

A day in the life of a Media Store with connect2



The insight we get from spending time with our customers is invaluable to us. After all, understanding and serving the needs of academic institutions is at the heart of what we do. There are many occasions that help us achieve this, from day-to-day conversations and account visits to annual user group meetings. We welcome every opportunity. Needless to say, the chance to get even closer and spend a day helping to run a media store in person proved irresistible!

Coventry University kindly invited the connect2 team to do just this. So this summer, Matthew Etherington, Account Manager, and Olivier Bushayija Gatete, a member of the Development team, arrived early one morning at the Media Loan Shop within the School of Art and Design to see first-hand exactly what's involved and how connect2 helps.

School of Art and Design at Coventry University

The Coventry School of Art and Design has over 150 years' experience of producing internationally recognised artists and designers. It's located in the Ellen Terry Building - an art deco cinema and ballroom in the centre of Coventry, built in 1931 and refurbished by the University in 2011. The Media Loan Shop provides the Art and Design School's students with a range of equipment that can be booked out for their use in completing assignments, for example, cameras, lighting and AV equipment.

Before the School had connect2 they operated a paper based reservation system. Students would come to the store to book items using paper forms, often



collecting equipment at the same time. With limited opening hours, queues quickly formed and the two members of staff were stretched. Since introducing connect2 the store has been able to implement a number of changes, all geared towards improving the borrowing experience for students.



A typical day in the store

The staff usually arrive at 8.30am and use connect2 to quickly review booked items and returns for the day. This allows them to prepare some kit in advance. Every item is checked and switched on to ensure it works before being given out. Large bookings (25 items+) are fairly rare but when they do occur it can take 5-10 minutes to check all the kit so it's useful to be able to do this in advance of the scheduled collection time using connect2.

Once the shutters open at 8.45am, bookings normally start going in and out straight away. Students need to be fairly prompt to collect their items – all booked in advance using connect2. Only 30 minutes grace is allowed before equipment is made available again to other users.

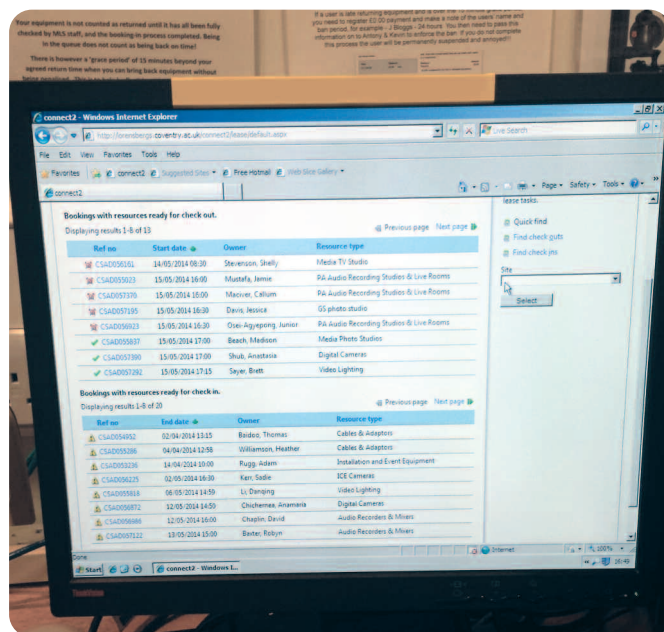
The store doesn't allow students to walk up and checkout items without a booking. They expect students to book in advance online using connect2. If a

student hasn't done so, the store provides a bank of booking terminals close by. They can also book using their mobile device – around 20% of students make their bookings on connect2 in this way. While it may be quick for the store to operate an immediate checkout for items without reservations using connect2, they want students to get in the habit of making advanced bookings. It allows the store to run more efficiently, and it also means other students that have booked ahead aren't held up in a queue. The connect2 system is very intuitive, and students can start making their bookings without any training or documentation.

No card = no kit!

When students collect their kit they hand over their student ID cards. The cards contain a NFC chip rather than a barcode. In connect2, 'Find Check Out' is selected, the card is run over the NFC pad and connect2 finds the booking. The kit is retrieved, checked and taken away. We saw that the whole process usually takes only a matter of seconds.

Upon check-in only the resource barcode is scanned rather than the student ID - it's not so much about who is returning the kit as long as it's returned, although if it's late or broken it's still the booking owner that will be impacted.



The sum of a busy day

We saw a total of 65 checkouts while we were there - a typical day for the store. At busy times they can see upwards of 150, with the record so far at 180. The chart below gives an overview of all booking volumes as captured by connect2 for the month of January.

Since connect2 was implemented in late 2009 around 60,000 bookings have been made through the system.

Throughout the day staff check connect2 for late returns and contact the relevant students to minimise the impact on later bookings. Any kit returned 15 minutes later than the agreed time is considered late. The desk operates a banning policy and disciplinary procedure for late returns. Bans range from 24 hours to two weeks or until the disciplinary process is completed.

Changes introduced with connect2

As students must book their kit in advance online, there is a much faster turnaround time at the desk. There is also easier tracking of equipment and lots of statistical information available to the team.

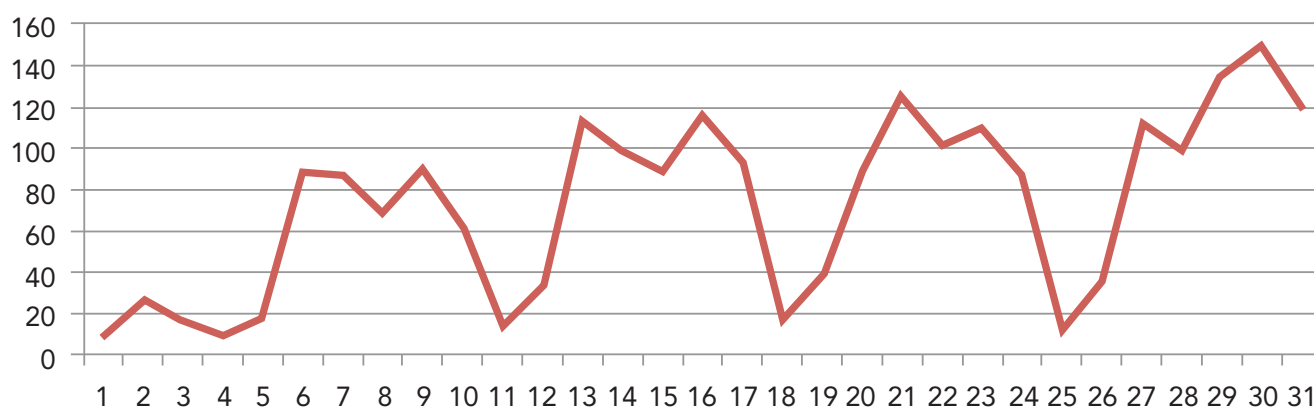
Implementing connect2 was key to enabling the store to employ student helpers. With its easy to use interface, and automatic borrowing permissions for



different types of equipment, student workers can easily assist staff. They are able to check in and out equipment with minimal training, resulting in less queues, calmer operations and happier students. They have become a major factor in the store's efficient operation. It also means the store can stay open for much longer periods – up to nearly 11 hours per day. It now opens some evenings right up until 9.30pm, where it is manned solely by student helpers.

The store ensures that they have a broad mix of student helpers representing a range of courses – photography, fine art etc, so there is a good base of knowledge in the store and the ability to advise students on different courses. The human interaction and knowledge transfer at the store remains an

Coventry University connect2 equipment booking sessions in January



incredibly important part of students' education. connect2 allows staff more time and so more emphasis to be placed on this crucial role, as administrative aspects are automated and bookings approached through student self-service.

Making the difference with connect2

In summary, the Media Loan Shop is a vital service for students within the School of Art and Design and connect2 is now fundamental to an efficient operation. Since its introduction the store has been able to dramatically improve access to resources not least due to the ability to include student helpers and increase opening hours. The range of resources available for booking has expanded and now includes studios. connect2 is also proving indispensable for running inventory reports and for use as a repair log. As its functionality is put to greater use the store progressively improves operations and is able to deliver an enhanced student experience.

It was great to witness the Coventry Media Loan Shop in action and to find out how connect2 continues to make the difference to everyday life there! Thanks to the team for giving us the opportunity to shadow them and share their approach and best practice with the rest of our customers.

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