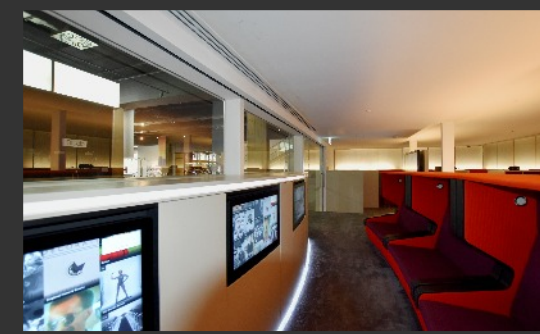# smartcomm
integrating technology with vision

Access and interaction for all through Technology

The British Film Institute was founded in 1933 and is a film and charitable organisation established by Royal Charter, which promotes and preserves filmmaking and television in the UK. The BFI maintains the world's largest film archive. Their charter includes promoting access to and appreciation of the widest possible range of British and world cinema, reflecting the moving image history and heritage of the UK.

Smartcomm worked with BFI to deliver their new Mediatheque experience, a free public access service allowing visitors full, interactive access to the digital moving image files in the BFI national film and television archive.

Smartcomm's close collaboration with the BFI helped bring their vision to reality. Accessibility was a key feature in both technological and spatial terms. The BFI wanted the archive to be brought into the present with intuitive, interactive interfaces and clear search criteria to appeal to both the younger generations as well as older users and academics. Touch screens, combined with other solutions for less mobile users open the centre to those of all abilities.

The Smartcomm Solution

The BFI is a charity and as such, it needs to run as economically as possible. A great deal of bespoke programming allows the Mediatheque to be essentially unmanned, booting up and powering down automatically each day it is open

Reception: Welcoming Functionality

The Drop-In area is an important part of the Mediatheque. As well as acting as a reception and waiting area, it is also the area that stays open for longer than the enclosed Mediatheque space. It can be used in private functions and Film Festivals, the displays providing digital signage or wallpaper.

Three 70" Iiyama interactive displays were wall mounted in front of the Mediatheque room. They can switch from BFI content to digital signage as required, via the global control. Smartcomm integrated the displays with the incumbent Onelan Digital Signage solution, adding HP Elite PCs to provide the BFI content.

While all three displays are touch screen and interactive, for those less able-bodied and to make it easier when content is being viewed by groups of up to four people, control of the outside screens is also via two totems. The specially made totems contain screens which replicate the interactive displays.

Four earphone jacks allow the content to be heard by groups of up to four visitors at a time.

Introductory Screen

As visitors walk into the Mediatheque, they are greeted by the 70" wall mounted Iiyama interactive display. A PIR is programmed to detect when a visitor gets close to the screen and content is switched from general BFI content to interactive Digital Signage. This welcomes visitors and replaces the need for an attendant within the Mediatheque hub, allowing the centre to be open for longer at lower cost.

Cinema Seating

To the right of the Introductory Screen, four fabulously retro chic double cinema booths provide the seating for four 32" Iiyama interactive displays.

Kef speakers are built into the side of the retro chic booths with 4" Tannoy Surface Mount Loudspeakers. The speakers are programmed to be loud enough to hear comfortable when in the booths but minimise overspill. Audio jacks provide headphone options and the audio switches seamlessly from the external loudspeakers to the headphones as the headphone jacks are used.

Research Booths

There are twelve booths. Four are extra-large to allow access for those with mobility requirements such as wheelchairs. All booths have a 27" Iiyama Interactive display, a headphone jack and Rugged Armour Cable Headphones on a hanger. Smartcomm integrated these with HP Elite PCs for content and BFI wireless keyboards.

Although the displays are interactive with touch screen functionality, wireless keyboards are important for visitors who have limited mobility and perhaps cannot reach the screens. The height of the display screens was also important, they had to be appropriate for wheelchair users.

In the Research booths, while there are two chairs, it is normal for only one person to use a booth. The extra jack allows flexibility for another to join them and listen to the audio as well. Otherwise the audio option is via the headphones provided.

The interactive displays allow visitors to scroll through, discover and explore the wonderful world of British film. Content is sorted into categories such as subject, duration and year – perfect for casual visitors with limited time to spare.

Atrium Flexibility

While the area is as self-sufficient as possible, there may be times when it is desirable to override the system, such as for after-hours events or special projects. Global manual control has been programmed to allow any area or piece of equipment to be controlled individually, as necessary.

Individual PCs and screens can be shut down, rebooted, content managed and controlled remotely from anywhere in the building via the network. This includes going to manual mode so that the equipment stays on after hours for private events or group bookings.