# University of Oxford

**The world-renowned University of Oxford enlists the expertise of Smartcomm to enhance its teaching space experience with state-of-the-art audio-visual services, teaching aids and video conferencing facilities.**



The University of Oxford is a globally renowned institution which has been visited by people from all walks of life and all parts of the world for nine centuries. It was the first University in the English-speaking world and aims to remain at the forefront of centres of learning, teaching and research.
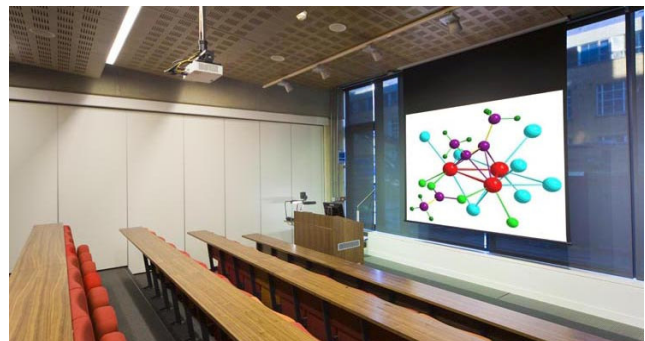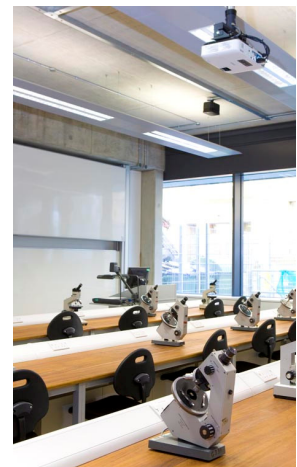
Oxford's remarkable global appeal continues to grow. Students from more than a hundred and forty countries and territories make up a student population of over twenty thousand. With its distinctive college and tutorial system and outstanding research achievement the University of Oxford is a leader in many fields

Above: The Conference Room featuring a 5m projection screen & IOCOM video conferencing

The University has invested heavily in the refurbishment of its Teaching Space and in a new building for the Earth Sciences Department, appointing TMD, an independent Chartered Building Surveying and Project Management practice, as its Consultants. TMD selected Smartcomm to consult with the individual Faculty Departments to gain an understanding of the individual user requirements and undertake a detailed survey of the designated OUED (Oxford University Estates Directorate) buildings during the Summer break in August.

Smartcomm were then required to create a comprehensive report with the associated recommendations for each individual department to enhance the teaching space experience and bring the areas up to a modern OUED Teaching Space standard.

In October, the Department of Earth Sciences were handed the keys to the new Earth Sciences Building -providing laboratory and office space for around 400 students and staff. The purpose-built centre will enable the Department to maintain its international reputation as a centre for research excellence.

Smartcomm provided audio visual services and teaching aids in two seminar rooms and three teaching laboratories, presentation and video conferencing facilities for the Department's conference room and video displays capable of delivering network delivered content in the atrium reception area.
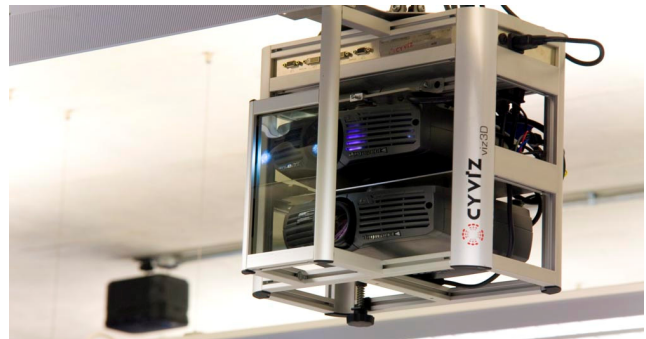
**Seminar Rooms 1 & 2** - These two adjoining seminar rooms are used by a large number of visiting subject matter experts as well as the Department's teaching staff, and so the technology within the rooms above all had to be simple and intuitive to use. Bespoke lecterns were designed to accommodate the Department's resident PC and associated Extron video distribution equipment and audio power amps, with a slide out locking shelf on which to sit the digital presenter/visualiser. Lectern top inputs were provided for easy laptop connectivity with thoughtful additions such as a USB-A memory stick connection point. Philips Pronto touch screen controllers were installed into a lectern mounted dock to store the touch screen and keep it charged. Philips Pronto's were specified to provide simple one touch operation of key functions within the room such as displaying the residential PC, guest laptop and digital presenters on the large motorised screens.

A challenge was introduced that the two rooms are on occasion to be opened up to form one large seminar room and requiring the ability to merge the two AV systems in to one integrated solution displaying simultaneously on both display screens. This was achieved by distributing the video and audio from the lectern in seminar room 1 to seminar room 2, and to prevent the rooms accidentally displaying shared content while the rooms are divided, a PIN system was programmed into the seminar room 1 Pronto to allow the Department's staff to enter the correct code to 'join' the separate AV systems when opening the rooms dividing sliding wall panels.

**Conference Room** - The Department's conference room is used by the staff for internal meetings and training. The room benefits from two separate display systems - the first being an independent PC/Laptop presentation system on a powerful projection system displaying on a smaller screen for Boardroom type events. The second is dedicated to IOCOM video conferencing over the JA.NET education and research network comprising of a 5m motorised screen with three carefully aligned projectors to provide a huge image for multi window video conferencing. Each window image can be dragged and dropped and manipulated over the 6.3m2 display screen giving a perfect networking & brainstorming environment with on screen PC data and multiple site contributing to various documents and data. A Philips Pronto touch screen controller was specified to provide simple one touch operation of key functions within the room such selecting Presentation Mode and displaying the residential PC, guest laptop and digital presenter/visualiser on the large motorised screen or selecting Video Conferencing mode.





**Teaching Laboratories (x3)** - The new Elementary, Mineralogical and IT Laboratories are used by the Department's teaching staff on a daily basis. The Department provided their existing projectors, including a dual Projection Design 3D System. Again, as per the Seminar Rooms, bespoke lecterns were designed to accommodate the AV equipment. The labs each have two twin board column system writing boards, consisting of two surfaced boards that slide up and down to provide the teaching staff with the maximum amount of writing surface. Concealed precision counter weights balance the vertical movement of the boards allowing each to move effortlessly and to be positioned at the ideal writing or display height. The IT lab has one set of twin boards with the remaining wall space taken by a fixed frame Harkness Spectral 240 3D projection screen for RealD 3D presentations.

**Teaching Space (38 Rooms)** - Smartcomm were able to provide a tailored AV system to these environments which was both functional and sympathetic to the building character and listed constraints. Each Lecture theatre is controlled by a Crestron touch screen which allows lecturers to have any combination of any source inputs from Laptops/PC's, Blu-Ray, DVD, Visualisers and document cameras onto a combination of display screens - some over 4m wide - which drop down from the exceedingly high ceilings into view at the correct eye level height for the teared/raked seating. All smaller teaching rooms have flatscreen displays and new Glassboard writing boards to give a new contemporary feel unachievable with traditional chalk or dry wipe writing boards.

**PROJECT FACT-FILE**

**Cost:** £592,000

**System Designer:** Mark Allen

**Start Date:** September 2010

**Completion Date:** October 2010

Photography by Richard Wadey
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