Last week I posted the message below on behalf of an ECAWA member.

There have been many responses, and I have copied these into this email so that anyone who is interested can go through them.

I think I have removed all the obvious identifying information. Please let me know if I have missed anything.

I have posted a copy of the document on ECAWeb at http://ecawa.wa.edu.au/experiments/discussions/interactive-technology-in-the-classroom/

Feel free to add any further comments to that web page if you wish.

Regards,

Lynley

I was inquiring what most schools are using now for interactive technology in the classroom; specifically IWB vs Large Screen Interactive TVs. I know there are benefits from both but is the latter the way to go as some of our iwbs are ageing and frankly the support has been less than ideal, not to mention issues with orienting?

Your recommendation would be gratefully received.

From the outside selling in....

I've sold about 30 - 40 interactive LCD touch screens (55"-70") into schools over the last year.

Still an expensive option but coming down fast in price, expect to pay about the same as an old projector & IWB set up - The CUA prices are very much out of date. High Def, TV functions and you can use any IWB software that you want. I still think one note is a great IWB tool.

I've sold a lot more interactive projectors - Ultra short throws that have an IR camera built in that pick up on IR pens (same principal as the WiiMote board) - no need to change the whiteboard, low TCO @$80 per lamp at 3000 hours. About $300 more than a standard ultra short throw projector.

There is a new epson projector out that will do 6 touch (no pens required) - uses a similar system but with an IR curtain/projector placed on the board in conjunction with the camera built into the projector - Bit more expensive than the pen based one but still under the price of a large non interactive LCD. With windows 8 (and 9) is pretty awesome. Again you keep your ordinary whiteboard.

I still see schools going for regular throw projectors - I know one major school that is fitting out with new high def regular throw projectors with mira cast/widi built in. That way they can throw directly to the projector in full high def wireless.

I see some Secondary schools going for cheap off brand LCD screens (JBhif or Goodguys or internet), then just using apple TV's and or better - AirServer ($15) to push their ipad onto it. There are similar systems for android and Win8 to do the same. By doing this they can bypass the CUA as TV's are not covered under the strict contracts set up by the the Dept of Finance. I'd watch your warranty with this solution - most of these TV's are not designed for educational/public environments.

If you want to retrofit or re-purpose there is still ebeam and mimio as well with some interesting 3D tracking technologies out there as well that are not quite ready for daily use. Xbox Kinect and leapmotion spring to mind.

I have some customers that are using WACOM wireless graphics tablets and a projector - Maths teachers particularly like them as they are so precise. It takes a bit of getting used to but once you do the control is fantastic.

Yep some of the IWB's out there are on the last legs - but I have seen some that even after 5 years of use are still going strong. I recently revisited a school that still have some Panasonic units I sold them 7 years ago, still motoring along.

What to choose will be based on your budget, the teacher in the room, the style of teaching your school is encouraging, the support you want and the level of confidence your teachers have with technology.

And for goodness sake clean the filters of your projectors - 5 minutes with a dustbuster or $12 for a new filter could save you hundreds. I recently serviced a school fleet and found spiders living in the filters - no one had cleaned them in over 4 years and they were going through lamps like nothing else and wondering why.

Clean them once a year or twice if you they live in a dusty environment or are installed near an aircon vent.

Hope someone found this useful.

Cheers

In my experience IWB's in most teaching spaces are used as display only devices, or as a simple replacements for an ordinary whiteboard, in in which case the money is better spent on a very large TV - much easier to see.

I have seen good use of Interactive displays and IWB's in early years, and for that purpose I'd prefer an interactive TV.

I've heard rumours the updated Apple TV is not going to require infrastructure wireless for connecting to iOS devices, which holds out a tempting promise to easily throw up student work to a TV if you've gone down the Apple route.

I always thought as the runt up the front that IWBs and student devices be they touch or not were good adjuncts.

I want control most of the time but also want the ability to throw kids screens up onto the board.

What is the point of having an interactive screen if students are so far away from it they can't see it?? They should be the ones interacting shouldn't they??

We just opened our Phase 2 of Stamford American International School in Singapore. Another 85 classrooms Elementary – Secondary.

WE had planned to keep the same Promethean 87" Multi-touch IWB with short throw projectors as Phase 1 but then saw some very good pricing for Smart's 70" Interactive TVs.

When we mounted one in a classroom however, while they were really impressive for close-up work, don't expect the children in the back row to be able to see them.

For smaller classrooms they would be fine, and Primary school where you tend to bring the children in close to the board for interactive activities and direct instruction.

We ended up changing across to Promethean with built in projectors.

We did purchase a couple of the interactive TVs on portable stands that are really useful.

The Australian International School has had 78" IWBs for many years in their classrooms. They also have interactive projectors in the upper Secondary areas that seem to be used for the same function. As the IWBs die, I would suggest that they will be replaced with Interactive Projectors.

Hope this helps.

We too are in the transition mode with display technology in classrooms. As some of you have pointed out that budget implications may push some to smaller interactive TVs and IWBs, whilst still very functional, represent old school technology.

We have had a roll out of Epson interactive Projectors, which are Ultra Short Throw and turn most surfaces into interactive areas. The auto calibration features are excellent and the Easy Interactive Tool Software, can provide simple yet powerful tools for any teacher.

Download free - https://files.support.epson.com/htmldocs/bl475wi/bl475wiug/source/interactive/tasks/eit_installing_bl475wi_485wi.html

If you have an Epson supplier in your area, do yourself a favour and consider looking at the new MeetingMate projectors. http://www.epson.com.au/products/Projector_interactive_meetingmate/

We installed two 70" 'eBoard' interactive TV's (supplied by AVMedia) this year to replace IWB's, as a trial.

We are very happy with them and intend to use them to replace a fleet of 10 ageing Polyvision IWB's and projectors for 2015.

We like the idea that they are an educational product, not a home TV.

Watch out for the total length of USB if providing wall outlets.

The biggest unanswered question is their lifespan in a school. Average life of an IWB system for us seems to be 5 years with regular use.

We have just ventured into the eboards made by AV Media. I must say we a so happier with these than the IWB's. The main reasons are

- no projectors or lamps to worry about

- no light interference

- plug and play (works with what ever software you already have)

- superior stereo sound on this model

- great support

You are welcome to come and have a look if your are interested.

Just responding to your thoughts on Interactive technologies Vs LED interactive screens "the eBoard "

We have found over the past 3 years the interactive LED screens have been very well received from our end user base for the following reasons ………..

The transitions from the flat TV at home to in the classroom is less invasive

Less connectivity issues truly "Plug N Play "

Better picture quality and less restrictions on location in the classroom

Adapts to latest peripherals ie : Ipads , surface tablets etc etc due to resolution capability 1080 P resolution

More robust and virtually NO MAINTENACE

Better value overall post 4 year term VS any projector related interactive technology

These are just few ……………………

At our school we are looking to replace IWBs and projected displays with non-interactive (i.e. standard) TVs. Have you considered whether interactivity is really needed? Conversations with teachers and observations showed us that the teacher neither uses nor wants interactivity. This allows us to provide a more bespoke solution and it is far more cost effective. There are considerations over the size of the display as a projected display is often bigger than most TVs particularly in terms of length but I would urge you to consider the options. There is plenty of research to support non use of IWBs.

Cheers

….. this is exactly what is happening at our school. Just a few teachers are using IWBs to their capacity so we are largely replacing with projectors and screens or TVs. P-12 school.

We have found that the six 55" TVs that were installed three years ago in various classrooms around the school, have not been as successful as anticipated.

They went into rooms that had no projection in contrast to the rooms that had projection and IWBs.

Now, the IWBs are being removed, leaving projection onto a standard whiteboard, which seems to meet the needs of most.
That is :
- some form of projection,
- a surface that allows writing over a projected image
- plenty of whiteboard space when projection is not used. (The IWBs had been centrally mounted and dominated the room)

Whilst the projected image isn't "perfect", (glare/reflection etc.) this seems to provide an environment that all teachers are able to work with.

Not perfect, but seems to be working.

At our school we are looking to replace IWBs and projected displays with non-interactive (i.e. standard) TVs. Have you considered whether interactivity is really needed? Conversations with teachers and observations showed us that the teacher neither uses nor wants interactivity. This allows us to provide a more bespoke solution and it is far more cost effective. There are considerations over the size of the display as a projected display is often bigger than most TVs particularly in terms of length but I would urge you to consider the options. There is plenty of research to support non use of IWBs.

All our classrooms have IWB's and they are an integral part of our teaching. They are used all the time and through collaborative teaching in teams across grades we have amassed a lot of resources for IWB's which are stored on our server. Any teacher starting on a grade for the first time already has a bank of resources to use in the classroom. I can't imagine our teaching without them.

IWBs... guaranteed to polarise! ;)
I can't imagine being in a classroom without being able to use all of my personally created and shared rich IWB content. Most of it is in SMART or Promethean format, but the recent introduction of the .iwb standard makes importing into another software like 2Touch etc pretty realistic.
The perennial problem with IWBs is that they are under-utilised. How often do we hear colleagues mention that they are "doing something on their IWB" when usually all they are doing is displaying content through a data projector.
Sure, you can project onto a whiteboard and mark it up with a whiteboard marker, but if I mark it up on an IWB I save the file and either print or dropbox/email it or save it to be used or referred to again later in the unit.
I love being able to get the students designing learning activities and have these students run a short activity using those activities. It's great to be able to hear them "teach" their classmates and listen to the language and watch them teach/revisit - it allows me to more readily assess their cognitive thought process and so then assess how I taught them in the first place.
My 2c worth.
Enjoy the holidays everyone :)

To add to the discussion:

Our teachers are happy to give up their interactive white boards in favour of TVs with Apple TV and iPads in the student hands. The interactivity is now mobile!

We looked into the large touch screen TV's and thought them to be a better option. Our only stumbling block is the licensing of the Smart software. As it stands you can't use Smart software on the interactive TV's. As most of our collaborative and staff resources were in that format for us it was a deal breaker. I think there are moves to negotiate with DET about licensing behind the scenes so we are going to wait and see what happens.

I hope this helps.