LifeSize® Results™

A CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

HD video is widely accepted at the University of Amsterdam

University of Amsterdam (UvA), Amsterdam, The Netherlands

A technology-driven university

It is almost 3:00 PM and a class at the University of Amsterdam is about to begin. One by one, students enter the room and take their seats. At the front of the classroom, a LifeSize video system is activated. A connection is made with another classroom in India. Surprisingly, students do not react to the system or the clear, crisp HD images on the screen. They've seen it all before.

Arjan Sas, ICT Coordinator at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at UvA, acknowledges that there's not much by way of classroom technology that astonishes this particular generation of students anymore. Because many students have laptops and iPhones, visual media has become an integral part of many courses offered today. Video communications makes courses more international and consequentially more interactive.

"Distances have become abstract ideas for students," Sas says. "For some time now, students have been attending classes remotely and lectures can be followed using video communications systems."

Among the information technology facilities in place at UvA are a variety of video conferencing systems, but LifeSize enforced a certain breakthrough.



Founded in 1632, the University of Amsterdam is the largest university in the Netherlands, with over 28,000 students and offering over 140 Masters Degree Programs.

Video made simple

UvA is well acquainted with the potential of video. As ICT Coordinator, Sas has taken several study trips to the US, including a visit to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), to witness how video conferencing is experienced in the American university system. Specifically, he wanted to observe how conferences are scheduled, how equipment was used optimally and how video networks are managed.

His goal was to create a well-managed system of video endpoints that was easy to use and easy to administer, while giving the end user a superior quality of experience.

For the University of Amsterdam, LifeSize was a perfect fit.

"Technology or support is not the issue any more," he said. "The quality is superb. A student-assistant can easily set up a video meeting and manage the conference. It is merely a matter of communication: the remaining thing to worry about is agreeing on the right schedule, the right time zone, the number of participants and the booking of the room."

Sas and his team can now meet faculty and student demand with ease. The simplicity of the interface and ease of use of the system management makes troubleshooting simple and straightforward from an IT perspective.

"A professor is not exposed to any technological challenges," Sas said. "Setting up a conference is made as easy as pushing a button on the remote control."

The right solution

Everyday at UvA, LifeSize Room video systems are used at 1Mbps in crystal clear HD and many times with multiple locations simultaneously. Most professors will also use the built-in H.239 data sharing capability to quickly and easily share presentations and streaming video. Also, many students at the university interact frequently with other students in India, China, Colombia, Finland, Germany and the United States. Using video to communicate has helped the university demonstrate more of an international presence.

Currently, video technology is used in five of the university's nine program modules. Professors are using this system to reduce travel expenses and to suppress travel time, specifically. And obviously it is a perfect medium to demonstrate international presence.

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> – ARJAN SAS, ICT COORDINATOR, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Sas has created an internal Wiki at UvA which serves as an information and user guide on video conferencing. Now, anyone who needs to know what a particular terminology in video conferencing means or the basic principles of the technology is accessible at the touch of a button.

Simplicity is one of the reasons that more departments show rising interest for a LifeSize system. To justify this, an inter-faculty cost allocation model is applied. When a conference is not scheduled to be used at length for educational purposes, the university lends the system to organizations in or near Amsterdam.

"The quality of LifeSize and its favorable pricing allowed us to push video to higher levels," Sas said. "These systems contribute to a better image of video conferencing in general and in a way meet a latent demand – to provide a lifelike experience and ease of use, all in one. The simplicity of setting up a conference and the price/quality relation have played important roles."



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