



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

COLLABORATION SUITE

CASE STUDY

## Lancaster University explores Active Learning with the introduction of a new Collaboration Suite.

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.

Teaching Space Coordinator at Lancaster University, David Neal, explained that collaborative learning and support for BYOD has been under consideration for some time.

### DIGITAL CLASSROOM ROADSHOW SPARKS INTERESTS

It was, however, the arrival of the **Digital Classroom Roadshow**, an initiative created by consultant Duncan Peberdy of Droitwich.net and supported by JISC that ultimately resulted in the Management Schools' decision to go ahead with the installation of the Collaborative Suite.

The Roadshow involved the temporary installation of a fully functioning Digital Classroom for a four-week period during the summer. This installation gave a wide range of people from across the university a hands-on experience of a fully equipped digital learning space.

The exercise enabled staff to try out various techniques for technology enhanced active learning, generating excellent feedback that would be carried forward to support the ultimate design and introduction of the new Collaboration Suite.

### A COLLABORATION BETWEEN NEW AND EXISTING EQUIPMENT

The solution implemented by Pure AV had to be integrated into a pre-existing teaching space and retain the existing lectern, projector and AMX control system. It would also incorporate the main features of the Digital Classroom seen at the Roadshow, with the requirement to create a powerful yet simple to use collaborative teaching environment.

The system created by Pure AV was designed to retain the rich collaborative functionality demonstrated during the roadshow while providing room users with simple control. Simplicity delivered in part by the ease of use that the Kramer Via solution offers, but above all through the bespoke programming of the control system and user interface.

“Colin Hasted, systems specialist at Pure AV, did a really good job with the programming of the user interface, keeping it straightforward with minimal button presses required to complete actions.”

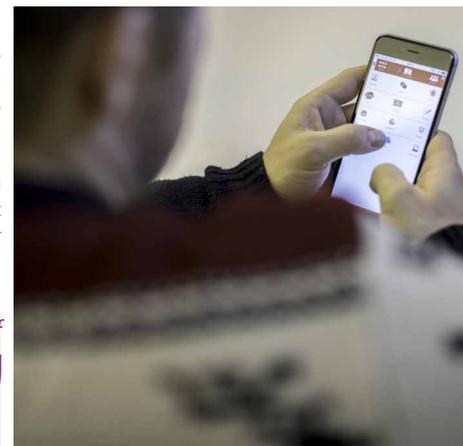
DAVID NEAL  
TEACHING SPACE COORDINATOR

“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.”

DAVID NEAL  
TEACHING SPACE COORDINATOR

“The opportunity for ‘live’ teaching sessions 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.”

PHIL CHEESEMAN  
HEAD OF ACADEMIC SERVICES



## POWERFUL COLLABORATION

The room can accommodate up to 35 students seated around 5 Top-Tec Synergy Quad workstations. Each desk has a 42" Panasonic TH-42LFE8 Professional Display with HDMI and VGA input for laptops. A Kramer Via Connect Pro provides wireless device connectivity, and local source switching and display control are managed via an eight button AMX control pad situated at each student desk.



The arrangement enables students to work in groups connecting to the display screen with their own devices whether they are laptops, tablets or mobile phones. Once connected they can work together using their own devices, with the finished files available for instant sharing with every team member.

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.

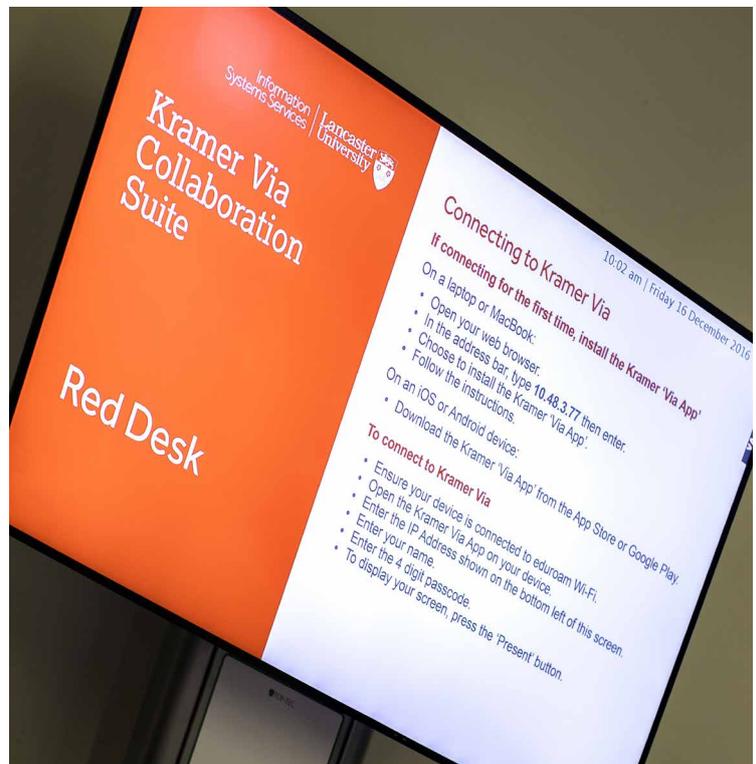
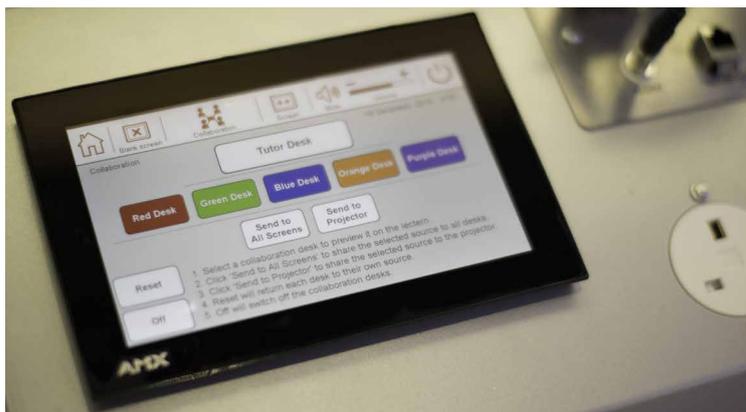
The main tutor desk in the room can display content on the main projection display (a pre-existing Panasonic PT-RZ570 Laser Projector), as well as to each group desk. Additionally, a Kramer Via Collage and Kramer VS88DT matrix switch enable the tutor desk to select and distribute the content from any of the group desks to any or all other displays in the room.

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.

## SIMPLE CONTROL

The University IT team has created a wall paper for the Kramer Vias so that at first log in the user is greeted with step by step instructions on how to connect. Physical colour coding of the desks and colour coding of the Kramer wall paper on the individual displays is used to help users navigate their way around the system. The visual prompt is supported by some astute programming to ensure that actions such as selecting and sharing content across the screens are achieved with a minimal number of button presses and by keeping the user interface clear and concise.

David Neal is particularly pleased with the programming carried out by the Pure AV team.



The control panel is designed with a dedicated collaboration page. The tutor simply needs to press the corresponding colour desk illustrated on the screen and choose where to send it; whether to all the desks or the main projector or both. It is then possible to go on to select other colours to share or press the reset button to return the room so that each station is displaying its own content.

The installation window was a week. The network requirement was considered early in the project, ensuring a smooth deployment.

A programme of pre-start meetings between the Pure AV project manager and the university ensured that the Engineers came to site well briefed; roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, and the process for integration with the pre-existing system was clearly understood. As a result, Pure AV was able to deliver a trouble-free installation experience for the technical team at the University.

**“ The installation was very good. A pre-start meeting with Pure AV project manager and the electrical contractor helped to ensure power and data locations and roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, and everyone was on the same page. ”**

**DAVID NEAL**  
TEACHING SPACE COORDINATOR

## EASY AND INTUITIVE

The collaboration room has received an enthusiastic reception from staff within the Management School. Steve Barron, programme director MSc Project Management at Lancaster University, is one of the early adopters of the Collaborative Suite and has used the room for teaching and student presentation of group work. He said, *“My experience of the room has been very, very good. 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.”*

He added, that while there has been no formal study, *“informal student feedback suggests that they like and appreciate the facilities”*.

Lancaster is now planning future installations based on the same template with a second room due for install in the next couple of months. *“It’s early days, but as more people become aware of the facilities we expect usage to develop and increase”*. David Neal.

It is a development that should please Steve Barron who concluded,

**“ 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! ”**

**STEVE BARRON**  
PROGRAMME DIRECTOR MSc PROJECT MANAGEMENT