

The smart board system that we are using in Eastern is the 600 series front projection interactive white board. It requires use of a computer, preferably a laptop, installed with the included software as well as a digital projector that is connected to the aforementioned computer. It operates on all major operating systems; Windows, Mac OS and Linux for those of you who may want to use Smart technology in other areas of your lives. The installation time for me was less than 10 minutes and for those of us that are pretty computer savvy it is very easy bundle of programs to learn. The notebook program is where you can take your notes and draw pictures etc. You can also use a screen capture in notebook so you can make changes or notes during training/meetings to tag along to the minutes. Video playing/recording, calculator, spotlight (blacks out portions of the screen) as well as screen shade (a drag up and down digital gray curtain if you wanted to completely hide the screen) is also included in the software bundle.

All MS office based products will work just fine, with the smart board. I have used SAFE and GroupWise too and had no problems. When you aren't running the included applications the whiteboard functions just as a touch-sensitive computer screen. Want to move a window? - use your finger - press gently drag to a new location and release. Close a window? tap the red X. To right click you need to press the mouse icon in the tray and then tap the screen to display the right click menu.

Web based conferencing is also supported by SMART and includes features very similar to those found in ePOP. Video and VoIP is also supported with programs that you can download from the website however it requires the appropriate peripherals, like web cams and microphones. If you wanted you could also sync the smart board to all of this so multiple remote users could make changes on the document opened on the smart board. All of the conferencing is operable on Windows/Mac and Linux but requires servers capable this type of conferencing. I am not sure if there is a limit to the number of users that can access the Bridgit (the proprietary web conferencing program) program simultaneously so talk with your tech guru before you attempt to web conference.

There are several models, and my recommendation is that if you have the ability to permanently mount your interactive whiteboard on a wall or affix it in place I would. The calibration process is not lengthy but can be tedious if you need to move the board for better viewing. Of those models that would work in an affixed location, I would like to try a rear projection or perhaps one that mounts over an LCD or plasma display/TV. The rear projection versions are stand alone units and take up some serious real estate in the training room and look like large rear projection televisions.

As I learn more about the technology I will pass on what I have learned.
Below is the website for Smart Technologies for more info.

<http://smarttech.com/>

We purchased ours through www.CDWg.com and spent about \$2300.00 for the board and rolling stand.

Feel free to call or drop me an email if you have any more questions.

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