

The Luton campus of the University of Bedfordshire was looking to build and install a teaching space simulating an integrated digital newsroom used to give lessons and workshops to post-18-year old students. It would also be used for short courses for continuing professional development. The university was therefore in the market for a complete gallery and studio system, including newsroom, automation, media management and video servers. The principle objective of the system was to provide the necessary technology to achieve Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTV) Accreditation for its journalism courses. This was crucial, as BJTC accreditation ensures the high standards that make students more employable and delivers them to the job market with the skills and knowledge that employers seek.

This initiative was just one piece of the University's investments in a new multi-million pound Media Art Centre and new facilities in its Computing and Media departments. In this studio, Bedfordshire aimed to simulate the existing broadcast newsroom environment for teaching, whilst ensuring that the system was innovative enough to allow for experimentation. As students passed through the course, they needed to gain knowledge, insights, and practical, hands-on skills that would serve them well in the job market.

Because Autocue had previously worked with a number of academic institutions to help them achieve BJTC accreditation, the company was ultimately selected to provide the newsroom technology for the installation.

However, it turns out that Autocue had a good deal more to offer.



Testing the Concept of an Entire Workflow from a Single Vendor

The University began discussions with Autocue about a newsroom, automation and video server system, which Autocue could readily supply as it has done for so many already. The company's flexible solutions and price points are designed to appeal to major networks and smaller broadcast stations alike, including leading UK colleges and universities that specialise in broadcast journalism media training.

However, Autocue was also developing a new product called "Autocue Production Suite", which extended the basic video server functions to include a vision and audio mixer, graphics handling (CG, logo, ticker) and keying for virtual sets. The University agreed to be a beta tester for the product which offered the prospect of even greater cost savings and the ability to buy the entire workflow solution from a single vendor.



The Autocue Production Suite

Autocue Production Suite replaced the need for the University to purchase and integrate a number of conventional devices – vision mixer, audio mixer, video player, picture-in-picture inserter, caption generator, still store, chromakeyer, router, output switcher and recorder. All of this, and more, can be delivered via the new Newsroom and Production environment provided by Autocue.

When combined with Autocue's newsroom, automation and prompting software, Production Suite provides everything needed to prepare and produce live shows, which was precisely what the University of Bedfordshire was after, and much more.

Specification and Installation

Working with Mike Whelan, managing director of Banbury-based Digital Garage and his team, Autocue set about designing and delivering a newsroom production system that would enable students to source stories from newswires and social media - integrate these sources with their own independently sourced AV material – and use the production system to make it suitable for television, radio, and online or be archived for further work.

According to Whelan, "Each group of students can research, script, and edit their individual stories while the production team researches, directs, produces, creates playlists etc, precisely as you would see it done in a professional environment. The fact that Autocue's Newsroom and Production Suite technology and functionality are so tightly integrated, I dare say that Bedfordshire University has a world-class facility."

The Benefits

In part, BJTC Accreditation requires that "Students are given instruction in key technical skills such as recording visual and audio material to tape, disc and/or solid state memory; editing material at the desktop and/or in craft edit suites; pre-production planning; adding meta data and tags to the filed story according to local archive conventions; and undertaking post-production modifications or reworking of material." All of which, and more, can be delivered via the new Newsroom and Production environment provided by Autocue.

Not only does the university now have a world-class system. As it is implemented and students and faculty alike gain hands-on technical knowledge, the practical manifestations of the process will accrue to the benefit of BJTC Accreditation plans. This is a key element in the university's offerings to students, and it escalates its global reputation for excellence.

For more information visit www.autocue.com

Autocue and QTV (in the Americas) have been serving the broadcast industry since the 1950s. They are the only company to offer the television industry a single solution for newsroom, scripting, automation, media management, video servers, broadcast monitors and teleprompters. Autocue is known worldwide for its service and dependability, serving such prestigious clients as the BBC, Bloomberg, NBC and CNN. Autocue's prompting solutions are compatible with all newsroom systems on the market and are used all over the world by broadcasters, production professionals, government facilities and corporate producers.

About University of Bedfordshire

The University of Bedfordshire is the largest higher education institution in the county, providing excellent opportunities for more people to access top quality higher education.

The University works closely with employers on its curriculum, while forging close links with UK companies to provide a broad range of training and accredited industry courses.

With large campuses in Luton and Bedford, the University is the single, major provider of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional education in Bedfordshire.

