



HELPING TO REALISE NTU'S DIGITAL VISION

29,000 +

Students attend NTU

Innovative and Inspiring

Learning Environment

£350 million +

Ongoing IT investment

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) serves more than 29,000 students across three campuses. Firmly committed to using the very latest technology to deliver enhanced learning capabilities, it's invested more than £350million in IT infrastructure since 2003. First-class facilities, an innovative teaching approach and an appetite for embracing new technologies has helped create an inspiring learning environment for one of the UK's leading new universities.

Find out more about NTU on their [website](#).

The Challenge

Teaching practices have evolved massively in recent years. In the last decade, NTU has introduced many of the very latest developments to help ensure that its students have access to the most effective learning opportunities. Digital delivery of teaching materials was identified as critical to providing students with easy-to-access, media-rich learning and communication resources that would enrich their academic experience. To achieve this, NTU implemented a long-term project aimed at delivering a broad range of innovative solutions that would be easy to use, easy to maintain and bring the university closer to becoming a predominantly digital environment.

Critical Success Factors

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Improve AV estate to deliver enhanced learning

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Reduce AV management complexity

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Deliver/configure innovative AV solutions

The Solution

NTU's Audio Visual and Media Services (AVMS) team had previous experience of working with Softcat through the North-Eastern University Procurement Consortium (NEUPC) Audio Visual framework, a Higher Education purchasing contract that aims to gain best value in IT purchasing for its university members. As Stuart Loughran, Audio Visual and Media Services Team Leader, said: "We approached Softcat to help identify suitable technologies that would enable us to install Audio/Visual (AV) technologies that were user-friendly, less complex to manage and capable of delivering the functionality and quality needed to deliver up-to-the-minute teaching."

Throughout all of the projects delivered, Softcat worked with installation partner Videonations, an independent AV and Video Conferencing specialist with more than 15 years' experience, to help source the right technologies for NTU's particular requirements. Across multiple projects, Softcat and Videonations worked closely with the team to ensure that each installation was the ideal fit for each project.

Close collaboration was essential. Having found earlier technologies complex to manage, the AVMS team worked alongside Softcat and Videonations to develop a user interface that would add the most value and be easier for staff and students to use. With three separate campuses, teaching a broad range of subjects, ensuring that every user could benefit from the technology on offer was critical to the project's success.

A major redevelopment of the Newton Building, a Grade II listed site at the heart of the City Campus, was the ideal opportunity to completely refresh the AV backbone of Lecture Theatre 2. Leading-edge technologies, such as high-end projectors, audio equipment and lecture capture capabilities, were installed alongside a user-friendly control system.

Much improved displays in teaching rooms and viewing and recording technologies were installed during the renovation of the Taylor Building. Every piece of AV technology was replaced and 12 rooms now benefit from improved signage screens and other equipment designed to enhance the learning experience.

At the Brackenhurst campus, home to NTU's School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, a 4m outdoor LED screen, multiple HD cameras and recording and playback facilities are now in place to fulfil a niche requirement. The technology will be able to capture in detail Equestrian teaching activities, for instance, to help improve riding technique and training.

The Erasmus Darwin labs, located on the Clifton Campus, underwent a radical refit to improve AV provision. A full back-end refresh, improvements to audio capabilities and the installation of the very latest HDMI matrix were complemented by twelve connection points across two labs to encourage collaborative working.

And across all three campuses significantly improved AV facilities are now in place. Twenty lecture rooms now have cameras, audio and Panopto lecture capture capabilities. The DICe lecture theatre benefits from a 5m wide screen, high end audio and projection facilities and more than 50 General Purpose Teaching (GPT) spaces have bespoke technology to improve collaborative working. Flexible Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Workzones, have been installed across four locations and libraries and pastoral needs haven't been overlooked either, with significant improvements to AV and signage resources in common areas like the SU gym.

"Multiple AV solutions installed across the university have significantly improved the learning and living experience for our students and staff," said Stuart Loughran. "Information can be shared much more effectively and we now have the sort of digital environment demanded by today's learners and educators."

Solution highlights

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Multiple projects in multiple locations

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Simplified AV management capabilities

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AV environment that encourages collaboration

The Benefits

As is to be expected, one of the main benefits gained is the improvement in information sharing and its capacity to enhance the learning and teaching process. Through implementing AV technologies that encourage collaboration, the university is now able to much more effectively, capture and distribute information for the benefit of all.

The cloud-based lecture capture technology, Panopto, enables teaching to be recorded across multiple locations, stored and accessed from any device within the university. It greatly enhances the distribution of information and ensures that students can easily access information critical to their studies - when it's convenient for them.

The Equestrian Centre can now simply and quickly analyse performance using video capture technology and then translate that analysis into improved teaching and riding technique with the minimum of fuss. The technology facilitates collaborative working, where students and staff benefit from the insight provided by the video capture capabilities.

And that capacity for improved collaboration has been enhanced across the university. From collaborative BYOD workzones, to connection points installed in university labs, the capacity for students and staff to cooperate in shared virtual and non-virtual work spaces is helping to improve the teaching, learning and living environment.

The technology is offering improved flexibility to help ensure that resources are used to the maximum. The DICe Lecture Theatre, for instance, now benefits from extra side screens capable of transmitting additional information to what appears on the 5m wide main projection screen, making it ideal for non-teaching applications like conferencing.

And it's all easier to manage. "Overall, the university now has an AV estate that delivers a much better service to everyone," said Stuart. "From an IT viewpoint, it's much simpler to use, it's more robust and it delivers great value to the university as a whole."

Benefits at a glance

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Improved information sharing capabilities

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Enhanced learning through lecture capture technologies

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Simpler to use and more robust AV solutions

Why Softcat?

Fulfilling clients' often unique needs is one of Softcat's major strengths. Understanding what the customer needs and collaborating with industry-leading partners, such as Videonations, to source the ideal solution helps it add value to any given project. "It was great to work with Softcat and Videonations. Customer service was excellent and the professional support provided was first class," said Stuart. "What they don't know they will find out. Then they'll report back with a suitable solution based on the most effective technology, which is exactly what we needed."

The success of this and many other projects Softcat has been involved with illustrates how working collaboratively to identify technologies capable of delivering solutions to a client's niche requirements, and tailoring installations where necessary, helps them maximise resources and realise their strategic vision.

About Videonations

Videonations operate from their Manchester and London premises and benefit from the support of the Nycomm Group while continuing to offer a personal service to their clients. They are fully accredited with all major suppliers of video conferencing and audio visual integration, offering their clients a custom-built solution best suited to their individual needs.

Videonations provides solutions to customers from all industries, no matter the scale or complexity of the project. Thanks to their relationships with manufacturers and their parent company, they can provide complete solutions, catering for all aspects of customers' visual communication challenges.

Their services include demonstrations, network connectivity, installations, training, technical support and managed services.