

For Immediate Release
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Interactive Whiteboard market to exceed US\$1bn by end of year

A new market report from Futuresource Consulting reveals explosive growth for the interactive whiteboard market, with over 600,000 boards installed across the globe during 2008, equating to a value in excess of US\$1bn.

Driven by continued technological developments, and with one in six classrooms worldwide forecast to be using the technology by 2012, interactive whiteboards are taking the classroom by storm. These devices hook up to computers and projectors to create large touch-sensitive displays which integrate AV, graphics and text into the lesson structure, improving learning by illustrating new concepts clearly and effectively, increasing pupil motivation and aiding in lesson flow.

“This technology is ideal for classrooms as the teacher no longer has to arrange large groups around a single computer screen,” says Colin Messenger, Senior Consultant, Futuresource, “and governments are recognising this potential, with record-breaking sales recorded last quarter – up more than 40% on last year and the largest since we started tracking this market seven years ago.”

In the 66 countries covered within the report, Futuresource calculates there are over 37 million classrooms: a huge market potential for companies operating within this sector.

“Do not be put off by the adage that ‘there is no money in education’”, says Messenger, “governments will often find the money to supply thousands of boards. Take a look at Mexico, where the Enciclomedia project launched by President Fox equipped 200,000+ classrooms with technology worth US\$1.8 billion, making it the largest educational ICT project anywhere in the world.

“The primary market objective is to spot the next Mexico, which is going to be tricky with 60 potential candidates all lined up, and at least another 80 second-tier countries in the offing. The manufacturer who is first to market can be the long-term winner, simply by establishing itself in governments’ education departments. Countries with few interactive whiteboards have no legacy to follow and can decide on any technology, configuration or brand.”

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In volume terms, in the last three months, the US currently leads the way, with more than four times the number of boards of the country ranked second, the UK.

Moreover, the combined markets of the US, UK and Mexico account for more than 70% of the worldwide interactive whiteboard installed base, with the remainder spread across more than 60 different countries.

By 2012 Futuresource predicts 80% classroom penetration in the UK, with volumes for EMEA six times greater than in the UK. Looking to Asia, the region has yet to fulfill its enormous potential, though more than 150% growth is forecast for 2008, with the majority coming from China and India. Australia and New Zealand also have their success stories.

“Adoption of the technology into classrooms can be fast-tracked, often driven by a desire from governments to kick-start their education system or leave a lasting legacy,” concludes Messenger. In contrast it can also be a step process, taking perhaps five years, starting with PC installations, followed by projectors and culminating in interactive whiteboards. Looking to the future, voting systems and visualisers will be the next logical steps towards completely interactive and collaborative classrooms.”

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