



Customer Spotlight



How Anglia Ruskin University reduced IT lab complaints by 80% with LabStats

Over 20 years ago, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) identified a challenge familiar to many higher education institutions: providing students with timely access to workstations when they needed them.

Alex Collings, Application Analyst within Academic & Research Systems was tasked to solving this issue that was impacting the institution's National Student Survey scores, which in the UK are taken seriously not only by universities, but also by current and prospective students.



Snapshot

Client: Anglia Ruskin University

Locations: Cambridge, Chelmsford, Peterborough and Writtle, UK

Devices Monitored: 600 workstations and 200 loan laptops

LabStats Customer For: 20 years

By using LabStats, Alex and his team determined the access issue was not a matter capacity, as much as it was a lack of visibility. By making the existing capacity visible, ARU reduced complaints by around 80%, supported more responsive IT operations and demonstrated why adding more hardware is not always the right solution.

The visibility challenge

Uncovering the true extent of the challenge was key to finding the best solution. The LabStats data showed some areas were hotspots, while others were deserts: students kept going to the busiest spaces, getting frustrated by the lack of available computers, while other areas remained underutilised.

ARU initially considered introducing a workstation booking system but quickly recognised the potential impact on students' experience.

“In an open-access environment, students often gather in groups. A booking system could result in one student being asked to leave a workstation in the middle of a collaborative session, while booked computers could also remain unused if the person who reserved them failed to arrive,” shared Alex.

What the university needed was to help students see where computers were available in real time, and LabStats was the perfect match.

Turning live data into student guidance

Using information surfaced by LabStats, ARU created a simple webpage showing students where open workstations could be found.

The delivery model was deliberately straightforward: the team purchased inexpensive television screens, connected them to Raspberry Pis and used a Chrome browser to display the live availability page in prominent campus locations.

Instead of walking between rooms or waiting for a workstation to become free, students could immediately see where capacity was available and move to a less busy area.

The impact was significant: complaints dropped by 80%, and computer usage became more uniform across different locations. The university improved the student experience without immediately investing in more

physical computers. It had made better use of the resources already available.

When the university's open-access estate grew to almost 400 workstations, the team also introduced approximately 350 additional virtual desktops as a cost-effective way to expand access. Working with LabStats to extend support to the virtual environment, these were added to LabMaps (the feature that displays available machines), further increasing student access and maintaining low complaints.



A live view of today's estate

Today ARU monitors approximately 600 workstations and 200 loan laptops through LabStats, offering the same reliable device availability mapping as 20 years ago and allowing students to choose where they do their best work: in a buzzing open space or a quieter environment.

For the IT team, the same data supports a more proactive operating model. Maintenance teams use LabMaps to identify machines that are not reporting or being used as expected, locate the individual workstation and investigate the issue.

This gives ARU a shared view of its estate that supports both sides of the student experience:

- Students can find suitable technology more easily.
- IT teams can identify and resolve problems more efficiently.
- Available capacity can be distributed more evenly across campus.
- Decisions can be based on observed demand rather than assumptions.
- Existing investments can be fully utilised before new hardware is purchased.

What began as a response to student complaints has become an enduring source of operational intelligence.



ARU is now preparing to expand its use of LabStats beyond open-access computers and loan laptops.

The university's academic IT teams are exploring a rollout to approximately 1,500 additional Windows and Mac workstations in classrooms and specialist labs.

As requests for academic software continue to increase, the expanded dataset will help ARU understand which applications are genuinely being used and where licences may be sitting unused.

Beyond the cost saving benefit, this also helps allocate existing licences more intelligently, redistributing them to the courses, departments and students that need them.



This represents the next stage of ARU's data-led approach:

- measuring real application use
- identifying underused software
- reducing unnecessary licence expenditure
- redistributing existing licences more effectively
- supporting future procurement with reliable evidence

By combining information about computers, spaces and applications, ARU can make more confident decisions across its physical and software estates.

20 years of continuing value

Higher education technology has changed considerably since ARU first introduced LabStats. Physical computer labs have been joined by virtual desktops, loan devices, specialist teaching environments and increasingly complex software estates.

Yet the underlying question remains the same: what do students actually need, and how can the university provide it efficiently?

Want to see how AppsAnywhere and LabStats could help your institution simplify software delivery, improve student access, and make better use of labs and licenses? Get in touch to explore what a joined-up approach could look like in your environment.

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Find out more at:
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For ARU, LabStats continues to provide the evidence required to answer that question.

This is a great example of “doing more with less”, improving access within existing resources, extracting the most value from current assets and infrastructure without the need for further investment.

“LabStats in our environment is as relevant today as it was when we first installed the product almost 20 years ago.”

Book a demo today!

