

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION



Courtesy of Atlona

Atlona presentation switchers and compact switcher/extenders provide a problem-solving means for this prestigious university. The multi-format CLSO Switcher series not only provided an economical means to meet the Boston University College of Communication's 4K readiness requirement, but it allowed multiple outdated components to be replaced with a single component.



Courtesy of Atlona

Like most institutions of higher education, Boston University updates its technology infrastructure every few years to ensure it offers students and faculty the very latest tools to aid them in the education process. Starting in the summer of 2015, the institution turned its attention to its highly-regarded College of Communication, where it decided to conduct an overhaul of the AV systems in two rooms serving advanced Journalism and narrative post-production workshop labs, as well as a lecture hall and a classroom.

While optimizing system performance was its priority, the university always needed to ensure its choice of gear and installation process fit into its budgetary constraints. Several years ago as a cost-saving measure, Boston University's College of Communication decided to manage the maintenance of its campus-wide AV needs internally without the assistance of outside integrators. Its AV upgrade projects were handled by the college's Technical Operations Manager and Chief Engineer, Jake Kassen, and his supervisor, Technology Director Brad Fernandes.

Selecting High Performance Gear to Maximize Investment

"To keep up with the latest standards, we needed all spaces in the Communication School to be 4K video ready, but we are always mindful of maximizing the student's investment," said Kassen. "Wherever we're able to save money on AV solutions, we can apply the savings to additional technology resources that directly improve the students' learning experience."

Connectivity is key in today's classrooms as instructors and students have a constant need to share content from many sources – Blu-ray players, laptops, television programming and, increasingly, portable devices – as part of their daily coursework. The computer/video production labs, classroom and lecture hall spaces in BU's College of Communication support a wide range of courses, including Advanced Post-Production for Narrative Storytelling, Broadcast and Multimedia Journalism, and Advertising and Communication research. In addition, these facilities are often used for special events and guest speakers.

Before getting started, Kassen and Fernandes spent a good deal of time researching the gear they would need for the upgrade. A crucial component in each setting was the multi-format switcher, which would need to offer high performance and a range of inputs to cover each space’s connectivity and workflow needs. In each case, they found Atlona models to be the answer.

“We were not very familiar with Atlona, but we were impressed with the company’s ability to offer the most features at the best price,” said Kassen. “We started out using their gear on a trial basis. As we proceeded through the projects, Atlona gear quickly became our go-to choice.”

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Panasonic Blu-ray players. The Atlona AT-UHD-CLSO-824 4K/UHD 8x2 matrix switcher was selected for this room, as it offered a mix of inputs, and the ability to support remote sources throughout the room. One immediate benefit of the new system is that it enhanced the students’ ability to view content being edited with professional software via a projector, while simultaneously viewing edited content on a separate display.

During the first stage of the installation project, it was also revealed that the new LED/laser projectors purchased to replace older lamp-based projectors had HDBaseT inputs, which were compatible with each of the new Atlona switchers. This enabled Kassen to save money and installation time without the need for HDBaseT receivers, as well as to keep select legacy gear in the mix without requiring separate cabling to carry RS-232 signals to the projectors.

It was also early in this project that Kassen found that the Atlona switchers enabled him to replace multiple outdated AV components with a single component. For instance, the AT-UHD-CLSO-824’s dedicated audio mix-matrix for signals routed to the switcher’s outputs enables audio signals to be mixed from either of the two selected video sources along with both mic/line input signals. This eliminated the need for an external mixer, which saved money, space and installation time. In Kassen’s view, the piece also proved considerably less expensive, more capable, physically smaller and more reliable than the competitive switcher it replaced.



Matrixed 4K/UHD in the Video Production Lab

The first project Kassen and his team tackled was the AV system upgrade of the Ezratti UHD lab (room 301A), which was completed with 13 Mac computer stations and two 70” Sharp 4K video screens fed by several sources, including

Flexible Switching for HDMI and Legacy Sources

For the next space upgrade, a seminar room the Atlona AT-UHD-CLSO-601 six-input switcher was chosen to support the single Panasonic LED projector configuration that needed to be connected to an assortment of video sources. This featured flexible multi-format switching of four HDMI and two multifunction analog inputs to mirrored HDBaseT and HDMI outputs with built-in 4K scaling. This provided the flexibility for it to be integrated with both new and legacy sources.

The AT-UHD-CLSO-601 enhanced the system's ease-of-use with intuitive, turnkey features including automatic display control, which turns on the display automatically whenever instructors and students connect a source, and automatic input selection, which senses the presence of any video signal. This eliminates the need for a separate control system, reducing cost and complexity.

During the summer of 2016, Kassen's team upgraded the college's largest lecture room with a new Panasonic projector with an HDBaseT input and AV distribution components from a number of manufacturers. All are connected via

Atlona's AT-HDVS-150-TX 3x1 switcher and HDBaseT extender, which is powered by an Atlona AT-PS-POE midspan power injector. Ideal for long distance transmission and display control in this educational setting, this model offered the versatility of two HDMI inputs plus a VGA input with audio.

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—Kassen



Courtesy of Atlona

This switcher also enabled multiple older components to be replaced by a single new component, as it combines the benefits of a switcher, with built-in auto-switching, and the advantages of long-distance HDBaseT signal extension. Like the other two Atlona switchers used in this project, it enables auto display on/off and auto-switching. Its installation with cost-effective and easy-to-terminate category cable provided additional cost and time saving benefits.

among top-tier communications schools,” said Kassen. “It is very satisfying that we chose Atlona, a new resource for us, to realize our full vision in upgrading our state-of-the-art facilities. We are very pleased with their products and support, as well as the fact we have virtually eliminated the performance issues and complaints we used to hear.”

“The Atlona gear has been rock solid,” said Kassen. “We have been very happy with the level of company support from the time we ordered the gear through its installation. ”



Looking Ahead

This fall, the final part of the project will be to complete a second lab space in a similar fashion to that of the Ezratti lab completed last year. As this four-space project draws to a close, Kassen, his team and the community of professors, instructors and students are very satisfied with the results.

“Now each room offers new capabilities and with significantly improved signal quality to keep us at the head of the pack

PRODUCTS FEATURED

Model	Description	More Information
AT-UHD-CLSO-824	4K/UHD 8x2 Multi-Format Matrix Switcher with Dual, HDBaseT and Mirrored HDMI Outputs	 http://atlona.com/product/at-uhd-clso-824/
AT-UHD-CLSO-601	4K/UHD Six-Input Multi-Format Switcher with Mirrored HDMI and HDBaseT Outputs and Automatic Display Control	 http://atlona.com/product/at-uhd-clso-601/
AT-HDVS-150-TX	Three-Input Switcher for HDMI and VGA Sources with HDBaseT Output	 http://atlona.com/product/at-hdvs-150-tx/
AT-PS-POE	Power Over Ethernet Mid-Span Power Supply	 http://atlona.com/product/at-ps-poe/

For more solutions, see <http://atlona.com/solutions-tour/>

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70 Daggett Drive, San Jose, CA USA 95134 | Telephone: +1.408.962.0515 | International: +41.43.508.4321 | www.atlona.com

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