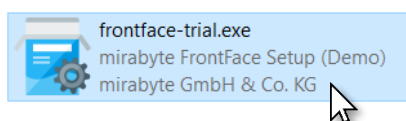# Learn how to easily set up an (Interactive) Digital Bulletin Board with *FrontFace*!

Replace your old school bulletin board or notice board with a modern, digital communications solution: Use a digital (touch) screen! Present general information, but also the latest news and other important information in a modern way. The digital signage software *FrontFace* by mirabyte allows you creating your digital, optionally also interactive, bulletin boards very easily, professionally, and conveniently! How this works in detail is explained - step by step - in this tutorial.

1 Downloading and Installing *FrontFace*

First, please visit the *FrontFace* product website https://www.mirabyte.com/en/frontface/ and click on the ⬇ Download button to download the trial version (or the full version if you have a license). After the download, run the installation package **frontface-trial.exe** on your workstation PC, and select the installation option *"Full Installation (incl. FrontFace Assistant)."*

frontface-trial.exe
mirabyte FrontFace Setup (Demo)
mirabyte GmbH & Co. KG
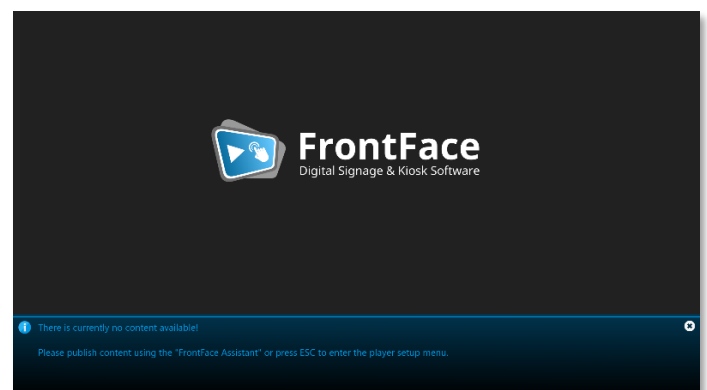
2 Installation of the Player PC

The *FrontFace* software consists of two components, the ***FrontFace Assistant*** for creating and configuring your projects and the ***FrontFace Player App*** for actually playing your content on the large screen or a TV. So far, you have only installed the *FrontFace Assistant* on your workstation PC.

The PC that is connected to your large screen or TV is called "player PC" (e.g. a mini PC). Please execute the installation package you just downloaded also on that PC. During the installation process, select the installation option *"Install Player App only (for installation on a player PC)."* During the installation process, a network share is created automatically (please write down the address!), which is used later on to remotely update the player PC from your workstation PC using the *FrontFace Assistant*. This, of course, requires that your workstation PC and the player PC are in the same local area network.

After having installed the *FrontFace Player App* on the player PC, you may also need to explicitly allow access to network shares in Windows system settings. How to do that is described in detail in our FAQ: https://www.mirabyte.com/go/kb/68

The last step is to launch the *FrontFace Player App* from the Windows start menu.
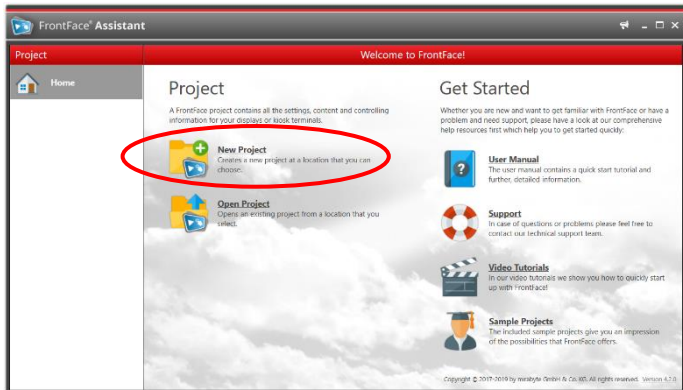
After a few seconds, a message appears telling you that no content has been published yet. The player is now good to go:

If you just want to try out *FrontFace* first without provisioning a player PC, you can skip this step and head over directly to the next step! *FrontFace* comes with a preview feature that allows you to view your digital bulletin board on your workstation PC in exactly the same way as it would appear on a dedicated player PC for production use!

3 Creating a Project for the Digital Bulletin Board

Now head back to your workstation PC and open the *FrontFace Assistant* from the Windows start menu, and click on *"New Project"* on the home page of the application:

Enter a name for the project (e.g., "Notice Board") and then select a suitable location on your hard disk for the project, such as *"Documents."* As project type you should select *"Digital Signage"* (even if you want to create an interactive digital bulletin board!).
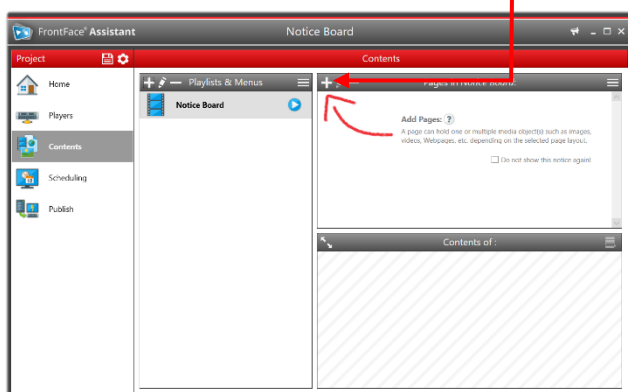
In the *"Player"* section of the *Assistant*, you first need to enter the address of the network share of your player PC, which was been created during the installation in step 2. This is usually:

\\NAME-OF-PC\FrontFace

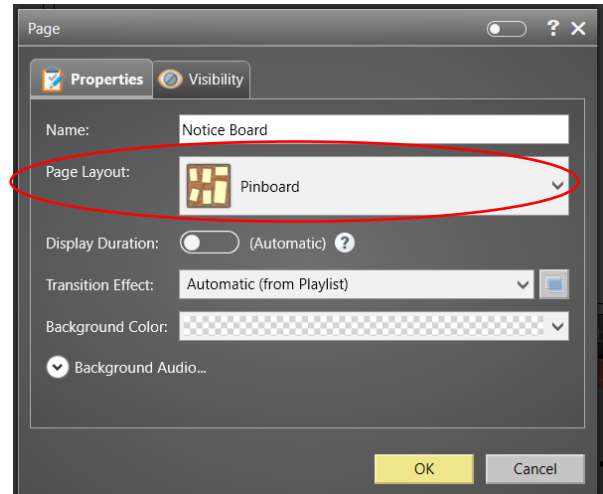However, if you skipped step 2, you can skip this step, too.

4 Creating a Playlist

Now head over to the *"Contents"* section: A playlist named "Playlist 1" has already been created there. Double-click this entry and change the name of the playlist to "Notice Board". Then, confirm with *OK* and then add a page to the playlist by clicking on the *"+"* ● button above the list of pages:

In this example the playlist consists of only one single page which represents your bulletin board. In the settings dialog of the new page, please click on the small arrow in the *"Page Layout"* box to select a suitable layout for the page. In the *"Special"* section you will find several ready-to-use layouts that perfectly suit for this type of application (you must scroll all the way down in the drop-down list of layouts!).

Of course, you can also design an individual layout by yourself or adapt an existing layout by clicking on *"Edit Layouts"* (for further details on this, please see user manual!).
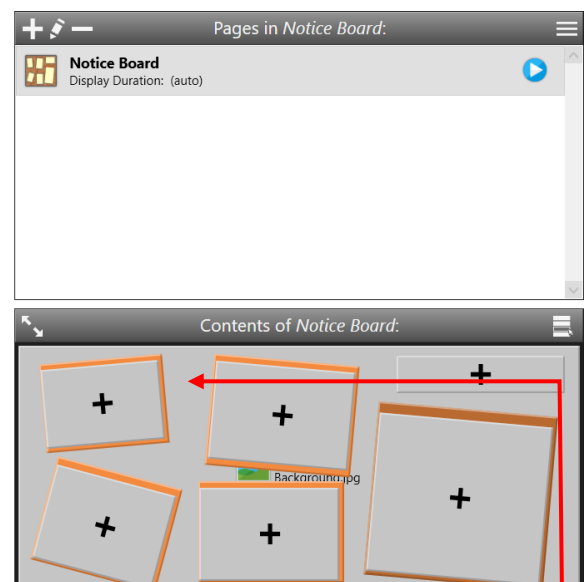

But it is best to start with one of the included layouts. In this example we choose the *"Pinboard"* layout. Then click *OK* to close the dialog.
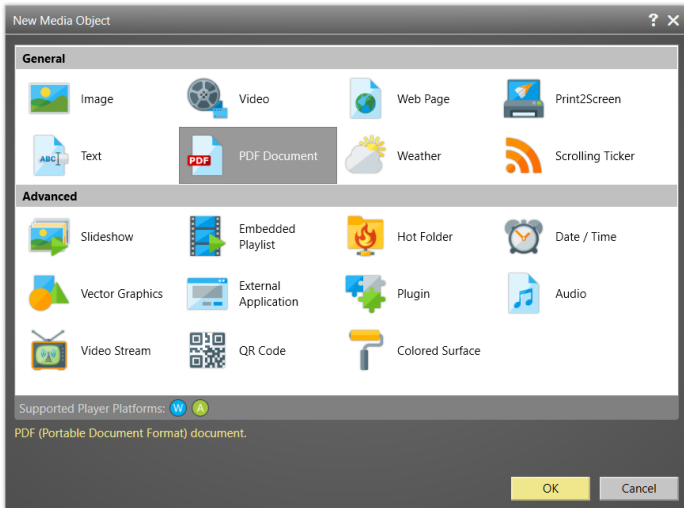
5 Inserting Your Content

You can now see in the lower area of the window below *"Contents of Notice Board:"* the selected layout in a schematic representation with the corresponding containers that will hold the actual content to display.

First, however, you can change the background image if you like. In the selected example layout, a cork texture is used as an image. But you can also use a different background image.
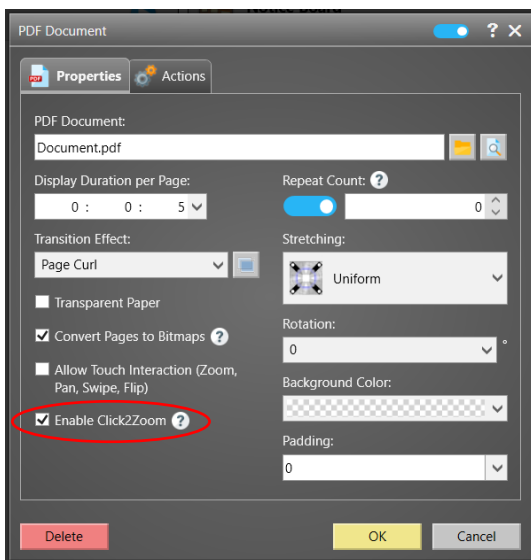

To do so, simply click on the container in the background ● of the page and select a different image file. Then change the *"Stretching"* property to *"Uniform to Fill"* so that the image will be displayed without borders and confirm with *OK*.

Now you can fill the containers with the actual content that you want to show on your digital notice board. Simply click on one of the *"+"* icons which indicate empty containers and select the media object type you want to insert in the next dialog, e.g., a PDF document:

After you have selected the desired PDF document, you can specify the stretching mode here as well, e.g., *"Uniform"*. This ensures that the entire content is shown in the available real estate area of the container. Most likely, you also must adjust the *"Background Color"* (to "White") to avoid black borders in case the actual content does not have the same aspect ratio as the container.

If your digital bulletin board is supposed to also be used interactively (e.g., on a touch screen), then you might want to activate the *"Click2Zoom"* function of the media object as well.
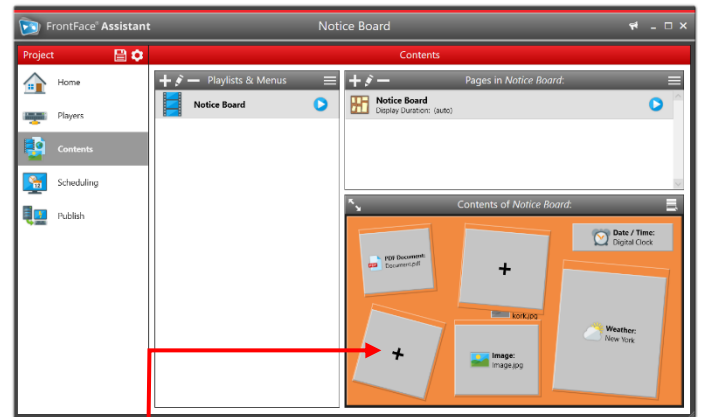

The *"Click2Zoom"* function allows to display media objects in a "full screen mode", simply by "clicking" or "tapping" on them. This way the content can easily be viewed in detail by the user. This function is available for the following media objects: image, video, website, Print2Screen, PDF document, weather, slide show, embedded playlist, HotFolder, vector graphics and video stream.

You can furthermore customize the full screen display by clicking on the *"Actions"* tab in the settings dialog of a media object. When *"Click2Zoom"* is activated, a click action is automatically created. If you click on the pencil icon to edit the action, you can, for example, define the layout for the full screen mode (e.g., "Toolbar Top" or "Toolbar Bottom") or set a different *"Background Color"*.

If you would like to create an individual layout here, you can do this, as before, by clicking on *"Edit Layouts"*. Please ensure that your layout

always contains at least one toolbar with a *"Close"* button, so that the user can later return to the previous view.
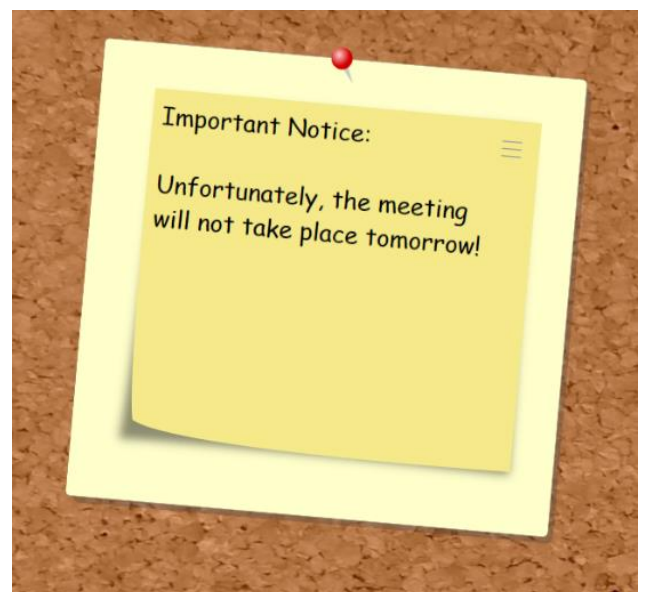

Now fill the other containers of the pinboard layout by clicking on the "+" icons of the empty containers. Various media objects such as PDF files, text elements, weather, date/time, etc. are available to fill your bulletin board with life. If you leave containers empty, they will not be displayed later on the screen. So, you do not necessarily have to fill all the containers here.

At the end of the day, you certainly want to have a look at the result: This is for what the preview feature of *FrontFace* is for. You can display a playlist or a specific page as it will look on the player. Just click the playlist or page preview button: ▶

6 Using the Sticky Note Plugin

A typical feature of notice boards and pinboards are those well-known sticky notes, with which information is shared or where users can leave messages for other users. This functionality can also be mimicked by *FrontFace*. You can either display simple text ("read-only") or allow users to edit the text using the on-screen keyboard. In pen/ink mode, you can even draw freehand on the note sheet with your finger or a pen (only on touch screens!).

The changes made by the user are persisted automatically. For example, a list can be created interactively, or users can leave important information on the bulletin board for others.
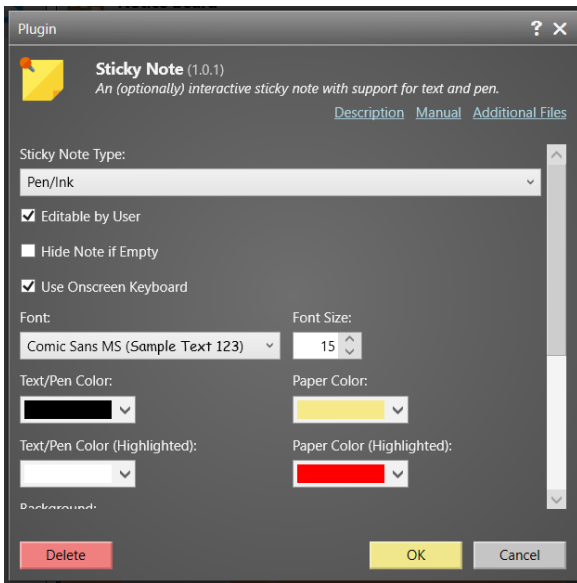
However, this feature is not part of the standard feature set of *FrontFace*, but is provided as an extension which is called "plugin":

First, install the (free) Sticky Note plugin by clicking on an empty container and selecting *"Plugin"* as the media object.

The dialog with the plugins available for selection is initially empty. Click on *"Install New Content Plugin"* and select the file `Sticky Note.ffapx`.

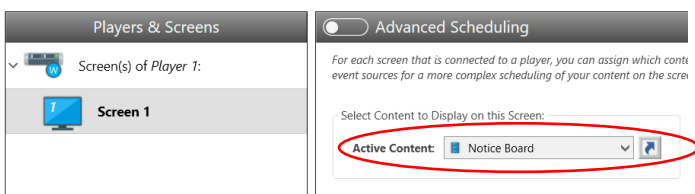You can then select the *"Sticky Note"* plugin and insert it into the container like any other media object.

In the settings dialog of the plugin, you can now specify the type of sticky note you want to insert (pen/ink or text) and configure many other settings such as colors, font, etc. A detailed description of the functions and settings can be found in the manual of the plugin.

7 Setting up the Scheduling

After creating your playlist which shows your digital bulletin board, you must assign it to the player.

Go to the *"Scheduling"* menu and select the screen of your player PC. Then assign your previously created playlist "Notice Board" as *"Active Content"*:

This will then permanently display your digital bulletin board on the screen. In addition, *FrontFace* also offers an *"Advanced Scheduling"* that allows you to display your content in a time- or event-driven way. For more information, please see *FrontFace* user manual.

8 Publishing the Content to the Player PC

In order to deploy your playlist to the player PC and to start it there, you must switch to the *"Publishing"* section in the *FrontFace Assistant* and then click on *"Publish!"*.

https://www.mirabyte.com/

This way, all the content and the control information are transferred to your player PC, which will then take care of displaying your content as desired:

9 What's next?

As you can see, it is really easy to create a professional digital bulletin board with *FrontFace*. Now that you have built the basic system, you can refine your playlist and the content and enhance it visually to provide a unique experience for your users! You can e.g., assign a *Screen Layout* to the playlist, which also integrates a scrolling news ticker to display additional information at the bottom of the screen.

For more information about the basic operation and installation of *FrontFace* and the manyfold capabilities that this software provides, please refer to the *FrontFace* user manual and the video tutorials available online at https://www.mirabyte.com/go/frontface/.

If you have any technical questions about *FrontFace* or this tutorial, please feel free to contact our support. Just visit our homepage to find out how to contact us: https://www.mirabyte.com/en/support/