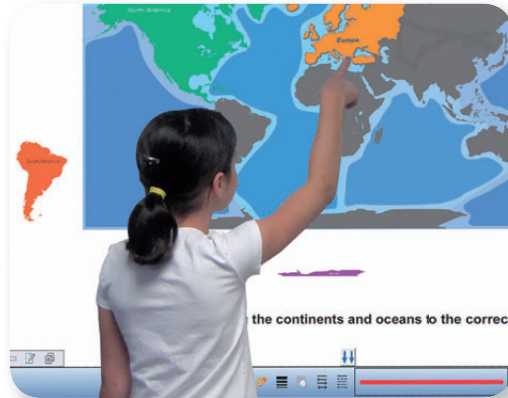
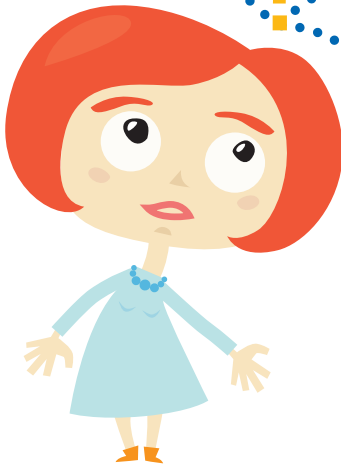



Top 10 Tips

For buying and installing Interactive Whiteboards





The following information is designed to help schools that are thinking about procuring and installing Interactive Whiteboards. It is based on a larger study by the European Schoolnet Interactive Whiteboard Working Group that provides much more detail on procurement issues.

If your school is thinking about making a substantial investment in this sort of technology, it would certainly be useful to read the full reports¹.

1. Know why you want an IWB

- First and most importantly - have a clear vision for how you will use IWBs and how they will be integrated with other forms of ICT in your school.
- Consider the additional functionality offered by an interactive whiteboard over a digital projector and screen and how this will be utilised.
- If your school does not have an ICT development strategy, maybe now might be a good time to produce one before you buy more equipment.

2. Size and position of board

- Before buying an IWB, do a thorough survey of rooms or learning spaces where it might be used.
- Displaying images and documents with text on a small board in a large space can be a problem.
- You may need to be able to adjust the height of the board so that it can be easily seen from all parts of the room and be accessed easily by smaller children.
- Pointers can also be useful so that primary school children can access a sufficient area of the board without standing on a platform.

- Make sure desks and other furniture don't get in the way of pupils accessing the board as this can ruin the pace of a lesson.

- Think about how children in wheelchairs can access and use the IWB.

- You might also want to have a dry erase board next to the IWB.

3. Lighting

- It may be difficult to see the board easily in bright sunlight. Will you need to fit blinds?

- Can you locate the IWB so that lighting in the room runs parallel to the board as this might help eliminate reflections?

- It can sometimes help if you can switch off the row of lights closest to the board.

4. Power

- Check if you need more power sockets nearby (e.g. for a printer, scanner, visualiser).

- Find out if you need to follow any local or national energy saving solutions (standby settings, automated close down of the IWB, purchase and lifespan of lamps?).



5. Health & Safety issues

- Think if there any hazards to consider when installing the IWB (asbestos?).
- Check local regulations in case they place a limit on the brightness of projectors that can be used in classrooms.
- 'Short throw' (and ultra short throw) projectors mounted on the board can minimise problems of the beam shining in the eyes of pupils.
- Install H&S guidelines close to the board.
- In some countries security checks may be needed on installation staff if the equipment is being installed while pupils are on the premises.

6. Installing

- You might prefer to have a board you can move around, a portable device that can be added to an existing whiteboard or an interactive projector.
- Make sure the wall will support the weight of an IWB before you buy a fixed board.
- If you are buying an interactive projector rather than an IWB, make sure you have a wall or surface that you can project onto that can produce a clear image.

- If you do not have internet access (either hardwired or wireless) where the IWB will be used, it will limit what you can do.

- You will need a suitable desk or workstation near the IWB to house the computer and peripheral devices.

- Find out if the installation can be done after school hours or in the holidays in order to minimise disruption.

- Agree that the installer will remove any packaging when the job is completed.

7. Training

- Training from IWB vendors may vary in length and quality. Check what initial training the vendor will provide at the time of installation.

- Costs involved for initial training should be included in the procurement process and the comparison of what different vendors are offering.

- Continuing Professional Development should be developed either in your school or in partnership with a cluster of schools so that teachers can share good practice.

- Check if any accreditation is available through vendor support programmes.

- Find out if vendors have any content, online training or CPD resources in your language and if they provide access to a community of practice.



8. Software licenses

- Make sure you know how many staff and pupil devices you may run the software on when it is installed separately for use away from the hardware.
- You will need to keep your version of the software and resources up to date. Make sure you are registered to receive the latest updates.
- Some vendors offer a 'lighter version' of their IWB software to allow students to view lesson content from home.
- Consider open source software (e.g. <http://open-sankore.org/>)

9. Warranties

- Make sure you know what is covered by the warranty (surfaces, pens, projectors, lamps, labour?) and how long it lasts.
- What happens if the board is marked or torn or if IWB pens break?
 - Who covers shipping costs if the IWB or peripherals need to be repaired off site?
 - Can you extend the warranty after the initial period or is an enhanced warranty available?

10. Costs

■ Work with IWB vendors so that you understand the Total Cost of Ownership of the equipment over its expected lifetime. Total Cost of Ownership means that you need to think about more than the initial cost of the equipment. Also think about costs related to:

- Installation
- Infrastructure (e.g. electrical or data)
- Running costs (electrical)
- Consumable costs (e.g. lamps, filters etc.)
- Initial Training
- Continuing professional Development
- Ongoing support and maintenance

¹ <http://moe.eun.org/web/iwbworkinggroup/>

