mobile, etc) and also signals when it goes live in Times Square on the Clear Channel Jumbotron, so all players have a chance of having their words displayed in one of the world's most famous locations.

LocaModa enabled Clear Channel screen in Times Sq. *Users play high scoring words via mobile phones or from Facebook.*

Of course, not every DOOH application needs to connect to Times Square, but it can leverage similar techniques such as communicating that a user's interactions will be displayed "on all bars in Boston" or "screens across the US."

Conclusion

Social media platforms designed for public display must be able to route and combine web-based UGC *and* real-time location messages. Systems that cannot manage these tasks are likely to experience the Ghost Town experience.

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