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InFocus Acquires TUN, Plans To Double Size Within Two Months

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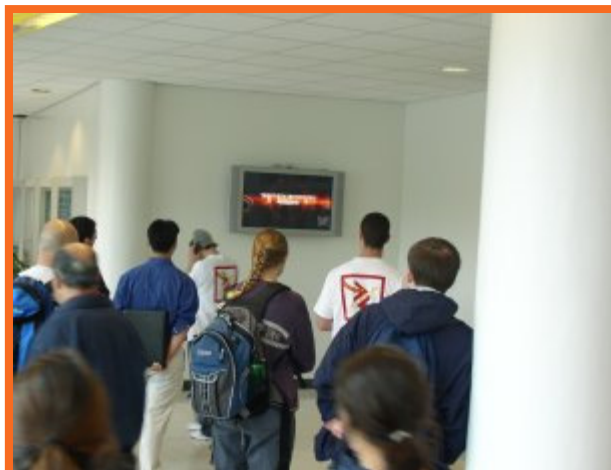
SAN FRANCISCO – The University Network (TUN), operator of digital-signage installations in around 80 universities across the United States, has been acquired by digital-projection specialist InFocus in a deal that will see an accelerated expansion of the network by the end of 2005.

TUN will continue to operate with its existing staff out of its headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, concentrating on content creation and management, as well as managing direct relationships with the network's host universities.

InFocus, which has recently changed its business strategy to find additional value streams outside of sales of projectors displays in isolation, has been looking to make an acquisition in a vertically-specific digital-signage network for some time, according to Candace Petersen, the company's VP and chief strategy officer. The strategy, however, was one of several that came under fire from investors at the company's second-quarter conference call last week.

Petersen told **aka.tv** that TUN appealed to InFocus as it provided a "thoughtful, targeted solution in a lucrative vertical", as well as a software solution that complemented InFocus's display hardware.

InFocus will provide the much-needed capital investment required to enable TUN to meet its business projections of installing its network in 700 colleges over the next two years; according



Currently in around 80 locations, The University Network will double in size by mid-September, according to its new owner InFocus



Students at Tulane University in New Orleans watch campus-

to Petersen, this will begin with an aggressive expansion of the network, which she said will double its number of locations by mid-September.

specific content and selected commercial messaging on one of TUN's plasma displays

Petersen says that InFocus will take advantage of the summer vacation to kick-start the additional installations: "Now that the deal is done the resources are in place – doubling the network in a month and a half is not a problem," she said.

As well as providing financial impetus and a vast hardware inventory for the network, InFocus will be actively involved in developing content strategy as the network expands, according to Petersen. As head of InFocus's digital-media operations, she will be concentrating on developing "magnetizing content" for the network, and addressing the question of "how students want their 15 seconds packaged".

This will principally involve developing the content on the network to find an optimum formula for advertising, news and student-based content.

David Sanders, president of TUN, says that he was flattered by the approach from InFocus, which he says provides the network with financial resources to meet expansion demands. He adds that the involvement of InFocus is also a "very good thing" for TUN as it brings to the network an increased technology expertise, and extended PR and marketing capabilities.

InFocus will retain TUN's Linux-based content-scheduling software platform, which Petersen describes as "bulletproof" and equal to InFocus's standards of security, reliability and scalability.

Student unions provide access to universities

Founded in 2002, The University Network has managed to establish a presence in major universities across the U.S. through a unique relationship with two influential school entities – the student unions and recreational-sports departments – through which it negotiates contracts, content policy and revenue-sharing with the host schools.

At the time of the InFocus acquisition, TUN claimed to be delivering more than 8m weekly impressions to an audience with an average age of 21.

Content is delivered to displays in high-traffic locations in the university via TUN's proprietary Web-based scheduling software. Commercial messaging from advertisers in pre-approved categories is alternated with campus-specific information and near-real-time news and sports updates. With increased locations and access to improved marketing channels, TUN expects to be able to attract more advertisers, to whom it can now offer a nationwide critical mass of displays reaching the golden 18-to-24-year-old demographic.

"What InFocus brings to us is credibility," says Ron Goldner, TUN's senior VP and director of ad sales. "When marketing departments are earmarking the money for next year, they can be confident that we will still be here."

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