Crestron Awards AIS Departments for Innovative Alexa Integration

Classroom & Academic Media Production, Office of Teaching & Learning Technologies

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Amazon’s Alexa is now installed in 13 classrooms and makes technology easier to access.

- Classroom & Academic Media Production
- Office of Teaching & Learning Technologies

Classroom and Teaching & Learning Technologies (TLT) received the 2019 A+ Partner Recognition Award from Crestron at InfoComm, the largest professional audiovisual trade show in North America. The two Academic & Instructional Services (AIS) departments received the award for the unique implementation of Amazon’s Alexa in 13 classrooms throughout the university.

“Thanks to the joint effort between Classroom and TLT, we have found unique ways to use Alexa in tech-heavy classrooms that empower the students and instructors,” said Jim Wellings, classroom technical professional. “We’ve seen a lot of success in the classrooms where we’ve installed Alexa and plan on adding it to more campus learning areas.”

Instead of controlling individual devices with many applications, TLT wrote one custom Alexa skill to control a Crestron processor through Fusion. This allows an instructor to control any classroom device regardless if it offers smart connectivity or not. They can still use the Crestron touch panel to select operation modes, or they can simply ask Alexa. The Classroom team installed Alexa in the classrooms and ensured it worked seamlessly with the existing technology.

One of the major benefits to this innovative use of Amazon’s Alexa is making a classrooms technology accessible to visually impaired instructors. According to Tina Haskin, a blind USU instructor, using Alexa has made teaching easier. “I don’t have to stress about using a computer and can focus on teaching the material. I have more flexibility and confidence. I’m able to use all of the resources available to me, which gives the students a better learning experience.”

Classroom and TLT plan on making the Alexa available in more classrooms throughout the university, both in Logan and Statewide Campuses.

For more information, contact Kevin Reeve at kevin.reeve@usu.edu.

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