TOP-TEC Case Study:

University of Derby

B226 Collaboration Lab (Kedleston Road, B Block)
The University of Derby is one of the largest Universities in the Midlands and today is home to more than 29,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. The University believes ‘anything is possible’ and are committed to helping students get their careers off to a great start through a variety of courses at all levels. They pride themselves on delivering an outstanding level of education and are renowned for regularly updating their teaching facilities to help enhance the overall student experience.

The University is well-known for introducing new technology into a range of learning environments to help further benefit the students, helping move away from traditional style lecture theatres and classroom setups.

As part of these ongoing renovations, TOP-TEC were approached by Mark Daniels, Senior AV Engineer at the University and Stuart Harris, Technical Project Lead at GV Multimedia, regarding Technical Furniture solutions for a brand-new B226 Collaboration Lab located in the Kedleston Road Building.

The overall objective for the new collaboration lab was to create an easy to use and engaging space to encourage students to work together for a more collaborative outcome, whilst also introducing the latest education technology. Mark and Stuart didn’t want to play it safe, but were committed to ‘sitting at the forefront of technology’, with the goal of supporting new and innovative teaching methods to get the best out of the students.

At the start of the project, Stuart recommended the new Crestron AirBoard™ whiteboard capture system as an option for the new space. Having tested this type of AV over IP technology in other parts of the University, both were keen to include it in the new collaboration lab.
Regarding the technical furniture within the space, the University required a height adjustable screen mount solution for a main 98" NEC display, an audio visual lectern as a control point for the AV and five individual collaborative desks to provide group working spaces for students.

Each table would also need to integrate a NUC PC, a 55" screen, microphone and camera units for lecture capture purposes and power & data modules for students to charge their laptop & tablet devices.

The Solution

Due to the fact the furniture would be the base for most of the technology in the room, it was important to get the right supplier for this type of project. Having used our technical furniture in several recent projects, the University of Derby and GV Multimedia were confident that TOP-TEC could deliver on key aspects of the project, utilising our ability to easily integrate all types of AV/IT equipment into our furniture solutions.

After several project meetings, our SYNERGY collaborative tables were selected as the preferred solution going forward. TOP-TEC then provided a series of 2D room layouts for the University to choose from featuring our SYNERGY Collaborative Tables alongside several screen mount and AV lectern options.

Having decided on a final room layout, the University installed five SYNERGY PLECTRUM 9-seat collaborative tables providing room for up to 45 students at any one time. One of the key criteria from the beginning was to encourage group learning, resulting in the selection of the PLECTRUM configuration due to its shape promoting group focus and collaboration between participants.
Each table was supplied with a bespoke housing for an NUC PC below the worktop, a secure screen mount for an NEC 55” 4K LFD, power and data modules in the worktop and mast, a screen shroud featuring vinyl branding of the University’s logo and integrated webcam & MXA310W table microphone units for lecture capture purposes.

To further enhance collaboration and group focus, each table was supplied with different coloured chairs with matching LED lights on each microphone unit to help the lecturer know which group is talking when giving feedback.

For the main display at the front of the room, we supplied a DISCOVERY FLOOR-TO-WALL mount able to secure the large 98” NEC Shadowsense touch screen. The fully height adjustable screen mount suits any user height preference enabling Equality Act Compliance within the space.

To manage all the AV, an EXPLORER MONO 1500 was supplied at the front of the classroom. The AV lectern featured a 16U rack space, a bespoke control panel housing for the integration of the Crestron TSW-1060, a dual articulated monitor arm and vinyl branding of the University’s logo to enforce the brand identity within the new collaboration lab.

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Crestron AirBoard™
Committed to introducing the latest technology into the new lab space, the University implemented the new Crestron Airboard™ whiteboard capture system.

The overhead camera and snapshot feature allow students access to the content on the white board and cast it onto the Synergy’s screen for discussion. Students can also connect their smartphones or tablets via the AirMedia software.
The Result

The new space provides a fantastic base for students to collaborate with one another and has been well received by all at the University. From the beginning of the project, the focus on encouraging group work can now be seen in a number of aspects throughout the lab.

The Crestron AirBoard™ whiteboard capture technology is the first of its kind at classroom level and further enhances collaboration within the new learning space.

All of the AV has been seamlessly integrated into the TOP-TEC technical furniture, which can be controlled from the Explorer lectern at the front of the room, creating a completely interactive learning environment that is easy to use and engaging for both the students and lecturers.

“We are always looking at ways to improve the overall learning experience for our students, and the installation of this new technology alongside the TOP-TEC technical furniture has provided an innovative way for them to collaborate and communicate with each other”

Mark Daniels
Senior AV Engineer
University of Derby

Kit list

5x Synergy Plectrum (9-seat)
- Secure screen mount for NEC 55” 4K LFD
- Screen shroud w/ vinyl branding
- Coloured seating upholstery
- Mast inputs (2x 13A / 1x HDMI / 1x USB)
- Desktop power & data (2x13A / 2x USB)
- Bespoke enclosure for NUC PC beneath the worktop
- MXA310W table microphone

1x Explorer (Mono 1500)
- Dual Enoo monitor arm
- Vinyl branding
- Bespoke control panel housing for the Crestron TSW-1060

1x Discovery (Floor-to-wall)
- NEC 98” Shadowsense
- Electrical height adjustment

AV integration by:

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