

CASE STUDY:

Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Tai Poutini is an innovative polytechnic providing both core tertiary education and niche programmes on the West Coast of the South Island and throughout New Zealand. Established in Greymouth in 1990, today it is one of the fastest growing polytechnics in New Zealand and has over 16,000 students scattered across its nine campuses.

Instead of focusing solely on the teaching experience – as is the case with many academic institutions – Tai Poutini Polytechnic prides itself on providing a learning experience for its students that is second to none.

The Need

In order to deliver on its promise of providing a quality learning environment, Tai Poutini Polytechnic recognised the need to upgrade its classrooms, many of which hadn't been upgraded since they were first built.

As part of the first stage of the project, the Polytechnic was initially looking to provide technology such as document cameras and data shows in every classroom and approached a number of vendors for quotes.

The Solution

Samuel Blight, Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Director for the West Coast, said Canon's approach immediately made them stand out. "Rather than just providing a quote for the hardware, they spent time trying to understand exactly what we were trying to achieve."

Canon proposed a fully integrated solution to maximise teacher/student interaction and enhance the learning experience. This consisted of Canon's XEED SX6 projector for their auditorium, combined with Smart Interactive Whiteboards and LV-7250 ultra portable

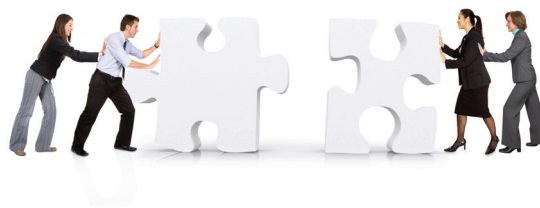
projectors for nearly every classroom. Canon also supplied a number of digital document cameras.

The Smart Interactive Whiteboard transforms a space into an interactive working, training and learning environment. The combined power of a projector, computer and whiteboard means lecturers can do everything they can do on a computer and more.

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It enables them to highlight and review key points, access applications and web sites, run videos, powerpoint presentations and write notes in electronic ink. Work can then be saved to one file that can be printed, e-mailed or posted to a website.

Before Tai Poutini Polytechnic made a commitment to purchase, Canon visited the campus and ran demonstrations to the teaching faculty.



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“It wasn’t just a sales pitch to the decision makers, but to the end users via these demonstrations. Canon recognised the value of staff buy in and acted on it – and we valued that as ultimately it is the tutors who are going to be using the technology,” said Samuel.

There was a high level of the buy-in by the teaching faculty and Canon was awarded the contract. Canon Professional Services then conducted comprehensive training sessions for all staff located on the West Coast and in Auckland and Christchurch.

“Longer term we expect this to pay even greater dividends... We are proud to have created one of the most advanced interactive learning environments for Tai Poutini Polytechnic students.”

Said Samuel Blight

The Result

The use of the Smart interactive whiteboard powered by high quality Canon projectors has enabled more spontaneous presentations by faculty. They can immediately incorporate student thoughts and ideas as they come up and save annotations for future discussions.

“Longer term we expect this to pay even greater dividends,” says Samuel. “Lecturers can save an entire session, so that rather than just relying on memory when reviewing lesson plans they can flick through last year’s sessions and see some of the things that came up during the session, and modify their lesson plan accordingly.”

The new interactive environment encourages student participation and allows lecturers to illustrate information visually and provide students with a variety of visual media.

“Students learn in different ways and we want to make sure our teaching methods cater to the variety

of learning styles,” says Samuel. “Our new interactive learning environment is of particular benefit to both visual learners and kinaesthetic learners. These two learning styles are all too often not catered for in the traditional lecture that so many people remember as their educational experience.”

Currently 90% of Tai Poutini Polytechnic’s 30 classrooms across all campuses have been fitted out with the technology, with the aim to have the remainder of the classes fitted out by the end of the year.

“We have only had the technology installed for one term so far, but the feedback from the students and the staff has been very positive,” says Samuel. “We are proud to have created one of the most advanced interactive learning environments for Tai Poutini Polytechnic students.”

