

THE LEADERS → Dynamic signage and other audio-visual services



ULTIMEDIA

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ULTIMedia, precursor in the creation of terminals for more than ten years, has accompanied its customers in their projects by the council to maintenance. Their buildings house the assembly lines, a research platform, test bench, and a software and computer graphics development platform. The brand has more than 100 models of terminals all registered with the INPI. ULTIMedia also creates software: Espot, a securised navigator for the diffusion of Websites, Netspot, an online administration platform, Agora, for the creation and administration of multi-media content and Novae, software for orientation and information. ULTIMedia works with customers such as the Matignon Hotel, NASA, the SNCF, France Telecom, Arte, and Coca Cola...



Eric Dumouchel
Chairman

From the advent of Internet, Eric Dumouchel has been one of the first to anticipate the concept of interactive terminals. He founded ULTIMedia in 1993.

He created the first outside terminal functioning with solar energy as well as the Cyberkiosk concept.

Trained as an architect, he received in 1987 the Cultural Ministry Prize for the realization of a cafe music space.

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INTERVIEW

■ with Mr Eric Dumouchel

Chairman

Cleverdis: *What services do interactive terminals bring to hotel customers?*

Eric Dumouchel: There are several types of terminals: Internet terminals, reservation terminals, display terminals, information terminals & game terminals. We have invented a terminal which is able to fulfil all of these functions at the same time. Excluding films, a terminal can bring the same services as interactive television (consultation of information relating to the hotel and its partners, reservation of their next stay, ordering fitness and beauty treatments, a bottle of champagne, reserving taxis, purchasing theatre tickets, etc). Consulting the terminal proves to be at the same time easy to do and qualitative. Above all, it is accessible to everyone, placed in strategic places and saves the customer having to possibly wait in a queue at the reception.

Cl.: *In what way is the interactive terminal more comfortable to use as an interactive system than an interactive television?*

E.D.: The terminal is used as a complementary tool to the television whose interactivity remains both limited and relative. The terminal provides real customer services and supports the access to other parts of the hotel. In the rooms, the access to Internet on television sets passes by badly adapted remote controls. The quality of the television image is inferior to that of data-processing monitors of



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the terminals. The key-point is above all of a social & cultural nature. Life in the hotel goes beyond the simple number of rooms. As its name indicates the interactive terminal represents a true focal point in space. The comfort of the hotel does not boil down to only the comfort of the room, but also to that of related services...

Cl.: *Hotels are developing Wi-Fi more and more in order to make it possible for their customers to be able to use portable computers. How does the Internet terminal represent an alternative?*

E.D.: Wi-Fi represents a good solution for customers who have a portable computer. Consulting Internet on your portable is currently a fashion phenomenon, but it is necessary to acknowledge that it is not really a practical answer. The luxury, when one is in a luxury hotel, is to travel "light" without having to be cut off from your computer. The true luxury is for clients to be able to use a terminal with a beautiful flat screen, to order whatever they wish, wherever they are in the hotel. While Wi-Fi facilitates the nomad aspect of behaviour, the terminal supports this nomadic behaviour even more, by freeing the customer completely from the constraint of always having their briefcase with them.

Cl.: *In addition to adding to the comfort of hotel guests, how does the terminal make it possible to generate income?*

E.D.: The terminal can generate income in various ways: by games in the bars, via Internet connection time or allowing for the sale of hotel services those of its partners. Some of our customers develop partnerships with the travel agencies and share on the sale of theatre tickets. Therefore it is important to develop content with institutions, which in addition to providing useful information for the customers can also create revenue. For Internet, we have developed the "Cyberkiosk" principle with the sale of Internet tickets allowing the machine to produce cash flow.

Cl.: *Are the terminals compatible with PMS, the hotel invoicing system?*

E.D.: We are GIE credit card approved and with regard to the PMS, a customer can reserve a bottle of champagne on a terminal by their room number and by introducing their room card. We have the software development capacity of in-house interfacing allowing us to adapt our generic software platforms of interactive terminals by interfacing them with the client database.

Cl.: *In addition to the assigned functionality of the terminal, what are the key points to be taken into consideration to make the right choice?*

E.D.: In ten years, we have developed more than 93 models of terminals. The terminal can take multiple aspects: a totem with ten screens, a terminal with a large display screen and an interactive touch screen, etc. There is a multitude of solutions. One of the principal criteria is the man-machine interface whose quality depends on the ergonomics of the terminal, comfort of use and design, as well as on the content aspect. The first perception one has of the terminal at a certain distance is its silhouette... its line. It must exert an attractiveness, to be visible and identifiable with the first glance. It is necessary to develop, as it is the case, on Internet, interactive contents, bringing up to date, targeting users' needs.

Finally and importantly, the principal challenge is the after sale service. I have just published a White Paper on interactive terminals, which is rather explicit on this subject, in particular on the very significant subject, which relates to the deployment and maintenance of interactive terminals, and the management of control boards as standard requirement. It is fundamental that the durability of the terminal is assured, as well as its upgrades, in order to be constantly up to date.

Cl.: *You have developed several types of terminals. Which is your latest innovation?*

E.D.: Our last generation of terminals proposes dynamic posting and interactive posting. It makes it possible to update the contents in an automatic manner at several times during the day. For example, the restaurant menu can be posted on the principal screen at midday, to return to another image after 2 p.m. Then, the posting screen may, for example, automatically announce the beginning of a convention. This system is very flexible. In addition, we have developed an interface for the hotel in order to know all the statistics concerning terminal use. The Net Spot waiter system makes it possible to keep tabs on the users' orders on Internet and thus to ensure the control of payment channelled to hotel partners.

