

BUYER'S **guide**

It's easy to imagine the instructional potential interactive whiteboards can bring to the classroom. Teachers can use them as a projection screen, as a way to capture notes electronically, or as an interactive whiteboard when connected to a computer, and some can be used as a traditional dry-erase board when they're turned off. Add a rolling adjustable stand, speakers, and a built-in printer, and you have a powerful mobile tool for teaching and learning.

What makes an interactive whiteboard interactive is sensing technology that gives the user remote control of a computer from the board. Depending on the technology used, a touch with a finger or wireless stylus gives the user the ability to scroll through pages, access menus, and run programs. This also makes it easy to print on the spot, capture, and e-mail lessons to absent students or to post lessons on the Web for those who want to see them again.

Interactive whiteboards use either front or rear projection to display images. Rear projection units are generally more expensive, larger, and heavier, and cannot be mounted flush against a wall. All of the units featured here use front projection, which means they require a video projector placed some distance in front of the board to work. One disadvantage is that users cast a shadow on the board and have to look past the projector's light to see the audience. Some manufacturers have addressed this problem by attaching a short-throw projector above the board that casts its image at about a 45-degree angle just

in front and above the viewing surface.

Most manufacturers offer several screen sizes. Mimio's board, for example, is available in four sizes, from 76 inches across to 110 inches, and with options such as wide-screen and high-definition resolution, depending on the model. To get a sense of the actual space that is interactive, note the whiteboard's active screen size, which is usually measured diagonally.

Perhaps as important as a board's size is its adjustability. If you plan to use a whiteboard in elementary classrooms, consider how low it will go. Some units, either wall mounted or stand mounted, are adjustable vertically to enable younger students and those in wheelchairs easier access to the upper reaches of the screen.

Hands-on classroom environments can test even the most durable materials, and many whiteboards are constructed with this in mind. Several manufacturers use laminate or steel display surfaces, and some even offer a lifetime warranty.

Because educators are a target audience for whiteboard sellers, lesson-creation software is often included to help integrate lesson plans. The eInstruction Interwrite Board, for example, is bundled with free access to a digital library of images, simulations, and lessons, along with more than 50 tools for creating, displaying, annotating, recording, and sharing lessons. Promethean offers free and premium teaching resources online, and Smart offers onsite training and thousands of lesson activities that can be used with a range of grade levels.

Interactive Whiteboards

Company

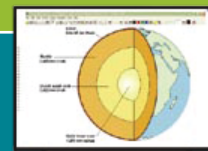
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Promethean
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Smart
<http://smarttech.com>

Model	Price (USD)	Screen Size (H x W)	Weight	System Requirements	Projector Included	PC Interface	Interactivity	Notes
Interwrite 77" Dualboard	\$1,397	46.5 × 62" (118.1 × 157.5 cm) 77.5" (197 cm) diagonal active area	39 lb. (17.7 kg)	Pentium III, Windows 2000, Mac OS X, Linux	No	Serial, USB	Rechargeable digital pens	Optional stand, RF compatible, dry-erase board, supports multiple simultaneous inputs
StarBoard FXDUO-77	\$1,600	62 × 74" (157.48 × 187.96 cm) 77" (195.6 cm) diagonal active area	60 lb. (27 kg) 98 lb. (44 kg) w/stand	Pentium III 800MHz; Windows 2000, XP; Mac compatible	No	USB	Finger recognition, pen/stylus	Senses two-touch hand gestures, optional stand
Interactive Board 80	\$1,427	48 × 67" (121.92 × 170.18 cm) 78" (198.1 cm) diagonal active area	66 lb. (30 kg)	Pentium 166, Windows 98, Mac OS X 10.3.9, 400 MHz Mac	No	Wireless with USB interface	Two-button stylus pen	Handwriting recognition, powered by mimio Studio software
Intelliboard I-Board 77	\$1,395	45.6 × 63.3" (115.8 × 160.8 cm) 77" (195.6 cm) diagonal active area	36 lb. (16.3 kg)	Windows 2000, Mac OS X	No	Serial, USB	Stylus pen	Optional RF wireless, limited lifetime warranty
Panaboard UB-8325EW	\$2,259	35.4 × 55.1" (90 × 140 cm) 62.1" (157.5 cm) diagonal active area	75 lb. (34 kg) 105 lb. (47.5 kg) w/stand	Pentium II, Windows 98	No	USB	Electronic pens	Handwriting recognition, built-in printer, dry-erase board
eno 2610	\$1,595	46.9 × 62.6" (119.2 × 158.9 cm) 78" (198.1 cm) diagonal active area	66 lb. (30 kg)	Pentium, PowerPC, Windows XP, Mac OS X 10.3.9	No	Bluetooth via USB	Stylus	Magnetic surface, dry-erase board, lifetime warranty
ActivBoard+2 78	\$3,199	64 × 46" (162.56 × 116.84 cm), 78" (198.1 cm) diagonal active area	220 lb. (100 kg)	Windows 98, Mac OS 9.2	Yes	Bluetooth, serial, USB	Battery-free, wireless stylus	Built-in speakers, height adjustment
SMART Board 660I2	\$3,599 (MSRP)	41 5/8 × 54 3/4" (105.7 × 139.1 cm) 64" (162.6 cm) diagonal active area	73 lb. 6 oz. (24.4 kg)	Pentium II, G3, Windows 2000, Mac OS X 10.4.11	Yes	USB, optional Bluetooth	Finger recognition, stylus	Optional speakers and stand, collapsible projector boom