

SPOTLIGHTS

Welcome to our Spotlight series.

Real success in the real world.
Day after day we witness how Apple technologies truly enrich the lives of students and staff, transforming the way they live, learn and work.

Spotlight is our way of capturing and sharing with you great examples of great practice and innovation within Education.

We hope you enjoy these wonderful stories of success.

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The Institute
of Contemporary
Music Performance

ICMP

Improving the student learning experience.

How The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) alleviated digital poverty and improved the overall learning experience to ensure all students have an equal chance of success.



The Context

The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) has been developing and delivering cutting-edge, industry-relevant courses to students of contemporary music for over 30 years, longer than any other UK-based music school.

They've established a reputation for delivering world-class musical education based on their state-of-the-art facilities, access to the very best teachers and their dedication to innovation. As a result, aspiring musicians come from all over the globe to access their range of professional postgraduate and undergraduate programmes, alongside their shorter, part-time evening courses.

ICMP is run by a professional management team and outstanding academics focused on developing the next generation of music industry performers, creators and entrepreneurs. The school's alumni can be found all over the world, working at the highest levels of the industry, performing on some of the biggest stages, running their own businesses, or simply creating rewarding careers making, playing, performing or teaching music.



The challenge

Keeping up with the times

ICMP provides its students with on-campus access to tech suites 7 days a week, until 11pm each night, where they can utilise over 130 iMacs, all of which run the latest Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), to help them undertake their coursework and personal projects.

When it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would potentially mean closing the facilities and impact their ability to deliver a full timetable of face-to-face teaching, a blended model of online and in-person teaching was considered essential. Importantly, the ICMP had to develop a remote learning strategy that continued to provide the same level of access to world-class technology experienced by students on campus, from wherever they were learning from.

With some students not having access to an adequate device, or the software required to study independently at home, ICMP engaged Academia to expand their digital services and develop a futureproofed digital learning solution that provided equal access to all.

“Our goal was to alleviate digital poverty and improve the overall learning experience to ensure all students have an equal chance of success.”

— Paul Kirkham, Chief Executive



The solution



Equipping every student to succeed with Apple

Academia worked with ICMP to design a MacBook Loan Scheme ensuring no student was disadvantaged in their ability to record/produce work. Of course, without sufficient network access to support the MacBooks, students wouldn't be able to take advantage of all the features on offer. As such, they introduced an initiative to fund students' WiFi and made hardship funds available allowing them to purchase any additional tech or software essential for their studies.

The MacBook Loan Scheme proved incredibly valuable, with over 350 students signing up..

“The MacBook Loan Scheme has been a critical part of our COVID strategy, allowing us to seamlessly move provision online without disadvantaging any student.”

— Professor Tony Harris, Director and Dean of Academic Studies

Why MacBook?

Access to specialist audio production and recording apps that students were accustomed to using on a daily basis, such as LogicPro.

Ease of integration with existing technology in campus tech suites.

Portability of technology allowed students to continue with their work and personal projects wherever they were based.

Total equality across the student body - no student was disadvantaged by lack of access to suitable equipment.

Remote contact with tutors and other college staff enabled students to stay connected with vital academic services.

Students were freely able to collaborate remotely without application or data compatibility concerns.

Ability to record lectures and provide these to students for them to playback at any time.

The true impact

For staff

Some staff members at ICMP were initially sceptical that they would be able to deliver the same quality of education via a blended learning model. Scepticism was particularly acute amongst the minority that considered themselves less tech-savvy, or who favoured traditional face-to-face teaching practices.

Regardless of their familiarity with technology, all staff have had to adapt. Of diversifying the ICMP's teaching methods, Jonathan Whiskerd, Head of Undergraduate Programmes says: "Teaching online is not simply transferring the same skills from the physical classroom; pedagogically, although learning outcomes remain the same, the method of achieving those outcomes is different."

By removing any obstacles to attending lectures, be that physically or virtually, they've actually seen attendance improve for many classes. Increased attendance, combined with staff learning how to manage and assess a wider variety of engagement metrics has enabled them to hone and perfect their approach to blended learning, adapting it to fit all student needs.

As a result, the majority of staff members have become converts to the blended learning approach. Somewhat accelerated by the fact that on a personal level, they have also been able to reduce the cost and time of commuting into campus.

For students

The student experience during COVID-19 has been one that is likely to never be repeated. For example, new students who joined ICMP mid-pandemic did not meet their classmates until well into their first year. The MacBook Loan Scheme has therefore offered those students who had no access to technology a means to connect with their fellow students and forge vital relationships.

"There is a new understanding and acceptance of the online learning experience which is a real enhancement."

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— Paul Kirkham, Chief Executive

Technological equality is key to students' success and experience with ICMP, so it's unsurprising that they have embraced the many opportunities of blended learning.

Students are able to:

- Easily conduct independent learning.

- Communicate freely and access support from staff and fellow students when it matters.

- Explore their creativity 24/7.

- Access recorded lectures at any time and revisit content as often as they'd like.

- Increase their interactivity in classes.



Alleviating digital poverty

Students were understandably apprehensive about commencing their studies without being able to replicate some of the specialist facilities that the ICMP have in their studios. Without support from the ICMP, many students faced the prospect of using their smartphone to virtually attend lectures or using laptops without the necessary professional programmes that are available on MacBook. Students have described the scheme as vital and essential to their studies, with many saying that without it, they simply would not have been able to complete their studies whilst access to campus facilities was restricted.

“It is well known that not all students are in a comfortable financial situation. This scheme gives them a great feeling of confidence that they not only have the option of borrowing a MacBook, but that they are also covered if they need support with their machine, again at no cost to them.”

– Music, Business and Entrepreneurship Student

Student wellbeing

There has never been a more important time for educational institutes to be able to support student wellbeing. During prolonged periods of lockdown, studying alone could feel particularly isolating.

The college offers confidential support services such as counselling to its student body. An unexpected discovery of ‘going remote’ has been that these services are actually more readily accessible online rather than in-person. Previously, students would have to physically attend appointments, entering private meeting spaces in view of other students. Offering remote meetings enables the ICMP to further enhance confidentiality, in turn increasing the number of students willing to make use of the service. As a result, it’s unlikely that the ICMP will revert to the previous delivery model in full.

The outcome

“The main impact of the MacBook Loan Scheme has been the discovery that delivering some, or all, of our course components at distance is not only possible, but often desirable.”

– Jonathan Whiskerd, Head of Undergraduate Programmes

Face-to-face teaching will forever continue to be a vital part of how ICMP delivers their education. The benefit has been the discovery that there is minimal negative impact on the quality of teaching if forced to be remote. Without disruption, they were able to continue equipping musicians with the skills they need to be as creative as possible, and providing practical guidance for finding their ideal career in the music industry.

In essence the MacBook Loan Scheme just works; it levels out inequalities; it reassures students they will be able to engage effectively at no cost to them; and it provides reassurance to staff that their students are properly equipped. In fact, in many cases, students are actually better equipped to manage their own independent study.



Looking to the future

The ICMP are currently evaluating and quantifying the long-term impact of the service. However, as a result of the “undoubted benefits”, they are looking to either make the MacBook Loan Scheme a more permanent service, or extending what it offers where disadvantage currently exists.

“We are now rethinking our longer term approach to how we integrate remote digital learning with our onsite face-to-face teaching.”

— Professor Tony Harris, Director and Dean of Academic Studies





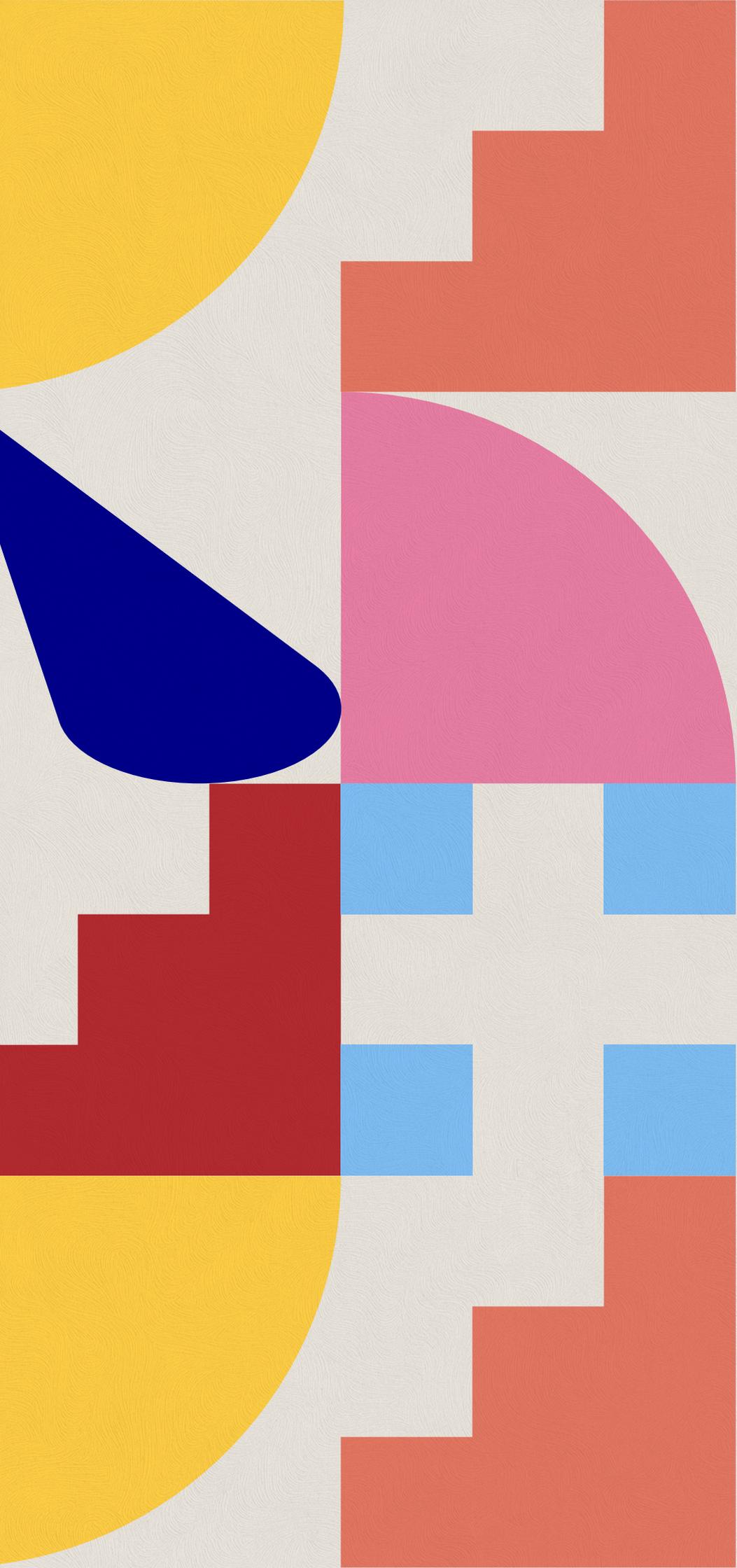
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