

## BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY

### Tops the tables for self-service laptop loans



Birmingham City University (BCU) is LapSafe®'s **largest** university user of their Diplomat™ Self-Service Laptop Loan lockers in the World! With almost 700 locker bays available to students across 18 installations throughout the campus, BCU make the most of agile and flexible working.

A diverse and increasingly popular place for students to study, BCU has around 25,000 students and 4,000 members of staff. Over the last ten years, BCU has invested heavily in new buildings and facilities. They are currently undertaking a £340 million investment programme which includes expansion of their Birmingham City Centre campus and by moving the campus in the north into the centre to be in-line with their mission to be the University **for** Birmingham.

#### **Optimising learning space**

Paul Davis, IT Quality Manager at BCU said "The big driving force for us using LapSafe® has been to optimise learning space for students. In order to increase the study space available, we decided to loan out laptops to students and reduce the PC workstations across the campus. This has allowed us to increase study space available and by installing the LapSafe® Diplomat™ we've allowed students to borrow a laptop whenever they want."

The Diplomat™ is a sophisticated and intelligent self-service locker system which loans devices or lockers 24 x 7. Fully charged devices such as laptops, Chromebooks and tablets can be automatically loaned to borrowers without staff interaction.

BCU is a long-standing customer of LapSafe® previously using their mobile storage and charging trolleys. They started down the road of self-service laptop loans with an initial pilot of a 48-bay Diplomat™ back in 2014. BCU have added to that every year since growing the estate to 636-bays for students and another 48-bays for staff across the campus. BCU make about 10,000 loans per month across the estate, and offer a variety of different loan laptops ranging from very high performance mobile work stations to smaller lighter devices.

### **Always available**

“Integration with the library management system has been really important to save us having to duplicate all of the student records and avoid maintaining separate systems. It also lessens staff training as they already knew how to use the library management software. A real key thing is for students to have access to a device whenever they need to use it.” Said Paul speaking to Denise Crouch, Head of Sales & Marketing at LapSafe®.

BCU’s home-grown PC Finder service enables students to find a computer that’s available anywhere on the campus. BCU’s Development Team worked closely with the LapSafe® team to link to the LapSafe® ‘Availability Dashboard’. The introduction of LapSafe® Availability Dashboard enables BCU to publish real time stats for their students so that they can find a Diplomat™ that has laptops available to borrow across the site. This saves students from having to queue or wander around the university looking for availability. Paul also said “It gives me great tools and reports to see how the Diplomat™ units are functioning across our considerable estate. We can see which ones are being used when and where, what the peaks are and the patterns of activity are; thus, telling us when to expand the service.”

Paul went on to say “The students really love the self-service laptop loans and there has been such a high demand for it across the campus, we have grown the service, year on year. Talking to the students, both the anecdotal feedback and the impact on our NSS scores have been really positive.”

### **Integrated into building design**

As BCU have expanded their service, they have been able to model the lockers into the buildings, using sympathetic colour schemes. However, they went all out with their latest (eighteenth) installation in the Curzon Library with rainbow coloured locker doors. This 48-bay Diplomat™ loans new MacBook’s to students who needed access 24 x 7.

BCU also worked with LapSafe® to customise the user interfaces to ensure they met their requirements.

It’s not just students who can borrow laptops, installed in the staff room in the Joseph Priestley building is a 48-bay Diplomat. Loaning laptops to the staff has enabled a reduction in the number of desk top PC’s making better use of the space available.

When speaking to Denise, Paul said that the “data connectivity function of the lockers has been really important as it has enabled us to manage such a large estate of laptops, keeping them up-to-date and connected to the network for security updates etc.”

When asked whether BCU would recommend LapSafe® to others, Paul said, “we’ve really built on our relationship with LapSafe®, they have grown with us and the technical support we have received has been excellent. LapSafe® has shared with us their road map and software development plans for the future and we are really excited.”

In terms of growth Paul mentioned “The University has big ambitions to grow the estate and the size of the student population. LapSafe® is going to be a key part of growing the service and enabling us to offer that transformational service to students. Besides maintaining our market-leading position as the World’s largest university user of the Diplomat™ self-service loan lockers, is to start using the flexibility that USB-C charging offers us so that we can mix and match the devices we use across the estate.”

Denise said that “visiting BCU was really exciting, the buildings are stunning and complement the surrounding area. It really is an inspirational place to study. We are really proud to be part of the University’s success and looking forward to working with Paul and his team on future projects.”

If you like what you have read and would like to watch the **BCU Video** case study then visit <https://www.lapsafe.com/case-studies/birmingham-city-university>