MIDAS

Digital Signage Addon
Documentation

https://mid.as/digital-signage

v1.47

...making your facilities work for you!

Digital Signage Addon

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Overview

The optional Digital Signage addon for MIDAS allows you to automatically display a live stream of upcoming room bookings or room availability on display devices (screens). These screens, for example, could be located within communal areas of your venue, and/or outside individual rooms.

For a step-by-step tutorial on how the Digital Signage addon works with your MIDAS room booking system, please see our Video Tutorials page.

Prerequisites

In order to use the Digital Signage addon for your MIDAS room booking system, you will need to be running at least MIDAS v4.03, and have either;

- **Display devices** (TV/Monitors) installed in your venue. These screens should be connected to a computer with a network connection to the server where your MIDAS system resides. If you wish to have multiple screens displaying different content at the same time (in the case of a separate screen outside each room showing only that room's bookings), each screen would require a connection to a different computer (or separate graphics card output) which in turn has a network connection to the server where your MIDAS resides. or;

- **iPad/Tablet** devices installed in your venue. These devices should have a modern web browser installed, an active Wi-Fi connection, and be able to connect to the server where your MIDAS (and Digital Signage addon) run. You may also like to consider some form of enclosure for your mounted iPads/tablets to prevent unauthorized interaction with the devices.

- **"Smart" TVs** installed in your venue – provided that they have a fully-fledged and modern web browser installed and an active internet connection.

Note: Display devices, computers, and any other associated hardware and physical infrastructure are not supplied by MIDAS.

A basic knowledge of HTML is also required to compose your screen templates.

Typical Infrastructure Configurations

Single signage screen

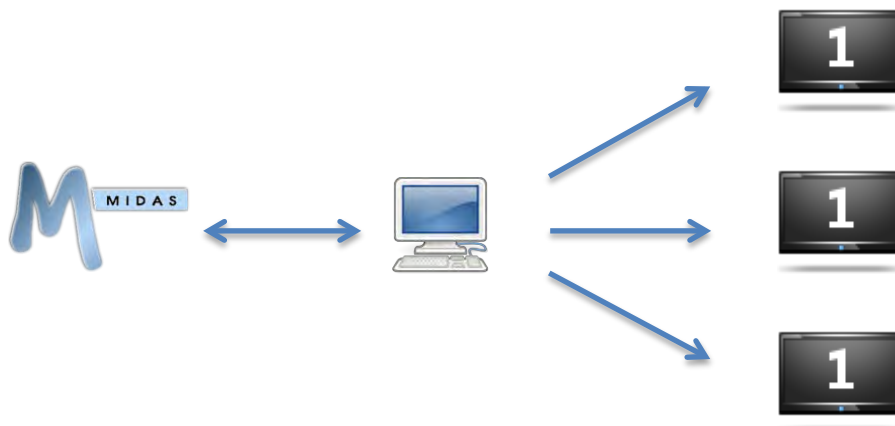(1 computer (with a connection to MIDAS), 1 display device)

Multiple signage screens all showing the same content

(1 computer (with a connection to MIDAS), 1 VGA splitter/distribution amplifier (or similar), multiple display devices)
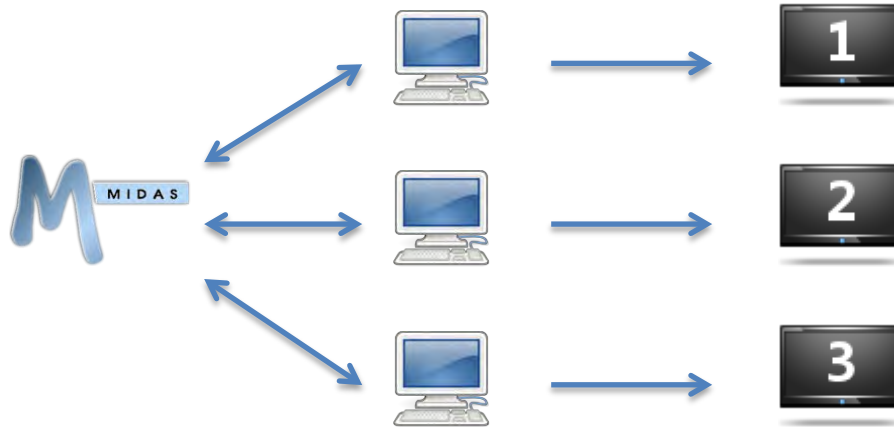
Two signage screens showing different content from a single computer

(1 computer (with a connection to MIDAS) with a dual-head graphics card), two display devices)

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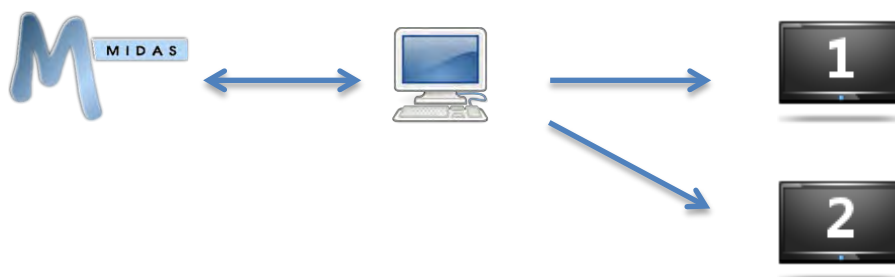
Multiple signage screens showing different content

(Multiple computers (with connections to MIDAS), multiple display devices)

iPad / Tablet Digital Signage:

Instead of the above setups where a central computer (or computers) output their display to various screens/monitors, you can instead have iPads or other tablets around your venue (outside rooms, etc) and have these as your screens, showing generated content from the Digital Signage addon.

This method has the additional benefit of not having the same cabling requirements as the PC/Desktop/Server infrastructure configuration (i.e. you don't have to cable each iPad/Tablet back to a central server)

"Smart" TV Digital Signage:

If your "Smart" TV has a fully-fledged and modern web browser installed, then you may be able to use our Digital Signage addon without any additional hardware!

However, many "Smart" TVs (particularly older "Smart" TVs) have very limited web browsing capabilities and browsers, and therefore we would strongly recommend accessing our demo Digital Signage addon through your Smart TV first to check that it displays and functions as expected.

Installing the Addon

The Signage addon is available as an option for MIDAS v4.03 (or later), that can be purchased along with MIDAS, or added at a later stage.

- To purchase MIDAS and the Digital Signage addon, please visit: https://mid.as/pricing
- To add the Signage addon to an existing MIDAS installation, please go to MIDAS Admin Options → Manage Addons → Available Addons → Digital Signage.

Once purchased, the Digital Signage addon will become available for one-click installation via MIDAS Admin Options → Manage Addons → Addons Ready To Install → Digital Signage.

Once installed, various Digital Signage settings are available via MIDAS Admin Options → Manage Addons → Installed Addons → Digital Signage.
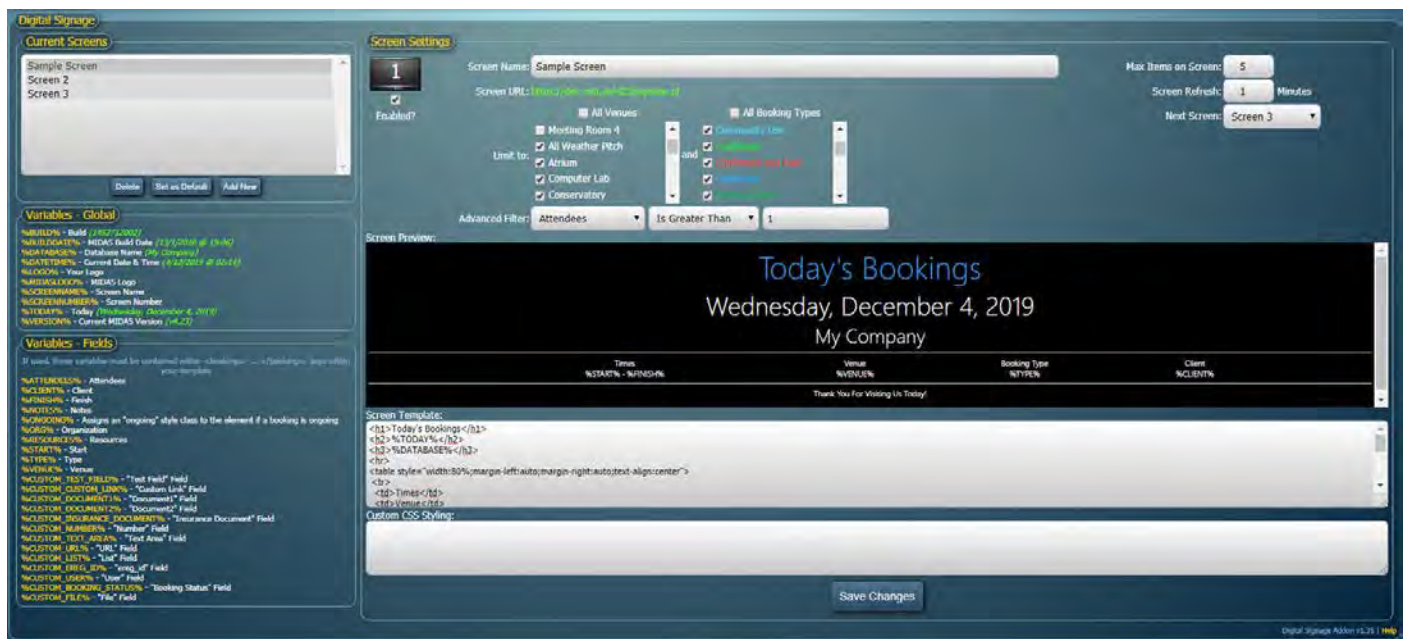
Settings

Above: The Signage administrative interface (MIDAS Admin Options → Manage Addons → Installed Addons → Signage)

From this screen you can define and design the content of each of your display screens. The following settings may be found in this area...

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Current Screens

This is a list of all the signage screens you've already defined.

To define a new screen, click "Add New" below the list.

To set an existing screen to be the "default" screen, highlight it in the "Current Screens" list and click "Set as Default". An asterisk will denote the current "default" screen.

Any display device not set to display a specific screen will display the "default" screen instead.

To remove a screen, select it and click the "Delete" button.

Variables - Global

Lists a number of variables that you can use within your screen templates.

These variables will be substituted for corresponding content on your actual display screens.

A full list of Global Variables and their meanings may be found in the "Global Variables" section of the documentation.

Variables - Fields

Similar to global variables, when field "field" variables are used within your screen templates, they are substituted with live data from corresponding booking fields on your actual display screens.

A full list of Field Variables and their meanings may be found in the "Field Variables" section of the documentation.

Field variables must be placed within <bookings>...</bookings> tags

Enabled?

Allows you to "disable" individual screens. When a screen is disabled, it will not show any booking information on your display devices, and instead display a "Screen Currently Disabled" message.

Screen Number

The internal number representing the screen you are currently defining.

This number cannot be changed, but is used for screen addressing. For example, to display Screen Number 4 on a display device, the URL for that device would be:
https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?**screen=4**

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Screen Name

A name by which you can use to identify the screen you are defining.

This name will appear in the "Current Screens" list and can be shown on your display device if desired through the inclusion of the %SCREENNAME% variable within your screen templates

Screen URL

The URL which you should point your display device(s) to in order to display the screen you're currently configuring

Max Items on Screen

The maximum number of bookings that will be shown on the screen at any one time. Depending upon the font size used, and the resolution of your display devices, you may need to increase / decrease this number. The default is 5

Screen Refresh

How frequently (in minutes) booking data on the screen should refresh.

> NOTE: The minimum interval that "Screen Refresh" can be set to is governed by the "Default Time Interval" setting, which can be found via MIDAS Admin Options → Manage MIDAS → Appearance → Date/Time Settings

Next Screen

If left blank, when the Screen Refresh interval is reached, the current screen will simply refresh.

If a "Next Screen" is specified, when the Screen Refresh interval is reached, the selected "Next Screen" will be displayed. This allows you to create "PowerPoint-like" "slide shows" of your screens! For example, on a single display device you could have Screen 1 showing for 2 minutes, followed by Screen 2 showing for 5 minutes, and then Screen 1 again, etc

Limit Screen To

These settings allow you to control which bookings should be included on the current screen. By default, "All Venues" and "All Booking Types" will be shown.

This is useful if you have a general display device in a reception area showing an overview of every booking.

You can "untick" either of these options to limit the range of venues/booking types that are shown. For example, if you have a dedicated display device situated directly outside "Meeting Room A", you may only want to display bookings for "Meeting Room A" on that particular screen. You would therefore untick "All Venues", and select just "Meeting Room A" from the venues list

Screen Preview

An example of how your screen will look on your display device.
Modifications to the Screen Template (see below) will be shown here in real time.

Screen Template

This is where you design the look and content of your screen using standard HTML code, Global, and Field variables.

A number of template examples may be found in the "Template Examples" section of the documentation.

Custom .css Stylesheet

This field allows you to precisely control all the visual elements of your signage screen through the use of CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). This field will accept the URL to an external .css file, or (starting from v1.13 of the Digital Signage addon) raw CSS code directly.

Save Changes

Once you're happy with your screen settings and template, click the "Save Changes" button to save your settings.

You can edit the template and/or settings for a previously saved screen at any time by simply selecting it in the "Current Screens" list.

Implementing your Signage

Once you've defined your screen(s) the next stage is to make them appear on your signage devices.

For PC/Desktop Infrastructures:

To display the same screen on one or more signage devices, your signage devices need to be connected to a computer with a modern web browser and a network connection to the server where your MIDAS resides.

1) Open your web browser on the computer connected to your display devices, and navigate to:

<div align="center">

https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl

</div>

2) Whichever screen you've set as the "default" screen (or in the case where only one screen has been defined, this screen) will then be displayed in your browser (and therefore also on your connected signage device)
3) Make your browser "full screen". If you're running a modern browser that supports the full screen API, you can simply click within your signage screen, and MIDAS will automatically place your browser in full screen mode (Note: MIDAS also automatically hides your cursor if it is "hovering" within your signage screen)

To display different screens on different display devices around your venue, each display device will need connecting to a different computer with a modern web browser and a network connection to the server where your MIDAS resides, or a single computer with a multi-head graphics card.

Setup each computer as above, but append "?screen=x" to the end of the URL, where "x" is the number of the screen number you've setup within MIDAS that you wish to display on this device – i.e.

<div align="center">

https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?screen=**1**

</div>

So, to display Screen 1 on one display device and Screen 2 on another display device, you would need to point their respective computers to:

<div align="center">

https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?screen=**1**
https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?screen=**2**

</div>

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For iPad/Tablet Infrastructures:

1. Open the web browser on your iPad/Tablet, and navigate to:
   https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl
2. Whichever screen you've set as the "default" screen (or in the case where only one screen has been defined, this screen) will then be displayed in your iPad/Tablet's browser.
3. Add the current browser window to your [Home Screen](#).
4. Close the browser, and open the "MIDAS Digital Signage" shortcut on your Home Screen. Your iPad/Tablet will then display (full screen) your Digital Signage feed.

To display different signage screens on different iPad/Tablet devices, follow the above steps on each device, but append "?screen=x" to the end of the URL, where "x" is the number of the screen you've set up within MIDAS that you wish to display on the current iPad/Tablet - i.e.
https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?screen=**1**

For "Smart TV" Infrastructures:

1. Open the web browser on your Smart TV and navigate to:
   https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl
2. Whichever screen you've set as the "default" screen (or in the case where only one screen has been defined, this screen) will then be displayed in your Smart TV's browser.
3. If your Smart TV's browser allows, make the displayed page go "Full Screen".

To display different signage screens on different Smart TVs, follow the above steps on each device, but append "?screen=x" to the end of the URL, where "x" is the number of the screen you've set up within MIDAS that you wish to display on the current Smart TV - i.e.
https://*your_midas_url*/signage.pl?screen=**1**

Global Variables

The following global variables may be used within your Screen Templates and will be substituted for corresponding content on your display devices.

Variable	Description	Example value
%BUILD%	Current MIDAS build number	1333703520
%BUILDDATE%	Current MIDAS build date/time	6/4/2017 @ 09:12
%DATABASE%	The name of your current MIDAS database (usually your Organization name). You can rename your database via MIDAS Admin Options → Manage MIDAS → Database	My Company
%DATETIME%	The current date/time shown in the format defined via MIDAS Admin Options → Manage MIDAS → Appearance → Date/Time Settings	30/7/2014 @ 20:15
%LOGO%	Your company/organization logo. Please see "How to add your company/corporate logo"	*<Your logo>*
%MIDASLOGO%	The MIDAS logo	*<MIDAS logo>*
%NOW%	The current time, updating in real-time	12:42
%SCREENNAME%	The name of the current screen	Screen 1
%SCREENNUMBER%	The internal number of the current screen	1
%TODAY%	A "nice" representation of the current date	Saturday, February 12, 2022
%VERSION%	Current MIDAS version	v4.32

Field Variables

Field variables must be contained within a set of "booking tags" within your template – these "booking tags" define the section of code that is to be repeated (looped) for each booking to be displayed. For template examples, please see the "Template Examples" section of the documentation.

Booking Tags	Description
\<bookings>\</bookings>	This will display ongoing and upcoming bookings for the rest of the day
\<bookings_now>\</bookings_now>	This will only display bookings which are taking place at the present time
\<bookings_next>\</bookings_next>	This will only display bookings for the remainder of the day which have yet to start

The following variables can be used within a set of booking tags in your Screen Templates and correspond to booking fields within MIDAS. These variables will be automatically substituted with booking data on your display devices.

Setting	Description	Example value
%ATTENDEES%	Number of attendees	10
%CLIENT%	Name of client	Joe Bloggs
%FINISH%	Booking finish time	10:00
%NOTES%	Booking notes	This booking may finish early
%ONGOING%	Assigns an "ongoing" style class to the template element if the booking is ongoing. This could be used to display bookings currently taking place in a different color to other bookings. See "Template Examples"	
%ORG%	Client's organization	My Company
%RESOURCES%	List of resources assigned to booking	x1 Laptop x1 Data Projector
%START%	Booking start time	09:00
%TYPE%	Booking type	Internal Meeting
%VENUE%	Name of venue	Meeting Room A
%CUSTOM_*x*%	If you've defined your own custom booking fields within MIDAS, you can include them on your screens using the "%CUSTOM_x%" variable (where "x" is the internal name of your custom booking field). For example, if you've added a custom field to your MIDAS named "Room Layout", you would include data from this field	

	on your signage screen with the variable "%CUSTOM_ROOM_LAYOUT%"	

Availability Display

In addition to being able to display ongoing and upcoming bookings on your signage screens, the Digital Signage addon (from v1.47) also facilitates the display of current availability for each of your rooms.

Instead of using <bookings> ... </bookings> tags in your signage templates, you can instead insert a set of <availability> ... </availability> tags.

This instructs the addon to display room availability instead of ongoing/upcoming bookings.

The availability for all venues which you have selected to be included in the current signage screen will be displayed. The display of this information may be customized through the use of the following variables placed between the opening <availability> and closing </availability> tags:

Variable	Description
%AVAILABILITY%	The current availability of the venue/room
%INUSE%	Whether the venue/room is currently in use
%VENUE%	The name of the venue/room

Template Examples

Bookings Display Template

Below is a typical Screen Template example, how it may appear on your display device, and a detailed explanation of how the template translates to what your visitors will see on screen...

Example Screen Template

```
<h1>Today's Bookings</h1>
<h2>%TODAY%</h2>
<h3>%DATABASE%</h3>
<table>
 <tr>
  <td>Times</td>
  <td>Venue</td>
  <td>Booking Type</td>
  <td>Client</td>
 </tr>
 <bookings>
  <tr%ONGOING%>
   <td>%START% - %FINISH%</td>
   <td>%VENUE%</td>
   <td>%TYPE%</td>
   <td>%CLIENT%</td>
  </tr>
 </bookings>
</table>
<br>Thank You For Visiting Us Today!
```

The following is a graphic representation of how the above example template may render on your display device:

Example Screen Output

Today's Bookings
Wednesday, April 15, 2020
My Company

Times	Venue	Booking Type	Client
08.00 – 09.00	Room 1	Meeting	Joe Bloggs
09.00 – 11.30	Room 4	Training	Jane Doe
09.15 – 10.45	Room 2	Exam	Joe Bloggs

Thank You For Visiting Us Today!

Powered by https://mid.as

Explanation

This simple screen starts by displaying 3 headings (<h1>, <h2>, and <h3>).
"Today's Bookings" is the first "static" heading.
The other two headings use global variables in the template, which are substituted with corresponding values when displayed on your display device(s).

The next section of the template is a standard HTML table.
The first row contains columns names for "Times", "Venue", "Booking Type", and "Client"
Notice that the second row of the table is surrounded by <booking></booking> tags (indicated in blue) – this indicates to MIDAS that this section of code should be repeated for each booking displayed.
In this example, because the second table row is enclosed within <booking></booking> tags, a new row will be inserted for each booking. (Note: <booking></booking> tags will be automatically stripped from the final output display in order to generate valid HTML)

The field variables in this row are substituted for real booking data when displayed on your display device(s)

Note the presence of the %ONGOING% variable (indicated in green) – this tells MIDAS that if the booking is currently ongoing ("in progress") to apply an "ongoing" class to the element.

So, for ongoing bookings <tr%ONGOING%> would be substituted with <tr class=ongoing>

For all other bookings, <tr%ONGOING%> would be substituted with <tr>

If we assume that the Example Screen Output shown above was what was displayed on the screen at 08.15 in the morning – at that point in time, one booking is "ongoing" – the one highlighted on the screen in red.

You could define the color/style of our "ongoing" class in an external style sheet and then include it using the "Custom .css Stylesheet" option.

In your external style sheet, you can change the styling of this special "ongoing" class, as follows:
`.ongoing{color:yellow}`

Availability Display Template

Instead of showing booking information, a signage screen can instead show an indication of current room availability.

Example Screen Template

```
<h1>Today's Availability</h1>
<h2>%TODAY%</h2>
<h3>%DATABASE%</h3>
<table>
 <tr>
  <td>Room</td>
  <td>Availability</td>
  <td>Currently In Use?</td>
 </tr>
 <availability>
  <tr>
   <td>%VENUE%</td>
   <td>%AVAILABILITY%</td>
   <td>%INUSE%</td>
  </tr>
 </availability>
</table>
<br>Thank You For Visiting Us Today!
```

The following is a graphic representation of how the above example template may render on your display device:

Example Screen Output

Today's Availability
Wednesday, April 14, 2021
My Company

Room	Availability	Currently In Use?
Room 1	Available	Available
Room 2	Unavailable until 7pm	Unavailable
Room 3	Available until 8pm	Available
Room 4	Available	Available
Room5	Unavailable until 15.4.2021 @ 10am	Unavailable

Thank You For Visiting Us Today!

Powered by https://mid.as

Explanation

The example template and rendered screen above starts by displaying 3 headings in decreasing size (using the HTML tags <h1>, <h2>, and <h3>).

"Today's Availability" is the first static heading (<h1>).

The other two smaller headings (<h2> and <h3>) use global "placeholder" variables in the template code. These placeholders are substituted with corresponding live data when displayed on your display device(s).

The %TODAY% placeholder is substituted with the current date. The %DATABASE% placeholder is substituted for the name of your current database.

The next section of the template is a standard HTML table, contained between the <table> and </table> tags.

The first row of the table (contained between the first set of <tr> and </tr> (Table Row) tags) contains columns names for "Venue", "Availability", and "Currently in use?". Each column in a row is surrounded by <td> and </td> tags, denoting Table Data.

Notice that the second row of the table is surrounded by <availability></availability> tags (indicated in blue) - this indicates to MIDAS that this section of template code should be repeated for each individual venue being displayed.

In this example, because the second table row is enclosed within <availability></availability> tags, a new row will be inserted into the table for each venue selected for inclusion in the template. (Note: <availability></availability> tags will be automatically stripped from the final output display in order to generate valid HTML)

The field placeholder variables in this row are substituted for real availability data when displayed on your display device(s). For example, %VENUE% will be substituted for the actual name of a room (venue).

The %INUSE% variable will display a simple "Available/Unavailable" indicator for each venue, whilst using the %AVAILABILITY% variable will instead offer more verbose availability details for each venue.

As in the previous example, you can "style" visual screen elements on your signage screen through the use of CSS.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I change the font size/color, etc on my signage screens?

You can change the font size, color and the visual appearance of your generated digital signage screen by modifying each signage screen's template. For more information, please see our KB article: What is HTML and how do I use it within my MIDAS templates?

Will my signage screens still work if there's no connection to my MIDAS server?

Your digital signage screens will regularly refresh and attempt to obtain the latest data on your bookings from the server.

In the event the connection to the server is lost, the last known good information will continue to be displayed on screen, but a small warning will be displayed in the lower left corner of your screens alerting you that the connection to the server was lost.

MIDAS will keep retrying the connection, and should it be restored, the warning will disappear and your screens will resume updating as normal.

How many signage screens can MIDAS support displaying different content for each room?

There are no software limits imposed on the number of screens that MIDAS can generate. This would only be limited by your physical digital signage infrastructure.

Can I display bookings exactly as they appear to logged-in users (i.e. in a graphical booking grid)?

The Digital Signage addon is designed to display bookings in a simple list or table format. Other layouts may be possible through customizing your signage templates.

For more complex and bespoke display of bookings on your screens, our optional API may be better suited to your needs. Using the MIDAS API you can programmatically read raw booking data from your MIDAS system, which you can then format, use, and display however you wish.

Release Notes

See https://mid.as/digital-signage/release-notes

For the most up-to-date Digital Signage documentation,
please visit https://mid.as/digital-signage