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CASE STUDY

Embracing change to accelerate progress

Teesside University

MIDDLESBROUGH, UNITED KINGDOM

Offering iPad to enhance student success

Teesside University has witnessed drastic changes to the educational landscape since its beginnings in 1930. Located in a town that hosts a mix of industry and culture, with the backdrop of the River Tees, the university serves as a foundation for economic progression in the region.

Recognized for their expertise in media and technology, Teesside encourages students to use creativity and critical thinking to challenge the status quo and move beyond traditional learning. To enhance this work, the university introduced a 1-to-1 iPad program in the fall of 2018 — a step that reinforces their desire to constantly move forward and prepare students for an uncertain, yet technologically driven, future.

AT A GLANCE

| Teesside University	jamf PRO				
Teesside launched a 1-to-1 iPad program to better prepare their students for the future.	A team of two uses Jamf to manage 4,000 iPads, 500 Macs and about 150 iPhones.	The iPad management lives in Jamf Cloud, with plans to move the Mac management to Jamf Cloud soon.	Teesside believes Office 365, paired with an iPad, offers students the optimal 21st century learning toolset.	Apple technology supports the university's move toward eliminating paper processes.	Continuous professional development ensures the staff thrive with iPads in the classroom.
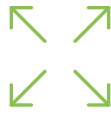
PUSHING THE TECHNOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

"We focus here at Teesside on thinking about the future of education and what we need to deliver to ensure our graduates have the best chance of success," said Dr. Jonathan Eaton, academic registrar, Teesside University.

According to Eaton, it's imperative that any college or university reposition themselves to provide students with the skills, knowledge and expertise to thrive in a complex and uncertain future. At Teesside, they created the Future Facing Learning initiative to address this reality. "It's designed to provide our students with a toolkit that will allow them to thrive and enjoy sustainable success," Eaton explained.

With technology as a main component of the initiative, the school tasked Neal Harper, the ICT manager of Technology Enablement, with pushing the technological boundaries to ensure Teesside students have access to 21st century learning tools. In his 22nd year at Teesside, Harper's seen a lot of changes. That's one of the reasons he was excited to see how adding an iPad offering at Teesside would bring more success to the staff and students for years to come.

In the fall of 2018, Harper's team of two admins, in conjunction with their technology partner, used Jamf Pro to roll out nearly 4,000 iPad devices to incoming students. During a summer distribution day, Harper said, "Students showed up, enrolled, got their ID cards and picked up their iPads." Utilizing Automated Device Enrollment (formerly known as DEP), Luke Driscoll, a senior technician on Harper's team, said, "When the student got their iPad, and they opened the box and switched it on, it was ready to use straight away. We didn't want them to go through the welcome screen and install custom profiles or apps. It's just literally switch it on, and it's ready to go." In addition to the iPad, every first year, full-time student also received an iPad case with keyboard, the Microsoft Office Suite and £100 (about $127) to use in the university's partner bookstore.

"Jamf really challenges the notion that Apple isn't built for the enterprise."

–Neal Harper, ICT manager, Technology Enablement, Teesside University

THE BENEFITS OF APPLE AND JAMF

Professor Mark Simpson, Teesside's Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, is the visionary behind Future Facing Learning and provided strategic leadership to the project. "Professor Simpson recognized that you could never be certain that all students have access to the same technology," Eaton said. "What we're trying to do through the iPad program is provide a level of confidence. We wanted both the academic staff and students to have the same technology so they could, together, understand how to derive the maximum benefit from it." But why an iPad?

"The iPad is easy to use, and it has a very robust feature set with virtually zero failure rate, so we knew it wouldn't give us a massive support headache," Harper said. "We also knew people could learn to use them pretty quickly. That's been proven, as the amount of support we've provided over the last year has been very minimal." Another notable benefit of the iPad, Harper said, is its long battery life.

And when it came to price, Apple also beat the competition. Teesside said thanks to the price drop of the sixth generation iPad devices, and their large-quantity purchase, they secured the devices for roughly £1,100 (about $1,394 dollars) less than a comparable tablet. "So the price just didn't compare," Harper said.

And when it came to device management, Jamf Pro was the only option. Teesside first purchased Jamf in 2016 to manage the university's Mac labs. "I'd known of Jamf for a long, long time," Harper said. "It's always been the best management tool for Apple products." He said it only made sense to add their new iPad devices into Jamf and manage all Apple devices in one place.

But the benefits of the iPad, everyone agreed, span far beyond the feature set, durability or residual value. They open the doors to a brighter future for students, especially with those navigating their academic careers with learning differences.

PROVIDING ALL STUDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE

While it's easy to recognize when a student has a physical disability that inhibits them in their daily life, it's much more difficult to see the learning differences that often prevent students from proving their full potential in the classroom. But these differences, Driscoll said, shouldn't go unnoticed.

He shared the story of a student with autism who wanted to use an Apple Pencil for their exam. "In order to make this happen," he said, "We created an account for them and incorporated OneDrive. We then used a restrictions profile in Jamf Pro to tie down the device so it couldn't be used as an internet browser." The student also greatly benefitted from movement. "Being able to walk around obviously isn't possible with the fixed desktops, so the flexibility of the iPad also really helped them," Driscoll said.

First-year student, Rebecca Freeman, echoed the support she received from the device's accessibility features and shared that the use of an iPad drastically changed the trajectory of her educational journey. Prior to attending Teesside, she said she wasn't aware she had dyslexia. For years, she thought she was poor at reading and spelling. While she received extra help in school, it wasn't until her first year of college that she truly understood her challenges. It was only after her tutor, Dr. Daniel Eaves, encouraged her to test for dyslexia that learned she wasn't less intelligent than her peers, she just learned differently.

With a goal to help all students achieve their highest levels of success, Teesside provides students with learning differences additional apps or tools to help them navigate their academic journey. Freeman received a C-Pen, which allows her to scan sentences on her iPad and listen as they're read back. She also uses Grammarly to assist with grammar.

"It's helping me a lot, because I'm slow at writing, and it's slower for me to process things. I miss quite a lot of important information," Freeman said. "But with the iPad, I can either record a session, or I can type faster so I don't miss as many important things." She added that not only does the iPad give her confidence in the classroom, but it's also preparing her for life after graduation.

Driscoll said seeing the power of the iPad, especially when paired with its accessibility features, is inspiring how Teesside offers tech to its student population. Continuing to expand on this reality, he's working with the Library Services team to create personal support environments for students through their devices. The program will offer students with learning differences, like dyslexia, autism and ADHD, easy access to support from university staff through Microsoft Teams. "The idea is that the student then has this little umbrella around them that can provide additional resources," he explained.

Hoping to eventually take the idea one step forward, Driscoll said he looks forward to the day when any student with an ailment, illness, disability, etc. that interferes with their education can access a support network through their iPad. Though this plan is a work in progress, the ideas behind it are already making an impact on Teesside students. And tutors are taking note.

SUPPORTING TEACHING STAFF WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Eaves is the first to admit that adding iPad devices to his classroom made him skeptical and nervous. But after attending the university's digital development program, he said he knew teaching with technology should be the new teaching norm. But, he added, it must include proper professional development. "We can't be in modern universities without this level of tech support," he said.

Eaton agreed, explaining that when other universities tried to implement similar technology programs without professional development, they failed. "The academic staff at those institutions didn't have confidence, and then left the devices in their offices," he said. "We realized that from the start, we needed to focus our energy on developing our staff."

Eaves said he attended six sessions to learn tips and tricks of teaching with a variety of apps. And while he recognizes he isn't the expert with the iPad, he knows many who are — his students. Eaves believes asking his students for app recommendations encourages participation and increases student-led learning.

But is it working? As a way to measure the program's success, Harper said they added a question to each module's evaluation that asked whether students agree with the statement: "I have had the opportunity to use my iPad and associated software apps to support my learning in this module". In Semester 1, the question yielded an 85% positive result.

> What we're essentially doing is combining the workplace strengths of Microsoft Office 365 with the brand strength of Apple."
>
> — Dr. Jonathan Eaton, academic registrar, Teesside University

USING JAMF PRO TO PUSH FORWARD

While it's easy to see the program's impact in the classroom, and with individual students like Freeman, Harper said it's important to recognize the glue that helps keep it together — Jamf Pro. He also called out how easy it is to use Jamf's integration with Apple Business Manger to purchase apps in volume. "This has been the most powerful feature," he explained, referring to deploying apps to mobile devices. "We couldn't have done the Future Facing Learning project without it. We couldn't possibly have asked the students to install all the apps themselves."

And when it comes to the functionality he needs to properly support students with learning differences, Harper said he again turns to Jamf. "There are a lot of management things you can do with policies to support this student population that you can't do with anything else," he explained. Locking exams into single app mode during testing, remotely deploying language apps to help with reading, and much more, he said are important functions of Jamf that provide an elevated learning experience for all students. So where do they go from here?

Already on a progressive path, Eaton said Teesside will continue to provide a best-in-class digital learning ecosystem that's driven by data around the student experience. Additionally, he said, utilizing technology to automate processes is key to giving staff more efficient workflows so they can focus on where they deliver the most value.

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