

# PEOPLE'S POST OFFICE

New technology has the potential to complement a traditional post office by strengthening a feeling of community among local residents

For centuries the post office has been one of the world's most visible institutions. It was always much more than just a location facilitating postal services; it was also the village green. The post office was simply the traditional daily gathering place for the community.

Even today nearly every citizen has some reason to visit a post office at least a few times each year and many people, especially for business, still make a daily outing. The idea that this is the people's post office, with strong ties to the local community, provides the institution with a very valuable asset.

In recent times globalisation has changed things drastically and it is now impossible to restore the communal hierarchy that made the mayor, the school principal and the postmaster the community nobles. From a commercial point of view, however, it is well worth exploiting any remaining communal bond.

One very important change is the growing number of postal agents and the explosion of postal counters in other retail environments. Indeed increased competition, changed efficiency and new marketing parameters are some of the reasons why the traditional post office has already been moved out of its historic building in the city centre.

Can the use of 21st century technology enable postal operators to recover and strengthen the unique and historic bond with their local communities?

Sight stream, narrowcasting, digital signage – whatever you call it, this is the new low-cost and highly effective tool for micro- or target-marketing. It is a tool that in a very practical way epitomises today's 'act global – think local' credo.

Sight stream technology has clear benefits over traditional point-of-purchase marketing. The ease of changing content, the simplicity of tailor-made customer communication and, most importantly, the



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extensive opportunity for local content adaptation makes sight stream the technology of choice to reinforce the post office as the new-age communal village green.

Sight stream has become a very attractive technology, especially in a slowing economy, due to the relatively low investment required and the excellent potential returns. Implementation is a breeze, with most of today's postal transaction terminals facilitating a second VGA display port and providing an excess of processing power by default.

So what else is needed to run a sight stream application? Just a low-cost medium-quality LCD display panel with a wall-mount kit (or perhaps a consumer LCD TV with a PC input) and a broadband internet connection. Of course you will also need the sight stream application itself. Given the recent price reductions in both LCD panels and connectivity, the return on investment is outstanding and quite simple to compute.

The use of sight stream technology will enable postal operators to combine postal service promotions with other non-commercial community service announcements and a variety of information of interest to customers. There



are many possibilities, whether it be information on a winning sports team, a new brochure for the adult education centre, an AMBER alert, dates and agenda of city council meetings, or just information on local road constructions.

A sight stream introduction has the potential to establish the post office as a digital village green that can complement a traditional post office or just a postal counter in some other retail environment. Above all it can strengthen the feeling of community that local residents enjoy when visiting an institution that demonstrates that it cares about their community while providing the essential service they have come to expect.

## FIND OUT MORE

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