

Oxford University Keeps Lectures Going with Stem

About University of Oxford

The University of Oxford is comprised of 39 Oxford colleges, which are financially independent and self-governing but relate to the central University in a kind of federal system. There are also six permanent private halls, which are similar to colleges except that they tend to be smaller, and were founded by particular Christian denominations. The colleges and halls are close academic communities, which bring together students and researchers from different disciplines, cultures, and countries to help foster the outstanding research achievement that has made Oxford a leader in so many fields.

Challenge

As the Fall 2020 term approached, several colleges at the University of Oxford realized that they needed to create more designated spaces for distance learning. They were looking for a flexible solution that could give their students a high quality distance learning experience and still make them feel like they were part of the lectures in some traditionally audio challenging environments. "At Nuffield College at Oxford and at the other sites wanted to create a situation where you've got students sitting in the room with the lecturer speaking and then students who are maybe isolating or coming in on a Teams invite to be able to help remote participants feel like they were part of the session," said Adam Newman Technical Director Isis AV Ltd & Oxford Sound Masking. "Part of the design brief was figuring out how we can make something that feels really unnatural for students and make them feel engaged and like they're really part of the whole term."

Solution

Newman decided to select a variety of Stem devices to meet the needs of different environments. One room for

The University of Oxford -
Nuffield College, Trinity College,
Department of Earth Sciences

Founded: 1096

Location: Oxford, United Kingdom

Industry: Higher Education

Core Challenges:

- Budget
- Flexibility
- Audio coverage
- Installation timeframe
- Challenging environments

The Need: To find a high-quality audio solution that could be integrated into a variety of challenging environments for distance learning.

Solutions:



Stem Ceilings



Stem Hubs



Stem Walls

Organizational Benefits: Improved meeting experience, fast and affordable implementation, a safe and high-quality meeting experience for students

"I've had my fingers crossed that the Stem devices wouldn't let me down and the fact that they haven't let me down and have basically over performed on what I expected has been a great relief."

- Adam Newman

Technical Director

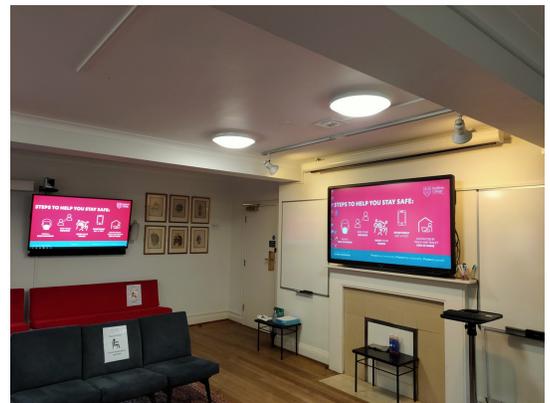
Isis AV Ltd & Oxford Sound Masking

Nuffield College "set up as a marquis for an overflow room. There's a large wall on one side of the room and on the other side, there's one of the busiest bus routes that runs through Oxford. From the outside the noise is unbelievable but I set up the two Stem Ceilings with a Hub and walked around the room speaking pretty quietly and recorded the audio through audacity to have a listen of what was being picked up and it's amazing. I was absolutely blown away."

Another install site was at Trinity College where they have a "temporary building with a multipurpose room where we settled on the Stem Wall units. The multipurpose room has a problem when it rains because it is so loud on the roof that whoever is speaking used to have to raise their voices in the room to be heard. We did some test calls on a day when it was tipping down rain on the roof and it was unbelievable. He was standing about 10 meters away from the Stem Wall unit and the people on the test call could hear him perfectly clear so we really have tried Stem in a variety of situations."

Results

The implementation of Stem Walls, Ceilings, and Hubs in a variety of overflow distance learning environments has allowed students to be engaged and feel like they're part of the lecture again. "It was unbelievable because these rooms were meant to overflow rooms and they've actually started using them more than the other rooms they've got there. The colleges were trading carefully at first but Stem has worked so well that they're now wanting to roll it out into other rooms," Newman explained. "I've had my fingers crossed that the Stem devices wouldn't let me down and the fact that they haven't let me down and have basically over performed on what I expected has been a great relief."



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