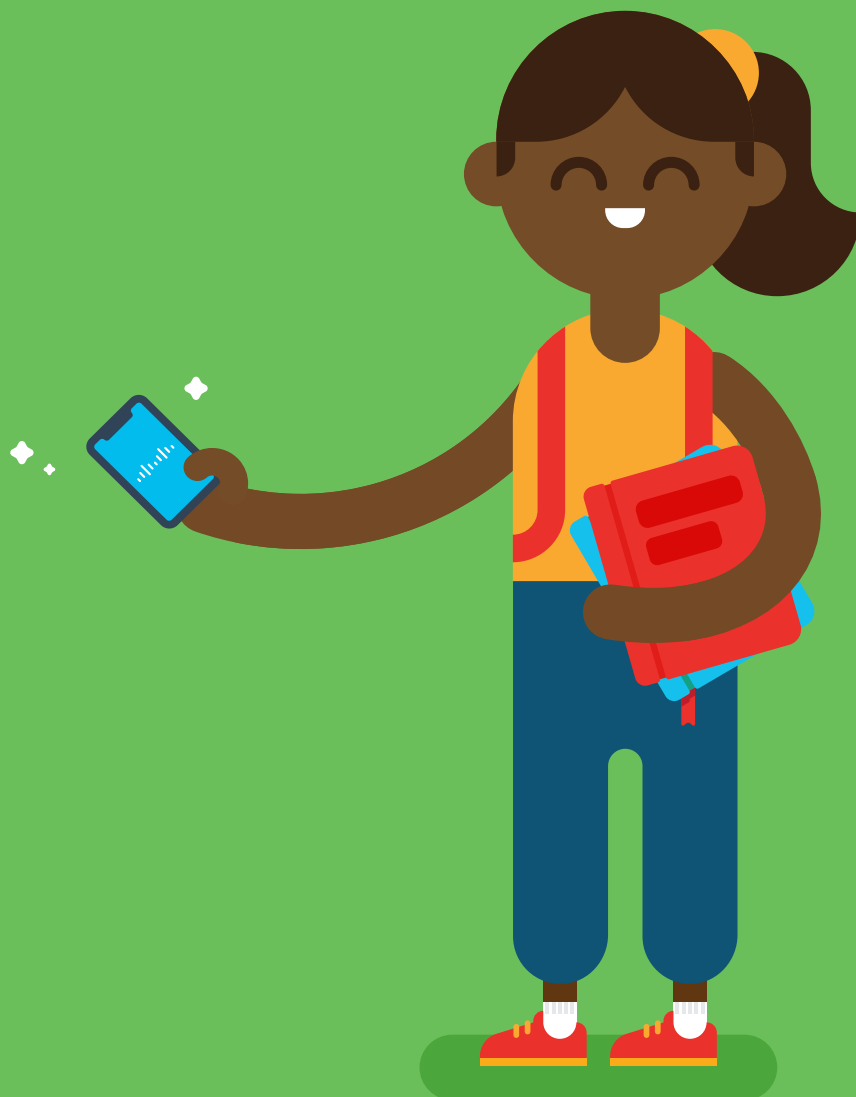# Building an intuitive future for further education

Contents

Introduction

The UK's further education (FE) colleges serve a vital purpose. They deliver academic, technical, and professional education to millions of people of all abilities and from all backgrounds, from school-age children to adults.

FE colleges prepare people for the workplace through vocational study as well as offering a route to higher education. They provide part-time, full-time and evening study and make a valuable contribution to our communities, aiding social mobility and skills development. They also offer multiple course options including GCSEs, ALevels, STEM studies and foundation degrees.

And they do all of this in spite of perpetual budget cuts and pressure to comply with Department for Education reform.

Lack of funding, however, combined with rising costs and teaching shortages, makes sustaining this current offering extremely challenging. Yet as the post-16 population rises, further education will become more important than ever.

We therefore believe a totally new way forward is the answer. A 21st-century response to a 21st-century challenge. One that meets the needs of 21st-century staff and students alike, keeps costs under control and allows FE colleges to evolve and grow.

But most importantly, we need an approach that transforms the student experience in completely new ways.

Welcome to the intuitive campus: a new type of further education environment, powered by human-centric connectivity and processes that can support students and staff every step of the way.

In this report we explain what the intuitive campus is and how it can help transform further education forever.
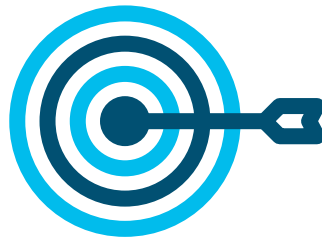
Read on to find out more.

Our goals

Our mission is to develop a digital campus environment that is created for people, with technology that is totally responsive to their needs.

Better quality of life

Economic competitiveness

Increased sustainability

Chapter 1: Creating a brighter future for further education

Why is further education so important?

Education can transform the lives of students and improve their life chances.

This is particularly true of further education, which can set young people on the pathway to their futures and support mature students embarking on new careers. That's some responsibility, not least because this ability to teach such a broad range of skills to so many different groups of people has a significant impact on the future prosperity of the country and the wider economy.

To continue delivering on these goals in such a difficult financial environment, FE colleges need technology fit for the students and educators of today and tomorrow. And they need it now.

Why? Because the way students expect to work and learn is continually evolving. They are networked individuals who consume information multiple ways. Education has had to evolve in response. The days of learning solely by sitting in a room listening to lecturers are disappearing. Those traditional methods still apply, but they are now supported by multiple streams of learning materials across physical and digital formats.

In short: a blended learning approach.

By embedding connected technology into physical infrastructure, FE colleges can create an education experience far more in tune with the next generation of students – a personalised experience that can scale and transform as technology improves and their needs continue to evolve.

Dealing with today's issues

There many reasons why further education needs to evolve and transform through intuitive connectivity.

Delivering such a varied prospectus to so many diverse groups of students is complex and costly. Yet according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), further education has suffered larger budget cuts than any other part of the sector – losing over a fifth of its funding since 2010. This has resulted in course closures, job cuts and reduced pastoral care.

FE colleges also rely on skilled, experienced teachers. Yet staff pay has fallen since 2009, resulting in a teaching shortage.

The current financial climate also makes managing estates and buying their own equipment increasingly challenging, resulting in a capital investment fall from £1.5 billion in 2009/10 to approximately £1 billion. With little or no property, less funding per student and being ineligible for many of the grants offered to schools and higher education, many FE colleges are merging.

But student numbers continue to fall, as many opt to stay on at school.

An intuitive campus can help demonstrate that far from being a second-best option, further education actually provides superior, and supportive service to students, giving them the support they need throughout their time at college.

In addition to attracting and retaining students, the intuitive campus could have a wider impact on FE colleges, from increasing student numbers to providing greater financial stability.

The needs of today's further education colleges

Enriching the student experience

- Create better study environments
- Improve people's long-term prospects – throughout their lives
- Offer people the right courses for them – in ways that work for them
- Develop new ways of teaching and learning
- Improve student on-boarding
- Boost enrolment
- Increase attainment and retention
- Increase diversity by supporting students with disabilities and welcoming people of all backgrounds and abilities
- Attract and retain the very best teachers
- Help students attain their goals

Greater financial stability

- Increase teaching income
- Reduce operating costs
- Utilise space more effectively
- Improve workplace productivity
- Continue to have a positive local and national economic impact

Chapter 2: Why choose an intuitive campus?

In the previous chapter we highlighted the challenges facing today's FE colleges and explored how a people-focused digital approach could help overcome them. But why is an intuitive campus the right choice and how does it differ from the current campus environment?

It is in fact, a logical progression from what Cisco has envisaged for some time.

Firstly, take the traditional campus and add digital technology. Then join everything together using sensors and wireless connectivity, bringing previously siloed technologies and datasets together to create a smart campus.

Our intuitive campus concept uses pre-existing technology in a more people-centric way to improve staff and student experience and wellbeing. It does so by providing an effortless and personalised experience, from the day a student enrols to the day they finish their course.

Ultimately, it's about removing friction from people's daily lives – offering them the information they need, when they need it, without having to seek it out.

Everything in one place

Key to the success of the intuitive campus is the application that sits in the centre and brings together all the different functions and datasets.

FE colleges need to demonstrate digital excellence – both in terms of teaching and the overall campus experience. And they can, through one central platform that amalgamates every service, meaning students and staff can find everything they need in one place.

Even better, they don't even have to search for it. Imagine a student on their way to an exam, for example. The app knows this. It also knows they may
want to pick up a coffee on their way to the exam room. So the app could work out the best route based on real-time traffic and other parameters, suggest the best place to stop for a drink, and perhaps even offer a promotional voucher.

Or let's say a lecture gets moved at the last minute. A notification will inform students of this change, with directions to the new room in plenty of time to ensure they don't arrive late.

That's got to be more convenient and reliable than a scribbled note stuck on the classroom door!

21st-century communication for 21st-century students

The way we all interact with the world around us through technology has fundamentally changed. This is particularly true for people arriving at FE colleges across the UK, many of whom will be young and will have grown up digitally literate. Most of us are used to sites like Google

and Amazon offering contextual suggestions, personalised to our unique preferences in our personal lives. So why not replicate this within the student experience?

The intuitive campus makes this possible, taking data from multiple, previously disconnected sources and using it to serve students with bespoke, real-time information, in a way that removes any effort or friction for them.
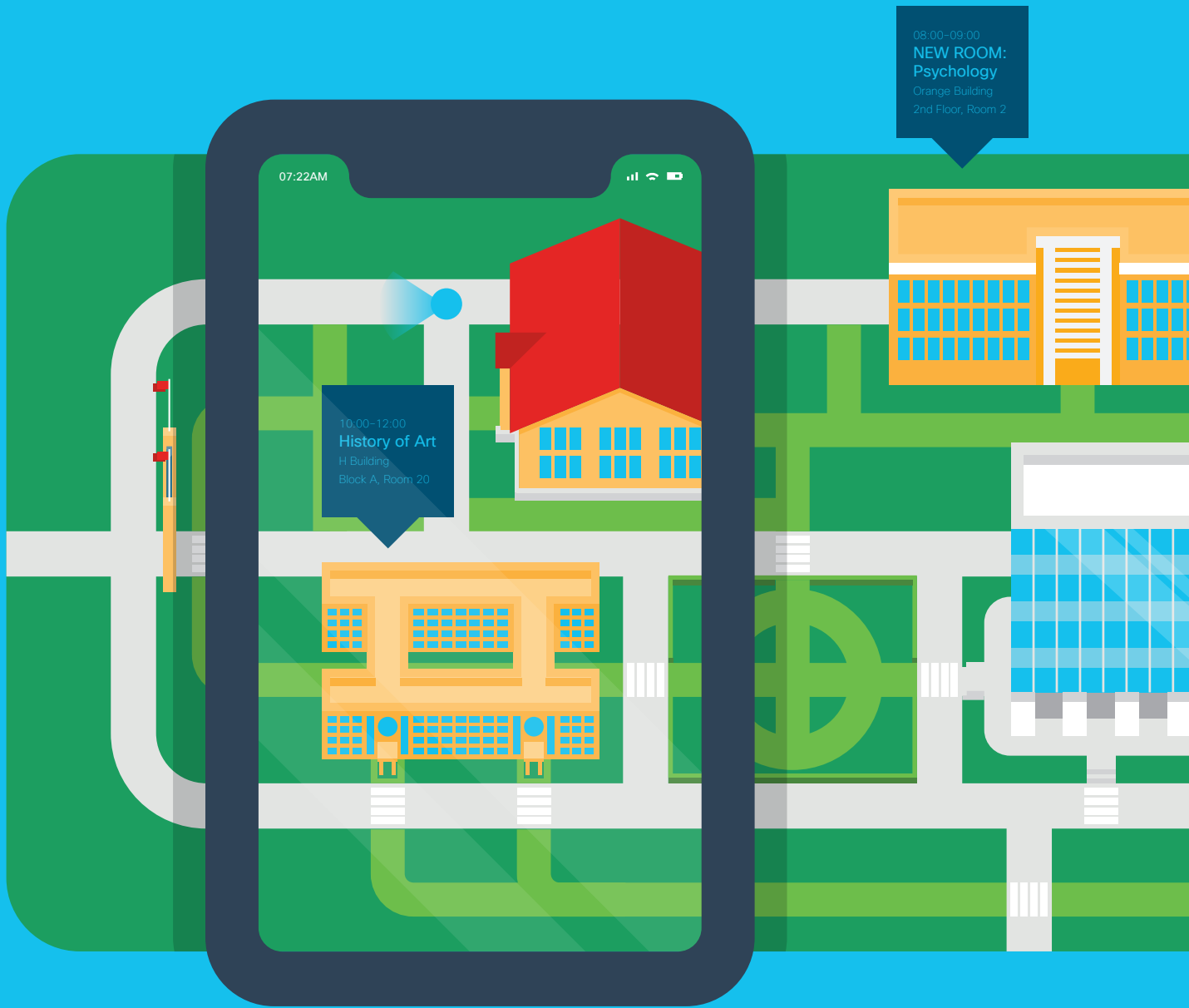
Take the student walking past the library with an overdue book they've forgotten to return. Their intuitive campus app would send them a reminder to ensure they remember to drop the book off in time.
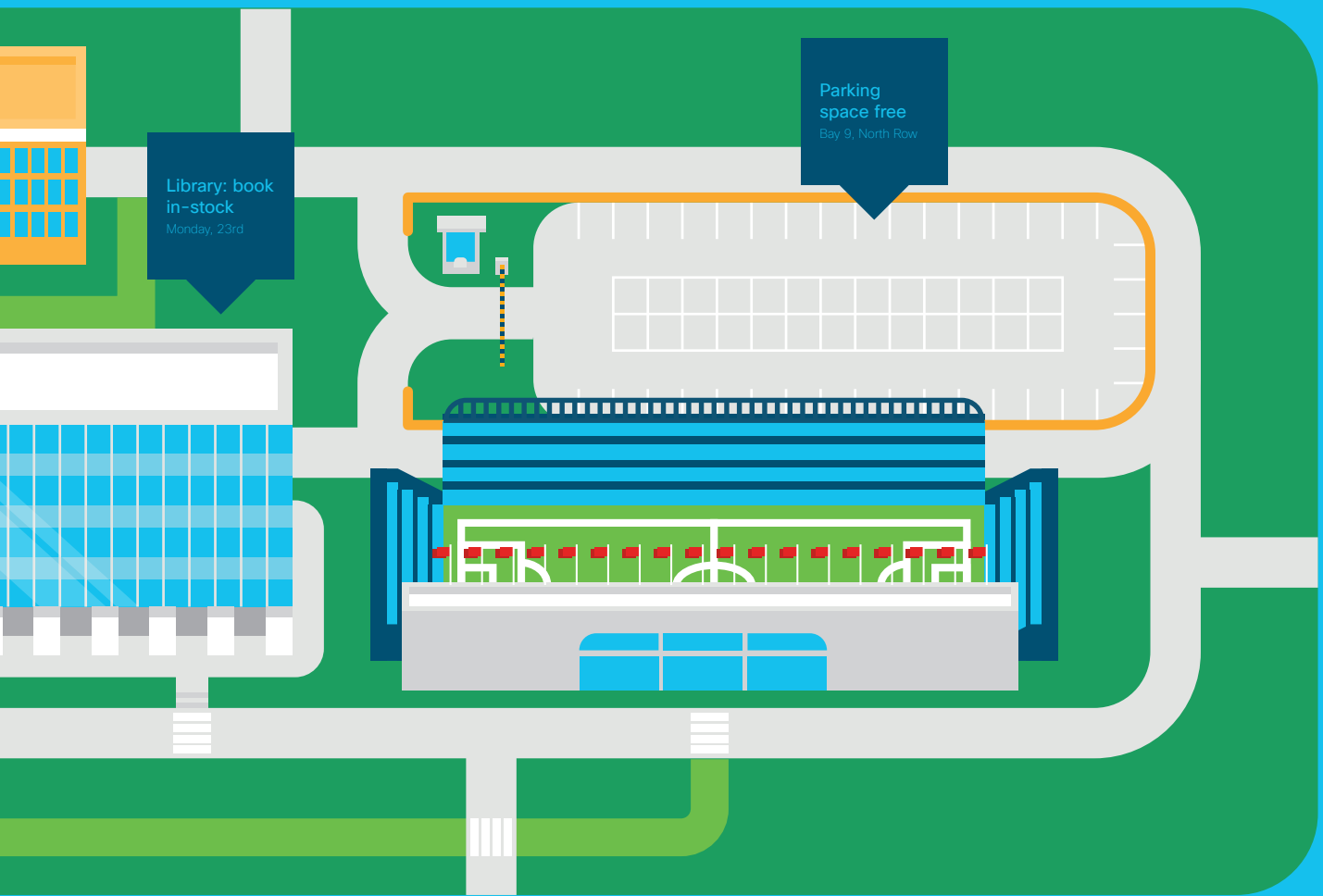
Or perhaps they're looking for a quiet place to study. The app could tell them the library is currently busy but is likely to be much quieter in an hour's time, meaning they don't have to waste time and increase their stress levels searching for a place where they can concentrate on their work. Real-time relevant information of this type can also help FE colleges attract prospective students.

The sports-loving potential student visiting the campus could receive a notification as they pass the sports hall, for example, inviting them to check out the facilities.

There are multiple possibilities for the intuitive campus, all of which can help improve student and staff wellbeing while enhancing the college's reputation as a place that works for its students and staff.

08:00–09:00
NEW ROOM:
Psychology
Orange Building
2nd Floor, Room 2

07:22AM

10:00–12:00
History of Art
H Building
Block A, Room 20

Parking
space free
Bay 9, North Row

Library: book
in-stock
Monday, 23rd

Chapter 3: Real-life applications

Day-to-day – around the college

- Getting to class on time, from information on lecture room changes to detailed room directions

- Helping students locate the places and things they need, from coffee shops to libraries

- Ensuring students can find the right space for their studies, whether collaborating with classmates or focusing on a dissertation

- Supporting wellbeing and health, from realtime pollution level updates to information on pollen counts

- Offering positive nudges, such as reminders when a library book is due for return or information on what's happening around the campus

- Building inclusivity into technology, to ensure all students – including those with disabilities – can make the most of their time on campus

- Watching lectures via Webex when students can't attend in person

- Offering a route master service, effectively giving people a dedicated campus map

- Ensuring greater physical security, to help everyone feel safer.

Education

- Offering remote learning when students can't physically attend their class

- Enabling new ways of teaching and learning, with applicable data and personalised course material

- Flipping the concept of the classroom, so students can consume lectures before the session and then discuss what have they learned in class

- Distance learning, to make all FE colleges more accessible regardless of where people live

- Improving capacity planning, showing how many people attend lectures and using predictive analytics to help people find the right space for their needs

Economic benefits

- Improving operating costs by using real-time information to use resources more efficiently

- Refining building and facilities management systems, from smart cleaning to more efficient buildings

- Boosting enrolment, by having a reputation for providing a brilliant student experience

- Using chatbots to interact with students, many of whom might not use social media to get updates about their FE college

- Improving open day attendance, by sending contextual reminders to prospective students

- Utilising space more effectively to save millions of pounds in avoidable costs

Conclusion

The intuitive campus uses data and connected technology to deliver benefits in a much more personal way. And not just to students but also to staff and the colleges themselves. It can also benefit the UK economy; our FE colleges not only produce tomorrow's university graduates, but also equip others in important vocational skills, re-train existing workers and deliver quality apprenticeships, helping ensure our national workforce is highly qualified and competent.

Our goal is to support them in this. And to make campuses truly intuitive and engaging we need to measure impact as well as action, using data to improve people's lives and verify that what we're doing is working.

But this is not really about technology.
It's about people.

Technology is just the enabler.

If you want to attract and retain more students, build a better environment for them and your staff and save millions of pounds in operating costs, get in touch, so we can start creating your intuitive campus.

Let's build a successful future for further education together.

Learn more: www.cisco.co.uk/education