

THE SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL VIRTUAL NEWSLETTER

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Message from the CEO

by Debra Leeves, CEO

As 2021 ended and the new year started there was a sense of excitement at Virtual as our two Product Specialist & Territory Managers, Claire Hardie and Lindsay Smith, began travelling outside the UK again and were able to visit our global VERT users for the first time in almost two years.

We were delighted to see Manhattan College upgrade their VERT system and include the Proton VERT, which was then used by the college when they hosted an ASRT approved continuing education event. Hanze University of Applied Science, Groningen in The Netherlands have also purchased a proton upgrade, demonstrating the growing popularity of the Proton VERT software and the importance of students being able to learn both proton and photon treatment on a virtual system.

I am pleased to see the Compact VERT is proving a popular choice for those universities and teaching establishments with less space or no designated training room for student teaching. We also look forward to hearing from the teams at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, and the Shandong Cancer Hospital as they begin using their Compact VERTs.

Finally, I am looking forward to welcoming the whole Virtual team to our new offices on 1st March. You will find us at 'The Dock,' located where the River Hull meets the River Humber, in East Yorkshire.

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Proton VERT Manhattan

by Sarah Silverstein



Manhattan College's Radiation Therapy Program in Riverdale, New York received upgrades to the program's VERT system, which included the proton therapy extension, earlier this year. These upgrades were made possible by a grant.

On Saturday, December 11th, 2021 Manhattan College's Radiation Therapy Program hosted an ASRT approved continuing education event utilizing their VERT system entitled, Proton Therapy: An Introduction to the ProBeam. The event was hosted by the radiation therapy program director, Ms. Kayla Valentino, and supported by the radiation therapy clinical coordinator, Ms. Sara Silverstein. The presenter was Ms. Patricia Thornton, a graduate of Manhattan College's radiation therapy program, who has extensive proton therapy experience. The presentation included an introduction to the machine components of a ProBeam with live demonstrations utilizing VERT ProBeam.

When deciding how to utilize our VERT ProBeam to provide a CE opportunity to current therapists, we noticed that there were not many CE offerings that covered the basic machine components of the ProBeam. We knew that this would be something that our VERT system could demonstrate effectively. Using Virtual Presenter, we shared a slideshow to provide information about the ProBeam and then used our VERT to demonstrate the actual movements in the treatment delivery room. We were also able to have participants come up and demonstrate movements themselves using the ProBeam hand pendant.

There were 14 radiation therapists in attendance from radiation therapy departments throughout the New York City metropolitan area. All the therapists in attendance were graduates of the program and have varying levels of experience in the field with photon/electron and proton therapy. The offering was a great success, and our graduates are eagerly awaiting to hear about what CE/VERT opportunity we may offer next!

Here are some quotes from the event's participants:

"The VERT presentation allowed me to learn about the inner workings of a proton therapy department and how it compares to a photon treatment facility and experience without having to visit one. Very interesting!" Marissa Segui, '20

"I truly appreciate all the knowledge! I loved how well we got to see the Proton Machine to get an idea of how it really works! Such a great and insightful presentation!" Micaela Quintero, '19

"The VERT system is an extraordinary tool for both students and therapists to strengthen their TrueBeam and now, ProBeam skills! The virtual system is very realistic and having a physical pendant and couch makes learning easier and fun! Manhattan College offers leading technology that allows you to have that clinical hands-on practice in a classroom setting!" Jannat Iftikhar, '19

"The improvements the VERT system has had since I was attending Manhattan College are truly impressive. Being able to learn Proton and photon treatment on a virtual system will provide such an advantage and a well-rounded education to the new generations of RTTs." Daniela Fortich, '18



Vertual are back Travelling

by Lindsay Smith

During the course of the national lockdown, the team at Vertual continued to work vigorously with Program Directors and Clinical Professionals across the world to help them secure VERT systems to support their radiation therapy education services both remotely and in person. A whopping 21 new system orders were taken from across the world.

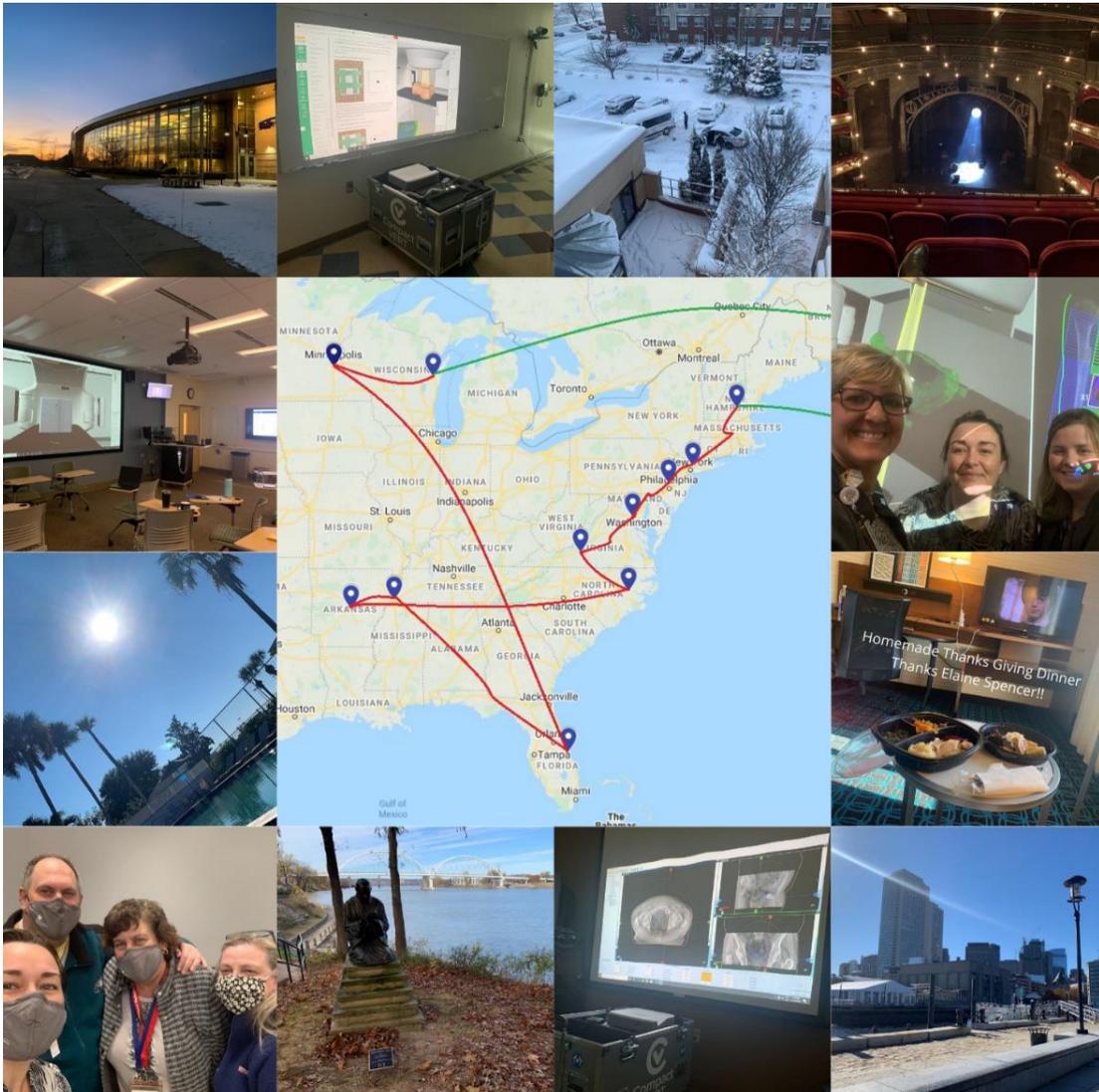
On the 20th September 2021 World News delivered the greenlight I had very much been waiting for, Joe Biden had announced the travel ban was going to be lifted on the 8th November. Minutes later I received a call from my superior joking "Pack your bags, we'll see you at Christmas!"..... well after being limited to my home office for 20 months she didn't have to tell me twice!

So, on the 9th November I boarded a plane to the east coast of the USA to deliver onsite training to as

many of the 15 new customers I could before the Christmas break..... here are the highlights.

My journey started up in New Hampshire, where I was greeted by Amy the Program Director at Concord New Hampshire Technical Institute. Amy was one of the first customers to opt for Vertual's Compact VERT system which is a mobile system and can be moved from room to room.

From here I travelled to Manhattan College in New York, they are a long standing customer of Vertual, but they love the system so much they purchased a complete hardware upgrade and our proton training package. During my stay in New York, and being a child of the 90's, I couldn't resist buying a last minute ticket to Harry Potter and the Cursed Child on Broadway, which I can report is one of the best things I have EVER seen!



My next visit was a short drive to Philadelphia, and I will admit the only thing I knew about this area was that it was the birthplace of Will Smith's huge acting career. However, I can happily say courtesy of Rose and her team, I'm now very experienced in Philadelphia delicacies. The team at Gwynedd Mercy were a customer most effected by the travel ban, they purchased their system before the pandemic began but their install was delayed as the country was locked down in April 2020. Virtual training was delivered but then they were not allowed on campus! So face to face training was long overdue and I am pleased to say they are finally up and running with the system.

Next stop Virginia! Sister institutions Northern Virginia and Virginia Western Community Colleges are a recent addition to the VERT community; however they have done things a little bit different. They have based an installed VERT system at one campus and a Compact VERT system at the other. The systems can support teaching materials created at either site giving the opportunity to 'share the load'. I am very excited to see how these two institutions utilise the systems over the next year or so!

Greenville was where I experienced my first ever Thanksgiving. I met with Elaine and Kim the day before. Pitt Community College has had their system installed now for a little while and we have done a lot of training online, but certainly confidence in the team built after the face-to-face meeting! I also have to take a minute to thank Elaine for driving to my hotel and delivering me a delicious homemade dinner on Thanksgiving! It was truly delicious, and I have informed my mother she needs to up her game on her Christmas roast 😊!

I dump the car, jump on a plane and arrive in Little Rock, Arkansas. Well, what a place! With a weekend to explore I walk the glorious stretch of riverbank and hit the dive bars on an evening enjoying the live music on offer! Tiffany and Ashley are BRAND NEW customers, their system was installed the week before I arrived! So full new customer training over two days was delivered and you could see the excitement in their eyes as I revealed each new feature....or they were suppressing a laugh at my accent and funny words, but I would like to believe it was the former!

Hello Sunshine State! Keiser University is another dual site institution who have an installed Seminar System at each campus. They have had a large staff change over the last year so they purchased on and a half days of onsite training for their new staff member to ensure they are getting the most out of their systems.

Goodbye Sunshine State, Hello Blizzard!! My final two sites Minnesota and Wisconsin! Northwestern University and Bellin College have been using their VERT system for a little while now after having the online training offered during the lockdown period. At both sites we refreshed on the system as a whole then focused on the new developments on VERT 5.

Then came the time for me to have a red wine by the fire, and cross everything that the next day my plane wouldn't be cancelled because of the snow, and I would make it home in time for Christmas!

10 out of 15 sites received training in total and the feedback we got as a company is that the face-to-face training is preferred over virtual training, most customers reported that it really helps with the integration of the VERT software into the curriculum. If you would like to enquire about a member of the Virtual team attending your institution for refresh training, please email sales@vertual.co.uk.

Vertual Have Moved!



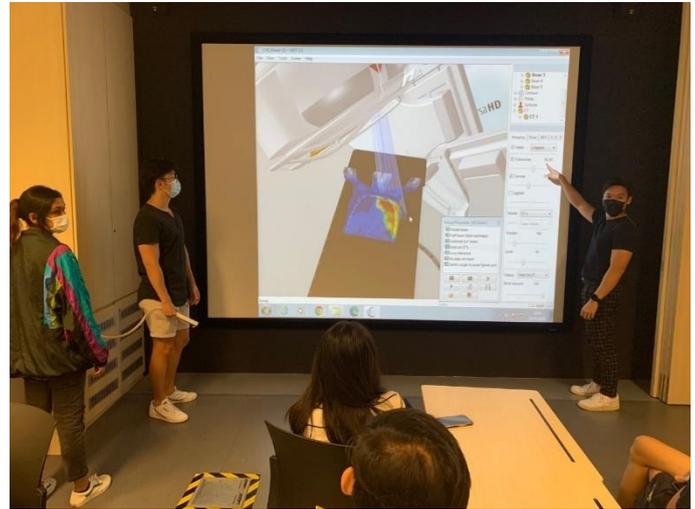
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UWE & SIT Collaboration

By Robin Jhagra

The University of the West of England (UWE) educational alliance with Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) is a long-term relationship that has enabled for the delivery of continuing high-quality pedagogy dispensation towards the BSc Radiation Therapy programme, at multiple times during the year. Having been rigorously quality checked by the Ministry of Health, Singapore, the programme is internationally inspired, enabling the students to receive a full 360-degree cognizance of global practice benchmark including that in the United Kingdom, and what is importantly Singapore-centred.

To achieve this aim, contribution of simulation learning has been pivotal in assimilating case scenarios in the classroom which in turn has supported the growth in knowledge to allow fundamental practice-based principles among students in a safe environment. Virtual Environment Radiotherapy Training (VERT) is one of the primary platforms that is used to achieve such teaching objectives that students use in conjunction with the facilitator, or among peers to standardise their understanding of treatment techniques, methods of immobilisation, dose distribution, CBCT and above all, the opportunity to critically evaluate geometric and dosimetric variations. This array of interactive learning can be noted in the image below, where 3rd year students attempt to problem solve a head and neck setup using MR / CT fused dataset. Further, some module specifications (such as for the module on head and neck, lymphomas and paediatrics) provide opportunities to be more dynamic in creating educational content with experts at Vertual that factor different learning style needs of students. An example of this is where a parotid cancer case workbook was developed and adapted to suit the remit of this module during January’s delivery.



UWE, Bristol has recently been successful in securing funds to purchase a full replacement VERT system, including the physics comprehensive module software package. This will be integrated within multiple degree programmes that are offered at Bristol such as radiotherapy engineering and physics. However, in the context of

UWE / SIT alliance, such software features will be applied towards forthcoming education, such as in quality assurance procedures, total body irradiation, oncologic emergency techniques requiring greater emphases on hypo fractionation etcetera. The longer-term plan is to assimilate equivalent capabilities at both sites so that coherent mapping of integration can take place at all levels of programmes, as well as with pre-treatment technologies such as the treatment planning system.

