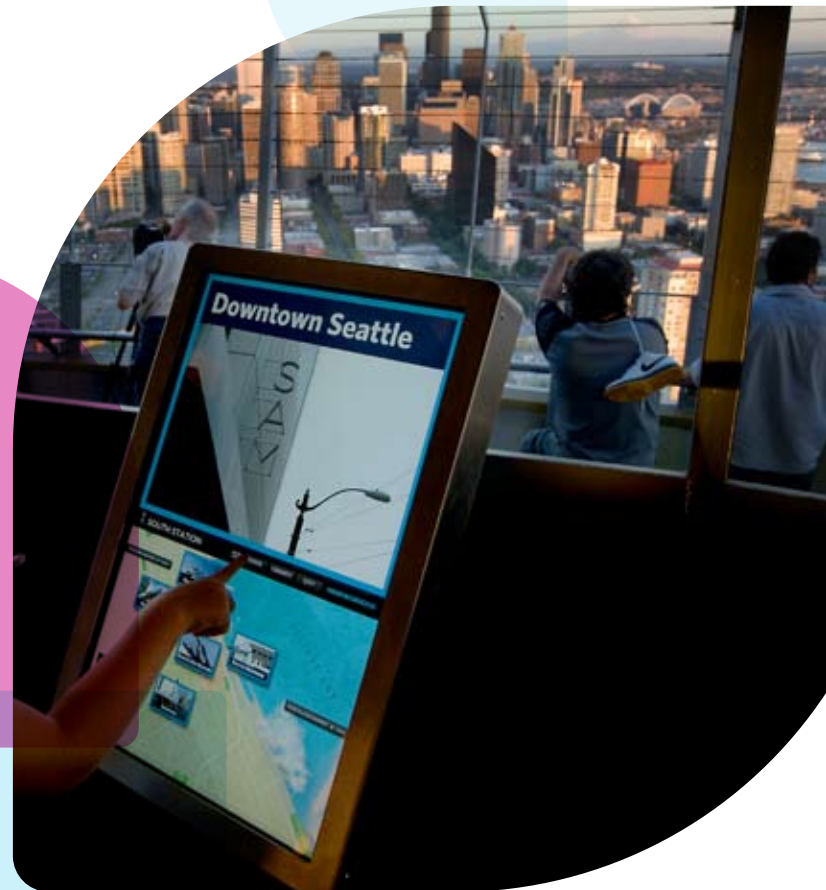


# Interactive Touch Screen Displays Help Seattle Tourists Plan Their Visit

Case Study: Seattle Space Needle



## Profile

Built in 1962, the Space Needle served as the symbol of that year's World's Fair and has since become the symbol of Seattle.

From the observation deck, visitors can enjoy a 360-degree view of downtown Seattle, snow-capped Mt. Rainier to the south and the Cascade Mountains to the east, and the Olympic Peninsula to the west.

The Space Needle is one of the top tourist attractions for Seattle and a memorable way for visitors to get acquainted with the city. The privately-owned Space Needle is managed by Space Needle LLC.



## Solution

In an effort to provide a single resource for tourists to plan their stay in Seattle, which had been lacking, Space Needle executives were interested in developing a large-format interactive display for the observation deck. Working with Horizon Display, a Lake Forest, California-based provider of large-format touch screen displays, the company developed SkyQ, a set of five interactive kiosks (30" and 42" displays) that circle the observation deck atop the Seattle Space Needle.

The project concept was 10 years in the making and became reality as technology caught up with imagination. The first attempt was referred to as Zoomitron. That set of kiosks employed much smaller touch screens and were more informational than interactive. The Zoomitron was a relative success however, and Space Needle LLC decided to take the next step towards their ultimate dream; the SkyQ.

The core features of the solution include:

- Five 30" Dell LCD monitors mounted contiguously display a single high-resolution 360-degree panorama image of the Seattle landscape.
- Visitors passing their hand over the monitors will reveal a second image layer beneath the photograph — a photo-realistic illustration of the same landscape with points of interest called out through whimsical illustration.

## User Experience

With SkyQ, visitors not only get to "live the view", but they also can interact with the screens and view a richer set of information.

Users can touch a spot on the map to experience a close-up shot of a local attraction or neighborhood, with accompanying information, to help plan their stay.

Touching any of the illustrations displays fun facts and trivia about that part of the city and its culture.

Video also brings the city and its people to life. To deliver some local flavor, a 42" LCD touch monitor displays a 'photo wheel' of 27 Seattle citizens. All of the individuals featured on the screen vary in age, culture and occupation in order to provide visitors with a wide array of local perspectives.

The touch screen allows visitors to wave their finger and spin the 'photo wheel.' Visitors can then touch one of the photos to begin playing video featuring 'real stories from real people'—Seattle citizens from all walks of life, giving their impressions of the city's best and favorite activities.

## NextWindow

When Space Needle LLC reached out to Horizon Display, they did so after receiving a hard recommendation from their marketing agency to use SAW (Surface Acoustic Wave) technology. Horizon Display urged the use of optical technology, but there were time pressures as well as a strict budget for the Space Needle to operate within. Reluctantly, Horizon provided five 30" touch screens utilizing SAW.

A few months after the launch of SkyQ, the SAW units began failing, and visitors were not getting the experience they had expected. False touches were being registered, touch points were inaccurate, and sometimes the touch wasn't reading at all.

The Space Needle immediately contacted Jeff Niles, the National Account Manager at Horizon Display, and subsequently installed a 30" screen incorporating the 2150 optical touch frame from NextWindow.





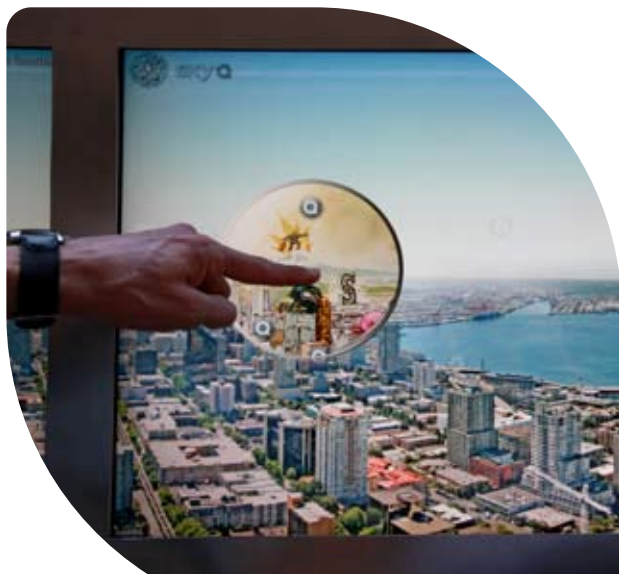
## Benefits

According to Niles, the NextWindow technology allows for Horizon Display to offer its clients hardened substrates that protect the touch screen from vandalism, as well as enhancements for displays that are outdoors or subject to high levels of ambient light. These are two common scenarios that are not manageable when using most other touch screen technologies, he adds. As well, he says, multi-touch technology offered by NextWindow is a leading-edge option that many customers now desire:

The kiosks create a set of unique and engaging experiences for visitors looking for a hands-on and memorable way to connect with Seattle's people and places. According to Space Needle, the solution has helped increase foot traffic and number of return visitors and boosted revenues and customer satisfaction ratings.

As well, visitors are now spending more time per visit in the Space Needle.

“Gesturing is where the digital signage market is going and NextWindow’s 2150 touch frame allows for our clients to migrate into this arena without having to purchase new hardware.”





**New Zealand**  
PO Box 91383  
Victoria Street West  
Auckland 1142 New Zealand  
+64 9 353 6608

**United States**  
7020 Koll Center Parkway  
Suite 138  
Pleasanton, CA 94566 USA  
+1 925 271 2390

**Taiwan**  
3F/ A3, No. 58  
Jhouzih Street, Neihu Dist.  
Taipei 114, Taiwan  
+886 2 8751 5818 ext 222

**Singapore**  
31 Jurong Port Road  
#02-10/11 Jurong Logistics Hub  
Singapore 619115  
+65 6 265 0238