City, University of London, UK: MATRIX at the Department of Journalism

Exterior view of building: City, University of London

Located in the heart of London, the Department of Journalism at City, University of London, is one of the leading providers of journalism education in the UK. With over 5,000 graduates currently working in the media in the UK, and internationally, its state-of-the-art facilities include: a television studio, four radio studios, two radio broadcast newsrooms, two digital newsrooms, and two TV editing and production newsrooms. The institution offers nine MA courses and a three-year BA course, focusing on online, data, broadcast, and print journalism. The latest addition to these impressive learning facilities is an active learning classroom powered by vSolution MATRIX from WolfVision.

Commenting on the design brief, James Rutherford, FHEA, MA, Senior Educational Technologist at City, said, "I was very keen to design a space with technology that reflects a forward thinking approach based on a contemporary pedagogical methodology. The aim is to create a post-convergent collaborative environment where students are led through the curriculum and practical activities that mirror a typical newsroom. My brief from the academic team was to embrace contemporary pedagogic styles for the development of

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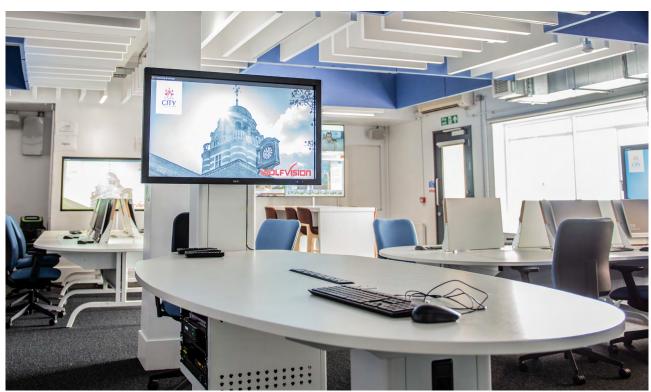https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/arts-social-sciences/journalism

craft skills through guided experiential learning. The technology and the furniture will create opportunities for a rich student experience that will support the teaching and learning of journalistic skills needed for the inter-connected world of today and tomorrow." The new room, installed by UK integrator, Reflex Limited, consists of four student stations, each with a Cy-nap Core system, plus a central teaching station equipped with a Cynap system. These devices are connected via network infrastructure, enabling classroom content materials of all types to be easily shared between the student stations and main station as required. James Rutherford said, "I designed the layout to allow easy, frequent and informal interactions ac-ross the groups of student media teams, under the leadership of acade-mic staff, who would be situated centrally in the space, I use the term 'the mentor in the centre' to describe their role at the hub of the newsroom."

In use, each of the student stations is designed to represent a particular type of media: print jour-nalism, radio, TV news, and social media, and classes are typically split into groups, each tasked to work on one speci-fic type of media. News items in different formats can be shared by the in-structor to the student stations, and students are able to work in parallel using the different media content. Completed work is either shared onto the main classroom display, or to all screens in the room. The vSolution MA-

Main teacher station in the active learning classroom at City, University of London, Department of Journalism.

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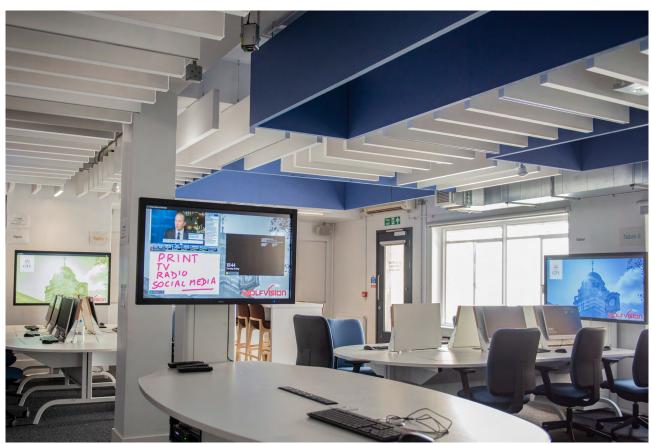
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TRIX solution provides a flexible platform for working with different media, and control of on-screen materials is kept simple using the instructor's 'Room View' screen which is customised to closely match the actual layout of the room. It is very straightforward for instructors to see exact-ly what is displayed on either individual or all student stations at any time during group sessions, and it also provides convenient drag and drop functionality, for distribution of classroom materials to student stations as required. Each student station has 5-6 PCs, and WolfVision's vSolution Cast software is used to enable content to be sent over the network, and presented onto the main screen. Students are also encouraged to use their own mobile devices, and the Cynap Core systems ensure easy wireless BYOD connectivity without requiring apps or buttons, for all iOS, Android, Windows, and macOS devices. This is the first installation of its type at the university, and security was an important consideration when selecting a suitable system, particularly with the requirement for students to be able to use their own laptops, smartphones and tablets

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in the classroom. A key benefit of the WolfVision solution is that all Cynap and Cynap Core systems in the classroom are connected to Eduroam. This secure roaming access service for education, ensures that all users of the room are properly authenticated, and all users with access to the network are known to administrators. Outside of normal timetabled classroom sessions with an instructor, students are encouraged to make use of the technology in the room, and the vSolution MATRIX system enables individual tables to be utilised independently, without needing the main teacher station to be in operation. In this way, City is able to maximise usage of this outstanding learning space. WolfVision is extremely proud to play a supporting role in student education at City, University of London, and looks forward to providing support and advice to this leading educational institution for many years to come.

Students at City can either use the in-room PCs or their own mobile devices to share content on-screen.

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