

systems integrationasia

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**Unilever's most
innovative, ecological
and user friendly
facility worldwide**

**Art and Science
experienced through
innovative AV Solutions
at the ArtScience Museum**

**Robin Enlund of AMX
contends that the future
is already here**





The Main reception features six Christie MicroTiles in a horizontal strip.

Unilever's most innovative, ecological and user friendly facility worldwide

Hewshott International devises, designs and creates this unique space



The Lobby to the Unilever office features 4x5 Christie MicroTiles

When Unilever signed up to their new building in Singapore at Mapletree Business City, they signed up to make a statement. In a world where technology can deliver solutions that are limited by imagination, Unilever turned to one of the world's leading independent AV consultancies, Hewshott International, to devise, design and create the most

innovative, ecological and user friendly facility that Unilever occupy worldwide.

Reception

The dynamic and diverse nature of Unilever's business is evident when first arriving at the building. The first implementation of **Christie's Microtile** video wall in Singapore displays some of the many video and moving graphics produced for Unilever. Their TV commercials, advertising and internal communication messaging are delivered in real time, centrally controlled with access to their worldwide database. Driving this is the **AMX IPTV** solution with multiple digital signage servers, and as that technology becomes more complex and capable, there's a natural upgrade path.



The wireless AMX touchpanel controls the building-wide PA system from the reception.

To maintain the look and feel, a similar approach was taken through to the internal reception on level 6, where further Microtiles are configured to run more visual material, but in a different format. The dynamic and 'non-conformist' nature of Christie's product allowed the unusual aspect ratio of six tiles wide in a horizontal strip. This gave a resolution of 540 x 4320 driven by an Apple MAC, and presented new scope for Unilever to display material in formats outside of standard video screen ratios.

The reception is the hub for the building-wide PA system. This is controlled using a **wireless AMX touchpanel** and a **Biamp DSP**. Strategic to this design decision was the benefit gained in using a **Cobranet system**, which allows for future expansion and flexibility. Multiple zones are available throughout the floors and the DSP's features are presented on the touchpanel as a very user-friendly GUI that allows for quick and intuitive use and caters for different members of staff, who may have little or no training.

Hair Salon and Spa

On the same floor, there is a hair salon and a spa, each of which required a sound system, but with no space for any equipment racks, this presented a challenge. High-grade ceiling speakers and sub-woofers are linked to remote



The Executive Boardroom has a fixed Stewart projection screen with two large Samsung 65" touchscreens on each side of the Stewart screen. Images are projected via a Christie projector sitting in a motorised projector lift.



To accommodate varied needs, there are two Smartboards at the back of the Executive Boardroom.

equipment, which is controlled via the Cobranet system using a discrete wall-mounted **RedOne tactile keypad**. Through this, users have access and control over the basic features of the media servers. The network media servers are located in the main equipment rack room but are fully accessible anywhere in the building under a permissions management solution.

Executive Boardroom

The boardroom is a challenging space and, during the design phase, was one of the primary focus points. To meet Unilever's specific needs, conventional thinking was thrown away and Hewshott's consultants relished the opportunity to develop a fresh approach to the corporate meeting environment. The room needed to maintain the services and facilities demanded by a boardroom of an international firm, but the nature

of Unilever's business meant it had to switch to different types of meetings, presentations and workshops quickly and seamlessly.

Hewshott specified a fixed **Stewart projection screen**, combined with a **Christie projector** sitting in a motorised projector lift. To accommodate the varied presentation styles, the **WOW Vision wireless presenter system** was chosen because it meets the demand for endless numbers of participants to connect to the various displays and stream high resolution video. There are two large **Samsung 65" touchscreens** at the front, one on each side of the fixed projection screen, as well as two **Smartboards** at the back of the room that are used in workshop configurations.

On the audio side, it was important that the table surface is as uncluttered as possible, but with a sizable room, table



The neatly laid out rack-room outside the Executive Boardroom. At the top sits the WOW Vision wireless presenter system.

microphones were the only option. To overcome this, **Clockaudio pop-up microphones** were installed on the tabletop, and hard wired XGA cables were provided below the table surface to provide back-up to the wireless system – these were integrated into **Extron's latest Cable Cubby retractor series**. A **Kramer/Sierra matrix switcher** handles the large quantity of inputs and outputs, and this is located in a rack outside the room.

Unilever had an existing room booking system, and Hewshott was tasked with devising a new solution that integrated their meeting room booking software with a control system that accommodated resource management. After careful consideration, **AMX's RMS software** met the requirements, and RMS is used as the graphic display. As the majority of meeting rooms have glazed partitions, mounting the panels outside the rooms was achieved by placing the **AMX touchpanel** into a brushed aluminum pod, specifically designed for this requirement.

Kitchen

The diverse range of products and brands that are part of Unilever brought Hewshott into the kitchen. Hewshott has recent experience of a similar requirement – through work completed on teaching kitchens at an education facility north of London. Education and industry have different needs, but the principles are similar,

so drawing on this UK experience, Hewshott designed a full AV system for a live demonstration kitchen. The AV systems in the kitchens are under the full control of chefs and cooks, both in-house and guest. Appreciating that this system had to be easy to use, but also powerful and effective, significant time was spent consulting with Unilever's award-winning chef to develop a solution that can be used with very little technical understanding or AV knowledge. Hewshott's consultants drew on their experience of high-end domestic design work and developed a solution that is intuitive but meets the varying complexities of Unilever's requirements.

The kitchen area itself is fitted with discretely located, dual high definition fully pan tilt and zoom cameras, which can be aligned to a combination of close-up presets as well as manually controlled configurations for one-off sessions. Careful planning with other consultants was required to ensure condensation did not form on the lenses and to protect the camera's electronics from high humidity and a hot environment. Voice was carried using cardioid wireless mics. The high levels of ambient noise that are to be expected in a kitchen had to be overcome in order to achieve effective sound reinforcement. An array of recessed screens shows the more intricate demonstrations, and a central hard disk recorder was also used to record this sometimes one-off material for distribution or safe keeping.

Market Research Facility

Unilever's market research facility demanded a cutting edge design, and Hewshott were tasked with coming up with unique solutions. This particular area has constantly evolving requirements, dictating that any solution must be future proofed, and must use the latest and emerging technologies and practices. The suite consists of four main areas: live Retail Lab, a Virtual Lab, a Knowledge Centre and a breakout room.

The Retail Lab was specified with dual projectors providing any shop background around the world, and respondents are invited into the space. Three ceiling-mounted cameras strategically positioned offer full coverage of the subject's movements. Adding to the sense of a real life environment, two ceiling-mounted Samsung backlit LED screens provide digital signage within the space. An eye-tracker system, which monitors

and records the respondents' exact eye movements via spectacles completes the system functionality and all the data is relayed to the viewing area for analysis.

The Virtual Lab was a Reddottsquare solution and has three high definition projectors edge blended to cover a full width curved screen allowing clients to immerse themselves within any given store at any time. The individual images that make up the blend were brought back into the main control room and reassembled to allow monitoring to take place on a single screen alongside the multiple live camera feeds. The images are routed using standard **Kramer distribution amplifiers**, and inserting them into a **TVOne digital DVI image combiner**. The combined signal can be distributed throughout the research centre as part of the media management solution.

The viewing area is no less complex. This required seven individual displays of various sizes, a 65" touch screen monitor, two 46" LED displays and a fourth temporary monitor, which is brought in should the need arise for further coverage. Three bespoke bubble screens relay the four main elements: Earth, Wind, Fire and Water.

All seven displays are designed to be controlled via a combination of two AMX wireless touch panels that independently allow full control of volume, display, source selection and camera control. The system has built in future proofing to allow an iPad to control the whole system, and to give the user control over the **Allen&Heath IDR16 audio mixer**, which is based in the AV control room.

The Unilever Singapore project represents a bold and dynamic approach to their workplace environment and the works were completed in Q1 2011. Hewshott International were appointed as AV and Acoustic consultants and undertook the design and project management of all the technology spaces, working closely with Unilever's marketing and technical departments to fully understand and appreciate the business' needs and requirements.

Consultant:
Frederick Hall, Associate, Hewshott International

Systems Integration:
Pave System Pte Ltd

* Photos courtesy of Frederick Hall

www.hewshott.com.sg
www.pave.com.sg



The boardroom featuring a Christie projector sitting on a motorised projector lift.



All the boardrooms and meeting rooms featured Clockaudio pop-up microphones



Small meeting room featuring a Samsung interactive screen



As the majority of meeting rooms have glazed partitions, mounting the panels outside the rooms was achieved by placing the AMX touchpanel into a brushed aluminum pod.



Digital signages were extensively used for information and where necessary internal communications.