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From strength to strength

IT gives me great pleasure to report on another successful year for SCHOMS in terms of both activity and extended partnerships.

It started with the SCHOMS annual pilgrimage to ISE **(see page 9).** Thanks to the sponsored buyers' scheme, 60 delegates from 47 institutions attended. Always a great opportunity to meet up and network with colleagues, it was the first year that the presentations contributed towards CTS renewal points.

In terms of membership and sponsorship we remain in excellent financial health even though our York conference proved more expensive due to the historic location. There was a range of presentations appealing to the diverse nature of the SCHOMS membership including keynotes from Robina Chatham **(see pages 2-3)** and Jon Moon, both leading authorities in their field of professional development.

The dinners at the eminent Hospitium and the famous National Railway Museum also helped to make it a truly memorable conference.

There are currently 104 UK HEIs members with new members joining from Oxford, Said Business School, Kent, Lincoln, University College Birmingham, Worcester, University of Highlands and Islands, North East Scotland College, Liverpool John Moores and Gibraltar. A very warm welcome to you all.

Sponsorship is vital to our success and enables the funding of membership activities. In June, 20 members embarked on a SCHOMS-facilitated AVIXA Certified

Chair Caroline Pepper looks forward to SCHOMS building on 2018 successes

Technology Specialist course at Loughborough delivered by Chuck Espinosa who flew in from the States **(see page 8)**. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and congratulations to the 'Lufbra CTS class of 2018'

Partnership with AVIXA strengthens year on year together with increased collaboration with other professional bodies including European University Innovation Systems (EUNIS), Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC), FlexSpace – the current host site of the Learning Space Toolkit phase 2 – and last but not least, our antipodean sister organisation AETM where ongoing collaboration with the President Scott Doyle has enabled the creation of affiliate membership for both organisations. AETM hosted Mark Dunlop, Vice Chair, and Rodrigo Sanchez-Pizani as bursary winner in November at their conference in Adelaide.

Plans are progressing well for 2019 annual conference from 26–28 June hosted by Bournemouth University. It will be centred on the Fusion building, which has been designed to bring together key elements of education, research and practice, creating something which is greater than the sum of its parts. Bournemouth also boasts the best beach in Britain (TripAdvisor, 2018).

In parallel with this, plans are also underway for the 2020 conference which will be extra special in celebration of 20 years of SCHOMS. Watch this space!

The strength of this organisation is its members so thank you all for your ongoing support and commitment.

It's a date **SCHOMS19** Bournemouth University 26–28 June

How is your 'managing today' going?

Inspirational executive coach, writer and speaker Robina Chatham lifted the lid at SCHOMS18 on 'Developing Personal Power' in organisations.

WE can be like hamsters on a wheel in the modern workplace, according to Robina Chatham. "We never have enough time, the more work we do, the more it generates.

"When we don't have enough time, something gives. What often gives is tomorrow at the expense of today."

She described today as our comfort zone. "We busy ourselves sorting out day-to-day problems with the feeling they're more urgent. They probably are urgent – but they're not necessarily more important."

Tomorrow was more difficult, she added. "There's no right answer for tomorrow, it's a world of unpredictability, so we tend to focus our time on our comfort zone."

Robina likened IT time management to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. "The bottom level is about keeping the lights on, keeping everything working, your licence to exist.

"The next level is reactive mode, like putting in new equipment or doing what the rest of the university asks you to do."

It was on the third level that we became proactive rather than reactive and began to influence developments.

"At the very top, you're turning existing models on their head and doing things totally differently, like introducing a new service or product through clever use of AV and IT."

The bottom two levels required a different mindset to the top two levels, she said.

"In the bottom two you're looking for right answer,

Not important or not urgent

Question whether you should be doing them at all. These include:
- going to meetings because you've been invited, not because you've questioned the purpose
- doing every little email
- having lunch with the sales rep because he's asked you to not because you've got a useful purpose in doing it.

Important and urgent
- fire-fighting – if you haven't spent enough time on important non-urgent matters, you will spend more time fire-fighting because you won't have done contingency planning.

focusing on the present, managing today. The top two are more about asking the right question, focusing on the future, leading tomorrow.

"If you don't manage today right you haven't got a licence to contribute to the top two levels. It's about getting the balance right. Getting the bottom two levels right is what gives you credibility and you get a good reputation."

Robina said that, freed of the day-to-day and focus on the top two levels, managers needed to delegate to trusted people beneath them.

Research had shown that senior IT leaders spent 19% on the top two levels and 81% on the bottom two levels.

"It's pretty depressing," Robina said. "Time is finite, a budget item. If you don't manage time, it gets eaten up by what's urgent but not necessarily important.

"Just because something is urgent, it doesn't necessarily mean it's important and vice-versa. If it's urgent, you have to do it now. But if it's not important, you only have to spend a little bit of time doing it or delegate if you can. If you don't manage this, your time will drift."

She advised people to spend more of their time on planning for the future, networking and building relationships. "It's about developing opportunities and engaging in your own personal development," Robina said.

"Remember the 80-20 rule. In doing a job, 20% of time is spent getting 80% there. Getting the extra 20% perfection takes 80% of time."

// If you don't manage time, it's eaten up by what's urgent but not necessarily important. Just because something is urgent, it doesn't mean it's important and vice-versa //

HAVE you ever wondered why the presentation you thought had the perfectly-crafted case didn't work as well as you'd hoped?

"Chances are it's nothing to do with the content, but everything to do with the style," Robina revealed. "It's the style that gets people's attention."

She said that achieving engagement – and the opportunity to influence – was more likely if you spoke the language of the recipient.

"Don't treat other people as you wish to be treated yourself because they may be different from you. What does it for you doesn't necessarily do it for others."

As there were four types of people, this required four types of influencing strategies (see panel in article below).

▶ "If you want to engage ST type of people, you need to be organised and structured, work logically to a conclusion offering proof and evidence."

Use the classic presentation technique – tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you've told them.

▶ NTs wanted the big picture and for the message to appeal to their

Guide to understanding and extending your influence

intellect and imagination. "They also want to see you've got charisma and presence and are a credible source of information."

NTs do not like bullet point slides and if you have to give them one, no more than three bullet points, and if you really want to annoy them, use the 'slow reveal' technique. You're hiding things and they want the big picture. You're forcing them to go at your speed. NTs like models.

▶ NFs wanted to be shown how the message would contribute to greater good of humankind. "Engage with their values, paint pictures, draw analogies that have meaning."

Have a metaphor, I've used snakes and ladders, they like lots of ideas

and how they play to people's strengths, but not too much detail.

▶ SFs were concerned with the details about people. "They care that every person is important and not one should be disadvantaged by strategy."

Be informal, sit down as you would with a friend, have a genuine two-way conversation, listen and learn, modify your own conclusions accordingly.

Robina recommended mixing and matching styles in the event of presenting to a mixed group.

"Data, lists for STs, models for NTs, metaphors and analogies for NFs and personal stories for SFs," she suggested. "Keep changing your style frequently, so you're not engaging three-quarters of your audience for too long.

"Craft your presentation initially in your own style then look back at what messages would lend themselves to a different form of presentation, when could you turn a list into a model, use a metaphor to explain, when could you add personal story. You will find your presentations become more universally appealing."

3

Good communications: a question of personality

ROBINA derived her four types of people by pairing the most significant communication preferences from the Myles-Briggs Type Indicator, a self-report inventory designed to identify personality types.

Sensing thinkers (STs) – pragmatic
Intuitive thinkers (NTs) – theoretical
Intuitive feelers (NFs) – idealistic
Sensing feelers (SFs) – sociable

Sensing versus intuition

"Sensing is about gathering data from the real world through any one or all of the five senses – factual information based in the here and now," she explained. "It's the part of the personality that helps you learn by experience, by repeating the task and getting more skilled.

"Intuition is more about sixth sense, gut feel and future possibilities. It is a case of 'been there, done that', more the jack of all trades than master of one.

"Whatever your preference, celebrate it and aim to be good. To do that, you need the balance of the opposite in your personality. Be sensitive to the needs of others."

Thinking versus feeling

"This is how we make decisions," Robina said. "Thinking is with the head, based on logic. Feeling is with the heart, based on personal views, therefore subjective.

"A well-balanced thinker is logical, object, precise. But could come across as critical and argumentative.

"A well-balanced feeler is empathetic, considerate and good at forming collaborative relationships. But could come across as having no balance, hyper-sensitive, sanctimonious and illogical."

She recommended a business-like approach with thinkers. "Be direct and to the point, focus on results and objectives, don't waffle.

"With feelers – be personal and caring, listen, put yourself in their shoes, acknowledge their values.

"The general population is very much skewed towards sensing," Robina said. "In IT, it's very much skewed towards sensing-thinking. Even if you don't have these preferences, this is the adopted cultural style in IT, it's how you've been taught to do it."

Game-changing Digital Campus

Ross Parry, Associate Professor Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital) at the University of Leicester, spoke about the ground-breaking Digital Campus that is changing the face and nature of his institution.

Leicester's 'revolutionary' Digital Reading Room.

THERE'S a 'golden thread' running through a digital transformation at the University of Leicester, according to Ross Parry.

It connects every discussion and initiative to a comprehensive digital strategy and, in turn, to the institution's mission statement.

"A digital strategy is much wider than an IT strategy," Ross said. "It's seeing the university as a digital platform and constantly building it. But because we're a university, we call it a digital campus.

"We hadn't written one before," he added. "We had an IT strategy that was clear on software, technologies, cables, codes and protocols. A digital strategy is about systems and data but also the softer cultural side of things, people and the environment.

"The strategic plan – our vision and mission – sits at the top of our family tree of documents. Underneath sit the research strategy and technology strategy. Under that, people, finance, estates, international and digital.

"Everything in the digital strategy goes up to either the research or teaching strategy, and those strategies go up to the strategic plan. A golden thread runs through".

He explained how the strategy revolved around digital skills and capabilities, digital learning environment and digital research environment.

But skills lay at the heart of it all. "You can have the best wi-fi, touch screens, monitors and infrastructure, but if you don't have a digitally confident workforce, it doesn't transform you."

The main work lay in exciting staff about their own **digital capabilities**. Under a digital literacy framework, a steering group of digital learning spaces was formed – comprising library, IT services, doctoral college, career development services, human resources and Leicester Learning Institute. "Those organisations didn't talk together before," Ross said.

JISC helped to create a digital capabilities framework. Skills and digital capabilities were embedded within the leadership programme. Digital innovation partnerships were introduced. A reverse mentoring model, the partnerships saw students become digital associates and gain a financial reward on completion of a project.

Ross gave the example of a geography student who asked why more students weren't being marked digitally. "Supported by digital advocates, the student delivered that micro-change. We've got 23 projects in total finishing now and all at a total cost of £15k."

Ross praised the tireless work put in by SCHOMS' own Chris Gooch and his team on creating the Digital Reading Room, a revolutionary new learning space in the library. "It went from concept in July to opening in January – a media rich social studies space with digital screens, interactive table, digital wall, a room full of beautiful display technology. It's the physical manifestation of all the digital campus stands for."

The **digital learning environment** was about "giving ourselves permission to look for different solutions to deliver capabilities."

Ross gave the example of the ways the university used Blackboard. "We unboxed it and started to understand different capabilities," he said. "Blackboard didn't talk to our student record system, so we fixed it. We now have single authentication to get into Office 365, Panopto, TurnItIn and Blackboard."

The **digital research environment** aimed to establish clear and consistent support for researchers through pilot projects. Ross felt that, as a general rule, universities provided digital classrooms but nothing for researchers.

Commending digital strategies to delegates, Ross said: "Once you've clarified your vision, formulated your projects and won hearts and minds, then you need to keep the energy going.

"Throughout we've continued to have beginner's mindset, humility and authenticity. It's really hard, there isn't a playbook."

// You can have the best wi-fi, touch screens, monitors and infrastructure, but if you don't have a digitally confident workforce, it doesn't transform you //

4

Digital awakening at new-look site

WHEN Rob Howe and Andrew Taylor were given the opportunity of creating a learning technology space from scratch, they thought big – by thinking small.

Tasked with providing AV solutions for the brand new Waterside campus at the University of Northampton, they decided to reverse the trend of what other institutions had been doing.

"Did it mean a bigger lecture theatre? We've gone smaller," Rob told delegates. "Do you learn in the lecture theatre? We didn't think so.

"We changed it radically to lots of smaller rooms. Learning happens in discourse, when people are being challenged."

This means five key areas at the new site – a raised building on the edge of the River Nene to combat the risk of flooding. These are an interactive huddle space, a classroom/lecture

Rob Howe, Head of Learning Technology, and Andrew Taylor, Senior Audio Visual Engineer - AV lead, talked delegates through the challenges they faced providing an AV solution for the brand new Waterside campus at the University of Northampton.

hall, overflow room, collaboration room and virtual room.

Rob explained another aim. "We want to get to the point where 'tech' disappears, where people don't have to worry about the technology," he said. "You lose learning and engagement if they do."

To this end, they introduced Barco wireless presentation systems.

"The idea of lecturers presenting from wherever they are, rather than having to set up a machine, changes the dynamic of the presentation.

"Moving away from cables and adaptors opens up the presentation. The presenter can stand anywhere in the room, share on screen and

different groups can join in."

'Dated' room PCs – which took too long to boot up and log in – have been ditched in favour of 'choose your own device' and wireless connection.

"Everything happens so much quicker. It starts to 'wake up' students and involve them differently," said Rob. "It encourages more discussion and feedback and we get more active blended learning. Students can access wherever they work and as groups.

"There were massive amounts of culture change and it's still very much an evolving story," Rob said. "Enabling digital transformation is like a jigsaw. It's only when you see the full picture it starts to make sense."

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Andrew Taylor talked delegates through the technical aspects of the new campus – how the twin aims of reducing cognitive load and of making life easier for lecturers and students were realised.

He particularly praised the introduction of Software Defined Access. "It's the next wave of networking structure, not traditional switching. It allows me to send from A to B without all the fuss of having to reconfigure switches and making sure certain protocols are running," he said. "We're looking at networked AV in a big way."

Other features of the new-look set-up included:

Choose your own device

The choice of one of four devices is offered by the university.

No more lecterns or lecture theatres

"We don't like anchoring people to a lectern" said Andrew. "We got rid of all lecterns and we've only got one lecture theatre with 80 seats. It has interactive screens at the front of the room. All devices are interactive, annotations can be done over the screen without a lecturer having to break eye contact."

Software over hardware

"We wanted to lose all hardware so we have media walls, digital signage and large video walls. Instead of hardware processing, we've gone for software processing. We have one box doing all the things a traditional lectern used to do and we have one computer doing everything the big media wall racks would have done."

Web-based control

"We don't have control panels any more," Andrew explained. "There is no fixed point of teaching.

"Web-based control helps us put in standardised easy configuration into each room. We have 116 standardised spaces, all with exactly the same AV set-up and infrastructure. Some studios have advanced audio or ceiling-mounted visualisers."

Andrew added he was able to support the lecture theatre from home if necessary. "I can control their screen, see them, hear them and vice versa."

No more projectors

LFDs (large format displays) with higher brightness, greater reliability and a longer lifespan have replaced projectors. "From stores, spares and support perspective, we can change stuff almost instantly," Andrew said. "When I inherited AV, had 50 different types of projector across 200 rooms. They were too expensive to maintain."

Automated spaces where possible

In theory, a lecturer could now walk in to a space at their booked time and – without the need to switch on anything – the room would work for them and nobody else. This was thanks to space management software that was also used for monitoring. "We should know what's going wrong before it goes wrong, allowing us to fix and not lose valuable teaching time," said Andrew. "We can't afford to have downtime when we're moving into a smaller space."

How technology is taking a hold

Ian Woolner, Technology Specialist for Education with Microsoft, spoke on how 'Education is Done with Transformation'.

DIGITAL transformation is disrupting every industry at pace, according to Ian Woolner. In HE, this meant new ways of engaging with current and prospective students.

Universities were placing more focus on marketing to attract students, including the trialling of bots. "The manual phone queue is being replaced by automatic responses to calls about courses."

He explained how Artificial Intelligence (AI) could help with student data analysis.

"AI can track how students react to different things – if they are turning up for lectures, what are they saying – and it can identify different styles of students who are vulnerable.

"Being able to build an AI picture takes us past student experience and satisfaction surveys. It goes into welfare and how students are reacting to the pressures of courses."

More customer relationship manager (CRM) products were being introduced to manage the student experience.

"Students don't go to a helpdesk, they seek advice or complain on social media. We've been asked to optimise a lot of these interactions with tools to manage Facebook comments by students," Ian said.

"Students are students until something goes wrong, then they are customers. An agile management process recognises that if something doesn't go right, we have to fix that."

He told delegates that Microsoft's education team had quadrupled and would do so again "to keep universities at the centre of the conversation."

Digital needs: a compatibility test

John Sumpter, subject specialist in teaching, learning and assessment with Jisc, explored whether consistencies could be achieved between the digital worlds provided by universities and those more familiar to students.

STUDENTS occupy a digital world of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat - a rapid environment of updating every second, John Sumpter told delegates.

"They come to education and they're confronted with virtual learning programmes like Moodle, MOOC and Blackboard – it's so different."

He wanted to know if it was possible for universities to have a mix of social and institutional tools and space to compromise between the digital worlds.

And he set out to discover it by posing questions to delegates through a series of interactive digital applications — Mentimeter voting, Padlet, TodaysMeet and the response-gathering app PollEv.
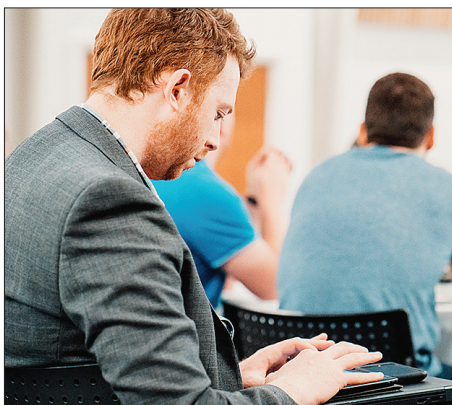
His questions included:

▸ What are the opportunities and challenges that face us when use social web 5.0 and type of tools we provide students in university?

▸ How can we compromise between different worlds – what needs to be changed to allow them to be used together more harmoniously?

▸ If it was agreed there was some sort of happy medium to be reached, how do we support staff and students to engage effectively with the tools required?
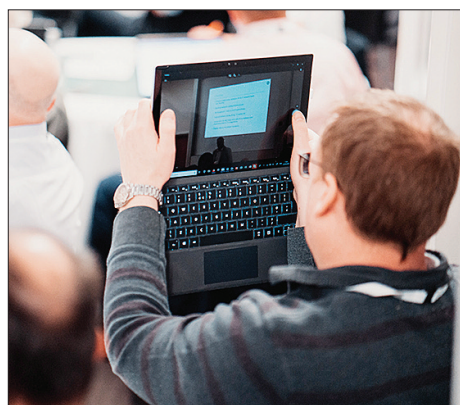
After discussing responses on a number of themes, delegates concluded that consistencies could be achieved.

The themes ranged from the need for digitally literate staff and for making sure IT is flexible and working all the time to the need to employ a common approach across universities instead of individual faculty approaches.

Demonstrating our own line in BYODs!

Tech notes. . . as you would expect, delegates were well equipped to keep their own records of conference proceedings.

6

Learning arrives on all platforms

BY his own admission, Glenn Hurst is not a social media buff. An assistant professor specialising in chemistry education, he regards himself as a private person who has no interest in broadcasting his daily life.

Nor, he told delegates, did he want to adopt e-learning tools as an academic unless there was evidence it would be of benefit to students.

Yet he has won recognition from Jisc as one of the top 10 HE social media superstars.

"My research interests are in green chemistry," he told delegates. "I'm also interested in training postgraduate students and engaging with new communication methods – of which social media is one – to confer deeper understanding of chemistry."

Glenn explained how social media was used at the University of York both by departments and individuals.

Twitter was used extensively – an account for the chemistry department celebrated teaching and student achievements and spread the word about publications, league tables, research, conference presentations and seminars. "It's really quite useful to us," he said.

Facebook was used to engage with alumni, find out what graduates were doing and invite them back for talks or to make donations.
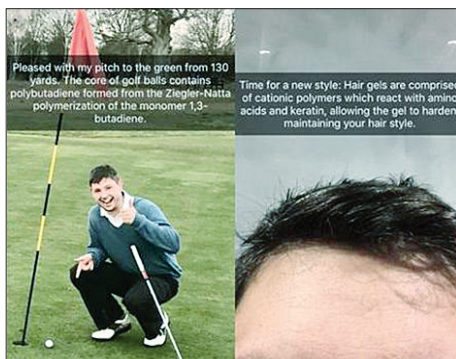
Instagram and Snapchat were targeted more at applicants and the younger generation. "Instagram is helpful from promotional and advertising perspectives because of its no character limit," said Glenn. "We use it for news updates."

YouTube was also widely used – as part of the admissions drive and for teaching demonstrations of key techniques for undergraduates. Glenn's own use includes creating and posting videos that feature a problem and asking students to solve it. "They post their answers to a Twitter account and I provide feedback," he said.

But it was Glenn's use of the photo messaging app Snapchat that impressed the Jisc judges and led to his recognition for innovative use of social media to enhance his teaching.

"Snapchat is ubiquitous among my students. You share

Glenn Hurst, Assistant Professor of Chemical Education at the University of York, spoke on 'Innovative Use of Social Media'. Glenn has been recognised as one of the top 10 HE social media superstars by Jisc

How Glenn reaches students on Snapchat. . . "I link what I enjoy doing with what I teach" he told delegates. So his round of golf and hairstyle become educational posts.

photos and videos but these disappear after a set time. Or a user can post as part of story for 24 hours.

"It's easy for someone like me to use, I'm not very digitally literate. I use the camera on my phone. I can annotate photos or videos with text and send them to friends, students or to a story."

Glenn established a class account and invited first year students to follow his images and updates. "I did not 'add' them so I wouldn't see their personal information. It was more for dissemination.

"It helped me contextualise chemistry in the real-life world. Students engage more deeply, they can see how it applies to them and affects them."

Now he was looking forward to the possibilities of app development and gaming. In a collaboration with the Department of Theatre, Film and Television, the chemistry department employed an undergraduate – as part of his computer degree course – to develop an app to support admissions.

"It included discipline specific content – careers, campus map, videos, insight into undergraduate life – but the biology department asked us if they could use the framework for their information.

"We let them do it for free. We paid the student about £2,000. External companies had been talking tens of thousands to do it. Now it's spreading throughout the university, just from £2k investment."

The chemistry department had also introduced a new quiz app called Organic Fanatic, free for download on iOS and Android.

"It helps school transition in organic chemistry and, at its hardest level, our undergraduates to revise for exams," said Glenn. "It's a database with answers and made fun with arcade style music. The aim is for single players to go through the levels in the shortest time."

Students post their top score by Twitter or email, with the winner receiving a prize "It encourages competitive and collaborative learning and it's useful in tutorials and workshop sessions to break the ice. It's great to get students talking and having fun."

" Snapchat helped me contextualise chemistry in the real-life world. Students engage more deeply, they can see how it applies to them and affects them "

7

Praise for CTS course

A SCHOMS-BACKED AVIXA training course has met with resounding praise.

In feedback, the course received an 88.3% 'excellent' rating and 16.7% 'good'.

Twenty members attended the three-day Certified Technology Specialist (CTS) course at Loughborough University last June.

AVIXA senior staff instructor Chuck Espinoza (pictured right) flew in especially from the States to run the course which accredits staff to competently create, provide, operate and service AV solutions while conducting AV management activities.

SCHOMS offered a £500 bursary for each attendee to help meet the cost of course materials, an in-house exam, meals and accommodation.

"There's very little SCHOMS could do to improve the offering," said one attendee. "It was well organised and fulfilling."

Another said: "For AV professionals it gives clear sight of the standards across the industry. I think it's important for the AV profession to finally embrace a professional qualification."

One delegate found it "quite intensive, but the two-and-a-half days with exam at end is about right. Provision of short online tutorial videos covering the

mathematics would be appreciated."

Having the accommodation and course in the same place "really helped and also provided great value," said another.

Attendees said that other courses they would be interested in taking included CTS-D and technology and staff management.

> **"It was useful to complete the course and exam within a dedicated and uninterrupted time-frame. With the best will in the world, trying to find the time to self-study online is difficult especially given the depth of content involved with the CTS.**
>
> **"Having Chuck deliver the course is worth its weight in gold. He has a huge amount of experience and is able to lead by example with a lot of good practice .**
>
> **"I learnt a great deal. The course was very good value for money. It was useful to share experiences with other SCHOMS members as always!"**

Building a framework of greater unity

PROCUREMENT came under the conference spotlight as SCHOMS18 exhibitors joined delegates in round table discussions on issues of joint concern.

The exhibitors moved in speed dating style between 14 tables of delegates exchanging views on a series of pre-set questions:

▶ What do you think of the HE sector AV framework agreements?

▶ How do individual HE institutions procure audio visual equipment?

▶ How could universities improve the way they procure AV equipment?

Framework agreements were seen as a useful procurement route for AV when suppliers were already pre-vetted.

"However, there was concern that suppliers often didn't quote for mini-competitions, and there were (framework) supplier capacity issues during peak demand in the summer," said facilitator James Trotter (pictured

above), Head of Procurement for the universities of Leicester and Loughborough.

"It was strongly felt that frameworks should be better managed, with

suppliers' performance measured and taken account of during subsequent call-offs."

A single national AV framework was suggested, structured to better reflect market requirements, particularly covering broadcasting equipment and AV consultancy.

It was also noted that the varied use of frameworks led to a fair number of non-compliant call-offs – creating room for better education of AV buyers and specialists in how to use them.

The importance of having AV specialists, procurement professionals and Estates colleagues all on the same page when designing and purchasing AV solutions was flagged.

James' executive summary and the collated responses to the questions asked of all groups can be seen at https://www.schoms.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SCHOMS-2018-Procurement-Workshop-Output.pdf

'Fantastic' ISE awaits SCHOMS

As the latest SCHOMS contingent prepares to attend Europe's largest audio-visual equipment exhibition - ISE2019 - former attendee Nathan Jeffery gives his impressions of what they can expect. In his former role as media services manager at Leicester's De Montfort University, Nathan was one of the members who took up the offer for the first time last year. SCHOMS annually provides sponsorship for 60 members to visit the exhibition.

5-8 February 2019
Amsterdam, RAI, NL

Integrated Systems Europe

"BEING part of the SCHOMS offering was fantastic," Nathan said. "The presentations were aligned to areas I had been researching and I found them extremely relevant and useful.

"SCHOMS also provided regular periods for networking and engaging with colleagues at other HE institutions to share ideas on issues we face."

Nathan's plan was to approach ISE with an open mind – "you often find unexpected nuggets amongst all the eye candy" – meet manufacturers with whom his institution already knew and then plan a route around the rest of the exhibition, particularly the new ideas and research area.

"I attended with the mantra 'How can I make use of what I see at the exhibition to make a positive difference to the learning experience?'

"There is so much 'nice to see' stuff but often it's not practical or relevant. You need to remain focused on the key reason you're there."

As an example, Nathan explained how De Montfort uses Panasonic projectors and screens, ONELAN digital signage and room signage, Crestron control and MERSIVE wireless collaboration. "I booked a dedicated appointment with each to ensure I got quality time with no interruptions to understand where their products are going," he said.

His aim was to leave ISE with "two or three new ideas and relationships." To that end, he provided a full review of his ISE experiences for his De Montfort colleagues – Nathan himself has now moved on to become Head of Digital Academy at Cornwall College.

"De Montfort were working closely with Mersive on their beta programme for active learning in addition to their Solstice Mersive product and secured eight units which were installed in their Collaboratory," he explained. "We hoped the exciting developments in this area would open new avenues for teaching and supporting pedagogy with easy-to-use AV and IT."

He felt two days at ISE wasn't long enough to see everything given the time taken out for the presentations each day but his overall impression was of "a fantastic opportunity for anyone working at an HE institution."

Nathan said: ""I would not have been able to attend without the SCHOMS offering, there was a limited travel budget available from the University. I would recommend anyone attend with SCHOMS. The organisation for the event and the information provided to help with attending the conference and exhibition were all perfect. I would like to thank all the organisers."

9

. . .and so does Bournemouth University for SCHOMS19 26–28 June

Next stop for SCHOMS after all the attractions of York in 2018 – including dinner at the National Railway Museum (above) – will be the SCHOMS19 conference at Bournemouth University. We'll be pulling in from 26–28 June.