

## NEC Display Solutions Customer Installation Education

# Newcastle University

## Enriching student outreach through digital signage



Higher education establishments are catering for vast numbers of students and staff in diverse academic departments located in numerous buildings. Communicating with students, linking campuses and unifying the student population can be achieved through digital networks enabling instant news updates and notifications.

Only NEC's professional P Series displays with OPS slot-in PCs matched the technical specification required by Newcastle University for its Campus Messaging System, monitored and controlled centrally using NEC NaViSet software.

A member of the Russell Group of leading research-intensive UK universities, Newcastle was named one of the top civic universities in the country in the University league tables. Newcastle University offers world-class education in one of the most exciting student cities in the UK, attracting 23,000 students from across the globe. With its main city centre campus spanning 50 acres, student outreach requires an efficient means of communication.

### The Challenge

A bid to improve cross campus communications led to a proposal to upgrade the University Campus Messaging System to provide up to date University focussed information plus external content to staff, students and visitors, helping to enhance the student experience and improve communication. 'Our aim was to provide a visible, high quality, resilient and energy efficient digital signage system in high-traffic student footfall areas across campus,' explains Lee Harrison, Senior Audio Visual Technician at Newcastle University IT Services (NUIT).

'Initially, we researched and evaluated various products from different manufacturers that could provide a full software and hardware solution. It quickly became apparent that our needs in terms of a software platform would be best provided by developing an in-house content delivery process based upon the WordPress platform (the software for which has been released as open-source.)\* Once this decision had been made, our requirements concentrated on the hardware needed to support this system.' explains Lee, who led on this element of the project.

#### SITE INFORMATION

##### Sector

- Education

##### Client information

- Newcastle University
- [www.ncl.ac.uk](http://www.ncl.ac.uk)

##### Integration partner

- Roche Audio Visual
- [www.rocheav.co.uk](http://www.rocheav.co.uk)

##### Installed

- Summer 2014

#### EQUIPMENT

##### Display equipment

- 56 x NEC MultiSync® P Series displays embedded with OPS slot-in PCs deliver 24/7 trusted performance and lowest TCO.
- NEC NaViSet Administrator 2 Asset Management software allows all your connected display devices to be monitored and controlled from a centralised location.



'Our requirements were very specific in terms of image quality, connectivity (including OPS slot, outputs and control), operational functionality, reliability, power consumption and support and our technical specification reflected this. The screens must be able to operate 24/7 and in either portrait or landscape mode. Following a procurement exercise, all companies that tendered quoted NEC P series screens and SBCs, the only hardware solution which matched our requirements.'



## The Solution

NEC's P Series Professional displays deliver 24/7 trusted performance and the lowest installation and operating cost of any public displays on the market. With LED backlight technology, the slim, lightweight displays deliver high brightness (700cd/m<sup>2</sup>) with low reflection and consume minimal power. Genuine innovation through new connectivity and sensors enable intelligent content creativity and control. The unique built-in NFC sensor in combination with NEC's new Android app significantly reduces installation and maintenance costs.

NUIT Services worked closely with the appointed AV contractor, Roche Audio Visual, who in collaboration with NEC Display Solutions, effectively managed the installation of the AV infrastructure, system configuration and display hardware.

'The screens had to be bright, high quality, durable and energy efficient,' says Lee. 'We ultimately purchased a combination of 46" and 55" NEC P series screens to be driven from NEC OPS 'slot-in' PCs embedded within each unit.'

'Another key requirement within our technical specification was remote management to enable us to control, configure and monitor screens. We find NEC's NaViSet software a very useful tool and have set up tasks to

switch systems on and off daily and send global commands to all screens when needed. We also monitor system status using NaViSet and resend commands remotely where appropriate. NaViSet offered us all that we required and a lot more than we had originally requested.'

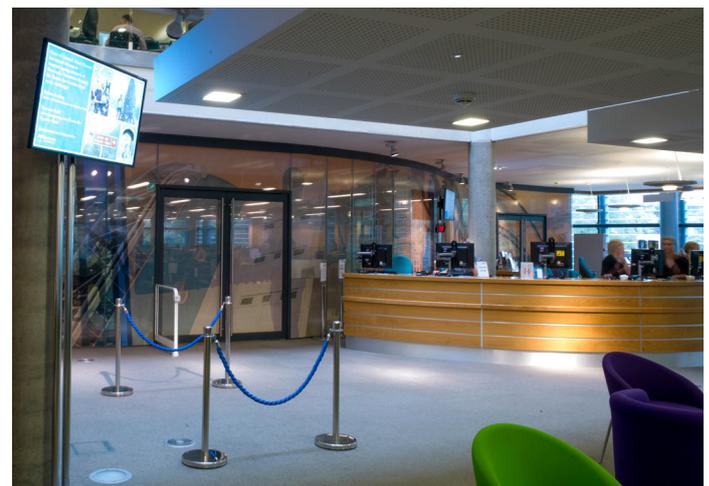
Achieving a sustainable solution was also high on NUIT's demands and the P Series impressed with its very low power consumption. As a result, the hardware provision has been increased by over 190% whilst achieving a marginal decrease in overall energy consumption.

## The Result

All of the installed screens are used to deliver digital signage across campus and in student accommodation areas. Two systems in a hospitality venue also accommodate external device input to allow them to be used for presentation during events and meetings. During University open days the content is tailored on all screens to promote the various activities taking place.

Most central content is managed within the University's Corporate Affairs Directorate with other specific content delivered via local administrators. Academic departments can also submit content to be featured in central channels. The displays have a number of configurable zones, including news feeds and Twitter, and the system can be overridden for emergency messaging should it be required.

'The quality and look of the displays is very eye catching; this coupled with the distribution of displays around campus has made the solution very visible. We have certainly achieved our objectives in terms of delivering the hardware.'



\* The software developed by the University for the WordPress platform is available for free download.

<https://github.com/mikesales83/wordpress-digital-signage>

Images courtesy of J Cooper

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