SCHOMS

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connections

expertise creativity enhancement technology community support

Focus on the tides of change

Heart of the SCHOMS conference activities - the atrium in the Fusion Building at Bournemouth.

WELCOME to the first of your Connections newsletter follow-ups to the SCHOMS19 conference at Bournemouth University.

It's a briefing of all the emergent topics and discussions.

The main edition of Connections will be published in Spring next year including more detailed accounts and wider features.

MEMBERS really did like being beside the seaside for their annual conference, according to feedback.

85% of respondents rated SCHOMS19 'excellent'.

It wasn't just the location and organisation that met with waves of approval - one delegate said:

// Great conference, great selection of speakers. I've come away full of ideas for my institution //

Most satisfyingly another said:

// It is always amazing how at home I feel //

Turn to pages 2 and 5 for more feedback.

The conference was attended by 60 delegates from 46 UK institutions – including 13 first-time attendees – and overseas visitors from Malta, New Zealand and Australia.

Presentations covered the full range of learning technology topics from virtual reality and video conferencing to project management and personal development.

And, of course, the conference was again the showcase for one of the UK's highest-profile suppliers' exhibitions with an HE focus (page 6).

SCHOMS20: Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, 19-21 May

Google on a different scale

DELEGATES didn't need to Google search 'AV at speed and scale' – Gary Keene from the technology giant was there to tell them all about it.

Gary, Manager of Audio Visual Operations with Google, revealed the design, deployment and support issues involved in running video conferencing (VC) for 20,000 meeting rooms.

"As an organisation we're growing 20% year-on-year, our VC use is growing 35% year-on-year and in any given week we're typically opening about 50 new VC rooms," he told delegates.

Gary – who runs a team of designers, project managers and UX-ers focusing on Google's conference spaces – added: "Our goal is simple – to deliver technology that makes Google uniquely productive. Having that clarity of vision when you're working at this scale and speed is absolutely critical."

Google had a catalogue of 11 room products – 95% at standardised costs – and Gary went into more detail about three of them.

The **conference room** – a box of interchangeable panels, allowing clients to build the room themselves – sat on the floor, kept in place by its weight. "A goal was to be able to deploy it within 24 hours," Gary said. "It's been tremendously helpful for our business customers because we can supply extra facilities on demand."

It also included two screens and a 'conference unit' with frames, monitor, speaker, camera and colour-coded cables.

The **lecture theatre** was a single rack with standardised lecterns. Ceiling projectors, wall screens and speakers were all routed into predefined points.

At the top end was **auditoria** which seated around 200 people and were used mainly for customer events.

In touch with virtual reality

ACADEMICS from Swansea University told SCHOMS19 how new ideas in teaching and learning were being turned into reality – by virtual reality.

Joanne Hudson explained how using virtual reality (VR) in a sport and exercise science undergraduate degree helped students gain an insight into the experiences of frail older adults.

Peter Dorrington and Will Harrison described how they used VR to boost creativity in a mechanical engineering undergraduate course.

Joanne, who is Associate Professor and Portfolio Director in the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Swansea, explained an app which enabled students to experience how they would look and feel when older.

"We kitted up the students and restricted their movement and breathing while they did basic tasks."

According to feedback, students gained a greater appreciation of the risks for older adults. "In terms of using virtual reality, that was all positive. They thought it was easy and high quality, it was relevant and it helped them to build empathy."

Course leaders Peter and Will gave 200 Year Two mechanical engineering students the challenge of designing a human-powered taxi.

"We spent a few hours with them developing and brainstorming a concept, encouraging them to be more creative and to bring it to reality," Will said.

"VR addresses problems with scale and creativity. It raises physical questions. When you bring the model into VR, you can put a seat inside and realise you might bang your head or discover that the drive chain is somewhere harmful.

"We used GravitySketches software, it's quite intuitive, and once students knew what the software could do, they came back with designs in their head and started putting them together."

5 things you should know...

LEADING authority on document clarity Jon Moon turned his attention to giving presentations and revealed how to come up with entertaining content. Lists.

Speech that's a list

"You've got to give a talk on AV/IT, stand up and say 'The five myths of AV/IT' 'Six things you don't know about AV/IT' 'AV/IT in five numbers'. Hang what you want to say on that construct."

Most talks are dreadful

"With presentations to bosses we worry about what colours we use, what size font, they interrupt, they find typing errors, they hijack and humiliate. With lunch and learns, we tell 'em what we're going to tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell em' what we told 'em. Most talks are dreadful because the bar is really low. If you do a half-decent one, you'll shine."

Good slides won't save a bad talk

"We've all seen someone show a dreadful slide and then start to talk and we go, 'oh you're brilliant, I don't know who did your slides but you should sack them'. Also people spend too long worrying about their slides and not enough time thinking about what they are going to say. I'm not against slides. I'm against script-on-screen and cliched photos."

Role-play your reports

"Have you ever been writing a report or presentation and you're thinking 'am I saying what I need to say'. Grab somebody and say 'force me to verbally summarise it to you in 30 seconds.'"

Add KFC to your work

"I got this from another author, Andy Maslen, a copywriter.

K – what you want your reader or listener to **Know**. We are trained to vomit out facts, figures, analysis, Gannt charts. Everyone is sick of them.

F – what do you want your reader or delegate to **Feel**. Think about what reaction you seek, therefore what buttons to press to get it.

C – what do you want them to **Commit** to be it buying the product, approving the plan."

Technology screen test

TECHNOLOGY is changing so much in HE teaching and learning - and delegates were given an interactive flavour of one of the developments.

Dr Dave Fevyer, Innovation and Technology Manager at Bournemouth University, invited delegates to try chroma key green screen technology in a way that academic staff might use it to create short videos.

Split into six working groups, each was asked to design a one-minute elevator pitch about an emerging technological trend using Bandicam software, a webcam, a pop-up green screen and a laptop or PC.

It was all part of an afternoon workshop called 'Tech Futures: Innovating Pedagogy' introduced by Professor of Learning Innovation, Debbie Holley.

"The challenge for us educators is to shift our own attitudes and practices and to work with students to create new ways of working together," she said.

Thinking outside the box - literally

AV Technical Lead Rodrigo Sanchez-Pizani presented his SCHOMS Bursary winning project on the importance of an holistic approach to AV standards.

He had been given the opportunity to present it at AETM Adelaide last November.

Rodrigo said that standards being reviewed at his place of work – Kings College London – focussed initially on technology and overlooked the people who would be using it.

"We didn't focus on defining problems and the people we are servicing," he told delegates. "That's an important change in the current standards. You have to think outside the box literally. Don't think about the device the manufacturer gives you, think more about the service holistically."
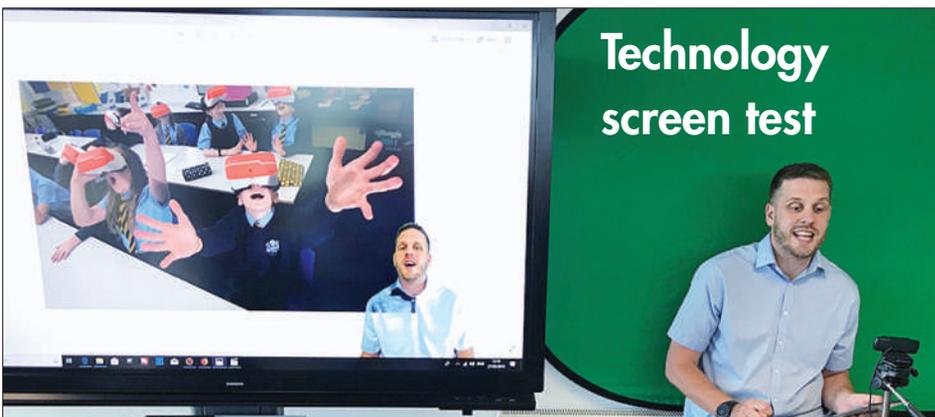
Now when assessing rooms, Rodrigo said his team looked into factors such as acoustics, room volume, lighting and what the room was going to be used for. "The standards are defined by the needs of users and the types of rooms being serviced."

Rodrigo added that team support was important. "We've done a lot of work in trying to bring up the skills set," he said. "We had no certified CTS technicians, now about 50% of our team is CTS certified."

He said feedback had confirmed that establishing holistic AV standards was vital to the student experience. "Over 70% said it was either 'very important' or 'extremely important' to be able to understand messages."

Quality AV standards also helped to improve spaces and motivate staff to provide a better service.

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in brief

Bursary boost

The SCHOMS bursary scheme demonstrates our commitment to staff development and to enhancing members' knowledge and experience.

It is designed to support members who wish to research or demonstrate innovation and excellence in their field.

Please look out for the next round a bursaries set to be launched in December which will include the research project, funding for specific projects investigating issues common to the community and the Presentation bursary, which provides funding up to £2,200 to attend and present at the AETM conference in Australia, November 2020.

Training regime

BENEFITS of gaining professional accreditation were underlined to delegates by AVIXA senior staff instructor Chuck Espinoza.

He stressed the importance of being able to carry out jobs in accordance with all standards, certifications and processes.

He said it was vital to be able to provide the best systems time and time again and to hold integrators responsible for their work.

Chuck explained what went into the CTS, CTS-I and CTS-D training courses offered by AVIXA under its partnership with SCHOMS.

AVIXA Regional Manager Ben Barnard said the partnership gave SCHOMS members free acccess to CTS training materials.

An AVIXA training session had been held on the day before conference opened. This was a valuable and productive half-day session.

Wins from the best of three

AETM Vice President Emerson Pratt spoke of how a geek, a dentist and a builder changed the face of project planning for a major university development in New Zealand.

As newly-appointed ICT Manager for the Dental School at the University of Otago – the southern hemisphere's largest dental school and practice – he decided to change the structure of a traditional project office.

Work had been going on for three years when he was brought into the role. "I was given 16 months to complete it with no budget and no staff," he told delegates.

The key part was to get away from the idea that construction ran projects, he said. "It's a change of mythology that's hard to get through.

"Our building team is amazing at building but has no idea about IT, no idea about AV and certainly no idea about being a dentist.

"We brought the three prongs together – builders, customers and AV/IT – in the same office."

Emerson was joined in the Dental

School Project Office by building project director Jamie Cargill and full-time dentist Dr Peter Cathroe.

Each project manager had their specialty and user groups. "For example, I had an X-ray team made up of dentists and most importantly, our students and our dental nurses. The day-to-day dental nurse perspective was completely different to that of the dentists and academics."

Having the project officers under the same roof was key, Emerson said. "You got to hear the little details that you don't get in meetings – 'this is running late', 'this is going to affect AV/IT', 'the dentists need another two chairs, what's that going to mean for the network'.

"We certainly gained a better understanding of our users and what they wanted."

• In his AETM report, Emerson said it was hoped AV/IT forums on the AETM website would be extended to include SCHOMS members. He added that the AETM membership had been opened to non-university members, including museums and larger high schools.

Strategy with wow factor

LEARNING Systems Manager Kevin Knox shared the methods he used to bring network-centric IT change to Australian National University.

Faced with taking over a 42-room refresh programme with three months to deliver – including the Christmas season – he embarked on a major management process around the Pedagogy Space and Technology (PST) model (Radcliffe 2008).

"I had a look at where we were, conducted focus group meetings with academics and students, asked them all what was going well, what could be improved and to provide one aspirational component with pedagogy, space and technology.

"I collated it all and created a formal SWOT analysis document."

He said he knew the future of infrastructure was all about network-centric models so he built relationships

with the network manager and investigated AV standards.

"Most important was the execution of the strategy," Kevin said. "Without people, the strategy does not evolve.

"I did a skills gaps analysis and presented it to Chief Information Officer, saying I would harness IT infrastructures including helpdesk, VM servers and the IT environment. She had one word: 'Wow'. On that, I was given money to take on people for 12 months and prove I could change this around."

Kevin described his strategy as network-centric and client-focussed, with an emphasis on being responsive to calls. It included customer feedback software integrated within ServiceNow and Cloud-based.

He said as a result of his strategy, he had inherited another 40 rooms which were going to be put on the network.

Michael McLaughlin (left) fields procurement questions from delegates and suppliers.

Multiple perspectives

EXHIBITORS joined delegates for parallel workshop discussions on AV issues of the day.

Award-winning print, digital and broadcast journalist Clive Couldwell (right) invited views on how AV technology is used across campuses.

Clive - editor of AV Magazine – posed questions on the role AV plays in areas such as student support, academic support, technology, security, audio and assistive living.

His audience explored where AV sat within current university IT/technology spending and how well the AV industry understood the fast-moving requirements of HE.

At the same time, procurement speciast Michael McLaughlin led discussions on enabling digital teaching and learning spaces through effective procurement.

Michael is Head of Category Information Services at Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), the procurement centre of expertise for Scotland's universities and colleges.

He raised issues such as the relationship between procurement contracts in the UK; regulations and call-off from framework agreements; specifications; and changing needs in teaching and learning.

He also showed examples of changing spaces at the University of Dundee, University of the West of Scotland and City of Glasgow College.

Getting a point across in the discussion on AV technology in higher education.

feedback

// I'd like to see more of the type of parallel sessions. The procurement presentation was great, however I would have liked to have heard more from delegates. . . I like the idea that these could become a sort of live version of the mailing list where a common problem is discussed between everyone. There's a good pool of knowledge in the membership //

Active learning challenges

ACADEMIC Technologist Marcus Saunders took delegates on a tour of active learning plans for an exciting new University of Arts (UAL) campus site in London.

UAL's London College of Fashion is amalgamating six sites onto one campus at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Known as East Bank, it will form part a major cultural district on Stratford Waterfront with partners including the V&A Museum, Sadler's Wells Theatre, University College London and Loughborough University.

The College of Fashion building will include four lecture theatres, state-of-the-art studios and workspaces, a new library and space for community engagement.

Marcus said one of the main aims before moving in to the 13-floor building was to complement transmissive delivery with scaled active learning.

The building design concept was 'a heart space' with workshops around the edges in different depths and sizes to accommodate the different kinds of practice.

Lecterns were being replaced by wireless wall box equipment. "You can plug into it, it drives two 4K screens and people use their laptops. It means the lecturer and the students are in the same space – start the room and everything's away with their own devices."

He also highlighted the hub space which showcased seminar, briefing, small group work and self-learning teaching modes. "We've modelled every floor to see how sessions in open spaces can be run based on statistics, analysis, STIs, occupancy rates.

"If you tie acoustic modelling to the pedagogy, you stand a better chance of having a space that people actually like working in."

SCHOMS members make an everyday difference

DELEGATES shared examples of how everyday student experience at their campuses is being improved.

The engaging round-table discussions were the brainchild of new SCHOMS chair **Mark Dunlop**. "Conference presents a great opportunity to talk about things you've seen that you like," he said. "It could be a new cafeteria, a new formal space. You don't have to be involved with it and doesn't have to be about technology."

Mark himself revealed how an IT suite was created at the **University of Dundee** by merging and 'stripping back' three 60-seater rooms, replacing all the infrastructure with collaborative desks, PCs, a screen and switchers.

• **Peppe Cataldo** explained how moving services in-house and setting up furniture storage during building work achieved cost savings and cut complaints at the **University of Reading**.

• **Samantha Goodall** told how academics at the **University of Kent** could now use a lecture theatre with touch panel and wireless technology that introduced options on the number and nature of inputs.

• **Adrian Brett** spoke of how corridors and spaces that hadn't been used at **Anglia Ruskin University** had become popular areas with students following a colourful repainting and furnishing programme.

• **Carolyn Wood** described how the **University of Brighton** introduced a 'beach hut' look of timber cabins and palm trees in its Checkland Building atrium to create a brighter studying and relaxing area.

• **Mike Goodwin** told how large touch screens on high adjustable trolleys had been introduced at **University of Wales Trinity St David**, to offer short-term help in setting up rooms.

• **Nick Pratt** said that **Cranfield University** had discovered 'less is more' by turning old offices into busy student break-out areas without modern technology – just 'old school' tables, chairs, whiteboards and flipcharts.

Exhibition points way to the future

SCHOMS again hosted one of the UK's largest AV/IT suppliers exhibition with an HE focus. Companies set up stands in the exhibitions area in the SportBU Hall, giving delegates the chance to discuss products, developments and requirements.

Mark takes the helm

SCHOMS has a new Chair of the Executive Committee - Mark Dunlop, Workspace Product Group Manager at The University of Dundee.

Mark takes over from Caroline Pepper, Loughborough University, who now becomes Vice-Chair.

Tessa Rogowski, University of Essex, has stepped down after four years. Her SCHOMS Bursary Scheme role has been taken over by Executive newcomer Adrian Brett of Anglia Ruskin University.

Rob Hyde of the University of Bath also joins the committee.

The executive is completed by:

Jim Bain, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh – Member Engagement and AV Magazine liaison

Chris Gooch, University of Leicester – Secretary

Jay Pema, University of Cambridge – Treasurer, Communications

Daniel Roberts – London School of Economics, Training and CPD

● Help from members is being sought to update the SCHOMS Strategic plan.

The plan was created three years to establish a community of practice, increase the profile of SCHOMS as a professional body and maintain and develop membership.

Anyone interested in joining a working group to review the plan from 2020 onwards was asked to get in touch with either Mark or Caroline.

DETAILS of the ISE Sponsored Buyers Scheme funding for 12-13 February 2020 will be made available soon.

SCHOMS

SCHOMS is the professional body for heads of services working within UK Higher Education. SCHOMS members lead and manage a diverse set of educational, media and institutional support services. They give strategic direction to support and promote excellence in teaching and learning practice.

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