

Commercial venues, corporate organisations and education establishments face a similar challenge: they want the latest technology but budgets are squeezed and space is at a premium. Geny Caloisi talks to the leading manufacturers of mounts and brackets to find out how they are addressing the needs of the industry.

# Flexibility meets strength



Mount and bracket manufacturers need to provide versatile, strong and flexible solutions. But, as Rachel Hunt, Unicol marketing director says: "This is not new. Mobile devices in the form of trolleys and stands have been around since the AV industry began. In situations where CRT (the new technology of the time) was a costly commodity it was necessary to make the most of it, so the education and other industries could use one device across many locations."

However, today we work, learn and share information in a different manner to a decade ago. It's not just because we carry with us powerful tools, our mobiles and tablets, which keep us connected all the time; it's also because we want our link to data to be ubiquitous.

We want instant communications. We want 24/7 visual access to information. The proliferation of screens makes this more achievable. But the way these screens are supported and presented is essential to reap the best benefits out of them.

Peerless-AV director of marketing, Paul Dawes says: "The intelligent use of the right mounting solution can definitely deliver enhanced value to a project – especially where mobile options enable a single AV set-up to be utilised in multiple locations

or for multiple applications."

Matthew Bennett, CEO of B-Tech, explained: "We have noticed an increased demand from new and existing customers for more universal mounting solutions, which eliminates the need to buy screen specific mounts for different models.

"Although we have had universal flat screen mounts for over ten years, we are applying this design principle to the new digital signage requirements with both our BT8310 Video Wall Mount – catering for screens from 46" to 65" – and BT8350 video wall Freestanding Unit for multiple screen brands and sizes. In particular the BT8350 can be used in multiple configurations. For example; if a client has a four by four unit, there are over 20 different options on displaying screens. This certainly saves the client money."

## Digital signage

Digital signage has indeed provided a boom for the mounts and brackets industry, but it also brings new needs. Careful design and planning can avoid complications later.

Retailers that use digital signage on their shop windows might want to vary the screen location,

orientation, functionality, and of course, they will want to keep it clean.

Hunt recalls: "Unicol has rolled out its Roller Trak system to Boux Avenue lingerie stores which is a ceiling suspended set-up. This allows a screen to be moved easily across the face of the entire shop window, rotated from landscape to portrait and swiveled from side to side – thus transforming a window.

"A secondary use is to enable screens that butt up against a window to be moved away from the glass for cleaning – this use is being rolled out to Hugo Boss with a stack of three landscape screens against a window.

"Another example of where cleaning and maintenance becomes an issue is where a touch screen is placed in front of a video wall, typically three by four. Unicol used the ceiling suspended idea, turned it upside down and placed a three by four video wall structure on top. This allowed the whole video wall to be moved back from the giant touch screen."

Laura Bonafont, marketing manager at Mode-AL points out: "Our MV-Brix System is a digital signage based video wall that provides easy access to the screens while keeping them secure. The units can be accessed either from the front or the rear. They can also be placed on castors if a mobile solution is required." >

< Chief has had a similar demand, “We’ve seen increases in requests for serviceable mounts and post installation features,” says Melinda von Horvath, director of sales and marketing for EMEA.

“With video wall carts and stands, independent knobs help to keep alignment quick and easy. Chief’s mounts also allow for quick display removal for servicing.”

But the role of digital signage is not just to adorn windows and stores; it also provides very useful services, such as way finding and information. In big public areas like shopping centres and airports, these info displays might be required at a short notice and needed in different locations.

Unicol is currently in the process of supplying BAA with another batch of mobile information display stands for use when airports reach critical passenger number levels and temporary space has to be provided. In order to keep passengers informed of flights, general information, local and international news in these temporary spaces, Unicol has designed a trolley that can be stored in existing low buildings and then, when required, moved easily to a location.

Once in location it can then be powered to full height to display flight information on three portrait screens, general information on one portrait screen and news on a landscape screen. In addition crowd behavior can be fed back to a control centre via two security cameras and information constantly updated by Wi-Fi.

This five screen trolley, with the ability to power all five screens up and down, has enough lockable storage capacity to house power cables long enough to ensure quick deployment in any situation. Special castors are used to combat the rigours of travelling over concrete and rough surfaces.

B-Tech has the BT8350 Modular Videowall Freestanding unit for videowalls or displays. “The unit can be used for anything from a 2x2 display to 7x100+ and be assembled in minutes owing to the clever design,” explains Spencer.

“This is particularly helpful for the likes of rental companies which can use the same stand in multiple locations. Castors can be added for a truly mobile unit and conversely lock-down brackets for a more secure install or even a hanging frame if it is required to ‘fly’ the display away from general access.”

B-Tech’s new range of back-to-back floor stands such as the BT8554 allow signage to be displayed in public. The company has recently provided this solution for Luanda Airport in Angola, using Samsung Screens.

Peerless’ mobile video wall trolleys can hold up to a 3x3 [arrangement of] 55” displays effectively creating a 150”+ mobile video wall. These kinds of mounts are



[Top to bottom] Peerless-AV DS-VWC655 portable digital signage video wall trolley, Unicol videoconference mounts and Top-Tech collaboration solution

ideal for commercial, education and retail applications, where fitting a fixed wall mounted video wall is not possible or practical, these trolleys can deliver eye catching POS, impressive backdrops for exhibitions and presentations as well as large format information and way-finding opportunities.

A mounting challenge we shouldn’t forget in this area, is the growing trend of multi-touch screens, which demands more steadiness. Chief’s XPAU and LPAU are compatible with interactive flat panel displays and provide the stability required. The XPAU started shipping in September. With 2U of rack space for quick and easy storage of peripheral equipment, this sturdy solution holds up to 136 Kg. It can be also adapted with the FCA623 accessory for video conferencing.

## The office

In the office, mobile mounting solutions have to accommodate peripheral equipment and cables to make the most of the space available.

“The quickly changing working environment is demanding more mobility. Meetings and conferences are no longer limited to one room,” comments Sofia Lindestad, marketing co-ordinator at Smart Media Solutions (SMS).

“Companies have international teams for which they might use VC, but it won’t always need to be a long meeting with many participants, for which they will need a specific space. Variable solutions are needed to suit the different type of meetings. Some people might also work remotely and pop into the office only occasionally. This is why ‘hot desking’ has become a practical way of organising office space. This affects how modern meetings are held and the type of conference equipment that is required.”

The latest SMS products that support the mobility, stability and security needs are its SMS Presence series. Launched in June this year, it consists of three products, two mobile floor solutions (of which one is motorised) and one-wall solutions. The Presence can support heavy displays of up to approximately 100” and its design to allow cables and peripherals to be hidden inside the product.

Vogel’s product manager Jurgen van Lieshout says: “As a stylish solution for video conferencing (VC) we offer the PPF5100 VC furniture. For a more flexible mobile solution we now introduced the PFTE7111.

“This is an electrical height adjustable trolley with built in storage space in a lockable cabinet. This multipurpose trolley can be used in corporate, as a VC unit and in education for bigger touch screen displays. But if you want full flexibility, you can design your own stand or trolley from our new modular Connect-it floor solution range.”

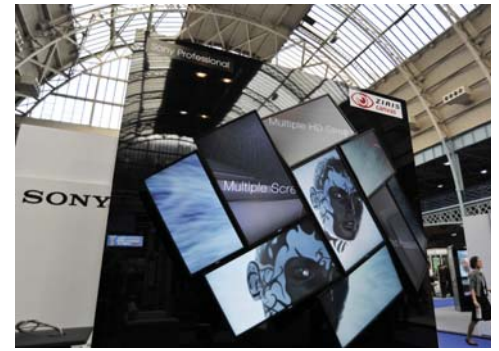
In the corporate sector, Top-Tech reports a large demand for its MediaMast Cabinet this year, which integrates a 38U mast with a mobile trolley and secure rack unit. This enables users to transport secured AV and screen equipment from room to room, without having to reconfigure equipment or cables for each usage. The strong steel mast provides stable support for large format screens together with concealed cable management.

Legmaster has a full line-up of fixed and height adjustable mobile solutions for its e-Boards and e-Screens and it has recently introduced a new column system line for both product segments. These allow quick installation of heavy equipment in buildings with non-rigid walls, saving costs and time on having to reinforce these walls by a contractor.





[L-R] Unicol in UK retail application; Mode-AL in action in Dubai for Sony campaign



## Education

In the education sector, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and more robust Wi-Fi technology is facilitating new ways of interacting and learning. However, according to Legmaster's international product manager Electronics Maarten Banis, this does not always mean that the displays are more mobile.

"In the educational channel, we see a trend that mobile systems actually show a decline. Since the classroom penetration of interactive systems is growing, there is less need for mobile solutions. We see a strong growth towards wall mounted height adjustable systems, or in case of non-rigid walls, our column systems."

Thomas Beardmore, marketing executive at Top-

Tech says: "We have noticed that in the education sector there is growing trend towards collaborative learning, which requires learning spaces to be adaptable and support both independent and team based study.

"This requires equipment to be flexible, mobile and reconfigurable, to enable multiple learning activities to take place in the same space. The ability to link hand-held devices to the main screen is also vital for sharing information between group members. Top-Tech brackets have universal mounting arms which are very adaptable.

"The issue of having safe and secure mounts solutions for the equipment is important in all applications, but when it comes to education, it is paramount to avoid any accidents."

Von Horvath explained: "At Chief, we test our WM

series for 90kg, even though the recommended load rate is 11kg. The reason behind this is for educational settings where children might jump up to grab the mount. We want the mount to bend, not break. Children can also be fans of pulling on or picking at cables, so cable management is a must to keep problems from arising."

## WiFi, freedom from cables

Organisations, schools and big metropolis are becoming 'hot spots'. Wi-Fi technology is getting stronger and this means fewer cables to care for. The convenience of Wi-Fi is being used across the board and it makes mounting solutions easier.

Top-Tech's Beardmore comments: "As providers to >

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expanding experiences



## expanding video conferencing experiences

### PFF 5100 Video conferencing furniture

Video conferencing is developing fast. Vogel's is capitalising on this trend with a refreshing, specially designed furniture in which all necessary equipment can be accommodated. Perfectly suitable for the modern techniques of video conferencing. This furniture's design incorporates a great attention to detail. That is why this furniture is different from all existing, individual solutions.

### New! PFTE 7111 Motorized display trolley

Vogel's designed the PFTE 7111 motorized height adjustable trolley especially for large LCD/plasma displays and large touch screen displays. It is ideal for use in schools, businesses, office centers and for video conferencing. The operation of the PFTE 7111 is extremely quiet and smooth. The motorized display trolley can be used for displays up to 85 inches and 160 kg.



PFF 5100 movie

For more information:  
call +31 (0)40 264 74 00 or e-mail [salesprof@vogels.com](mailto:salesprof@vogels.com)

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## TECHNOLOGY | Brackets & mounts

the education market, we see Wi-Fi being used predominantly in universities and schools where students can easily connect their portable devices to central networks and intranets.

"Our Synergy Plectrum Collaborative Tables allow online access by providing a secure PC entrapment beneath the table. However, there are new technologies available such as Apple TV and Barco's Clickshare, which can be integrated to connect devices wirelessly to the screen."

B-Tech has also been asked to cater for Apple TV units. "One of our blue chip clients came to us with a requirement for Apple TV, for which we designed the BT6079 which can be used with our modular mounting system," says Bennett.

*“ [There is] an increased demand for universal mounting solutions, which eliminates the need to buy screen specific mounts for different models. ”*

*- Matthew Bennett, B-Tech*

## Safety regulations

All mounts and brackets manufacturers have to make sure their equipment complies with the local standards and regulations. Weight bearing, ventilation flow, and handling safety are all taken into account when testing the units.

The organisations that approve the equipment are: the British Standards Institution (BSI) in the UK; in the US is the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and the Technischer Überwachungsverein (TUV) in Europe.

Hunt from Unicol comments, "None of these organisations provide regulations relating to AV equipment that are mandatory in law. However, most manufacturers abide by these regulations in their area of the world they apply."

Dawes from Peerless explained: "The most important industry standard is the UL safety testing regulations. This provides the peace of mind that these products have been rigorously tested to an agreed set of standards for the assurance of safety, security and durability.

"Peerless-AV has one of only two accredited test sites for mounts in the US, where they regularly conduct load testing on all mounting solutions to a minimum of four times the stated recommended weight limit."

Chief's von Horvath adds: "As the average weight being mounted onto walls and ceilings goes up, UL and TUV safety testings are becoming more important."

Cristiano Traferri, MD of Euromet, an Italian company that manufactures universal and modular solutions, such as its video wall product Infinigridd, agrees that evaluating weight-bearing is key to make sure a unit is fit for purpose.

"Generally, when you choose a bracket it should be able to withstand four times its weight at least for a minute. If you are looking at outdoor solutions, then weather resistant materials are very important," he says.

Once all the security boxes are ticked, the most important thing about mounts is not whether it rocks or rolls, but rather whether it's fit for purpose. While some markets need re-configurable options, others are keener on getting a variety of displays to visualise content as and when it's most convenient for the user.

This is a fantastic opportunity for mount and bracket manufacturers to work closely with their clients, listen to their needs and get their creative juices flowing.