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## IBC award for AMBER Alert digital signage

**When a four year-old was kidnapped in Rotterdam earlier this year, few could have anticipated the role that digital signage would play in his discovery or that the event would lead to a special award for digital signage company Netpresenter at the IBC 2009 conference in Amsterdam.**

The child's picture was flashed up on digital signs in the Netherlands shortly after the abduction alert was given. Much to the surprise of staff in a neighbouring McDonalds, the boy on the screen was sitting in their restaurant. The Dutch police were called and the child was returned safely.

This was the first success for the "AMBER Alert Netherlands" project, a nationwide initiative that links thousands of Netpresenter screens with radio, TV, SMS, newspapers and web services to distribute news of child abduction within minutes of it happening.

AMBER Alerts began in the United States in 1996 and have been introduced in Canada, Australia, France and the Netherlands with Ireland soon to set up the system.

In Holland, Netpresenter operates the system jointly with Netherlands Police Agency KLPD at no charge as a corporate charity project.

Netpresenter CEO, Frank Hoen, told Cue Supply Chain at IBC that similar initiatives could be of value in other countries and the company is already developing a system that would offer cross-border alerts.

"This technology can directly affect peoples' lives and because it is only used for emergencies, it quickly attracts attention when it is needed, mobilising all the citizens who see it to help out," Hoen said.

Following this success, other applications are being considered including localised versions and systems to advise of potential terrorist threats.

Michael Lumley, who chairs the IBC Innovations Award judging panel, said, "The abduction of a child is still a rare occurrence but when it happens everyone is focused on finding the child as quickly as possible. AMBER Alert is a great use of technology in our industry, which provides a real social service. We are delighted to make this award."

Netpresenter supplies its digital signage products to companies and retail stores around the world with customers ranging from Sony and Nokia to small and medium sized businesses. It even offers a fully featured single screen downloadable version free for "Mom & Pop" businesses with no commitment required.

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