

Transportation Outreach Planner

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Public Outreach Strategies

Interactive Television and Kiosks

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Recommended Target Groups

Education

College Education
High School Diploma
No High School Diploma

Language

Creole
Other
Spanish

Disability

Hearing Impaired
Other
Physically Challenged
Sight Impaired

Income

Low Income
Middle to Affluent

Vehicle Ownership

Non-vehicle Owner
Vehicle Owner

Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity

Age

Seniors
Working Age Adults
Youth

Strategy Class

- Technology

Strategy Types

- Civic Engagement
- Promotional

Description

Interactive television (ITV) and kiosks use a specific form of technology that allows users to interact and exchange information with a video display. Such technology provides menus or icons (also known as hot spots or triggers) that can be used to link the user to surveys, images, videos, or any other additional information that may be of interest to the public. Television users can activate the interactive options through the use of a remote control or a smart phone. On a kiosk, users can use a mouse or touch screen to access the interactive features. Agencies can use this form of technology to engage and involve the public (<http://www.itvdictionary.com/itvadv.html>).¹

Special Uses

ITVs and kiosks can be used to:²

- Disseminate information or answer questions
- Elicit specific feedback or conduct surveys
- Reach people who do not normally participate

When to Use

Agencies generally use interactive technology to disseminate information, enhance public outreach, and supplement staff resources. For example, can be used to reach a broad audience or hard to reach populations. Agencies can use kiosks in targeted geographic areas to reach specific audiences.

Cost

***** High (\$10000 to \$50000)**

The cost of using interactive television technology can be high. Expenses include the cost of video production, graphic design, air time, and the use of any special equipment or skilled operator that may be needed. Kiosks and interactive public displays can also be expensive. The costs include the display monitors, programming, and the maintenance of the data and the devices. It can also be costly to program and design the applications, particularly if they are complex and data rich.

Low (up to \$999)	*
Moderate (\$1,000 to \$9,999)	**
High (\$10,000 to \$50,000)	***
Very High (Above \$50,000)	****

Disclaimer: The cost estimates provided are intended to be a guide. Project costs will vary depending on the size and nature of the project.

Time

**** 6 months to a year**

It can take six months to a year to create an interactive program for television or kiosks, depending on the complexity of the program. In addition, time is needed to monitor the data that is displayed and received. If the interactive technology will be used on an on-going basis, agencies should assign dedicated staff to manage the system.

1 to 3 months	*
6 months to a year	**
Multiyear	***

Disclaimer: The time estimates are approximations. The duration of a project may vary depending on various factors, including size and budget.

Implementation Guidelines and Suggestions

The following serve as recommended guidelines and suggestions for implementing interactive technology:

- **Identify the desired objective, the target market, and the type of interactive technology to be used.** Establishing an objective for what is to be achieved and identifying the target market will help to determine the type of interactive technology that should be used. An agency's budget and resources will also influence what interactive technology will be most feasible. Below are recommended uses based on possible objectives:
 - ITVs can be used to obtain public input during televised town hall meetings or to enhance the information provided in public information commercials.³
 - Kiosks can be used to disseminate information to a targeted geographic area, showcase demonstrations, conduct

surveys, or automate routine transactions i.e. ticket sales.⁴

- **If using ITV agencies should work closely with local television and cable companies to determine the format for reaching the target market.** There are a variety of interactive techniques that can be used on television depending on the capabilities of the service provider, the creative direction, and the budget that is available.⁵ The options range from basic overlays to complex multi-media platforms. Mainly used by marketers for advertising purposes, ITV creates an immersive experience that enables the viewer to go from an entry point to a specific branded destination. It should be noted, however, that advanced interactive technology may only be available through specific platforms, such as cable, satellite, or subscription services, or through the use of special devices, including Roku, Vudu, etc. However, as television and the internet become more integrated, it is likely that this technology will be more accessible to a broader audience in the near future. Below are some of the specific options for ITV that agencies can utilize:⁶
 - **Social Media and Telephone Integration:** Although this technology is not new, it offers the most cost-effective way of applying interactive technology. Through the use of an on-screen icon, users are encouraged to take specific action by calling a telephone number or communicating through social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Agencies often use this method in televised town hall meetings to enable viewers to provide comments and feedback. If desired, it is possible to show viewer comments on the screen alongside the broadcast. If using social media, viewers have the option of seeing the comments on the social media platform. Since not all televisions have access to the more advanced ITV technology, the social media and telephone integration method provides the greatest reach to the general public.
 - **Telescoping:** Through telescoping, viewers can select a branded icon or entry point within the television viewing environment to get access to a designated destination or "a new level of navigation for selection." The destination can be a video, an online survey, a mini website, or a static display with information. These destinations are also known as Designated Advertiser Locations (DALs).
 - **Video on Demand (VOD):** This feature allows viewers to select a video through the television program guide. Agencies can use this option to display promotional, educational, or demonstration videos on policies, programs, or projects.
 - **Request for Information (RFI):** RFI technology allows the viewer to request information or purchase a product with the use of a remote control. The remote control enables the user to give permission to accept the offer and provide the information needed to fulfill the order. Agencies can use RFI to sell tickets for events or transit passes. It can also be used to send brochures, discount coupons, and promotional/educational information.
- **If using kiosks agencies should develop a plan for installing and operating the devices prior to installation.** Having a plan will help agencies to manage costs and monitor progress. The plan should include the following elements:⁷
 - **Type of kiosk to be used:** Agencies can use a simple computer with a monitor, or they can use automated terminals, similar to automatic teller machines (ATM). The automated terminals have a monitor that is operated by either touching the screen or using a keyboard. The type of kiosk that is used will depend on the agency budget and the target location. For example, a simple computer terminal can be used at an open house event where someone can oversee the computer. Automated terminals should be used in public places, such as a transit station, since such kiosks are designed to help prevent theft and abuse.
 - **Location:** The location where kiosks will be placed will largely depend on the target audience. The automated terminals should be located in high visibility areas where the target audience is likely to congregate. This can include shopping malls, community centers, transit stations, and other high-traffic public areas. Other factors that should be considered when selecting a location include availability of a reliable power source for electricity, lighting, security, and exposure to the elements.
 - **Maintenance:** The logistics of installing and maintaining the interactive displays should be determined prior to any installation. This should include a schedule for backups, reprogramming of software, regular maintenance and repairs.
- **Ensure that the design of the interactive display is accessible and easy to use by testing the device.** Whether using a basic computer, an automated terminal, or interactive television, the content of the display should be easy to understand and user-friendly. Agencies need to work closely with the designer to make sure that the interactive display is accessible to persons with disabilities, the elderly, and persons with limited English proficiency. "Designs should facilitate ease of operation to encourage people without computer experience to interact with the program." By asking member of the public and agency stakeholders to test the interactive design, agencies will be able to determine whether the interactive display is working as intended.⁸
- **Develop a method for collecting data and monitoring input.** Since the foundation of interactive technology is the ability to exchange information with the public, it is important for agencies to develop a system for collecting and storing the data that is received. They also need to have a system in place for updating the information that is displayed. Keeping records of data input can help agencies to monitor the use of the interactive technology and evaluate its effectiveness.⁹

Recommended Target Demographics

Interactive technology can be used to reach a broad audience. It can also be effective for targeting a specific demographic. For example, a television program can be produced to reach a particular audience through targeted programming. Furthermore, kiosks and public displays can be located in areas where the target demographic congregates, and displays can be designed to appeal to any specific group (i.e. children, adults, non-English speaking persons). However, it should be noted that persons with disabilities, people who are afraid of computers and those who are not literate may have difficulty using this form of technology, unless it is designed to facilitate their access.

Lessons Learned/Challenges

Below are key points to keep in mind when implementing interactive technology: ¹⁰

- **The use of new technology may cause unease.** Although interactive technology may provide greater convenience and more opportunity for participation, some people may be intimidated by the technology.
- **Make sure the interactive displays are user-friendly.** If people do not understand the interactive displays they may become frustrated and avoid using it in the future. To prevent this, it is important to test the systems to make sure that the desired target market is able to use the system as intended.
- **Kiosks and outdoor interactive displays can be subject to vandalism and liability issues.** When installing monitors and electronic displays in public spaces it is important to insure the equipment. The insurance should cover any defacement, abuse, or accident that may occur.
- **Advanced ITV technology is not accessible to a broad audience.** Only people who have subscriber services (i.e. cable and satellite television) or special devices can access features such as telescoping and video on demand. If agencies need to reach an audience that may not have access to subscriber services, other options should be considered.

Case Studies

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) engaged in a long-term planning effort, called Project Region, which received four national excellence awards for their innovative techniques. They conducted online surveys, used electronic polling technology, and utilized touch-screen kiosks to obtain resident feedback. They also held a web-based regional town meeting and held eleven simultaneous meetings throughout the area, using video and specialized software to present the proposed plan. The web format allowed 600 attendees to interact with each other (<http://www.spcregion.org/proj/award.shtml>).¹¹

Savannah, Georgia, broadcasts town hall meetings online through their "Town Hall Online" site. At the site residents can find information on upcoming meetings, review past meetings, and submit questions, comments, and concerns through an online forum called "Talk Back Savannah" (<http://savannahga.gov/cityweb/SavannahGaGOV.nsf/48c8783895df067e8525728e004f3dce/b674a023274e0bb7852572bf006ca564?OpenDocument>).¹²

For Further Information

The following links provide useful guides and information on interactive technology:

- **Challenges in E-Government Development, Lessons from Two Information Kiosk Projects:** This article provides two case studies related to the implementation of information kiosks and includes recommendations for implementation and management (<http://academic.udayton.edu/grantneeley/MPA%20512/kiosk.pdf>).¹³
- **Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Platform Status Report: An Interactive Television Advertising Overview:** Explains what interactive television technology is and how it can be utilized (<http://www.iab.net/media/file/iTVCommitteeWhitePaperv6.pdf>).¹⁴
- **21st Century Town Meetings:** This site explains the town meeting methodology developed by America Speaks. Such meetings can be held using interactive television or online technology (<http://americaspeaks.org/services/engaging-citizens/>).¹⁵

Sources

1 Online Interactive Television Dictionary & Business Index, "Advertising Using Interactive Television," 25 January 2012, (<http://www.itvdictionary.com/itvadv.html>).

2 U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), "USDOT FHWA/FTA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making: Interactive Television," August 2002, 29, FHWA, 17 December 2011 (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/contents.htm>).

3 FHWA, "USDOT FHWA/FTA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making: Interactive Television."

4 FHWA, "USDOT FHWA/FTA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making: Interactive Video Displays and Kiosks," August 2002, 29, FHWA, 17 December 2011 (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/contents.htm>).

5 Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), "IAB Platform Status Report: An Interactive Television Advertising Overview," Revised December 2011, IAB, 20 January 2012, (<http://www.iab.net/media/file/iTVCommitteeWhitePaperv6.pdf>).

6 IAB, "IAB Platform Status Report: An Interactive Television Advertising Overview."

7 FHWA, "USDOT FHWA/FTA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making: Interactive Video Displays and Kiosks."

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- 12 "Town Hall Online," 21 January 2012, City of Savannah, (<http://savannahga.gov/cityweb/SavannahGaGOV.nsf/48c8783895df067e8525728e004f3dce/b674a023274e0bb7852572bf006ca564?OpenDocument>).
- 13 Ni, Anna Ya, and Alfred Tat-Kei Ho, "Challenges in E-government Development: Lessons from Two Information Kiosk Projects," 2005, Government Information Quarterly 22, pp 58-74, 21 January 2012, (<http://academic.udayton.edu/grantneeley/MPA%20512/kiosk.pdf>).
- 14 IAB, "IAB Platform Status Report: An Interactive Television Advertising Overview."
- 15 "Engaging Citizens," America Speaks, 25 January 2012, (<http://americaspeaks.org/services/engaging-citizens/>).