> Lecture Capture System
University of Leeds

EDUCATION >

Lights, Camera, Action for University of Leeds Lecturers.

The University of Leeds is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities.

The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise showed the University of Leeds to be the UK's eighth biggest research powerhouse and the University's vision is to secure a place among the world's leading universities by 2015.

The Brief

An ambitious ground breaking project worth approx. £1.1 million to upgrade the M&E infrastructure and AV systems to allow for the installation of a lecture capture system (the largest roll-out in Europe) within Central Teaching Space. Works were required in 201 teaching rooms across the campus and ranged from a simple installation of the lecture capture device to a full upgrade of power, data and installation of a new AV system.

3 categories of lecture capture system were implemented:

- Bronze - the capture of presentation and audio
- Silver - the capture of presentation, audio and video from a fixed camera
- Gold - a complete presenter tracking video solution for presentation and audio with step mats to enhance fixed whiteboard and lectern close ups

The work required had to ensure no disruption to teaching, conferences and Open Days with all works completed between March – July 2014 for usage from September 2014.

Planning

Universal took a collaborative design approach to ensure that the solution identified by Leeds - Sonic Foundry, their Mediasite Enterprise Video Platform, would integrate with existing analogue & digital teaching solutions.

The University decided that due to time constraints there would be no initial on site test room, only conceptual testing of the equipment by Vaddio, and the solution was installed into every centrally time tabled teaching space across the campus.

Universal provided a comprehensive and detailed evaluation of the existing AV estate, competitive costs and a schedule for AV enablement works in all 201 teaching rooms. This was carried out smoothly during a short contract period and alongside live teaching Universal worked efficiently to integrate the Mediasite infrastructure to deliver efficient, reliable at scale lecture capture for the University.

Installation

Universal AV delivered both an innovative and challenging project that went through the gears of project management to deliver what has been received as an outstanding success. Installations included 201 teaching spaces, with a wide range of AV configurations, 10 of the rooms have auto-tracking cameras, 40 have fixed cameras, the rest are audio and slide capture. The solution captures rich video recordings of lectures, providing students with a flexible approach to learning.

The innovation and complexity was taking varying AV standards across the estate and delivering a fully secure automated solution to capture, manage and deliver broadcast quality lectures for streaming or playback on demand.

The AV work involved bringing all rooms to a comparable standard, replacing analogue switchers, adding additional ambient audio pick-up microphones, sub mixers and both static and auto tracking web cameras in selected larger spaces.

"The commitment and professionalism delivered by Universal was outstanding, the team were flexible, often at short notice, and always went the extra mile to deliver solutions to issues encountered along the way.

The installation was of extremely high quality and we have encountered minimal technical issues since the launch of the service.

The few issues which have arisen have been dealt with swiftly and professionally by the team."

Liz Brittain, Service Manager
Facilities Support Services,
Leeds University.

System Benefits

The software allows the University to track exactly what students are viewing, how long for and how often. The technology cues professors in to how engaged a student is with content and how often specific recordings are watched. Lecture capture shapes the interactive dynamic between students and faculty.

"We capture a great amount of analytics about how students view the lectures," says Gary Weiss CEO of Sonic Foundry. "If you log on as a student and view a lecture from start to finish, a professor can observe and store that behaviour as metadata associated with the lecture. If you only go 10 minutes into and don't watch any further we store that… We keep a complete set of analytics that the educator can use to better understand the students and how they've

used the material that's been captured."

The University has recorded 16, 500 lectures which have had 230,000 individual viewings. Students have been extremely positive about the service and it is a great selling point when marketing the University to future students.

Neil Morris, Director of Digital Learning at the University of Leeds, says " The lecture capture installation has been a huge hit with students and faculty alike. The stats on students; usage have been high – one third of students have used the solution since its initial rollout last term.

"You can just tell from the numbers that the students are readily accessing this content. The feedback that we've had from the students has been phenomenal about how useful it's been to catch up on material, review information they didn't understand in class, or if they had to miss events."

Even though academics can sometimes resist technological changes in their classrooms, Morris says the University of Leeds' academics are excited about the new lecture capture system.

"Overall, there's been a lot of excitement from the academic community because of the potential it brings, and because people have been doing their own homemade lecture capture," he says. "The beauty of this solution is its ability to be used from faculty perspective, and I think it's actually almost shocked a number of academics of how easy it is to use. The interaction can be as little as literally clicking a link in an email and saying make viewable. That is all the academic has to do, they like the control and flexibility. Everyone that's given feedback has said the best thing about it is that it's so simple to use."

User Assessments and Quotations

Professor Neil Morris, Director of Digital Learning at the University:

"This is a significant investment which will transform teaching and learning here at Leeds. Not only can we capture all our audio and video assets, but this new platform will allow us to store, manage and publish content across multiple channels. We are unique in having a digital strategy that encompasses all of these elements.

"We know our students learn in different ways, so as well as attending lectures, this gives them the opportunity to engage with the materials where they may be and at their own pace. Whether that's going over topics that are particularly complex or using recordings to help with revision, this new system will provide over 3,000 students with

outstanding resources to support their learning."

Biology lecturer Dr Christopher Hassall:

"There is a lot of excitement about the new lecture capture system – the system is not just a simple and effective way of recording lectures, but opens up a whole new world of teaching techniques. For example, the traditional model of teaching would be to give a lecture during class and send the students away to read around the topic.

"With the new system we can share pre-recorded lectures with students before class and use contact time for discussions and other activities that help to develop learning from the recorded lectures."

Tom Dixon, education officer at Leeds University Union:

"I welcome and am incredibly excited by the new lecture capture technology and all that it will do to support students in their learning.

"I believe the technology will help level the playing field for students who are learning in a second language and access issues. This is really important to me as the education officer; it's both mine and the Union's focus to make sure that lecture capture is being used to benefit all members of the university community."

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