



Utelogy at the London Business School

The London Business School (LBS) is one of the world's leading business schools. Each year its campus, spread across several buildings in the heart of London and including the new Sammy Ofer Centre, is host to somewhere in the region of 12,000 students and executives.

Up to 120 lectures a day take place at the School, spread across 140 teaching and meeting spaces, all of which results in an equally impressive AV estate. More than 2500 devices are in regular use at the School, which are maintained by a dedicated crew of just 5 AV support staff.

It's a lot to deal with and as a fee-paying school which has taught some of the brightest business minds of recent decades, there is constant pressure to ensure that everything is online and working all the time. "The first lectures are at 8.15 in the morning, and on the busier days you may have five lectures starting on one site, eight starting on another, and someone has to get round all those lecture theatres just to make sure that everything is okay before 8.15," comments Wayne Buttigieg, Head of Infrastructure, at London Business School.

Two significant events during 2020 have moved the goalposts at LBS, however. One is the event that has affected us all, and the way the School has had to respond to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic by shifting to a new method of hybrid teaching. The second is that it has installed the Utelogy platform to gain dramatically improved visibility into its AV estate, the way that it is being utilised, and the way that it can evolve in the future.

"We have something like 30 large teaching spaces, between lecture theatres and classrooms, as well as many student rooms, and they're all equipped with AV hardware," explains Mario Vergara, Teaching Specialist, IT, at London Business School. "Using Utelogy we've been able to set up automatic room checks that are scheduled to run at 6am daily, just before the morning shift starts for the IT Customer Services team. They're able to identify issues and go straight to the room that has that issue instead of checking every room from scratch. In the current Covid-19 environment, we have reduced coverage of engineers, so this efficiency is all the more pertinent."



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Saving time for the LBS' engineers and reducing time to lecture start has been only one of the key benefits of the system though which unites a wide range of equipment under a series of quick reference dashboards. The School has invested heavily in state-of-the-art AV equipment in recent years, so its equipment list covers everything from Wolfvision Cynap Cores and visualisers to AMX and Crestron panels, NEC and Iiyama screens, Panasonic cameras, Barco systems, and a whole lot more.

And during the course of 2020 it has had to pivot a lot of that estate to a new hybrid teaching model that accommodates the need for social distancing and students having to dial in from off campus.

"In May we decided, as a School, that teaching would be in a hybrid format, but hadn't decided in what form," says Buttigieg. "From there through to 21st September when our first live classes started, there were clearly a lot of things that needed to be done. But in terms of control, the Utelogy platform has enabled us to quickly get things done and experiment. In setting up hybrid teaching we created several configurations and, because we were able to come up with user interfaces so quickly ourselves using U-Console and U-Control, we were able to demonstrate the rooms to faculty. That was really useful; instead of waiting for a professional programmer, an AMX or Crestron programmer and pay for that work to be done, we could just rapidly prototype them ourselves with Utelogy. As the process was iterative, the speed to concept was invaluable."

Also of great value is the integration Utelogy has made with Zoom which we have tested in readiness for the return to conventional teaching and will provide in-room control of the Zoom meeting for the lecturer. By using this integration, the technology in meeting rooms can be controlled, monitored and managed through a single touch panel with the familiar Zoom Room interface configured using Utelogy. Users can control the Zoom Room elements which include the conferencing codec, the microphones, camera and display and also control other in-room devices including lighting and occupancy room sensors.

This constant adaptability is one of the real benefits LBS takes from its Utelogy installation. "We made quite a few tweaks from what we were originally proposing with hybrid learning," says Buttigieg. "Having a tool that allows you to do that on the fly really did help."

It is also changing the way the AV team at the school is looking at new kit. "You start thinking 'Does that manufacturer have a decent API because if they do that means we can support this so much better'. But we can even create custom drivers easily now if need be."

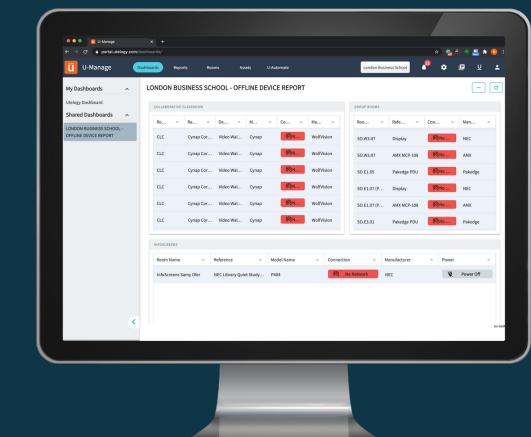
One instance of that involved designing a button for a lecturer using Wolfvision Cynap to share content via Zoom side by side in the School's new Virtual Classroom. "It's just a macro that governs the functionality of the button and ensures nothing unexpected happens, but she loves it. That is exactly the sort of project we would not have been able to do in the past as we can't justify paying a programmer to build something that may only ever be used by one person. Utelogy effectively gives us experimentation for free."

The Utelogy system at LBS is still relatively new — indeed, some functionality had only been live for just over a week when we talked to the team there — so that means that there are some significant areas of its functionality that it is yet to explore. And part of that involves data and seeing precisely what is being used when over the School's diverse estate.

"Utilisation data will be very useful, especially for the group rooms," says Buttigieg. "I often pass by a room which has some amazing equipment in it to find someone just sitting in there tapping away at a laptop that isn't connected to anything. Digging into the data will help us understand better what rooms need what equipment in them and enable us to target our resources in a much more efficient manner."

THE UTEOLOGY ADVANTAGE AND KEY RESULTS

- Reduced initial capital expenditure and total cost of ownership
- Reduce start to meeting and lecture times
- A hardware and software agnostic, reliable and secure solution that can be self-maintained
- Flexibility to continuously improve and update technology in the classroom and lecture halls while at the same time maintaining legacy systems
- Room readiness testing and automated overnight room sweeps
- Ability to support hybrid working, teaching, and learning environments



The Utelogy platform is an easy-to-deploy, easy-to-use, and easy-to-support technology that is constantly evolving to fit the needs of the current market. LBS was drawn to the platform for its superior monitoring, management, and analytics, with control being a huge bonus. Utelogy is a flexible single platform making it ideal to integrate with teaching space, Smart Classrooms, Auditoriums, and hybrid learning environments. The software can run on any network and any server, virtual or otherwise. This revolutionary approach eliminates large up-front hardware and programming costs and delivers a superior return on investment. Utelogy makes it easy to deploy meeting and teaching spaces at scale with a focus on improved system uptime and enhanced user experience. Utelogy delivers strategic benefits so you don't have to abandon your existing technology investment and have the flexibility to make choices in the future.

"We want to harness Utelogy further, with more custom interfaces for experimentation, more automation for checks and healing and ultimately use the data to make real ROI decisions."