

WHAT'S **new**

Capitalizing on the increased surface area of widescreens, GTCO CalComp has developed two wide-format interactive whiteboards, the **InterWrite SchoolBoard 1071** and **InterWrite SchoolBoard 1085**. Designed to provide maximum work area without making it difficult to reach the top of the board, the SchoolBoards are 71" and 85" diagonally (62" × 36" and 74" × 42"). Both use electro-magnetic technology with a 16:9 aspect ratio, optional wireless Bluetooth connection, and a durable interactive surface. The machines include InterWrite software that is both Windows and Macintosh compatible. Contact the company for pricing.



MORE INFO: GTCO CalComp, 1.800.344.4723, <http://www.gtccalcomp.com>

eTextbookCreator software enables authors to create dynamic eBooks simply and effectively. eBook benefits include interactive content that provides increased functionality over the printed word, and the software combines the flexibility of navigation and content of HTML Web pages with the productivity tools commonly used. According to the company, eTextbookCreator allows authors to create a web of topics within the structure of a textbook so students can move between related topics at will, directing them to other relevant topics and materials. The software is available for no fee as a download.

MORE INFO: Textbook Solutions, <http://www.etextbookshop.com>

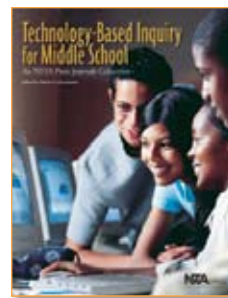
TeleParent allows teachers to send home daily, customized phone calls to the parents of their students in their home language. Parents are notified whether students are late to class, disobedient during a lesson, or haven't turned in their homework. The system is also capable of sending positive



information regarding students' good grades and behavior. Administrative messages, such as emergency information or school events, can be broadcast to the general school population. The system uses an online interface that allows rapid message selection, and uses both the telephone and Internet to ensure messages are delivered. No additional hardware is required, and there is no limit to the number of messages sent daily. Contact the company for pricing.

MORE INFO: TeleParent, 1.714.356.3090, <http://www.teleparent.net>

Technology-Based Inquiry for Middle School guides teachers through the basics of integrating technology-based inquiry into their science projects. The book, edited by Edwin P. Christmann, is a collection of 26 articles demonstrating how students can explore physical science, earth and space science, and life science. It covers the skills necessary for getting hands-on experience with graphing calculators, calculator-based labs, PDAs, GPS systems, geographic information systems, and other emerging technologies. Each chapter has a list of online resources, including where to purchase devices, where to download programs, and where students can go to conduct further research. Christmann has developed a complementary Web site with updated chapter reviews, outlines, sample test questions, and activities including a PowerPoint presentation that teachers can download as a supplement. The book costs \$17.95, or \$14.36 for NSTA members.



MORE INFO: NSTA Press, 1.800.277.5300, <http://store.nsta.org>



NetSupport School 8.5 computer lab management software lets teachers interact with and monitor networked student computers. Teachers can instruct, monitor, quiz, and support students individually, as a group, or as a whole class. The software includes student auto login, Internet co-browsing, new group features, testing options, and wireless support. Students' screen, keyboard, and mouse activity can be recorded for review or replay, and their work is monitored for

progress and approved activity. A student register, lesson plans, surveys and polls, and file sharing features are also incorporated. The software is Windows-compatible, and a 30-day trial is available for download at no cost.

MORE INFO: NetSupport, 1.888.665.0808, <http://www.netsupportschool.com>



The **WMS 100 Image** broadcaster plugs into most projectors and enables a wireless-enabled Windows-based computer to wirelessly project a presentation onto a screen. A receiver box attaches to the projector and Presto! WMS 2.5 software transmits the user's presentation from anywhere in the room. According to the company, the hardware is Wi-Fi IEEE 802.11a/b/g and Ethernet compliant and can connect any Wi-Fi PC or notebook to multiple VGA/XVGA projectors. The WMS 100 Image presents content at 15 frames per second for presentations with embedded animation or video. The system uses WEP 64/128-bit data encryption for transmission and network security. The WMS 100 Image is priced at \$279.95.

MORE INFO: NewSoft Technology Corporation, 1.510.445.8600, <http://www.newsoftinc.com>

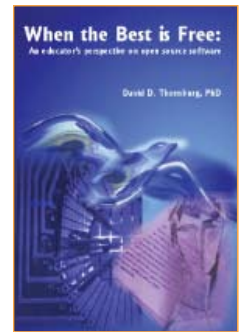


The **Tezaa Project** is an online community that aggregates public perception and opinions and facilitates decision making through online polls. Polls can be posted on any topic, including technology, politics, travel, sports, education, and social issues. Tezaa focuses on objective and summarized information, and information is organized by tags or keywords. Based on an open content concept like Wikipedia, Tezaa depends on user-created and moderated content, allowing any user to add a new choice to an existing poll. Polls can be added to a Web site or blog, so collective opinions can be gathered from targeted groups. Users can set up a membership account for no cost.

MORE INFO: Tezaa Project, <http://www.tezaa.com>

David Thornburg's book, **"When the Best is Free: An Educator's Perspective on Open Source Software,"** aims to increase educational computer use by children through the promotion of free software that is at least as

good as the expensive commercial titles it replaces. The author states, "For certain specialized applications, there are only commercial options, but for the bulk of activities done by children and teachers, open source and other free programs fit the bill amazingly well." Free software can be used for tasks from simple document creation to building multimedia projects and implementing online courseware. Thornburg focuses on programs that run equally well on any current operating system so students don't have licensing or platform issues when they continue using the program at home. The paperback book costs \$24.95.



MORE INFO: Thornburg Center, 1.847.277.7691, dthornburg@aol.com

The **LeapTrack Reading Pro** program is a full kit for individualized instruction in reading, writing, and literacy skills. The program includes six Quantum LeapPads with headphones, interactive skill cards, 12 student workbooks, placement books, Read-it-All books, and management software. Students are tested to create personal lesson plans, and assessments and reports monitor student progress. Students can self-direct their own learning, but the system generates alerts for intervention if needed. The kit is targeted at grades 3–8, and pricing starts at \$2,695.



MORE INFO: LeapFrog SchoolHouse, 1.800.883.7430, <http://www.leaptrack.com/readingpro>

Eduventures is holding three professional development opportunities at their **Fall 2006 K–12 Summit Series**. The summits give senior-level administrators access to industry experts, including peers, academics, and companies who serve the K–12 market. Participants will attend strategy sessions to discuss best practices in technology use. They also have the opportunity to help suppliers better understand the issues their districts face. The summits will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in September, and San Diego, California, and Houston, Texas in November. Contact Laura Altagen for more information about these invitation-only events.

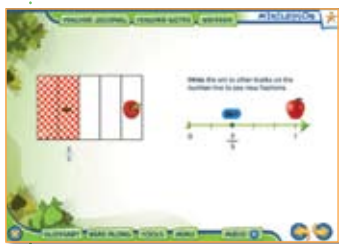
MORE INFO: Eduventures, 1.617.532.6072, <http://www.eduventures.com>

Elementary and middle school students can simulate the U.S. economy with lessons in **The Classroom Mini-Economy** publication. Students create a fully functioning economy inside their classroom, including reproducible play money, tax forms, worksheets, and job applications. Students learn how to earn, manage, and invest their money while gaining an applied understanding of running a business, productivity, supply and demand, and opportunity cost. The teacher's guide includes background readings, lesson plans, tips on improving the mini-economy, and follow-up activities and workshops. Additional resources are a banking program for online banking, supplemental enhancement resources, and a test bank.



MORE INFO: National Council on Economic Education (NCEE), <http://store.ncee.net/classroom-mini-economy.html>

Straight Curve Mathematics Series 2 focuses on math concepts that grade 3–5 students find the most challenging: decimals, fractions, measurement, probability, and problem solving.



The software is research-based and teacher-centric, and includes teacher-led activities such as mini-lessons, investigations, and workshops. Concepts are dynamically demonstrated to the whole class or small groups.

Teachers receive both online and offline support materials to guide lesson planning, identifying common misconceptions, and creating differentiated instruction. The software is available as part of the PLATO Learning Environment, a subscription-based license. Contact the company for pricing.

MORE INFO: PLATO, 1.800.869.2000, <http://www.plato.com>

Girls Inc. Online is a membership site with content targeted to girls ages 9–17. The site features age-segmented word portraits, colorful avatars, profiles, quizzes, and interactive activities that cover health and relationships, economic literacy, career exploration,



and education. Members can chat live with women in various careers, such as race car driving and publishing, and earn points for participation that can be applied toward awards. The registration process includes parental permission, contains automated filters, and is monitored for inappropriate content, such as personally identifiable information. There is no charge to become a member.

MORE INFO: Girls Inc., 1.212.509.2000, <http://www.girlsinc-online.org>

Learn step-by-step hows and whys of using digital images to enhance teaching and learning in **44 Fun, Fast, & Flashy Ways to Use Your Digital Camera in Your Classroom**. Written by Bill Naab, the book strives to provide everything PK–8 teachers need to begin using digital cameras in their classrooms. Topics include reasons for using cameras, tips for choosing equipment, quick tips, instructions for Microsoft PhotoStory 3, and ISTE standards. The book costs \$29.95.



MORE INFO: Brewer Technologies, LLC, 1.877.449.2556, <http://www.tonybrewer.com>

Preschoolers can learn simple Mandarin Chinese with the **Early Start Mandarin Chinese with Bao Bei DVD set**. Featuring a panda puppet and a cartoon cricket, the DVDs introduce simple words, phrases, and tonal sounds in an environment appealing to preschoolers. Volume one teaches colors and animals, and volume two focuses on numbers and fruit. Each DVD is approximately 30 minutes long and costs \$19.95 each or \$32.95 for the set.



MORE INFO: Ni Hao Productions LLC, <http://www.earlystartmandarin.com>

School paging systems can now harness existing IP technology in a school with the **ii3 IP Speakers** from Digital Acoustics. The speakers use LAN or WAN network connectivity, both wired and wireless, and deliver audio-over-Ethernet for point-to-point applications. The speakers are available in six configura-



tions, including surface-mounted, ceiling-mounted, weatherproof exterior horn, and an intercom door call station. Additional features include POE, vandal resistant enclosures, and mounting hardware. Prices range from \$410 to \$485, and include TalkMaster LE software for single console management at no additional cost.

MORE INFO: Digital Acoustics Corporation, 1.877.724.3387, <http://www.digitalacoustics.com>

a library of resources such as pre-recorded tunes, sound samples, and printable lesson plans. The CDs cost \$44.95 each or \$379.95 for an unlimited site license. The three-CD set is available for \$119.95 each or \$899.95 for an unlimited network site license. All CDs are Windows and Macintosh compatible.

MORE INFO: Tool Factory, 1.800.220.8386, <http://www.toolfactory.com>



Tutoring is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at a student's convenience, through **TutorVista**. The online tutoring service offers assistance in most K–12 subject areas, as well as exam tutoring programs and study skills enhancement. An assessment test gauges the student's strengths and weaknesses, and an individual learning plan is developed. In addition to live one-on-one tutoring, students have access to worksheets, lessons, practice tests, question banks, and animations. The virtual classrooms are equipped with voice and instant message interaction, an electronic whiteboard, and a toll-free fax number for review of printed materials. Single tutoring sessions are available for \$19.99 per hour or unlimited for \$99.99 per month and can be scheduled at any time.

MORE INFO: TutorVista, 1.866.735.0516, <http://www.tutorvista.com>

I.R.I.S. has released two handheld document text scanners. The **IRISPen Express** text scanner recognizes text, numbers, and grayscale images, and instantly



retypes the information into any word processing, e-mail, or database software on both Windows and Macintosh platforms. (*Editor's Note: See review on page 41.*) The **IRISPen Translator Express** scans printed foreign text and retypes or sounds out the translation instantly. Software is available for translation between English and French, Spanish, Russian, German, and Portuguese. Both scanners are about the size of a highlighter pen and plug into a USB port. The IRISPen Express costs \$129, and the IRISPen Translator costs \$179.

MORE INFO: I.R.I.S., <http://www.irislink.com>

The Tool Factory **Musical Monsters** series teaches students to build musical compositions using only mouse clicks. Activities focus on concepts such as melody, rhythm, pitch, tempo, and timbre while using IT skills. The series is completely text-free and appropriate for special education and visual and auditory learners. The series contains three CDs that can be purchased separately or as a set. Mini Musical Monsters is for 3–5 year olds, and has six musical activities with dancing characters, rhythms, and sound effects. Musical Monsters is for students in grades 1–4 to create rhythms and melodies they can listen to, evaluate, play for others, and incorporate into other media. Teachers can control the difficulty level by reducing or increasing the size of the musical grid, switching instruments, or adjusting the tempo. More Musical Monsters is geared toward upper elementary students who choose creatures and assign sound effects. All three CDs include ready-made compositions, and More Musical Monsters has



Califone's **Listening First Stereo Headphones** are lightweight and sized appropriately for young learners. Teachers can set the volume from the audio player, and the headphones have noise-reducing earcups that protect children's hearing by lowering outside noise so the headphone volume does not need to be as high. The headband adjusts to the wearer, and the leatherette ear cushions are replaceable. A 10-foot straight cord with a 3.5 mm right-angle plug prevents accidental disconnection, and the ABS plastic is shatter resistant. The units cost \$11 each and come in red, blue, and yellow.



MORE INFO: Califone, 1.800.722.0500, <http://www.califone.com>

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