

## Portillo's\_hopes\_to\_beef\_up\_orders\_with\_in-store\_kiosks

By [Larry Avila](#)  
business editor

Chicago has a national reputation for many things, including Italian beef sandwiches.

ON THE NET

The sandwiches are one of the most popular items Oak Brook-based Portillo's sells through its 41 Chicago-area locations. And like any other perishable item, it's best when fresh. [www.portillos.com](http://www.portillos.com)

About four years ago, Portillo's began selling some of its most popular menu items by mail and on its Web site. The products are frozen, packed with cooking and preparation instructions and shippable within one to two days.

Now Portillo's is taking that even further. Beginning today, patrons will be able to place mail orders on new Web-based touch-screen kiosks at Portillo's locations at 1992 W. Jefferson Ave. in Naperville and in Vernon Hills, Tinley Park, Schaumburg and Elmhurst.

If response is strong, Portillo's will place kiosks at its other locations.

"This way when people come into the restaurants and want to place an order, they won't have to wait to do it at home. They can just do it at the restaurant," said Eric Peterson, director of operations for Portillo's.

Portillo's mail and Web order business generated about 13,000 sales last year, Peterson said. He's hopeful the kiosks will boost mail orders.

"We're hoping that if someone is thinking about ordering while they're at the restaurant, having a kiosk available may increase the chance of a sale," he said.

Gino's East will install a similar system at its Chicago location at 633 N. Wells St. Other restaurants that recently signed on include Connie's Pizza, Bob Chin's of Chicago and the Giordano's group.

The software for the kiosks was developed by Chicago-based Insight 360 Degrees, a Web site and business software provider. The kiosk units were built by NCR, which also produces self-checkout systems used by Jewel-Osco and other major retailers.

Dave Milazzo, vice president of sales and marketing for Insight 360 Degrees, said it took about a year to develop the software that drives the kiosk system that will be used at Portillo's and the other restaurants.

A unique feature of the Web-based system is it will be connected to a nationwide database searchable by entering a person's last name and the state where they reside. When the correct address is found, that information is automatically imported into the shipping address for an order.

Users also will be able to set the desired delivery date and will be able to include a personalized message with their shipment.

"If someone wants to place an order but doesn't want it delivered until Christmas, the system can accommodate that," Milazzo said.

The kiosks will accept credit cards, and customers will not be charged until their order is shipped.

By fall, Insight 360 Degrees plans to roll out its retail kiosks, which will be placed in several high-pedestrian traffic locations in

Chicago, including O'Hare International Airport, Midway Airport, McCormick Place, the observation deck of the Hancock Tower, the Water Tower shopping mall and Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg.

Milazzo said the retail kiosks will be similar to those found at Portillo's and the other restaurants.

He said the retail kiosks will feature all the products from the restaurants that use the system.

Milazzo said the kiosks are a relative bargain at \$8,000 each because the cost could easily be offset with orders placed through them.

"The idea may be unproven but the potential certainly is there," Milazzo said. "If it proves to be successful, that will be tremendous for us. If it doesn't, then we go back to the drawing board."

04/01/04

 [Email Story](#)

[LOCAL NEWS](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [WEATHER](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [HEALTH](#) | [NEW HOMES & REAL ESTATE](#) | [SEARCH](#)