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MEDIA LAB REPORT

by Mitch Goodwin (Faculty of Arts)
and Louisa Lim
(Centre for Advancing Journalism)



August 31 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School of Culture and Communication is a large interdisciplinary School with a number of inter-related media, communications, digital humanities, screen studies and journalism programs and research groups requiring high quality media facilities. These programs are growing in global significance as the fields of the humanities, communication disciplines interact with real world issues and contexts. The reputation of the School, commensurate with the University's ambition to be a world-leading institution, for delivery of high quality teaching and research is currently inhibited by the lack of a dedicated strategy and resource agenda to provide suitable media facilities anywhere on campus. The range of these facilities, hereinafter called Media Lab, includes dedicated teaching spaces, production units of broadcast quality, and a range of technical equipment.

The purpose of this report was to identify the requirements of programs within the Faculty of Arts, to investigate what was available at competitor institutions both in Australia and internationally, to scope existing resources on campus and to identify any possibilities for expansion or refurbishment of appropriate spaces on campus. In addition, it was to recommend courses of action to stage investment in a Media Lab at the University of Melbourne Carlton campus.

The report recommends that an inclusive whole-of-University response to the question of a Media Lab facility based within the Faculty of Arts, could also serve the University's intellectual capacity for engagement and policy reform. It recognises that communication is increasingly a technological act that requires an appropriate level of production and finesse to participate effectively in national conversations. The role of the Centre for Advancing Journalism is, for instance, noted in [*Growing Esteem in relation to the Carlton Connect agenda*](#). Therefore a Media Lab should include collaborative studio, laboratory and teaching spaces with a commensurate research agenda that engages both students and faculty with the media industry and the public policy sector.

In terms of the core business of teaching and course delivery the report identifies key areas of urgent need in terms of equipment resources and production facilities. These are not isolated concerns and have significant implications at a School level (particularly the **Centre for Advanced Journalism** (CAJ) and the **Media & Communications** major and leading graduate programs), and at the Faculty level (**eTeaching Unit**) and at University level (**Learning Environments**).

Longer term, strategic, academic, practical and economic benefits could arise from centralising the University's media production facilities, equipment management and related teaching activity in one location. Providing a bricks and mortar site for media production – and therefore media output – could solve the interrelated shortcomings of media production education, learning technology and production and the critical component of research and intellectual activity – to service the communication of ideas and the application of policy.

A purpose-built Media Lab would sustain the reputation of the University of Melbourne for delivering high-quality media, journalism and communications research and education while

benefiting the whole university. It would also help realize the Digital Learning Strategy, as well as boosting engagement by driving meaningful connections beyond the academy.

In the more immediate term, better resourcing and consolidation of the university's media production facilities, equipment and related teaching activity would benefit the Centre for Advancing Journalism, the Media & Communications major, the Arts Faculty's eTeaching Unit, Learning Environments and many other stakeholders including External Relations.

Given the ambitious nature of this vision, this report recommends a three-stage solution setting out immediate, medium-range and long-term plans. The Media Lab should comprise a soundproofed radio studio, a television studio, soundproofed self-op radio booths, editing suites, an equipment store and teaching spaces equipped with computers on a networked server.

This strategy dovetails with the university's focus on Engaged Teaching and Research by providing facilities for recording podcasts, broadcast interviews and MOOCs. A Media Lab would also provide an opportunity for the School of Culture and Communication and the wider University to innovate on a number of fronts representing the core business of the contemporary tertiary institution: in audiovisual teaching, engagement and research.

CONTEXT

-The University of Melbourne offers a leading industry-based program with innovative course offerings in Audio and Video Journalism, Media and Communications, Digital Media and Screen Cultures. In 2015, 634 students enrolled in these subjects.

- Currently the University of Melbourne has no soundproofed recording suites or television studios for use as teaching facilities. The Horwood studio (John Medley 1F) is a fully-staffed recording studio, which belongs to the Linguistics department and is not available to media or journalism students. A purpose-built facility would make the university's offerings more competitive in their ability to produce industry-ready students, as well as attracting industry partners, providing new revenue streams and research opportunities.

- In terms of editing facilities, currently edit suites are scattered across the university (3 suites in WG20 John Medley, 2 in Old Arts 216 and 2 in the Visual Cultures Resource Centre (VCRC) in E302 John Medley. In each of the three locations, there is more than one edit station in the same physical space. This is problematic since these are not soundproofed spaces and - especially in the Media and Communications subject - the edit suites are used by many groups at the end of semester. It is impossible to edit material effectively, and especially do sound edits, when other groups are chatting and editing in the same physical space. In any proper solution, the edit suites would be isolated from one another. The VCRC suite are also hard to use for editing since they are in a facility with limited access.

-The Centre for Advancing Journalism plays a leading role in Australian journalism research and education, but needs to stay competitive as other programs update their facilities (APPENDIX 4).

Monash recently opened a brand new \$3m facility including three laboratories equipped with 24 computer terminals, two radio production facilities with control rooms and teaching suites, an open plan newsroom and a broadcast TV and video production studio. (see APPENDIX 1). According to the Head of journalism Philip Chubb, the aggressive marketing of these facilities resulted in a number of Masters students choosing Monash over Melbourne.

RMIT has five new production studios, as well as 20 edit suites with access to a Media Grid and a Media Convergence lab. Triple R midday news is broadcast from RMIT.

- Overseas universities offering journalism degrees offer purpose built-facilities, for example the US\$150m Wallis Annenberg hall in USC Annenberg where there is a fully-functioning newsroom, or the Journalism suite at CUNY which supports community television as well as national news feeds. At Bournemouth University in the UK, students have access to a number of different television studios offering the ability to record and broadcast material live.

STAKEHOLDERS

The SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

There is an immediate need to provide enhanced facilities for students enrolled in Media and Communications (BA and Masters), Journalism MA, Marketing and Communications (MA) and Screen and Cultural Studies (MA), who numbered 634 in 2015 (APPENDIX 1). The two graduate programs in Global Media and Communications and Marketing Communications are the fastest growing in the Faculty. These facilities would also help build the audio-visual profile for the award-winning publication, the Citizen, placing it firmly at the centre of the university's journalism program, as well as facilitating in-depth research into media forms and impacts.

COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Podcasts The Chancellery is aiming to make the university a 'centre for excellence in podcasts' and to this end a Podcast Hub community has just been launched, comprised of staff members currently engaged in podcasting or intending to do so. The University's External Relations unit is planning to double the number of podcasts it produces. Its best-known podcast, Up Close, has run for ten years, and nets around 330,000 listeners annually, with recent figures showing a 9% monthly increase in listeners

Other podcasts produced in-house include the Policy Shop, The Little Red Podcast, two Australia India Institute podcasts and Talking Indonesia, with at least three more podcasts in development. At the first Podcast Hub meeting, there was widespread demand for more soundproofed facilities for use within the university, and Andi Horvath who runs Podcasts at External Affairs says soundproofed booths are "absolutely essential to cater for the sudden interest in podcasts now at University of Melbourne."

Broadcast interviews The only radio studio in the university is run by the Linguistics department on four days a week between 9-5 only, so there is little provision for radio interviews outside these working hours. If these self-operated booths were fitted with phone and skype lines, it would allow staff to do broadcast interviews for outlets like the ABC, BBC, Al Jazeera and CNN around the clock, helping extend the university's reputation internationally.

E-TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The E-Teaching Unit has in the past year filmed 20 hours of online course content, 68% of which has been filmed in sub-optimal 'studio' environments (see APPENDIX 5). While there is much demand for online course offerings and MOOCS, there are still limited spaces in which to film them. At present, the E-Teaching unit is using a makeshift space for video lectures for online delivery, which is not soundproofed, and which requires them to spend around an hour putting up equipment and taking it down afterwards every time they film. A television studio with green screen would streamline processes, helping the University achieve its goal of delivering flexible and online learning.

STUDENT COMMUNITY

Around 70 students are involved in Radio Fodder, who produce between 30 and 35 hours of radio per week, though UMSU has trained 180 students, but their output is limited by a lack of facilities. Radio Fodder is operating from a self-built studio in UMSU but since the union shuts at 9pm, they cannot do a graveyard shift or prerecord programs to schedule later.

UMSU Media Officers say they would also like to shoot more videos; they have video shows that would use a studio, such as Media Matters. Their most-viewed video has received 139,000 views. A new student group MU STUDIO is hoping to establish a student marketing and production group but they are hampered by lack of facilities anywhere on campus.

STAGE ONE: IMMEDIATE SOLUTION (BY SEMESTER ONE 2017)

Audio booths Soundproofed audioboosts are necessary to provide space to record clean sound for audio and video work, since there are no sound-proofed spaces anywhere in the university. We recommend the installation of one, or ideally two, prefab soundproofed booths from VocalBooth, as used in the journalism departments of RMIT and UTS. To get full functionality and make these useful to the widest possible audience of stakeholders, they should be equipped with telephone and skype lines. Pre-fabricated soundproofed booths can be erected in existing spaces quickly, without any need for any structural changes or building work. These can become part of a long-term solution when a permanent Media Lab is built.

Approx costing

Audioboosts	10,000 – 15,799 each depending on sound insulation needs
Microphones	1000
Headphones	200
Mac computers	3600
Cables etc	200
Per Audioboost	15000 – 20799 each

Portable equipment There is a lack of camera bags, meaning that existing video cameras can only be transported in very heavy pelican cases and are not portable. In order to optimize existing resources, I would suggest the purchase of 5 more light camera bags. At present, there are 8 camera kits, but only 3 portable bags.

Approx costing 5x video camera bags Manfrotto 250 x 5 = 1250

Mobile journalism kits Technological change is transforming journalism, and the university needs to keep pace with this by offering mobile journalism kits, that will allow students to use their mobiles to record content. This is increasingly common within the industry, and will allow them to become industry-ready.

Shoulderpod S1	70
Rode Smartlav +	60
Rode SC6 TRRS	30
Rode SC1 extension cable	20
Tripod	70

I would suggest eight mobile journalism kits at 250 dollars per kit, as well as five Sony wireless lapel mikes at 200 dollars each for use with smartphones not equipped with headphone jacks

$(250 \times 8) + (200 \times 5) = 3000$ dollar

Editing equipment Editing suites are hard to book, as currently there is no online availability chart or automated booking service. This should be a priority – as with equipment hire – in order to simplify the system. Video journalism students need the flexibility to work on their output in their own time at their own pace, and giving three-month creative cloud licences for their laptops would allow that.

Creative cloud licences for 14 CAJ students for a 3 month period $(51 \times 14) = 714$

STAGE TWO: MEDIUM TERM SOLUTION (BY END 2017/EARLY 2018)

A staged solution working towards a purpose-built facility would see the acquisition of further soundproofed spaces, which would eventually be incorporated into the long-term solution. The ideal scenario at this stage would be to centralize the equipment and existing facilities at one site, both for streamlining usage and as a test-run for a purpose-built facility. The Digital Studio on the 3rd floor of Arts West may provide an ideal space to showcase new facilities, or an alternative space might be the basement seminar room in B06 in Arts West. Monash University's experience indicates how the use of new facilities in marketing materials can boost student numbers, especially from overseas, and raise the profile of a program, and the innovative spaces of Arts West provide an ideal backdrop to draw focus to the innovative learning and research experiences offered by the University. Enhanced digital facilities would also help realize the university's Digital Learning Strategy.

Audio Facilities It would be ideal to have at least three self-op single recording booths as well as one larger soundproofed studio with at least three microphones and a control desk that could be used for recording podcasts and interviewing guests. As well as the research and pedagogical functions, this would be used by the stakeholders listed below to help develop the new Podcast strategy, as well as by External affairs for broadcast interviews.

Video Facilities The medium-term solution would see the construction of a simple television studio with lighting and green screen that could be used for the recording of MOOCs and other online course delivery, as well as for a teaching tool. As befits a stage two solution, this not need to be a permanent facility, but could also use prefabricated studios and a television kit that could then be moved to the longterm facility. A studio such as this could also become an income stream, since it could be rented out on a daily or hourly basis to external users and for functions.

Research and Teaching Lab A research and teaching space equipped with up to 24 stations, all equipped with computers networked to a central server would be a boon to the university community, allowing networked teaching and research. Such a facility would also be useful to drive Engaged Teaching, by allowing team teaching in certain subjects, and these can play a role in object-based research and learning, academic collaboration as well as the teaching of industry-based subjects.

Editing equipment The existing edit suites should be co-located with the audio and video facilities, instead of scattered around the university as is currently the case. This would improve the workflow for stakeholders, as well as providing for ease of management of equipment and related technology. In any proper solution, as indicated above, the edit suites would be isolated from one another.

The university should install a networked software solution, so that all the edit suites and studios are on the same server and recorded content can be accessed from any computer in the facility, while content viewed on one machine can be thrown onto the central screen. This would benefit object-based learning, research and collaborative work, and could help drive Engaged Teaching and Learning.

STAGE THREE: LONGTERM SOLUTION (3-5 YEARS)

In the longer term, a purpose-built Media Lab is required, which could be located in the future Public Policy Precinct as envisioned in the Engagement strategy. This Media Lab would provide a physical space for the academic community and wider public to understand and participate in global media conversations. As a public-spirited institution, a Media Lab should be both external-facing in order to drive engagement with the wider community, and internal-facing by providing a space for the conduct of research into media forms and impacts.

There is also a need for the facilities all to be centralised in one place for workflow; otherwise anyone using the facilities will have to shuttle back and forth between the equipment centre, the audio booths and the edit suites, which is very poor for productivity and workflow.

This purpose built facility would comprise teaching labs with computers, radio studio with control room, TV studio with control room, equipment store, editing suites, self-op recording studios and the Citizen office, as detailed below:

- Teaching labs with 24 computers each for object-based learning. The computers would be networked to a central server, using a networked solution like Adobe Anywhere.

- Soundproofed professional radio studio with ISDN and Skype lines, with at least four mikes for panel discussions and a control room

- Television studio including Chroma key green screen, with at least four pedestal-mounted cameras with a teleprompter. Fully programmable lighting grid. Sets that can be wheeled in for news and interview formats. The control room would include a top-of-the-line graphics computer.

- Soundproofed edit suites with computers and screens, which could double up as audio booths.

- A truly ambitious solution would also include a sound-proofed theatre/tv studio for filming public lectures and events, and a green room for talent.

Summary of Findings

In late 2015, the School of Culture and Communication commissioned a report on the status of media equipment and facilities across the School, Faculty and University in order to determine what current and existing needs there may be (APPENDIX 2). Dr Mitch Goodwin was appointed (now working for the Faculty but previously a freelance yet experienced University media academic).

His findings are detailed in APPENDIX 3, however, in summary it was evident that the current equipment and infrastructure mix is inadequate for the delivery of existing curriculum offerings within SCC that depend on technology for either course delivery, course instruction and/or assessment completion. While staff would appear to be 'making do' there was a discernible level of frustration. Numerous learning outcomes cannot be fulfilled given the existing technology environment nor can the curriculum evolve as a technological discipline under current settings (APPENDIX 2 for those consulted).

An audit of School, Faculty and University infrastructure identified that a more inclusive and outward facing approach to media-lab infrastructure is required (APPENDIX 3). Since that date, ArtsWest has been completed although the full benefits of the building are yet to be realised until the E-teaching team and equipment loans system is operation, however, the imperative remains to evaluate short and longer term resource needs in the field of audiovisual communication. The report therefore has evolved from its original brief to a more inclusive agenda that incorporates the inter-related needs of a number of potential project partners:

- School of Culture and Communication
Including The Centre for Advancing Journalism (CAJ)
- eTeaching Unit and related learning technologies
- Learning Environments and Graduate Online
- Public Engagement

Any Media Lab development should incorporate an engagement initiative that provides a nexus for research and industry that not only benefits the student experience and the currency of the curricula but also provides a mechanism for the University to project a compelling and timely media product. Whether this takes the form of a Public Policy Precinct, a Media Institute or similar, such an integrated development would provide the technological foundation for the University's public engagement agenda as outlined in the [Growing Esteem](#) document.

It follows that work integrated learning opportunities for students and industry engagement for the School's research community should also be considered a priority. Additionally, a productive relationship with the media industry and the public policy sector would play to the research strengths of the School with the Transformative Technologies Research Unit and the Research Unit for Public Culture; as well as the School of Government.

Potential Benefits

- The Media Lab would contribute to the university's research capacity, as well as underlining the institution's commitment to Engaged Research and Teaching by providing facilities for the dissemination of research, as well as for the conduct of further research into the investigation of media forms and impacts.
- The Media Lab would help realize the university's Digital Learning Strategy by providing facilities to film and develop eLearning and mobile learning, MOOCs and graduate online courses. At present, there is still a shortage of suitable sound-proofed spaces where online content can be filmed and for related post-production work, and a Media Lab would play an important role in relieving the pressure on those spaces.
- The Media Lab would help the university to develop its profile as a public-spirited institution by helping the Chancellery's aim of building a Centre for Podcasting Excellence as well as by providing simple self-operated facilities for out-of-hours broadcast interviews. This would drive external engagement and brand-building beyond Australia and into new markets with the growing audiences for English-language podcasts in India, China and Southeast Asia. Podcasts are not only a way of disseminating research, but also of attracting new students from abroad, while at the same time providing the opportunity for pedagogical innovation.
- Upgrading audio and video production facilities will allow the University of Melbourne's degrees to produce industry-ready students. It would boost the reputation of the university's Journalism and Media & Communication Masters degrees, at the same time as offering the potential to be used as a marketing tool to help attract overseas students. Co-locating the audio and video facilities with the E-learning teams and the equipment stores could reshape pedagogical practices, for example leading to the development of collaborative teaching teams.
- There are many congruent interests in media production and infrastructure. For example, the audio booths for podcasts and high quality digital sound would be used by External Relations, the E-Teaching team, Learning Environments, Screen & Cultural Studies, UMSU and individual staff members, as well as other stakeholders. By allowing a space dedicated to Engaged Research and Engaged Students, the Media Lab would serve as a true enabler underlining the university's enduring commitment to relevance and public value.
- An audio and video newsroom would produce work for the university's award-winning online publication, The Citizen, placing it firmly at the heart of the journalism program. Students' audio and video work will be showcased throughout the university, for example by the Citizen, Farrago and also in the Science Gallery, which is seeking themed digital content for its exhibitions beginning in 2017.
- New digital facilities could serve as an extra income stream, through rental to external stakeholders, but also as a potential source for Category 2-4 research income. In conclusion, a Media Lab would provide the facilities to innovate and drive teaching, engagement and research across the University.

APPENDIX 1 SUBJECT OFFERINGS

Production subjects

Media & Communications

MECM40016 Audiovisual Communication

Journalism

JOUR90005 Audio Journalism

JOUR90008 Video Journalism

JOUR90013 Investigative Journalism

JOUR90010 Newsroom-Applied Professional Practice

JOUR90012 Journalism Project

Publishing & Communications

PUBL90006 Writing and Editing for Digital Media

PUBL90009 Advanced Editing for Digital Media

PUBL90013 Advanced Magazine Editing and Publishing

Possible cross-disciplinary synergies

Media & Communications

MECM20010 Comparing Media Systems

MECM20003 Net Communications

MECM30015 Media and Communications Project

MECM50001 Political Economy of the Network Society

MECM30004 Media Futures and New Technologies

MECM90007 Media Convergence and Digital Culture

MECM90015 History of Network Media

MECM90019 Social Media and Change

Journalism

MECM40007 Change in Journalism

JOUR90004 Journalism Entrepreneurship in New Media

JOUR90011 Data Journalism

Publishing & Communications

PUBL90013 Advanced Magazine Editing and Publishing

PUBL90004 Business and Professional Communications

PUBL90012 Practicum

Screen & Cultural Studies

CULS10005 Media, Identity and Everyday Life

CULS30002 Asian Cinema and Media

SCRN30005 The Digital Screenscape

CULS20014 Television, Lifestyle & Consumer Culture

SCRN90004 Visual Culture Industries

CULS30003 City Cultures

CULS20016 Media Histories

Marketing Communications

MKTG90009 Advertising

MKTG90028 Integrated Marketing Communications

MKTG90029 Marketing & Media in a Global Context

MKTG90032 Applied Syndicate Project

Other possible synergies

CWRI30014 Advanced Screenwriting

ABPL90368 Architecture & Media

CCDP70005 Rethinking the Creative City

AMGT90017 Communicating the Arts

THTR30040 Hashtag Cyberstardom

AHIS40002 Indigenous Photography, New Media, Film

LING20012 Language and Media

MULT20011 Communicating Science and Technology

HPSC20009 Technology & Contemporary Life

AMGT90012 Managing Creative Content

APPENDIX 2 CONSULTANCY BRIEF 2015

We are seeking expressions of interest to undertake research and reporting on the feasibility of a media lab to support the teaching aims of the Media and Communications, Publishing, and Journalism programs within the School of Culture and Communication.

The incumbent will travel to competing universities in Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney to investigate and compare facilities offered within their media programs. In addition to facility tours, these visits should include consultation with teaching and specialist administrative staff in order to gain insight on the benefits provided by their university's facilities. The incumbent should also extensively consult discipline heads in the School of Culture and Communication to determine what benefit they would derive from an investment in new media facilities, and other schools and faculties should be consulted to determine what benefits would be realised beyond the School.

The final report should provide detail on the following topics:

- Recommendations for equipment requirements including a recording studio and media production facilities.
- Space requirements and recommendations for the abovementioned facilities.
- An analysis of the benefits of leasing vs. purchasing equipment.
- An analysis of the current fixed desktop teaching spaces and flexible laptop lab spaces available for media-related subjects at the University and recommendations for investments in the future.
- Recommendations for implementing a strategy that will enable flexibility as needs change with time.
- Full costings of proposed investments.
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the benefit this investment would provide to the School of Culture and Communication and the entire University community. The incumbent will receive 6 weeks casual salary at \$42 per hour as well as airfare and accommodation for travel to Brisbane and Sydney.
- Expressions of interest in the form of a short statement and a recent CV should be sent to John Boardman at johnab@unimelb.edu.au no later than **Sunday 14 June**

INTERVIEWEES

This report was compiled drawing upon the consultations of Dr Mitch Goodwin, as well as additional interviewees.

Jim Middleton, Centre for Advancing Journalism
Steven McIntyre, Media & Communications
Heather Jarvis, Centre for Advancing Journalism
Elyas Khan, Centre for Advancing Journalism
Scott Wright, Culture & Communication
Meredith Hinze, eTeaching Unit Manager
Cameron Dunlop, eTeaching Unit Multimedia
Amelia Scurry, ArtsWest Executive Communication & Liaison
Mathilde Lochert, Academic Services
Simon Wilkins, Carlton Connect Senior Projects Manager
Nez Goc, Calton Connect Senior Facilities & Operations Manager
Jane Brown, Visual Culture Resources Centre
Gavin Nebauer, Horwood Recording Studio Sound Engineer
Peter Mellow, Learning Environments
Deborah Jones, Learning Environments Associate Director
Leigh Tillson, Learning Environments Video Production
Russel Evans, Learning Environments Media Production Technologies
Andi Horvath, External Relations, Media Advisor & Podcasts
Eric Van Bommel, External Relations
Rachel Fensham, Head, School of Culture & Communication
John Boardman, Manager School of Culture & Communication
Margaret Simon, Director, Centre for Advancing Journalism
Mark Davis, Publications & Communications Head
Angela Ndalians, Screen & Cultural Studies Head
Wendy Haslem, Screen Studies & Arts Management
Baya Ouyang, UMSU Media Office
Sebastian Dodds, UMSU Media Office
Danielle Bagnato, UMSU Media Office
Caleb Triscari, UMSU Media Office

External Consultation

Peter Allen, VCA Film & TV
David Aston, VCA Technical Services Manager
Philip Chubb, Monash University Head of Journalism
Andrew Dodd, Swinburne University Journalism Professor
Jonathan Lang, Swinburne University Journalism Coordinator, Digital Media Production
Scott Allan, Deakin University Dept of Media & Comms Technical Group Manager
Ross Harley, UNSW Dean of Art & design
Luke Killen, UNSW IT Manager
Tom Ellard, UNSW Media Lab Paddington Program Director
Sue Blackburn, UNSW Media Lab Paddington Senior Technical Officer
Som Guan, UNSW iCinema Software Engineer

Mark Evans, UTS School of Communication Head of School

Mark Riordan, UTS Media Lab Coordinator

Kaye Schumack, Western Sydney University, Humanities & Communication Arts Director of Programs

Mitchell Hart, Western Sydney University Studio Operations Manager

APPENDIX 3: INTERNAL AUDIT: KEY OBSERVATIONS – MITCH GOODWIN, JANUARY 2016

An internal audit of existing equipment and infrastructure within the Arts Faculty was conducted in late 2015 to evaluate how resources are currently being utilised by the School of Culture and Communication (SCC) staff and students. The aim of this audit was to get a better understanding of the pressure points that exist within the system and to evaluate the suitability of existing infrastructure. Notably, this audit was conducted prior to the completion and realisation of the ArtsWest building.

1. Teaching Requirements

In conversation with teaching staff and various heads of discipline from the teaching areas most acutely affected by the provision of technology there was general agreement that current facilities and equipment resources are either inadequate, under resourced or non-existent. There is a sense that while some of the equipment is of a very high quality, especially the camera acquisition equipment, and further integration of their necessity and use in a broader technology strategy is required.

While the quality and volume of production equipment managed by the eTeaching Unit is regarded as positive, the level of demand presents a layer of complexity for the equipment's maintenance, distribution and instruction.

Meanwhile, the number of students who depend on technology for instruction and/or assessment outcomes is rapidly rising. The numbers below reflect current delivery.

Course	2012	2013	2014	2015
BA (3 rd level capstone subject-compulsory for Media and Communications major)	220	290	287	274
Master of Media and Communications	81	93	126	153
Master of Journalism	31	36	47	27
BA (3 rd level capstone for Screen and Cultural Studies major)	74	79	50	77
Master of Marketing and Communications	NA	NA	NA	103
Total # Students per Year	406	498	510	634

• **Table 1.1** Enrolment numbers for relevant programs in the School of Culture & Communication.

Pressure Points

The lack of a studio environment in which to teach the basic requirements of creative media production both in terms of practical workflow and the demands of proper instruction and assessment increasingly impacts on staff time and quality of teaching. This issue frequently appears in the comments of the Student Satisfaction Survey.

In terms of teaching and learning support, this lack of a studio facility is the most critical gap in the current arrangement. The problem for subject delivery then is twofold:

- Students enrolled in SCC subjects cannot be taught production practices and industry workflows within existing infrastructure during scheduled classes;
- Students cannot complete assessment tasks, and therefore develop a competitive industry ready show reel, within the existing resources for out of hours access.

A suitable network infrastructure for integration with other equipment and media assets is important for any cohesive technology strategy. Currently there is no media share solution between teaching spaces, teaching media, student production outputs, postproduction workflows or storage capacity for ongoing archival purposes.

It should be noted, that Monash, Deakin, RMIT and UTS all operate some form of networked media server infrastructure that facilitates the sharing of content for teaching purposes and creative media production.

2. Studio Facilities

Several make-shift spaces exist on campus: The “Green Room” (139.104 Babel building) operated by the eTeaching Unit, the Learning Environments studio in the Alice Hoy Building), the outside broadcast link in the Sidney Myer Building and of course the large sound stage at VCA at Southbank. Both the eTeaching Unit and the Learning Environments team are compromised by the physical limitations of the spaces they occupy and the current demands on their time mean that these facilities are unsuitable for assessment completion even if they were up to spec. The VCA facilities are heavily booked during assessment periods and operate in a different workflow environment than what is required for SCC media production.

Pressure Points

While some facilities exist on campus, none meet the requirements of a studio production space::

- Availability
- Sound proofing
- Sufficient height to hang a lighting rack
- Sufficient depth to accommodate a three camera setup
- Sufficient room / or observation windows for workshop instruction
- Additional breakout spaces for production meetings
- Edit suites in the near vicinity to conduct post-production

Such a facility also requires breakout spaces, teaching labs and edit suites located nearby, preferably on the same floor, if not in the same building.

1. Any such facility will require the piping of audio-visual content between the production space, the post-production space and the teaching lab.
2. Teaching of A/V production and multi-media development is a complex collaborative endeavour that requires a staged process:
 - Pre-production development
 - (Often lengthy) periods of production
 - The viewing and critiquing of material
 - Post-production assemblage
 - Mastering of media and assets
 - Publishing and/or distribution of content

It is practical, cost effective and efficient if this all takes place in the one location with staff and/or crew close-by to support the process.

3. Teaching Spaces

With regards to classroom and lab teaching spaces for the delivery of desktop publishing and basic multimedia instruction there is agreement among staff that while some spaces may be under-spec or physically awkward, the software side is improving in terms of currency, reliability and adaptability.

There was some praise with regards to the flexibility of spaces, (191.G21 in particular) in terms of using laptops rather than desktops and having the ability to “shape-shift” the space. There is considerable pressure on this space and as Assoc. Prof. Mark Davis indicates the number one priority for Publishing & Communications would be another Computer Lab.

Several other teaching spaces are used by SCC to teach creative media or screen media content:

- Room 191.106, John Medley Building (JMB)
- Room 191.G15, JMB
- Room 191.G21, JMB
- Room 191.G22, JMB
- Room 139.104, (The “Green Room”) Babel Building
- Room 158.G09, Sidney Myer Asia Centre

Pressure Points

Within current resources all computer labs are under spec for the type of instruction required. For instance, Room 139.104 in the Babel building is limited by its size, has only 18 terminals and lacks proximity to any sort of studio recording facility (particularly for audio recording). While Room 191.G21 is noted for its flexibility it is heavily booked, and lacks an electronic

whiteboard for software instruction and the current laptop configuration may become unworkable as acquisition tools become more sophisticated and assessment tasks more complex.

Quality and time pressure affects staff and students trying to produce sophisticated multimedia content within the Master of Journalism program, the production outcomes for Media and Communications' capstone offering and the more adventurous elements of Digital Publishing that are increasingly moving towards video and interactivity.

It is inevitable that as creative media components creep into other areas of more traditional theoretical study – such as Arts Management, Cultural and Screen Studies – that students will be permitted to use media *to respond to media* thereby placing more pressure on these labs to evolve.

As software becomes more intuitive and the tools of production more available it follows that there should be spaces where students can make and manipulate content whether or not for assessment. Digital production in a networked setting should be a site of innovation from the perspective of the student.

From an economic and usage perspective, Teaching Labs and Seminar spaces need to be as adaptable as possible for both technology and ergonomics. Facilities at Monash, RMIT and UTS in Sydney have innovative “news rooms” and “convergent labs” (see APPENDIX 4). These spaces feature:

- Wave shaped tables on wheels that can be configured according to group size or teaching orientation;
- Data and power cables from the roof and/or the floor for docking laptops or desktop computers;
- Large LED panels at points around the room that can be fed a signal either from the teaching console or students hooked up to a docking station;
- Electronic white boards for software instruction and content sharing;
- A large drop down screen, projector and 7.1 surround sound for viewing cinematic or gaming content and keynote presentations;
- And with respect to Journalism an outside link to television, social media feeds and news wire services.

These spaces then become “experience labs” as well as spaces where students can be taught traditional software and/or theoretical curricula. These labs should be situated close to, or ideally adjacent to, production studio facilities so that they can be booked as breakout spaces for production meetings or for viewing production rushes.

Rows of monitors on rows of desks facing a single teaching console is becoming an out-dated media model. The teaching instruction for emergent forms of new media production within more traditional sectors of the media and publishing sector however still requires a degree of point-and-click instruction.

There is therefore a strong case for two spaces, one that is flexible and adaptable across a range of teaching functions and project development purposes; and a more traditional lab with uniform software and fast dependable computers that students can access 24/7 to complete assessment.

4. Edit Suites & Post-Production

Post-production facilities (Audio/Video Edit Suites) are scattered across the campus and in less than ideal locations and in some cases several edit suites are crammed into the one room. While the software component would appear a bit of a patchwork they are at least up to date. The hardware however is quite dated and only capable of handling current - let alone future increases in – high definition media and/or student load.

Current post-production facilities available to SCC students total seven stations across three locations:

- Room 216, Old Arts (x2 Edit Stations)
- Room G20, John Medley Building
- Room G20A, John Medley Building (x2 Edit Stations)
- Room 342, Visual Culture Resources Centre, John Medley Building
- Room 343, Visual Culture Resources Centre, John Medley Building

Pressure Points

Further to the problem identified with the general teaching and lab facilities - as the quality of the media increases so does the need to critique, handle and manipulate that media. Currently there is a barely adequate model for post-production in SCC for existing media generation.

This scenario is even more perilous for students working with audio as there is no facility to capture clean audio and then to post-produce it. This is a critical requirement for a range of Journalism graduate subjects that require audio and video outcomes and most critically for their capstone project, JOUR90012.

It is therefore foreseeable as audio and video continue to grow as components of the web and digital publishing sectors that suitable audio recording and post-production facilities will be needed as more traditional streams of the curricula progress with industry changes.

Staff from a range of disciplines have already indicated a desire to implement new media components into their assessment design at all graduate levels, however, the lack of space to support audio-visual content inhibits further expansion of creative projects. This is not just a Teaching & Learning issue but also a professional practice issue with reference to an industry that increasingly requires students that are familiar with high-definition acquisition techniques and post-production workflows for broadcast, digital publishing, new media and online venues.

There is a clear need here for infrastructure and investment in durable equipment to handle the current demands on hardware that high-definition requires and the ability to negotiate the forthcoming 4K window. In other words, a solution that can be upgraded beyond the needs of today as a component of a long-term infrastructure strategy. An indication of what is required in terms of minimalist edit suite would be:

- High-end computer
- Audio interface module
- Data link to central server
- Computer desktop monitor
- Large output monitor (colour correction & mastering)
- Audio monitors (playback monitoring)
- Ceiling mounted microphone (voiceover, ADR)
- Desktop microphone (interviews and skype sessions)
- Large desk with room for three-four students and an instructor

This infrastructure does not have to be exclusive to video production nor does it need to be a student-only non-teaching space. With adequate planning and suitable space “Edit Suites” could be “booked” for a range of activities:

- Video post-production (basic edits through to mastering)
- Audio production (overdubs, voiceover, radio interviews, skype sessions)
- Screen analysis (TV, art history, cinema & gaming)
- Student project feedback
- Graduate digital object research

5. eTeaching Unit & Equipment

Teaching & Learning services facilitate eTeaching solutions for staff within the Faculty of the Arts, and also manage and design the lending systems for audio/visual equipment and production resources for the Faculty with one dedicated Equipment Loans Officer. The Unit uses the WASP booking and tracking system, the same system employed at VCA, as part of a long-term strategy.

This requires considerable time and effort to maintain distribute and track equipment use from both staff and students, and also requires providing tech-support for a very specialist range of audio-visual equipment by maintaining them in good working order.

Meredith Hinze, eTeaching Unit Manager, has observed a marked increase in staff and student usage: “Overall there’s a continuous and steady increase in the complexity of camera equipment & accessories involved. Many subjects across the faculty now use specialised equipment, and there’s been an increase in subjects offering different forms of assessment utilising student generated video content.”

Minutes of Video Recorded by E-Teaching Unit in the Past Year

Location	Sem 1	Sem 2	total
Studio	153	671	824
Office	27		27
On campus	66	23	89
Off campus	249	5	254
Digital	14	19	33
Lecture Theatre	815	388	1203

Client	Sem 1	Sem 2
eTeaching	14	
Subject	443	676
Arts	157	42
University	3	95
HR		
Lecture	707	293

Pressure Points

In 2015, the production team used a makeshift space, Room 139.104, to produce small video lectures for online delivery. This space is essentially a computer lab timetabled for teaching with a wraparound curtain and drop down green screen that can be deployed for lo-fi production purposes. The ceiling is too low to hang lights and the floor space is too shallow in length to accommodate a permanent camera setup stored in the space. The room is directly off a main corridor and is not isolated for sound recording purposes while the carpeted surface is unsuitable for any form of dolly system or set installation.

Essentially a teaching space, “the Green Room” as it is known, is utilized predominately for teaching media production subjects and/or components. Most frustratingly however, at only 18 terminals, the space lacks sufficient computers to accommodate a full class often being supplemented by laptops.

APPENDIX 4 EXTERNAL AUDIT: AUSTRALIA

Facilities offered by other Australian institutions offering Journalism degrees

RMIT, Melbourne

School of Media & Communications

Dr Alex Wake, Journalism

The School of Media & Communications is undergoing a major round of investment and is currently well into a three-year campus re-development along Swanston Street. This build will include five new production studios in a proposed “Media Precinct” due for completion in December 2016.

Resource Summary

Their current infrastructure is quite impressive and facilitates a range of creative media and communications production streams.



Key features:

- EVS media server and networked infrastructure known as the “Media Grid” is piped across two levels. This services a library of media to teaching labs as well as media assets to and from the production environment and the post-production edit suite cluster.
- A temporary fully rigged high-definition studio facility has been built as an interim solution before the new complex comes online.
- A post-production cluster of 20 edit suites with Media Grid access. Each room is isolated for sound and has voice-over and ADR capabilities.
- A “Media Convergence” lab that features a three-monitor news feed, outside telephone line, and the ability to share content from teaching console and all 18 student terminals.
- Radio studios are well resourced, yet equipment is quickly becoming redundant. Recording studios are isolated for sound yet lack sufficient space for observation and/or teacher instruction of classes.

University of Technology, Sydney

School of Communication

Prof. Mark Evans, Head of School of Communication

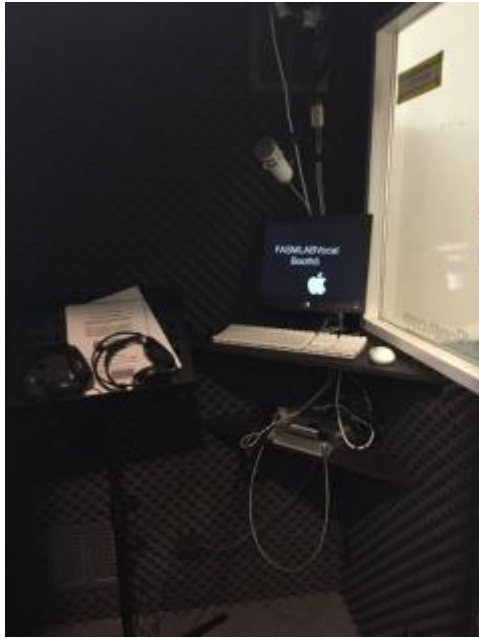
Mark Riordan, Media Lab Coordinator

The School of Communication at UTS is another institution that is going through a staged redevelopment project that directly benefits the delivery of the Media and Communications and Journalism programs.

Resource Summary

While some of their infrastructure is clearly showing signs of fatigue the longevity of their infrastructure and the staged refurbishment of the equipment inventory is indicative of careful planning and a refined process over time.

- Recently completed facilities to service 200 Journalism students, staff and postgrads.
- Journalism Research Space features a collaborative media space for staff and students that includes a small surround sound viewing lounge tucked into the back corner of the space, casual seating space along the perimeter (similar to the new facility at Monash), a large waveform table in the centre of the space for collaborative meetings and a few “express work terminals” towards the entrance.
- The Convergent News Room features a glass camera booth with backdrop of newsroom for pieces to camera, large meeting desks on wheels to reconfigure the space and seven production machines on benches around the edge of the room. It features an 18 screen video wall with feed from a range of news services including AAP and Reuters news wires, ABC24, Foxtel news channels and trending topics on social media. The system can also display content from the teaching console as well as pull up content from their Edit Share server using the new Octopus system.
- Between these two spaces are Skype Booths for conducting interviews in an isolated environment.



Vocalbooth prefab studios UTS Sydney/ Mitch Goodwin



UNSW, Paddington & Kensington campus

School of Art & Design

Prof. Ross Harley, Dean of Art & Design

Luke Killen, Faculty IT Manager

Tom Ellard, Program Director, Bachelor of Media Arts

Sue Blackburn, Senior Technical Officer

Som Guan, iCinema, Software Engineer

Extensive time was spent on both the Paddington and Kensington campus to establish some of the dynamics involved in the media technology-teaching interface. This provided a unique insight into the UNSW Art & Design approach that has an enviable reputation in attracting research funding and translating the investment into practical and visible outcomes.

Meeting Summary, Prof. Ross Harley

Initial meeting provided some important advice on the process of developing the type of technology infrastructure being considered by SCC:

- Important to identify who the active research staff are in the school and what they are working on and how this might inform the outcome.
- Accommodating staff research outputs and their teaching requirements into the design process of any new facility will ensure collective ownership and therefore productivity benefits.
- Any capital works investment requires an identifiable and ultimately sustainable roadmap of ongoing research and funding pathways embedded into the design.
- Ultimately the process is undertaken to ensure that the use and instruction of media production technology is built on a sound and informed curriculum – and potential future iterations – that is served by the facility.
- Building a strong relationship with Central IT Services early on is important so they are well prepared for any intended involvement and/or expertise.
- Vital that the studio facility has a functional and reflexive relationship with the teaching space.
- Think about how to best use the teaching space: how are teaching spaces changing? How are we teaching technology? What are the fundamental principles across time?
- Proposal needs to be scaled from an initial contained facility to accommodate current shortcomings with a roadmap towards a large-scale facility with leading edge fit-out and preferably industry partnerships.

Resource Summary

UNSW are extremely well resourced from teaching spaces, to studio facilities to the deployment of technology. This operates somewhere between the Art School and Film School model. Significant investment has clearly been made in the areas of data visualisation, interactive aesthetics, the digital humanities, new media production, design practice and innovative forms of experimental electronic art. Some key observations of their resources and approach include:

- Main studio space, referred to here as the “black box” follows the “cube” model at UTS – large adaptable space for producing, instructing and consuming media content.

- During discussions with staff it became obvious the studio space has undergone many changes and its use and configuration is constantly under review.
- The studio features a retractable curtain, sound isolation, lighting rig and generous ceiling height.
- Equipment Store is located centrally and serves the entire student body with a staged technology profile through the undergraduate program and onto the graduate cohort.
- Exceptional sound recording and post-production facilities are complimented by additional imported Vocal Booths (see VocalBooth.com) for extra flexibility and space efficiency.
- An In-house software developer is employed to build bespoke interfaces and software applications for teaching, research and administration (example: end of year grad show, student entry portfolio submissions, etc).
- Art & Design have a strong relationship with Central IT with two team members embedded in the local IT team at the Paddington campus. This has partly grown out of the School being geographically separated from the main campus at Kensington.

Monash University, Caulfield campus

School of Media, Film & Journalism

Assoc. Prof. Ian Chubb, Head of Journalism

The School has just completed a major redevelopment of an existing University space specifically for the purpose of teaching and producing media in a Broadcast Journalism context. The project site was identified within existing University property as being under-utilized which helped greatly with the execution of the build and support from the University.

Resource Summary

The new facility, due for completion and final fit-out in November 2015 cost approximately AU\$3 million and will predominately service the large Journalism cohort (1000 students):

- The facility is situated in the one location and spread out across one floor.
- The facility will also serve the Media & Communications cohort.
- The School will be employing two staff, one with IT expertise and one with Audio Visual production experience, to manage the facility including equipment distribution and maintenance and server infrastructure.
- Media Room, has approximately 32 consoles, a live feed news feed from all major networks and a breakout meeting room.
- Recording booths and edit bays are located in the corner block just off from the Video Studios



Monash University's new TV studio/Louisa Lim



Second view of Monash's tv studio/Louisa Lim



Monash's Media Lab/Louisa Lim



Monash's Media Lab/Louisa Lim



Monash's new \$3m facilities/ Louisa Lim

Deakin University, Burwood campus

School of Communication and Creative Arts

Scott Allan, Manager SCCA Technical Group

The Deakin program is well established and currently represents one of the most complete and functional production facilities for tertiary TV production in Melbourne. The facilities at the Burwood campus support primarily Communication, Film & TV Production and Journalism disciplines.

Resource Summary

- The site features a functioning HD Television Studio that is used on a weekly basis by NITV and provides the School with 8 student internships annually.
- The studio complex is a significant infrastructure that also benefits from a workshop space and loading dock.
- 15 technical staff support the studio facility, teaching labs, equipment lending and server infrastructure.
- Entire complex from studio to post-production is plugged into an Avid Everywhere production environment and Edit Share network storage.

- The Motion Lab is going through a phase of renewal after an initial period of activity from the gaming sector. Today it is mostly used for dance and performance research but is increasingly used for staff research and animation.
- Computer lab teaching console pushes out the desktop to multiple monitors and can also throw up an image from a student desktop, (similar to RMIT lab).



Swinburne University



Swinburne's TV studio/Louisa Lim



Radio self-ops at Swinburne/Louisa Lim

EXTERNAL AUDIT: INTERNATIONAL

Facilities offered by international universities offering graduate journalism degrees.



USC Annenberg Newsroom in the US\$150m Wallis Annenberg Hall, California /Louisa Lim



Bournemouth University TV studio, UK/Bournemouth Uni



Bournemouth University, UK/Bournemouth Uni