



# NEC Display Solutions for Houses of Worship

For a house of worship, it's about bringing people together. For NEC, it's about enhancing that human interaction through better communication. Though the message comes from the heart, its delivery is empowered by NEC smart technology, backed by industry experts offering personal, guided advice and management of a digital display solution designed for your church's growing needs. With new technology, there are many decisions to make—but only one company, NEC, helps you build a customized solution. This guide was created to help find that solution and prepare for some common questions and issues to consider when starting a conversation about digital signage systems.

## How does a house of worship benefit from a digital signage system?

**Improves the quality of experience.** Through projectors, flat-panel screens and tiled video walls, a digital display system can enhance the visual experience of your service. Using simulcast technology, viewers can see the pulpit from any distance and any angle no matter their seat, and hearing-impaired members are more easily included in the service. Special ceremonies serve as the perfect opportunity to fully take advantage of digital's dynamic viewing capabilities, as multiple streaming video feeds can be used alongside user-generated creative content.

**Informs your visitors.** Easily inform your congregation about service schedules, community events and member announcements through the strategic placement of digital screens. Interactive components like touchscreen kiosks can be useful in wayfinding; if a visitor needs to find information about facilities, they can simply refer to these screens without interrupting service. Information boards using paper, pushpins or plastic letters are now a thing of the past.

**Saves on costs.** Printed materials like static posters and banners are costly to replace over time, especially if you want your content to remain relevant and interesting for your members. Going digital saves a step in the production process by going straight from the design phase to live display; no more waiting on printed materials and paying extra for expedited shipping and insurance. By playing a slideshow of digital images and/or video clips, you're able to use common media formats and convey as many messages as you need on one screen, rather than facing the clutter of flyers and posters. To further help your budget, NEC offers

its Total Trade™ replacement and recycling program, which updates your outdated technology equipment with the latest NEC displays. The trade includes regulatory-compliant removal of industrial waste and the paperwork process of verifying it—saving you not only unexpected costs but also time.

**Helps reduce your environmental impact.** Not only is digital signage a cost-savings benefit, but also an immediate solution to reducing your overall usage of paper, ink and plastics. NEC LCD screens are not only recyclable, but also contain less hazardous materials. In partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NEC is a leader in developing policies and guidelines to create a more environmentally-conscious industry.

**Offers peace-of-mind in service, quality and security.** An NEC digital display system maintains itself using much more advanced technology than basic consumer products. Program when your displays turn on and off according to service hours—saving money and energy. Prevent blank screens with the system's self-monitoring software, which checks for displays in need of maintenance and automatically sends an e-mail to the support team before you even realize there's a problem. Professional technicians and engineers across the country are partnered with NEC to service digital display customers with 24-7-365 availability. Additionally, every NEC large-format display and system comes with a three-year standard warranty. If you have a security system currently set up, no problem; you're able to seamlessly include it into your digital display solution.

## Initial concerns when considering a digital signage system:

**This will be too difficult.** Most houses of worship look for the simple solution, and initially turn to store-bought flat-screen/DVD packages. Unfortunately, going the do-it-yourself route can cause more headache and unexpected costs, as everything from installation and wiring to content creation has to be organized from varying sources with minimal expertise. NEC can step in as the professional advisor and offer not only proper displays that are built for ease of use, but also a managed model solution that takes the burden off the church staff and places all responsibilities of speedy installation (of both hardware and software) and maintenance upon NEC staff. Coordinated project

management ensures deadlines are met with minimum impact on the house of worship's everyday operations. Your project management team will be able to move the effort forward from start to finish with periodic updates and installation status reports. NEC also serves as your liaison among your contractors to coordinate the installation of electrical outlets, low voltage wiring and network infrastructure. Very minimal workload is asked of your staff. Internally, while a learning curve is expected, in-person and online tutorials are available to prepare you for the transition. Web logins make it easy for you to manage content from any location. A networked display system is just that simple.

**This will look strange in my current environment.**

A new digital display system does not necessarily have to contrast with the aesthetic of a house of worship's traditional environment—in fact, NEC makes it seamless. NEC undergoes a thorough site survey to find the optimal locations for screen placement and assessing your existing electrical setup. Any new wiring needed is conspicuously hidden with custom-built enclosures. NEC's professional line of thin-bezel displays are ideal, as their frames are more discreet than general monitors and can be mounted in a variety of places. To further blend with your environment, enclosures for the displays and kiosks can also be built to emulate your current style of decor.

**This will be too expensive.** Unlike competitors, NEC offers complimentary consultations before any financial commitments are made. Through these consultations, NEC outlines how you're able to receive a lower total cost of ownership; lower failure rates in the system equate to lower costs in maintenance and operations. Financing options are available with attractive pricing, terms and delivery options.

**How would I keep content fresh?** The same content creation tools used to create printed signage are the same as those used to "feed" the digital signage network. The difference is that with digital signs, you can dynamically change the content, going from static images to video. For houses of worship without access to content assets, NEC can help create digital messaging at a monthly fee. Templates can be created to custom-fit your branding guidelines and provide you with an even easier way to update information. It's important to realize that content can determine the success or failure of your digital signage system, so a dedication to content renewal needs to be established early on with dedicated staff members.

## What are some general digital display solutions for houses of worship?

Though some visual display companies may try to convince you otherwise, there is no single "out of the box" solution. Each house of worship may have their own unique set of challenges, and there are multiple ways to solve each issue, simple or complex.

If you're looking for a simple way to translate traditional signage into a digital medium, consider a basic Flash memory-based media player or an industrial DVD player. If you just want to create a "wow-factor" for visitors, consider a video wall for a fully engaging simulcast experience. Solutions can vary in complexity according to the size of your facilities, budget and IT comfort level. That's why it helps to have a custom-built system that meets your basic needs today, but prepares you for tomorrow's potential.

Beyond your hardware components, you'll also be deciding on a network solution to support your displays:

**A SaaS Network** is an externally hosted system that resides outside of your house of worship's network. While you own the hardware, you only have to subscribe to the software. No maintenance is required on your part. Access is done through a browser-based user interface. SaaS is preferred when you have a tight timeline (one-day turnaround), a smaller budget, or have limited IT staff to handle system maintenance. It's not recommended when you're dealing with large-scale security issues or require more sophisticated consumer data retrieval (such as using interactive kiosks).

**A LAN/WAN Network** is an internally hosted system that resides within your house of worship's network and firewall. You own both the hardware and the software, allowing for complete customization (such as designing interactive kiosk data retrieval). Access is done through a browser-based user interface. LAN/WAN is preferred when your existing network requires firewall protection, or when your displays demand more sophisticated software writing. It's not recommended for quick turnaround or for those with limited resources.

## What are some challenges NEC might face with houses of worship?

**There is no ROI justification.** Houses of worship place value upon ease of use and longevity. NEC offers an industry-leading digital display system with smart capabilities that enable self-maintenance, supported by three-year warranties and a network of local service partners on-call 24-7.

**Houses of worship already have an existing partnership with local A/V.** Many churches have established relationships with local audio/visual businesses who sustain their current equipment needs. NEC can use this opportunity to work with these local A/V firms as maintenance partners when use of traditional network partners may not be as practical, encouraging new regional relationships and helping the church keep its local ties.

**Upfront costs are too high.** NEC can offer the most basic “sneakerware” systems, usually built around a simple Flash-based media player. These systems can be stand alone or networked so that more sophisticated components can be added later on when funds are more readily available.

**Current IT infrastructure is limited.** With a church’s limited or outsourced IT staff, NEC offers help with 24/7 service, in-system maintenance checks, and user-friendly tutorials within the software. In one-on-one meetings with IT and committee groups, PowerPoint™ presentations are used to illustrate software capabilities and answer any questions.

**Competitor offers lower-cost solution.** While it may look attractive on paper, these kinds of “boxed” solutions offer little if any customization or room for system growth. What you are saving today will end up costing you tomorrow, as you will be replacing your entire set of hardware as needs change, rather than adapting your current system to change. Included in your NEC display solution are networked products that no other competitor can offer: projectors/screens, LCD tiled video walls, and the basic digital signage lobby bundle. As a step above the competition, NEC offers warranties and a managed service model solution.

**“TV and PowerPoint are good enough” attitude.** This do-it-yourself approach actually adds more burden to the staff, more costs in installment, and fails to meet the full potential of dynamic digital technology. There are so many ways to go wrong when transitioning into a digital signage system. Instead, learn from NEC’s experience. Not only does NEC know what to do, but more importantly, what to avoid doing.



## Who are the key decision makers?

Internal committees, pastors, parishioners, IT departments and the Head of Church.

# What are some qualifying questions to ask?

## Current Equipment/Platform

What kind of signage do you currently use?

What kind of content is playing on your screens?

Do you know what digital signage is?

How big a part does digital signage play in your marketing plan?

Are you currently working with a digital signage provider?

## Budget

How much money do you spend per year on static signs, announcements, etc.?

Has a budget been set aside for digital signage?

How many partitions would you need per screen?

## Usage

What are your intended goals with a digital signage system?

How will you use the technology? (Promote services, visual aid during services?)

Will you need to retrieve data and feedback from your visitors?

How many services do you have per day?

## Integration

How quickly do you need to deploy?

What stage of pre-/post-construction are you in?

Would you prefer start-to-finish project management or working with your own vendors?

What screen sizes do you have in mind?

Do you prefer wall- or ceiling-mounted screens?

Will you require after-hours installation?

Are you required to work with a union labor, an architect, or facilities manager?

## Operation

Who will be managing the system's day-to-day operation?

Who is responsible for content?

What are the current user skill levels?

## Image Quality

Would you like high definition-quality playback and simulcasting?

Do you have high-quality videos and photos?

Will you require live telecast feeds?

Do you need to show regular TV programming?

## Network Requirements

What kind of IT infrastructure do you currently have?

Do you currently have an IT department?

Do you use a WAN/LAN?

Do you currently have a wireless network?

Do you have any bandwidth restrictions?

Does your server need to reside inside your firewall?

Can the system reside within your network, or will it require a dedicated network?

Are you interested in stored or streaming video capabilities?



## What are the steps in creating a digital display solution?

### Project Kickoff

**1. Project kickoff.** Your NEC representative will meet with key decision makers to assess several factors—timeline, ROI model, budget, and generally, what your needs and expectations are for your digital signage system. In collaboration with manufacturing partners, NEC develops a tailored, end-to-end solution, which is reviewed and approved among all involved parties, such as your internal committees, pastor, parishioners, IT departments and Head of Church.

**2. Project deployment.** NEC acts as a general contractor in placing orders with vendors, scheduling installations, securing insurance, and finalizing any application/content requirements among your key decision makers. A site survey is performed to determine the best placements for your digital signage—how traffic flows, key gathering points, proper infrastructure, electrical and outdoor issues—and the first set of systems are shipped to your location.

### Project Deployment

### Pilot Assessment

After testing and equipment inspection, your staff is trained and tutorials are created as needed.

**3. Pilot assessment.** If you've chosen to go through with a pilot program, this is when you start receiving feedback from your committees and members. An ROI analysis is performed, and a timeline is created for additional deployments, as well as any enhancements to the current system. The effectiveness of the project is continually monitored, and when results are hitting targets, your remaining sites take the full move into deployment stage.

**4. Ongoing evaluation.** A maintenance plan is built to fit your particular needs and budget. Your NEC representative is continually in contact with you to provide any support or help with troubleshooting the system.

### Ongoing Evaluation

## Why choose NEC?

With NEC, you're equipped with a total solutions package—from diagnostics and implementation to follow-up service and support. Through one point of contact, you have access to the highest quality technology, superior vendors, and an unrivaled industry-specific service team. No one is more committed to your needs, and no one else offers full complimentary consultations.

Unlike competitors, NEC doesn't just offer one solution that's either too big or too small for your current environment. Instead, NEC cost-effectively maximizes the system you start with, equipping it with network capabilities that are ready

to grow when you are. Evaluating your unique situation is a hugely important part of the NEC solution process, and can make the most of your investment.

Most importantly, NEC is an industry leader with a longstanding commitment to quality service, product and expertise. There is unparalleled value in working with a global household name, since you can trust that you will be taken care of throughout the lifetime of your digital signage system—and possibly beyond, as the relationship evolves at the rate of technological innovation.