



Glendon College ensures nothing gets lost in translation with StarLeaf video conferencing

StarLeaf cloud video conferencing and calling makes it possible for Glendon's Language Lab to provide interpretation services - in 8 different languages - to any event on campus.

One of York University's two campuses, Glendon is situated on the historic Wood family estate in the heart of Toronto. With just over 2,500 students, Glendon specializes in the liberal arts, and is the only bilingual university campus in southern Ontario.

The University introduced its Master in Conference Interpreting (MCI) program in 2012, along with a high-tech Language Lab featuring fourteen soundproofed and ISO-compliant interpreting booths. The program's director, Andrew Clifford, quickly recognized the unique opportunity now available to the school: the ability to provide students the opportunity to interpret actual live events by connecting the booths with the auditorium on campus.

While it is possible for interpretation to be done via audio only, Glendon understood that seeing a person speaking is just as important as hearing them. When they built their Language Lab, Glendon's team committed to equipping each interpretation booth with video stream capabilities so students could see a speaker's facial expressions and better convey their true emotion, tone, and demeanor.

"We reached out to StarLeaf for help in expanding our interpretation services," explained Aladin Alaily, Glendon's director of Information Technology Services. ***"They helped us choose the right equipment and introduced us to StarLeaf Breeze, their mobile video conferencing solution, which gave us an easy and affordable way to stream video into each booth."***

Collaborating with StarLeaf proved to be a good move for Glendon. Their video conferencing solution has made it possible for MCI students to learn how to communicate the ideas and intent behind a speaker's words – ensuring that, truly, nothing gets lost in translation.

Providing interpretation services across campus is a complex endeavor, but is achieved with surprisingly few pieces of equipment—2 StarLeaf meeting room systems the Group Telepresence 3351 codecs, which are paired with the StarLeaf touchscreen controller —plus the Breeze video conferencing client. To provide interpretation services for a live event, a video conference connection is established between the auditorium and the Language Lab, which distributes the video and audio signals to each of the booths where the students interpret live.



Four permanently cabled audio connections between the Language Lab and the auditorium, allow a maximum of four languages to be sent back to the auditorium, where antennas transmit the interpretations to the radio receivers worn by attendees. Glendon works around this limitation by connecting two of the booths via Breeze to a second StarLeaf codec unit, which is connected to a portable antenna beaming the interpretation signal.

“One of our biggest challenges was integrating StarLeaf with our existing audio equipment,” stated Alaily. **“The audio feed had to be very clean coming through the system in order for the interpreter to be able to use their mic instead of the phone. But the fact that StarLeaf is technology agnostic meant we were able to resolve this issue quickly.”**

Another challenge was transmitting video from a remote location on campus into a Language Lab booth, so the interpreter could not only hear, but also see the speaker. Integrating the Breeze client into their process made this possible. In Alaily’s own words, **“That was a show stopper and game-changer for the interpretation program.”** Interestingly, StarLeaf provides its Breeze software at no additional cost, and organizations are in a position to distribute the software to everyone, as is their want. In addition to the software, Glendon further benefits from the StarLeaf guest invite feature, which allows any user to reach anyone and anywhere, allowing them to also take advantage of a guest version of the Breeze software.

When asked what would have happened if StarLeaf hadn’t been able to help make this work, Alaily replied, **“It’s a hard thing to imagine, but we probably would not be interpreting as many languages as we’re interpreting now. Any solution that we would have found would have paled in comparison, and it would have been cost prohibitive and a lot more complicated.”**



Another key technology issue for any interpretation program is latency. Imagine watching a presentation in English, seeing the speaker’s mouth move, and then hearing the words in your language 10 seconds later. It would be frustrating, at the very least! Glendon has a strong, reliable Internet connection on campus, and has figured out that a delay of up to one and a half seconds is acceptable—but anything beyond that is too much.

Glendon’s MCI program has opened up opportunities for collaboration and new initiatives. They are able to consider things like expanding their curriculum, as well as using interpretation services to offer classes to students who speak languages other than English and French. And now that they are able to interpret to remote locations, they are working with the university president’s office to offer interpretation of certain events held on the main campus. The potential also exists for other organizations to pay Glendon a fee to provide similar services, to collaborate in some way, or to take advantage of either the Language Lab or the students’ interpretation services. And on an even larger scale, the groundwork is being laid for opportunities with the UN and the EU.

“The end goal of this program is not profitability,” explained Alaily. **“It’s to provide a tremendous amount of experiential learning. StarLeaf makes it possible for our students to interpret real, live events using the same technology they will use in the real world. When they graduate and look for a job, they will have a distinct competitive advantage over other candidates.”**

Glendon’s integration of StarLeaf puts it at the epicenter of their MCI graduate program, making it possible for students to cost effectively hone their interpretation skills in real-world scenarios. This, coupled with StarLeaf’s ability to connect through its cloud with any platform, has opened the door for the university in terms of new collaboration opportunities with other higher education institutions and organizations.