

## Promoting Use

*This paper summarises the experience of SustelT and the Welsh Video Network (WVN) in supporting institution's VC activities.*

**Policy** – This should signal organisational commitment and support; link to related areas such as Travel Plans; set targets for use; identify priority areas (e.g. internal meetings on multi-campus institutions) and be supported by appropriate funding.

**Champion(s)** – VC often has no clear 'owner', with AV and IT staff seeing themselves as having a narrow technical support role (often combined with other tasks), and users not having a strategic view. A champion can act as a single point of contact, and drive promotion and service improvement.

**Flexibility** - Many virtual meetings can be done effectively by using desktop software and it is important that this is supported technically, and that users can get headphones, webcams and other necessary equipment.

**Marketing** – Examples of good use, and benefits to individuals, the organisation and the environment, need to be highlighted. Personal benefits can include reduced stress and better work-life balance from less travelling, and increased job satisfaction through more time for core activities.

**Training** – This can increase confidence in using VC.

**Role Models** - Senior managers and team leaders should always lead by example and be seen to be using the equipment. Briefing Paper 8 shows how this has been done at Trinity St David.



Wendy Xerri (see over)

## What Not to Do

- Use lots of jargon
- Expect people to make effective use of the technology without induction or training
- Expect usage to grow without marketing and internal champions/core users
- Put equipment in inaccessible or noisy locations, or in rooms that have other purposes
- Make it difficult to book the equipment or the room
- Leave users without quick and easy access to technical support
- Fail to monitor equipment use and impacts
- Expect people to give up travelling or face-to-face activities completely
- Expect that all video meetings will result in travel avoidance
- Stress organisational and environmental benefits more than personal ones
- Advise others to use VC but avoid doing this yourself
- Expect everyone to go to a VC suite to conference.

## Thinking About the Audience

A successful videoconference is like a play – it needs good set up and direction to ensure that the audience can see and hear actions and dialogue and are effectively engaged in the meeting. Camera positionings should ensure that everyone is clearly visible, and avoid distractions such as doors that people might pop their heads round. Microphones should be positioned near participants, and away from equipment or other noise sources. Participants should be trained to look at the camera, and speak into microphones, and to circulate any materials they might be referring to in advance. They should also avoid side meetings, or visible signs of distraction, such as checking email.

# SustelT Briefing 11: Embedding Videoconferencing

## Equipment and Support Issues

**Bookings** - there should be a clear, documented, and easy to use procedure that combines both call and room booking. For mixed use rooms, VC use should take priority over local meetings.

**External Help** – This can be obtained from vendors, JANET UK (who offer training, and help from JVCS), and the WVN.

**Local Support** – Expert technical help is important but many VC problems can be straightforward and solved by someone near to rooms knowing how to switch on or restart equipment, where the cables plug into, and how to control the camera.

**Locations** – Dedicated rooms are best for important meetings and need to be easy to access, and near to target users' work places. They should be quiet, have good displays, be pleasant - with comfortable seats and soft furnishings - and avoid excessive glare from lighting. Wheeled mobile units, and desktop access, can be adjuncts or alternatives for some conferences.

**User Guides** – these can be left in the room, with a labelled photo of the remote control, and helpful contact numbers.



Trevor Buchan

## Views

*"I have an unusual role of promoting VC for management, interviews and teaching within the University, and marketing commercial use of our facilities to local businesses. I do this through maintaining web pages, offering familiarisation or more formal training, and regular mentions and updates in internal communications. I'm also on hand to quickly fix any technical issues that might arise. One message I give is that video meetings are often more effective than face to face ones because the business has to be done within a strict timeframe."*

Trevor Buchan, VC Co-ordinator, University of Kent, Canterbury

*"Our merger of two institutions was made easier by the installation of boardroom style facilities at each campus. Many senior managers are now enthusiastic users and champions of the technology."*

Wendy Xerri, Director of Knowledge & Information, Trinity Saint David

## VC Saves HEFCW Carbon, Money and Time

In 2009 The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) invested £37,000 in upgrading to modern, high definition, VC equipment and relocating it to a lighter, more accessible, room. A new policy strongly encouraged its use wherever possible, and office administrators have been fully trained in all aspects of arranging conferences, and managing the equipment. This has eased the administrative burden to the ICT team, and improved the knowledge and skills base of a number of staff. Ian Jakeman, ICT Service Manager, believes that "we've removed the 'fear factor', and shown people that they can make their working lives easier by minimising travelling to meetings. They also find it very effective in getting routine and detailed business done efficiently, in arranging short notice meetings, and gaining access to senior members of organisations with full diaries." The Council estimates that VC avoids an average of 192 miles and 4 hours per meeting, with total savings of 10,000 miles, and 2 tonnes of carbon emissions, in 2009-10.

Further information: See [www.goodcampus.org](http://www.goodcampus.org) and [www.wvn.ac.uk](http://www.wvn.ac.uk). Version 1.0 July 2011.

Disclaimer – Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but readers should verify all information.