

Updated: May 6, 2010

INFOTOGO pillars with touch-screen technology installed

Q. What is street furniture?

A. Street furniture consists of different elements installed in the public right-of-way for the convenience and use of the public. These elements include, but are not limited to, items such as transit shelters, waste/recycling bins and benches.

Q. What will happen to the existing information pillars around the City?

A. They will be phased out and replaced with the new style pillars which will feature the new touch-screen technology once we begin the rollout of the second phase, which is projected to start later in 2010.

Q. Will these new pillars work better than the old ones, given the voice feedback didn't function well and the map dispenser sometimes ate people's money?

A. The five pillars are the first phase of the pilot project to gather public feedback on the information provided as well as the technology. We are using new touch-screen technology that has been built to withstand Canadian winters and that will enhance and modernize the user experience. It also allows us to provide more information with maps and pictures of sites. These new pillars also have a new-generation map dispenser that will send an alert to Astral should the dispenser be low in stock or experience problems.

Q. Why are you conducting a pilot project with these five pillars?

A. The five pillars are the first phase of a pilot project and will be used to gather public feedback on the information provided as well as the technology. This feedback will be considered for improvements prior to the city rolling out the second phase of the touch-screen pillar, which is projected to start later in 2010.

Q. Where will the other pillars be placed in the City?

A. City staff are consulting with City Councillors and BIA's to identify the best location options. The pillars are designed for tourists, but will also benefit Torontonians who have traveled to a section of the city they are not familiar with.

Q. Is some of the information posted actually paid advertising for example, the concert ticket seller T.O. Tix and has anyone else paid to have content posted?

A. The information provided as part of the INFOTOGO Pillar is not paid advertising. The only paid advertising on the pillars are the two posters facing the street. The poster inventory is sold by Astral Media as part of the Coordinated Street Furniture Program.

Q. How was the content chosen for the pillars? Who decided the tourist sites and transportation companies to highlight?

A. The City of Toronto's Visitor Services unit has compiled the content based on the most asked for information at the Toronto Visitor Information Desk and INFOTOGO Mobile Unit (seasonal) that the City of Toronto has operated for the past three years. The intention is to be as comprehensive as possible within each category of information. The advantage of the touch screen is that content can be updated on a daily

basis. The City is aware that the information will be in constant flux, with changes being made as necessary, over time.

A selection of sightseeing companies are highlighted under the 'See and Do' section of the touch screen. The subsection heading is 'Sightseeing Tours', which is broken into 'Boat, Bus, Walking/biking and Helicopter'.

Q: Do you conduct regular maintenance checks to ensure the INFOTOGO pillars are fully operational? If so, how often?

A: All of the structures are maintained weekly. The pillars also have a built in sensor to indicate when a unit is low on maps. Astral Media also operates a Quality line that allows any one to email or phone in a maintenance issue with a pillar.

Q: Isn't there a high probability they will get damaged and malfunction?

A: The touch screens are equipped to withstand regular wear and tear as a result of the weather and continued use. All of the structures are maintained weekly and Astral Media's Quality line contact details posted are on the pillars should anyone wish to report an issue.

Q. Are the pillars likely to be damaged or defaced by vandals?

A. The pillars are in highly visible areas which would help deter vandals. Video cameras have been installed on the INFOTOGO pillars to protect them from vandalism. The video tape is property of the City and is controlled by City policy. The video will only be accessed if vandalism occurs.

Q: Who is responsible and how often will the information be updated on the pillars (or available through maps)?

A. The City of Toronto Visitor Services team is constantly updating their knowledge base to ensure that they are providing visitors to the city with the most up to date information. This information will be transferred to the touchscreen data base as needed. Our intention is to be as comprehensive as possible within each category of information and keep the information accurate with monthly reviews of the content. We will also be proactively conducting a complete annual review of the content against source materials. The advantage of the touch screen is that content can be updated on a daily basis. The City is aware that the information will be in constant flux, with changes being made as necessary, over time.

The maps will be updated on a two year cycle. The City will track changes as they occur, and if there are significant changes in a particular neighbourhood (such as the re-routing of major roads or the development of a significant landmark attraction), maps may be reproduced sooner.

Media questions Astral will respond to:

Q: Do you conduct regular maintenance checks to ensure the INFOTOGO pillars are fully operational? If so, how often?

A: Astral Media Outdoor conducts weekly scheduled maintenance on the INFOTOGO pillars. During our weekly maintenance calls, we refill the map dispensers, change the advertising postings, and maintain the structure and clean the advertising face. Astral Media also operates a Quality line that allows anyone to email or phone us at any time to request a maintenance call.

Q: How often do you replenish the maps in the dispenser? Is there a mechanism to alert Astral when they need to be restocked?

A: The maps will be refilled during regular weekly maintenance calls. Astral Media will monitor the quantity of maps taken to determine how many should be replaced. The new pillars also have a new-generation map dispenser that will send an alert to Astral should the dispenser be low in stock. We also make arrangements to restock maps at certain sites that experience high levels of traffic during specific time periods.