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BBC North West Tonight to get Salford touch screen



BBC NWT presenter Gordon Burns shows how the screen could be used

BBC North West Tonight is preparing to use touch screen technology in news broadcasts after developing "a presenter's dream" with the University of Salford.

Researchers have worked with staff at the regional news programme to build MediaSurface, a bespoke touch screen for social media interaction.

Presenter Gordon Burns said he could not wait "to have another ago".

The BBC plans to use it in a live broadcast in the summer.

Staff at the university, who will be opening a base alongside the new home of BBC North at MediaCityUK later in the year, were commissioned by the BBC to develop an interactive way of including social media postings within programming.

"It gave me total control of the item, was visually exciting and was fun to do" Gordon Burns BBC North West Tonight

Lecturer in Computer Science, Lee Griffiths, and undergraduate software engineering student, Adil Zaheer, were given the brief and delivered the touch screen to the BBC's Oxford Road studios for testing.

Mr Griffiths said that "interactive touch screens and surfaces are becoming commonplace and our touch surface application allows TV presenters to display and manipulate pictures and comments sent in by viewers".

"We have been experimenting with various touch screen technologies and we've come up with something we think will be really useful for Gordon Burns and his team.

"As far as we know this kind of media interaction on live TV has not been attempted before.

"We really believe that it can bring the presenters much closer to their viewers' opinions as news breaks."

'Visually exciting'

Having tested the application, Mr Burns said he had left the studio "literally buzzing".

"When you leave the studio with a real spring in your step after trying out a new piece of technology you know it's something special.

"The MediaSurface is a presenter's dream.

"Traditionally, we read out viewers' comments and tweets as well as showing some of the photos they've sent us.

"It gave me total control of the item, was visually exciting and was fun to do.

"I can't wait to have another ago, hopefully live on air."