

# Marketing

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by Chris Powell

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## OBN goes inside with digital signage.

**Outdoor Broadcast Network** (OBN) has added indoor signage to its portfolio.

The Toronto-based company has launched its first digital signage network in the new Bay-Dundas Concourse at the north end of the Toronto Eaton Centre. The network consists of eight ceiling-mounted, 45-inch LCD screens which show ads in a three-minute loop. OBN also operates nine 10-foot by 6-foot wall posters in the space.

**L'Oréal Paris**, **RBC Financial Group** and the **LCBO** are among the service's charter advertisers, while electronics retailer **Best Buy** is currently running a poster domination program. OBN is projecting weekly traffic of 150,000 people for the Concourse.

The network will also feature technology that lets consumers equipped with Bluetooth-enabled devices download music or video content from advertisers, or even request certain ad types (for example, a consumer interacting with a car ad could send a request to see the vehicle in a particular colour). OBN president **Peter Irwin** says the company is hoping to introduce Bluetooth-enabled ads as soon as Q1, 2007.

Irwin says digital signage has "great potential" as an ad medium, but says it isn't about to supplant outdoor LED screens as OBN's core business. "In any thing, you take it one step at a time," he says. "We want to gauge reaction to it from a technology point of view (and) get the first experiment going with Bluetooth."

There has been a considerable amount of activity in the digital signage space over the past 18 months, says Irwin.

"You've got a lot of small companies coming in. Some have a good business model and are well-financed, others have not fully thought out the implications of their plan, and are not funded properly. "My biggest fear in this whole process is that the plans that are not well thought out and are not well financed could cause some serious bumps along the road for those that are well thought out and have a well-financed plan."