The evolution of AudioVisual/Educational Media Teams into Forward-thinking Teaching Spaces support units: Gaining a new relevance.

Traditional A/V departments in universities are currently going through a significant identity crisis. Often reporting to either facilities management areas or Information Technology, these units that were previously responsible for lending TVs and VCRs to teaching academics, followed by the provision of projection and eventually computer technologies in classrooms, are now finding themselves responsible for complex, highly technical "teaching spaces".

While the responsibilities of these units, and their potential contribution to universities' teaching environments have evolved, many of these units are still staffed with long-term employees from the area that questioned whether we should be using VHS or Beta for our video viewing and recording. Many believe that most of these units, and their staff, are quickly becoming obsolete in the new university environment. Current emphasis on the "flipped classroom", flexible teaching spaces and collaborative learning demands a much more forward-thinking unit that can make substantial contributions to university planning for physical, as well as virtual spaces.

This best practices session shares a reorganization that occurred in the University of Newcastle, Australia, which re-assigned the "A/V / Teaching Spaces" team as part of a larger "Academic Technologies" unit, working alongside the Blended Learning design team and the eTeaching Support team. The presentation will address how these areas can be integrated to acknowledge and take advantage of the contribution of those who traditionally focussed on supporting media in the classroom, and how this can evolve into an integrated physical and virtual teaching and learning environment. Discussion of the changes to positions, services, and reporting structures will explain the new model.