



DISPLAYING A NEW COLLABORATIVE FUTURE

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY'S NEW TEACHING SUITE
MAKES USE OF PANASONIC DISPLAYS TO CREATE A
PRODUCTIVE LEARNING SPACE



It is an exciting time for the Management School at Lancaster University as they prepare for the construction of a new building. Due in 2019, the new development offers the opportunity to review current room designs, and the potential to explore new ways to enhance the student experience.

It is an opportunity for administrators to rethink the way their classrooms are set up and how they incorporate more technology, including bring-your-own-device.

The university wanted a collaborative solution, but it had to be integrated into a pre-existing teaching space, keeping the existing lectern, projector (a Panasonic PT-RZ570) and AMX control system.

David Neal, Teaching Space Co-ordinator at Lancaster explains, "We have been looking at various wireless presentation solutions for some time; the consensus is that student expectations are changing and that the ability to deliver a more active, personalised learning experience is going to be an important part of future lesson delivery."

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Working closely with integrator Pure AV, the result is a room that can accommodate up to 35 students around five workstations.

At the heart of the installation are 42" Panasonic TH-42LF80 displays, alongside Kramer Via connect Pro wireless hubs. With the layout, students can easily work in group format, connecting to the display screen with their own devices - whether those devices are laptops, tablets or mobile phones.

Students can then work together, sharing files instantly between team members and mirroring their screen up on the display.

The Kramer Via also allows the user to maintain web access when connected to the network for screen mirroring. An important specification point for the management school and something that other solutions looked at by the University had not been able to support.

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With a thin bezel and slim design, the displays help viewers concentrate on the displayed image and make for a discreet installation. The LFE8 series supports a total of 59 different input signals making them suited to the meeting and collaborative workspace where content may come in a variety of different formats.

The system provides both tutor and students with an enormous amount of flexibility and choice in the way that content is managed and displayed. It was, therefore, important to make the process of managing those choices as straight forward as possible.

The existing control system of the room has been maintained alongside the new Kramer Via collaboration system, providing wireless device connectivity. Local sourcing switching and display control, meanwhile, is achieved using an AMX button control pad.

To help users navigate their way around the system each desk is colour coded. The control panel has a dedicated collaboration page and is programmed to ensure the room user can select and share content across the screens with a minimal number of button presses.

Staff can also pull content from the groups' displays and put them up on the main projector for all to see, making for a flexible system to show and compare work with the rest of the group.

The space has already been enthusiastically adopted by teaching staff and students alike.

"The opportunity for 'live' teaching sessions during a four week trial of the system prior to installation, was invaluable in gaining student perspectives on the value of this teaching environment. This, together with overwhelmingly positive feedback from all users, has enabled us to make a compelling case for introducing similar classroom environments on campus," said Phil Cheeseman, Head of Academic Services.

"My experience of the room has been very, very good," said Steve Barron, programme director for MSc Project Management, and an early adopter of the new room. "Use of the technology is very easy and intuitive. With no training, I was able to work out how to use the technology in minutes."

"I like the café style layout because it provides good and easy group working facilities. With the added technology that is easy to control, sharing of group work is easy. More rooms like this, please!"

The University is now planning future installations based on the same template, with a second room due for install soon.