EnQii and Minicom Digital Signage (MDS) are to merge, the companies said today, creating a major player in digital out-of-home media technology. The combined EnQii-MDS will offer a cloud-based system, scalable for networks large and small alike, providing all the functionality necessary to manage digital screen content – from distribution to proof of play.

And more strings are likely to be added to its technology bow soon, with existing venture-capitalist shareholders committing further funds to finance product development and acquisitions.

“This strategic move creates a powerful vertical solution in an industry that has been plagued by complexity,” said Ronni Guggenheim, president of EnQii-MDS and former CEO of MDS.

“I am particularly excited with our new solutions such as IP streaming, mobile and Web linkages and the ability to provide proof of performance for signage networks,” said Ajay Chowdhury, CEO of the new venture and formerly in the same role at EnQii.

Both companies are relative newcomers that have quickly established wide-ranging international presence.

EnQii (pronounced en-key), a 2007 startup which rapidly built itself up through acquisitions including software and services provider Digital View Media, counts among its customers the food-services giant Compass, department-store chain Dillard’s, London Underground, Pharmacy Channel and The Elevator Channel.

MDS, meanwhile, was spun off a year ago from Israeli KVM specialist Minicom Advanced Systems. Its client roster includes Wal-Mart Mexico, the Toronto subway, Bancomer Bank, and Landmark Theatres. Its installation at Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus, pictured, won the

Best Practice Award at the Viscom trade fair last year.

Headquartered in New York City, EnQii-MDS will have six offices globally, as well as 150 distributors. Its operation is expected to include offices in the U.S., Canada, Britain, Switzerland and Israel, combining the existing outposts of the two firms.

Funding for further growth is coming from two current MDS investors – Jerusalem Venture Partners, which led the financing round, and Aviv Ventures – as well as a pair of EnQii's backers, Wellington Partners and Amadeus Capital Partners.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch

Separately, Minicom is partnering with venerable digital-signage software firm Scala at this week's Screenmedia Expo in London to show off the integration of Minicom's ScreenGate Management Gateway with Scala's Content Manager.

Joining the two technologies will allow operators of Scala-based networks to verify that content is being distributed from the server to media players, and thence displayed on screens. Suggested benefits include more screen uptime, because problems can be identified faster, and proof to advertisers that their spots have been played.

www.enqii.com
www.minicomdigitalsignage.com
www.scala.com
www.screenevents.co.uk