

BY ANTHONY UHRICK

TOUCH TIPS

JANUARY, 2006

ELECTRONIC WHITEBOARDS- PROJECTOR VS. LARGE DISPLAYS

The most popular presentation solution for education, training and collaboration applications has been the ceiling mounted projector and a pull down screen; hundreds of thousands of been installed in classrooms and boardrooms throughout the country. Another trend is interactive white boards using ultra-sonic pens allowing information to be emphasized with annotation and highlights that can be saved for later use. However, schools and corporations are now finding that this solution is not so perfect. In fact, the projector/screen systems are not only more costly to maintain, they also exhibit other concerns that are not always apparent until it is too late, such as:

- Typical projector fans are noisy
- Room lighting must be controlled
- Projectors require constant maintenance
- High resolution projectors are very expensive

In the past, their high price has made the use of large displays cost prohibitive, but, as the price of large displays continues to plummet, there use as an electronic whiteboard, is gaining acceptance. In fact, in comparing cost alone, the initial investment of an electronic whiteboard is now comparable to a traditional projector and screen solution.

Large flat panel displays are typically rated at 60,000 hours of use, whereas projector lamps are rated at only 2-4000 hours and cost \$300 to \$400 each. Depending upon the amount of usage, over a 5-year period, you will have likely spent a lot of money on lamps and continuing maintenance thus offsetting any initial cost benefits.

Initial Cost Comparison			
Projector/Screen		Large Display	
Projector	\$3,500	50" Plasma	\$3,000
Screen	1,000	Touch Overlay	2,500
Installation	1,000	Installation	500
Interactive Pen	500		
Total cost	\$6,000	Total Cost	\$6,000

With a large, touch-enabled flat panel display presenters are no longer "constrained" behind a podium or glued to their laptop. They can now move around freely and increase interaction with the class or group while facilitating multi-user collaboration. In addition, an advanced touch overlay provides full mouse functionality without the need for a keyboard, mouse, or dedicated stylus. Simple fingertip touch allows you to navigate between applications or to highlight and emphasize key information. All standard mouse functions are supported including click, right-click, double-click as well as drag and drop. You can even draw, write, move, edit objects and scroll through menus.

Another benefit of the touch-enabled flat panel display solution is enhanced picture dynamics including improved optics, higher resolution images up to 1080P, and faster video response eliminating visible image lag. With higher brightness and increased contrast, there is no need to draw the shades or dim the lights in the room, and gone are the days of dodging shadows on screen and shielding your eyes from the blinding light of the projector. An interactive touch overlay combined with a large flat panel display is simply is a "better mousetrap".

The combination of a flat panel display with an interactive touch overlay is a win-win situation for resellers and customers alike. Even though a projector/screen installation is commonplace and most integrators have the process down to a science, it is still more costly to install than attaching a single flat panel display to the wall and plugging it in. Therefore, by eliminating the need for hanging a projector suspended from a ceiling mount and a screen mounted in the ceiling or on the wall, not to mention the added complexity of the wiring that is required, flat panel display installations are simplified and with no lamps to replace or projectors to maintain.

On a Total Cost of Ownership basis, the projector solution comes in a distant second. What's more, no one has to remind you that displays of all types have become a commodity, whereas the interactive touch overlay has not. By adding an overlay to the installations it helps preserve the Value Added portion of the sale for the commercial audio visual systems integrator. In addition to interactive whiteboards, an overlay on a large format display provides a useful tool for a whole host of related applications.

HIDDEN COSTS OF PROJECTOR SYSTEMS

- Standard projector bulbs are rated at 2,000 to 4,000 hours
- Fans and filters require frequent maintenance
- Screens can be damaged and require replacement
- Warranties can be compromised by improper maintenance

Corporate Headquarters

NextWindow, Ltd.
Auckland, New Zealand
+64-9-353-6608
+64-9-353-6609 fax
www.nextwindow.com

U.S. Headquarters

Nextwindow USA
Chicago, IL
866-870-9733
708-575-1110 (fax)