

NEC Display Solutions Client Installation **Education**

DERBY UNIVERSITY



MOTIVATING STUDENTS WITH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SPACES

An innovative student centred approach to effective learning at Derby University has led to the development of informal, adaptable, interactive learning spaces which stimulate, create communities and embrace inclusivity. NEC multi-touch screens, mounted on moveable furniture, empower students to configure their own learning environment to promote collaboration within small group learning spaces.



The University of Derby is a modern, innovative education provider with a clear vision for the future. Having moved up 24 places in The Guardian University Guide 2013, the university is firmly focused on continuing this upward trend by offering students experiential learning opportunities which is closely linked to the world of work. "What makes our university stand out is a clear vision to offer a good value UK education that is more personal, relevant, and business-focused," states Prof John Coyne, Vice-Chancellor. "We're also passionately committed to improving what we do every day, and are open to fresh ideas and new ways of doing things. As an institution we must always move forward."

THE CHALLENGE

Seeking new ways to learn which stimulate and encourage student participation, the Institute for Learning Enhancement and Innovation (LEI) was created to ensure a high quality student focused learning experience. The LEI supports and drives teaching developments and embeds learning technologies throughout the University's programs in

line with its innovative, forward-thinking ambitions. Simon Birkett, Technology-Enhanced Learning Manager for the LEI, spearheading the new learning spaces initiative, works in partnership with IT Services and Estates to ensure the design of learning spaces meets the academic needs of the University but is efficiently and effectively managed in a sustainable way. He states "Higher Education is highly competitive, it is imperative that we demonstrate to prospective students that we understand their needs and can provide the facilities which are conducive to the ways in which they want to learn."

In developing effective learning spaces within budgetary constraints (the university prides itself on offering superb value education), Simon Birkett praises the consultative resources available from SCHOMS*, for which he is currently Chair. "SCHOMS is a Higher Education professional body that offers strategic direction to support and promote excellence in teaching and learning. Through exchange of good practice and collaboration on common themes, this has enabled me to deliver an effective technology solution at Derby which promises excellent adaptability to meet our ongoing needs. By sharing



* The Standing Conference for Heads of Media Services www.schoms.ac.uk



knowledge and expertise within the group, we are able to make more effective use of budgets and scarce resources across the whole sector.”

THE SOLUTION

The Learning Curve is the latest such development lead by Simon Birkett at Derby University. A flexible, technology rich space, designed to be used before and after formal teaching by small groups of students, it continues to transform the way Derby designs and delivers innovation in learning spaces. Located in the Atrium, the social hub of the University, the Learning Curve at Kedleston Road is an extension of this social environment with coffee lounge areas leading through to a number of adaptable

learning spaces. Each ‘pod’ comprises a large NEC touchscreen display mounted on a moveable table, enabling the space to be reconfigured as required and for all members of a working party to have full access to view and touch the screen. With true multi-touch capability that supports up to five touch points, students find the touch control highly intuitive, controlling the content as they would a tablet device.

AVM Impact, a Solution Partner of NEC Display Solutions, is the AV integrator who worked closely with Simon Birkett to ensure Derby’s objectives were met. Simon Hutchinson, Northern Account Manager at AVM Impact says, “We have an established relationship with NEC and are confident in the quality and performance of the brand. In specifying NEC

touchscreens for this installation we were assured that Derby would receive the best possible reliability and the equipment would fit well into Simon’s aim to create adaptive working spaces. The multi-touch displays come with free DisplayNote software so Derby can take collaborative learning to the next level as the learning spaces initiative evolves.”

There are ample power sockets for mobile devices, individually controlled lighting and all the furniture is moveable, helping to create a more engaging learning experience. There are six ‘pods’ in total, four more private spaces and two which are more open, each suited to different groups of students and their needs. Simon Birkett explains, “In reconfiguring learning spaces across the University of Derby, students and staff will be provided with opportunities to engage in new learning and teaching experiences which encourage greater collaboration and cooperation.”

THE RESULT

The redesigned spaces offer the opportunity to learn and teach in very different ways. For many, this approach represents a radical change in higher education with a greater focus on group active learning rather than a teacher lead didactic approach. Derby is following a student-led strategy in line with its aim to put the student at the centre of all they do,



with the result that students are motivated to learn through interaction with other students. One MBA student states, 'learning is more active which makes it easier to learn and understand.'

A recent user evaluation revealed that 96% of students said they were happy or very happy with the new facilities, making positive comments about the technology, the new opportunities that it has provided to learn and the contemporary and professional feel that has been introduced to student facilities.

Simon Birkett comments, "we have witnessed an informal evolution at Derby, since the new facility was made available, word has spread through the student community and it is rare now to find it not in use. Simple cartoon-like instructions are displayed but other than that, the students are free to make the space work for them. Derby University has fostered a culture for collaboration which will see our students well prepared for the world of work. Feedback for the next phase of development is to make the spaces even more informal - a coffee lounge with technology

and plenty of beanbags is to be the inspiration for even greater collaborative success."

The success at Kedleston Road, the adaptability of the space and the ways it is used, will lead on to further developments and Simon Birkett is currently evaluating the use of DisplayNote software which will enable students to collaborate through their own tablet devices, sharing content and annotations on the multi-touch displays and other connected devices.

INSTALLATION INFORMATION

SITE INFORMATION

SECTOR

Education

CLIENT INFORMATION

The University of Derby
www.derby.ac.uk

INSTALLATION DATE

August 2013

INTEGRATION PARTNER

AVM Impact
www.avmimpact.com

FURNITURE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE

Learning Space Design
www.learningspacedesign.net

EQUIPMENT AND BENEFITS

6 x NEC MultiSync® V462-TM

Complementing the trend towards tablet based classroom solutions, with DisplayNote collaborative software, any connected device can share their screen, annotations and drawings with a presenter or with any other connected device. Supporting various devices and operating systems, this is a perfect solution for BYOD (bring your own device) initiatives.

The 46" MultiSync® V462-TM delivers a high resolution, intuitive, cost effective and robust solution for interactive touch applications ideal for collaborative small group learning. NEC's multi-touch displays have double anti-reflective coating for good visibility and fully tempered glass for security within the tough demands of the educational setting.

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