Microsoft

Better Education Experiences for Everyone

Technology Foundations for Hybrid Learning

Contents

Introduction

The global COVID-19 outbreak brought with it an array of challenges for education, but one main quandary to be solved. How can teaching and learning continue when students and educators can't be together in the same physical location?

The solution, of course, was remote learning. Universities, schools and colleges everywhere brought teaching online – a reactive emergency measure driven by an urgent need to maintain continuity, rather than a long-term strategic move. Nonetheless, educational institutions can be proud of the work they did. In the midst of unprecedented events, learning kept going.

From the remote past to a hybrid future

Today, students and educators are making their careful, gradual return to campuses worldwide. But, like many other aspects of life, education has been forever changed. Remote learning is now a permanent fixture of the educational experience.

Although many may once again attend in person, others may be sporadic or even permanent online attendees. This includes a new demographic of overseas students and educators exploring fresh possibilities for studying or teaching at institutions far from where they live.

A new lesson to learn

Educational institutions face a new challenge: maintaining high standards of education and engagement for all students, whether on campus or remote. These 'hybrid' classes, containing both kinds of attendee, must deliver a unified experience that brings everyone together – regardless of where teaching is conducted or where each learner is located.

Not only must education experiences meet these hybrid classes' needs, but they also need to be accessible and natural for educators. When academic staff struggle with technology, it takes them away from doing what they do best: teaching. And now, educators also need to maintain a connection with remote students and keep them engaged – no mean feat.

In this new phase, technology now plays a different and perhaps even more important role. Rather than enabling remote learning during a crisis, it now needs to support consistently high-quality education experiences in a new, hybrid world.

Supporting education now and tomorrow

A new generation of technology is necessary to support the educational experiences needed now. Going far beyond the screens and interactive whiteboards of yesterday, this new technology is ready to meet everyone's needs, from students to faculty and support staff, whether on campus, at home, or even studying or teaching from another country.

In this eBook, you'll learn how you can meet today's needs perfectly and be ready for whatever the changing requirements and situations of the future may be. **Now is the time to create better education experiences for everyone**.

Now is the time to create better education experiences for everyone.

Bringing everyone together

Truly unified education experiences require a seamlessly connected technology foundation. Just as students and educators come together in seminar rooms and lecture rooms that are all part of the same campus, online learning experiences must take place 'under the same roof'.

By using one platform – not myriad disparate tools – you can provide this kind of learning environment. You just need to ensure you choose the best one for the task.

Choose the right digital campus

Many of the remote lectures and seminars during COVID-19 lockdowns have been held in **Microsoft Teams**. The platform's market-leading versatility, functionality and ease of use are why educational institutions all around the world have made Teams the centre of their digital world. If you haven't already joined them, here's why you should:

Comfortable and engaging digital learning

Teams contains a wide array of features designed to foster greater engagement and participation. These include the ability to **digitally raise your hand** during a video meeting or see all the attendees in a virtual lecture theatre using **Together Mode**.

Some remote students may initially be hesitant to speak up, or find it hard to engage with educators, peers and lessons. For these students, Teams is an online setting where they'll feel more comfortable and connected.

In fact, Teams is designed to make learning much more accessible for everyone. Microsoft's **screen-reader Narrator**, as well as other third-party solutions, can be easily accessed by students with visual impairments. They can also use the **built-in Magnifier** to see words and images better. Teams also features **in-chat text translation** for more than 60 languages, which may be particularly useful to help overseas students participate as fully as possible.

Natural whiteboarding and deep collaboration

Thanks to **Microsoft Whiteboard**, Teams offers **expressive and intuitive** interactive whiteboarding that helps educators and students make the most of seminars and lectures however they're attending. Those off-campus can participate just as effectively as if they were in the room, and **remote students can even add their own notes and sketches**. When it comes to deep collaboration, creative work and exploring complex ideas, this makes a real difference.

Whiteboard and Teams provides the most value when combined with the right in-room equipment, and **Microsoft Surface Hub 2S** is designed to integrate perfectly. 100-point multi-touch and Digital Inking technologies enable an **incredibly natural experience** that feels just like using a traditional whiteboard, with **fluid handwriting and drawing**.

The Surface Hub 2S also features a built-in **Ultra High Definition 4K camera**, as well as an **8-element microphone array** and **3-way stereo speakers**. These high specifications ensure that everyone can see and hear everything, as well as be seen and heard themselves, whether they're at the back of the seminar room or across the world.

Making it easy for everybody

The technology that supports your education experiences has to make life as easy as possible for everyone. That includes the educators and students who will be using it but also technicians and other staff-members whose job is to maintain it.

Let's explore what that means.

Familiar for students

The best way to ensure students can adopt and use technology effectively is if they already know it. So, choosing an obscure platform isn't the best solution. On the other hand, students everywhere are already well-accustomed to using Microsoft technology – from the Windows operating system to the Office productivity suite.

Teams is part of this familiar Microsoft ecosystem – and it's likely your students and your educational institution are already using it. Leverage this familiarity instead of starting from scratch.

Simple for educators

Academic staff want technology to help them provide engaging, inspiring and valuable experiences for their students. But, on a basic level, they want to come to a lecture or seminar and for their technology to *just work* – simply and quickly. Technology should always be an aid and never a burden.

Starting a session which includes remote students shouldn't be complex or time-consuming. With the Microsoft Surface Hub 2S and Teams, it just takes a few clicks. And what's more, it's all **integrated with the Microsoft Teams Rooms system**. That means that the Surface Hub 2S automatically connects to any Microsoft Teams Rooms devices in a learning space, such as high-resolution enhanced microphones and cameras.

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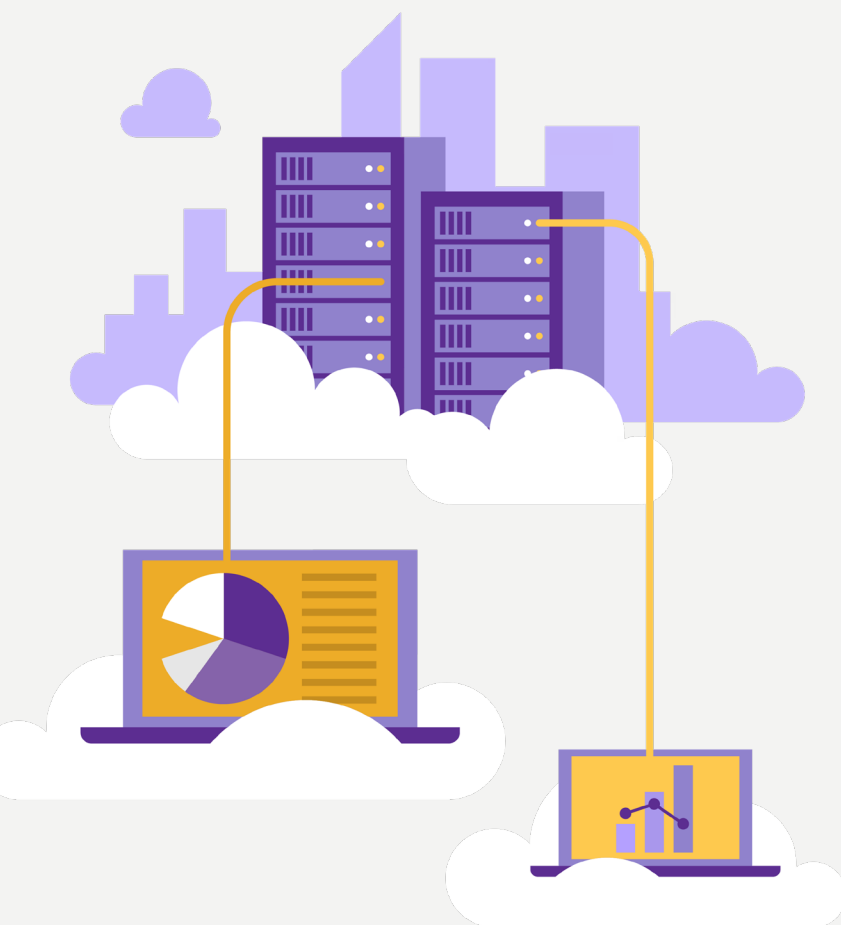
Hassle-free for IT

Busy university or college IT departments have little spare time to help teaching staff set up technology for individual seminars and lectures or to help remote students join them. The factors we've discussed previously have an impact on them, too. But there's also everyday administration to consider.

Using **Microsoft Intune** and **Windows Autopilot**, IT staff can quickly and simply administrate devices, create device groups, assign device profiles, and streamline all the necessary security tasks. Simplifying secure deployment and management makes their jobs considerably easier.

Choosing all the right investments

Whatever the changes to the modes of learning and teaching they now need to support, educational institutions still have to make the best possible use of their budgets. As ever, making the correct investments, from a long-term strategic viewpoint, is key.

How do you ensure you invest in the right technology for all your needs – now and in the future?

Budget-friendly flexibility

Detaching education from physical locations was the first necessary step, and the next is to decouple education technology from specific locations, too. That means flexibility: the ability to move your technology quickly, easily and responsively from one learning space to another where it's needed.

It's far more cost-effective to invest in a display or digital whiteboard that can be moved from one seminar room to another than to invest in dedicated displays for both rooms. The Microsoft Surface Hub 2S can combine with a mobile stand and battery to quickly and easily **transform any room into a fully-connected learning space** – as and when required. It goes further, so your investment does, too.
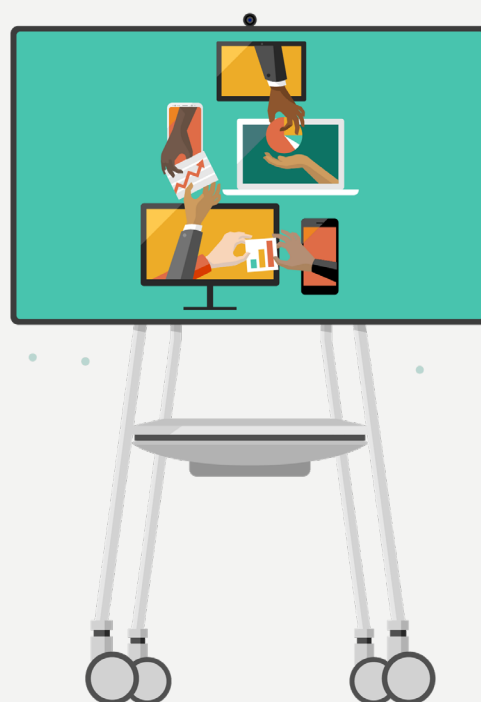
Ready for the future

A versatile technology investment means you're ready to handle unexpected developments – such as if lessons need to go fully remote again, or if you need to support new hybrid configurations where different numbers of students are attending remotely and on campus. If you rely on legacy audio visual (AV) equipment, or current technology with limited functionality, it may not be up to the task.
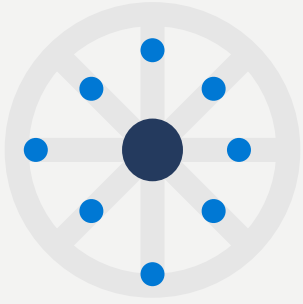
The flexibility and capabilities offered by the Microsoft Surface Hub 2S, Teams and Microsoft Teams Rooms mean that **your investment is future-proofed**. You won't need costly additional spending later to cater to changes, because you'll already be prepared for them.

Forrester Research's study 'The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Surface Hub'[1], weighed up factors including flexibility, costs, and benefits. They found that investing in the Surface Hub 2S would actually **pay back in as little as six months or less**, as well as stating an impressive **302% return on investment (ROI)**.

The Microsoft Surface Hub 2S

The challenges described in this eBook are not met by all education technology on the market today. However, the **Microsoft Surface Hub 2S** is built to go beyond the limitations of other displays and interactive whiteboards.
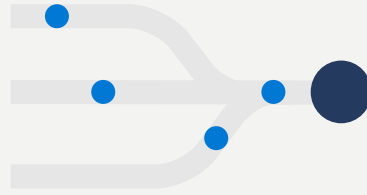
Cutting-edge capabilities

Bring everyone together, remote and on-campus, to engage, collaborate and inspire.
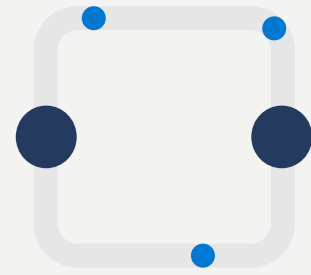
- Intuitive writing and drawing
- Powerful digital whiteboarding
- High-quality video and audio
- Chat text language translation
- Accessibility-boosting features

Simple to set up and use

Make starting and joining sessions easy for students and educators, plus cut hassle for IT.

- Microsoft Teams Rooms system
- Device management with Intune
- Easy setup via Windows Autopilot

Mobile, flexible and cost-effective

Invest in technology that goes further and is ready for any future needs and scenarios.

- Mobile stand and battery
- 302% return on investment
- Payback within six months

Better education experiences for everyone

With the Microsoft Surface Hub 2S, educators are empowered to engage students everywhere in new ways and deliver the exciting and inspiring new education experiences that they depend on and expect – **today and tomorrow.**

Your partner for success

As leading education technology supplier and Microsoft Partner, **[PARTNER_NAME]** is perfectly placed to help you better education experiences for all your students and academic staff.

[PARTNER_NAME] has the experience and expertise your educational institution needs to harness the full potential of the Microsoft Surface Hub 2S, Teams and the Microsoft Teams Room system.

If you'd like to discuss the possibilities, **get in touch with our team**.

Contact us today