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Education Buyers Guide

The ultimate guide to buying an Interactive Display

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Introduction

You're considering education technology for your classroom? Great choice! There is no better time than now to upgrade your systems to future proof technology that will transform teaching and learning.

There is no secret to finding the right Interactive Display, other than finding the right solution that suits your schools environment and needs. Let us help you make an informed decision with this guide to buying an Interactive Display.

What is an Interactive Display?

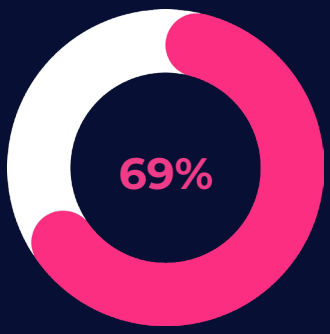
Also known as Interactive Touchscreen or an Interactive Flat Panel Display (IFPD), an Interactive Display can look very much like a flat screen TV, however, an Interactive Display offers you so much more. With fluid writing experiences and touch screen functionality, these screens allow you to interact just like you would with a mobile phone or tablet. Write, draw and edit directly on the display with technology that recognises fingers, palms, styluses, and more.

Why choose Interactive technology?

As many people can attest to, if we aren't totally keeping up with the basics of technology such as using a PC, reading and sending e-mail, and searching the internet for content, the digital divide – the gap between those who can benefit from using communication technology and those who cannot – widens and creates a chasm for those who are lacking key 21st-century skills.

This is a concern for many education decision-makers since they understand that today's students need essential technological skills to compete in the future job market.

Hundreds of schools have invested in educational technology such as a 1:1 devices for each student, interactive whiteboards and/or projectors for classrooms, and learning management systems to track student progress and provide pertinent information regarding learning needs. But moving beyond the basics can be seen as too much of a time and monetary investment. Is this truly the case?



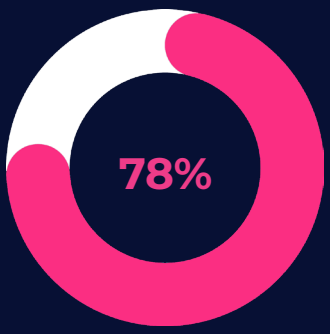
...of students are learning more effectively with technology

...of teachers can spend more time concentrating on teaching than technical issues

Many trusts/districts and schools are trying to close the digital divide by investing in technology solutions that:

1. Offer more opportunities to enhance teaching and learning so that all are engaged;
2. Help teachers ensure that learning time is used more efficiently; and
3. Provide students of all abilities access to the material that meets their learning needs. In the past year, schools took note of how educational technology can make a positive impact on how much and how well a student receives instruction.

One such educational technology tool is the Interactive Display. An Interactive Display can be thought of as a 'huge tablet' that provides teachers and students dynamic opportunities to access learning in ways that they're already familiar with - if users can tap, drag, scroll, and swipe then they can use an Interactive Display!



...of students pay attention for longer

5 Benefits of Using an Interactive Display

1. Increased engagement & active learning - Even the most reticent learner will appreciate the bright, clear images on the screen, as well as the interactivity possible during activities and lessons presented. A poster of the rainforest is starkly different from viewing a video simulating walking through the rainforest, including the ambient sounds which will make this type of learning experience unique. There is a plethora of resources available for increased interactivity that will engage students and motivate them to be more involved in lessons.

2. More opportunities to collaborate – At times, it can be a struggle to have students discuss and collaborate on activities and tasks. But because the look and feel of the Interactive Display is like their personal devices, the struggle is minimised. Some Interactive Displays have multi-touch capabilities so more than one student can come up and add annotations, highlight, or move content as they see fit. Quite a few displays also have screen mirroring software, so students learning from home can participate in class discussions. But more on that later.

3. Accessibility for students with disabilities – Interactive Displays have also been proven to help students with different disabilities participate actively in lessons. For example, students who have difficulty gripping writing tools such as a pencil or stylus, can use their fingers or palm to annotate on an Interactive Display. Displays mounted on carts/trolleys help students who aren't able to walk to or stand at the display. For an outstanding example of ways special education teachers have used Interactive Displays, read Interactive Learning for Students with Special Needs.

4. Incorporate STEM learning - It can be challenging to incorporate STEM activities and lessons that can bring the topics to life. With Interactive Displays, students can plan and facilitate experiments, share findings and results, and invite collaboration especially if the display comes with screen mirroring software. Science classes that have incorporated Interactive Displays rave about being able to invite experts for interviews via video conferencing, helping students envision a future with STEM playing a part.

5. Saves time – Interactive Displays are a complete, out-of-the-box solution and don't require excessive cables, hard wiring, or bulb maintenance. Teachers can save precious instructional time by not having to deal with making sure images are clear and focused, or connecting their PC to the display. Turn on the Interactive Display and start working.

Use less energy with an Interactive Display

With energy costs continuing to rise and take up big chunks of school budgets, it's never been more important to find energy efficient solutions to minimise operating costs and reduce carbon emissions, so that you can provide the best possible learning environments for your students.

As technology continues to advance, monitoring energy consumption will be a thing of the past. The most advanced interactive displays can already help to reduce energy consumptions by allowing you to set times and schedules your screen should power on and off through its central management system.

Currently using an traditional projector in your classroom? For every projector you switch to an Interactive Display, you can use up to 896.8 kWH less energy, saving on average £400 for the year.

Based on usage of 1 projector over 38 weeks, 5 days per week, 8 hours per day:

£400.00

896.8kWh

209.08kg of CO_2

10 trees saved

944 miles saved

The features you should consider

Before you start your Interactive Display journey, you should consider the needs of your school. Which features would benefit your teachers and students? Which ones are a must-have and which are a nice-to-have? Every display on the market features a broad range of sizes, features, functionalities and learning experiences that will differ between brands. The following features will help you to decide what is important.

Interactive technology

Like writing on paper

A fluid writing experience on a touch screen is important. Your experience should be smooth and replicate the experience you are used to when writing on a traditional whiteboard. New advancements in technology mean that you shouldn't have any unwanted issues, such as lag, unwanted marks from your arm brushing the screen or inaccurate writing. A more consistent experience means less surprises, and an Interactive Display that's easier to use.

Walk-up and use experience

The technology should be able to differentiate between palm-erase, finger-touch and stylus-writing, for a true walk-up and use experience. This means you shouldn't have to select a tool or menu to get started and makes it faster and easier to interact with the display.

Multiple users

Encouraging group work is important for students learning. Choose a display that lets multiple users interact all at the same time.

Customise

Every school is different. Your Interactive Display should be completely customisable, so that it reflects the needs of your school and teachers. A teacher should be able to go into any classroom and have the same touchscreen experience.

Computer system

It is common for an Interactive Display to include a built-in computer. This means you do not need to connect via a laptop or PC to use the display and will include access to files, applications and web browsers.

Easy to use

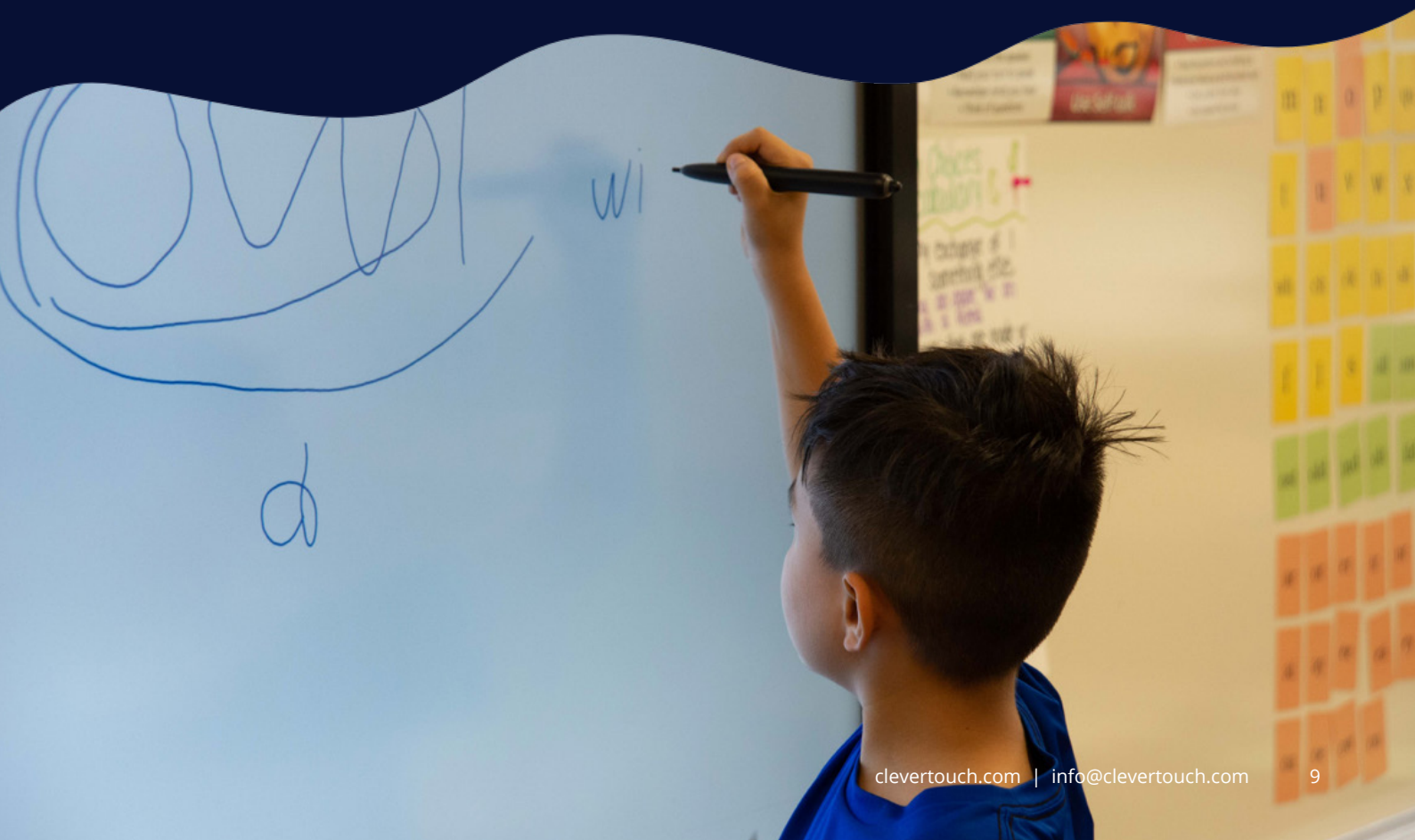
Adoption of the technology by teachers and students is the most important aspect of purchasing new technology. This means ensuring a simple, easy to use experience within intuitive tools that is familiar to the users. Consider how quick it takes the teachers to get up and running, how easy the display is to navigate and how easy the apps and tools are to use. The best way to get people to use something is to make it easy and familiar. Switch on and use. Save time and not waste it. This will ensure fewer training sessions and less IT support time.

Simple sign on

Teachers shouldn't have to waste time trying to login with lengthy credentials before class starts. By choosing an NFC-enabled display, your teachers can log in by tapping an ID card on the display. This will allow each teacher a simple and secure access to their own personalised set-up and the ability to log out with a click of a button, ready for the next teacher to use.

Teaching from around the room

Some classroom technology requires teachers to be tethered to the front of the classroom, but most teachers would prefer to be walking around the room to observe students and discuss ideas with them. Look for features that allow you to control your Interactive Display from anywhere in the room, wirelessly.



Innovative software and learning app

To attract more schools, many companies are making sure that their Interactive Displays come equipped with classroom software and learning apps. Exceptional classroom software allows teachers to create interactive lessons that include multiple question types, docs, images, videos, slide presentations, and more in a matter of minutes. To reinforce lessons, displays can also include learning apps many of which are aligned with key learning objectives. Some apps include dual language support so that students can learn French, German, Spanish, and other languages.

App store

We all use apps constantly in our daily lives, and schools are now used to setting homework via apps for students to complete at home. Increasingly, apps are being used for teacher-led learning in the classroom. Look for a display that has a verified app store to reduce the risk of users installing apps that will cause a security risk. Installing apps should be worry-free, without the need for IT support.

The right educational apps

Classroom software that comes inbuilt on many Interactive Displays usually includes tools so teachers can view student responses to questions created for the lesson. Teachers can measure student understanding while presenting, and address misunderstandings right away rather than wait, after grading a stack of paper tests. Some software and web-based platforms also allow for posing questions on the fly, which is a great way to get a sense of student interest and engagement in the topic. Find an Interactive Display with the right software available for your curriculum.

Sync with cloud drives

Being able to work from anywhere at any time, then save content to the cloud has helped teachers create, collaborate, and share even when not on the worksite. Cutting-edge Interactive Displays feature the ability to sync with cloud drives such as Google Drive and Microsoft OneDrive so teachers can upload and share activities, administrators can share annotated meeting notes, and students can access assigned lessons or reference documents.

Built-in Whiteboarding

Cross platform compatibility

Whiteboarding is an effective tool for the classroom, but works so much better if you can get your students to participate. Look for a display that includes whiteboard software that can be used across devices, such as tablets and mobile phones. Even better, a functionality that doesn't require students to log in makes viewing content by students much easier. A cloud-based whiteboard platform will give you the option to save your files online and share them to your colleagues and students.

Dual screen mode

If you have chosen a screen that can be used by multiple students at one time, your whiteboard software should allow dual screen mode, the ability for more than one student to collaborate on the same piece of work at the same time.

Browser compatibility

The ability to drag and drop images, videos and content straight from the internet will save your teachers time, enable group working in real-time and cause less disruptions. Look for a built-in whiteboard that has a direct link to an internet browser.

Ability to import 3rd party interactive lessons

Because interactive whiteboards were the popular device for many years in tech forward classrooms, teachers have created and used activities and lessons that have proven very successful for them. They don't want to waste the time invested in these treasured lessons. That being the case, state-of-the-art Interactive Displays can have platforms that can import 3rd party interactive whiteboard lessons to save you time.

Digital Signage Capabilities

School communications has traditionally been long-winded, with messengers sent from the office to walk around to classrooms. This can be problematic, especially in larger schools or ones with multiple buildings.

The ability to share information digitally and in real-time, unlocks a new communication channel with more potential than ever. Your Interactive display screen becomes relevant and offers real-time information for your students, staff, or visitors at any time.

If every classroom has an interactive display with built-in digital signage, you will have the potential to share bulletin alerts and emergency messages for instant communication across the school. Ideal for fire drills, calling students to the office and sharing information about the school day quickly and easily.

Look for an interactive display that has built-in digital signage capabilities with suitable cloud management software that enables communication to ALL of your displays no matter where they are located.

Connectivity

Many classrooms have a mixture of old and new tech, so it's important to have connectivity ports that allow you to play content from a DVD player, a mobile phone, a laptop or computer. For those of you that are lucky enough to have completely new tech in your classroom, it's vital to have the latest connectivity ports.

USB

Type A, Type B and Type C, also known as, USB-C are the different types of USB ports. Type A is used for flash drives and other peripherals. Type B is used for touch input on an Interactive Display. Type-C (USB-C) is latest connectivity technology and the most powerful. This input supports video, audio, touch, data and provides enough charging capability to charge a wide range of devices.

HDMI

HDMI means High-Definition Multimedia Interface, a standard port for transmitting digital video and audio simultaneously from another device. The majority of Interactive Displays will supply a HDMI port as standard. However, not all displays will offer a HDMI 2.0 port compatible with high-bandwidth video signals, like 4K. You will need to decide what type of HDMI port is important to you and how many ports will be needed at anyone time.

WI-FI

Choose an Interactive Display that doesn't need additional set-up or support for external Wi-Fi dongles, but a built-in integrated Wi-Fi for cheaper, straight out of the box solution.

Security

Cyber Essentials Certified

Cyber attacks come in many shapes and sizes, but the vast majority are very basic in nature, carried out by relatively unskilled individuals. They are the digital equivalent of a thief trying your front door to see if its unlocked. Cyber essentials certification is designed to prevent these attacks. To prevent your organisation from cyber attacks, ensure your Interactive Display meets cyber essentials certification with the latest operating systems. Selecting a model with Android 11 will future proof your device.

Data storage and processing

Data storing and processing is often overlooked by those that are not sure of the law. However, to meet GDPR legislation, data should be stored correctly and meet industry

standards. Does the manufacturer have the industry standard certifications such as ISO 27001 and SOC? Or for example, can European customers have their user data stored in the EU?

Over-the-air updates

Automatic over-the-air updates ensure your security settings are always up to date and patches or fixes are reliable deployed. In some instances, operating systems can be updated over the air, which will reduce the need to purchase a new Interactive Display when your operating system is end of life. To get the most out of your system, you will want automatic updates of patches, fixes and security updates so that your team does not have to manually update each screen, free of charge.

Lock down settings

In most organisations, Interactive Displays are shared by many users. The ability to customise their own profile and lock down these settings so that they cannot be changed should be an important aspect of your security checks for your next Interactive Display.

Remote Display Management

Remote Display Management

Many Interactive Displays offer a Mobile Device Management (MDM) system to manage your fleet of displays and additional devices.

Remote access & control

The best MDM management systems will link your fleet of displays to your MDM account, so that you can control them from anywhere. You'll have the option to shut down or wipe any screen and IT Managers can troubleshoot without needing to leave their office. Giving your team the control of hundred of devices, no matter where they are located.

Anti-theft modules

The ability to lock, unlock and reset a display directly from the MDM software will ensure no information can be pulled from a lost or stolen device.

Instant messages

Perfect for security and maintenance announcements, some MDM accounts allow you to push notifications directly to all or individual screens to keep communication open for less user frustrations. For an even better communication experience look for a solution that includes an alerts and audio alarm integration.

Who should you choose to buy from?

As with all tech, when things become more popular, cheaper alternatives become available. But lowest price isn't always best. Look for a brand that you can trust.

Warranty

Look for an Interactive Display that is designed for performance and built to last. But on occasion your technology does develop a fault, you need to ensure your warranty covers it and corrects it - FAST. You'll want to find a brand that offers a fully inclusive warranty, which means they guarantee no unexpected charges or hidden clauses and covers all parts and components.

Training

To get the best return on investment, you need school staff to be using all of the features available. Look for a company that offers a complete training and support programme. Whilst some will charge for this, others will provide both in-person and on-line training for free. The most comprehensive programmes will offer free training, a dedicated support person, online courses, training on installation day, refresher training and advice on pedagogy.

Support

After your devices have been installed, your likely going to need ongoing support. Choose a manufacturer that you can get in contact with and submit a support request. This type of support ensures your investment does not go to waste in the future when something could potentially go wrong.

Checklist

Interactive Technology

- [ ] Does it lag?
- [ ] Does it have palm rejection?
- [ ] What is the accuracy?
- [ ] Can you convert handwritten text to printed font?
- [ ] Does it have a true walk-up experience?
- [ ] Does it offer a fluid writing experience?
- [ ] Does it allow multiple users to interact at the same time?
- [ ] Do the tools and pens always behave like you expect?
- [ ] Can you customise your screen for each user?
- [ ] Can you add your teachers' favourite apps?
- [ ] Can you add your school or departments logo, messaging and settings?

Computer System

- [ ] Can teachers get started quickly?
- [ ] Is the display easy to navigate?
- [ ] Can new users find what they need without a manual?
- [ ] Is the interface clear and intuitive?
- [ ] Does it offer NFC-enabled login?
- [ ] Do teachers need to sign in using long passwords and credentials that will easily be forgotten?
- [ ] Can teachers sign out quick and easily?
- [ ] Can the Interactive Display be controlled from anywhere in the room, wirelessly?
- [ ] Can you use a tablet or mobile phone as a wireless document camera?

Innovative software and learning apps

- [ ] Does your screen come equipped with classroom software and learning apps?
- [ ] Do these apps include dual language support?
- [ ] Are apps included? What are they? Are they safe?
- [ ] Are apps and software free? Or Is there a one-off or subscription cost?
- [ ] Can you add your own apps without the need for IT support?
- [ ] Does the software have the ability to track student progression with questions and polls?
- [ ] Does your display integrate with cloud accounts?
- [ ] Can you open all file types via your display?
- [ ] Look for in-built apps that can convert old resources into workable files

Built-in whiteboard

- [ ] Can any device connect to your whiteboard app? Apple, Android and Chromebook, etc.
- [ ] Can you save and share whiteboard files online?
- [ ] Does the software offer dual-screen mode? The ability for more than one user to work at the same time?
- [ ] Does your whiteboard software have direct links to an internet browser?
- [ ] Can you import 3rd party interactive lessons?
- [ ] Do you have access to a bank of already curated lessons and activities?

Remote & blended learning

- [ ] Do you have direct access to video conferencing solutions?
- [ ] Does the screen include an in-built microphone array?
- [ ] Can you plug in a USB camera for additional video streaming functionality?
- [ ] Does it have latest generation USB-c?
- [ ] Can it charge connected devices as well as play content?
- [ ] Are there a wide range of connectivity options so that different devices can be connected?
- [ ] Does your screen offer a screen mirroring solution?
- [ ] Does the teacher have control of what is mirrored? (to stop students randomly sharing content)
- [ ] How many devices can connect?
- [ ] Can you mirror both ways?

Digital Signage

- [ ] Does your Interactive Display include in-built Digital Signage Capabilities?
- [ ] Will your Interactive Display seamlessly integrate with other digital signage solutions, such as, commercial displays, digital signage players and cloud management software?
- [ ] Can you remotely manage the content shown your screen from a cloud management software?
- [ ] Can you send communications to more than one screen at any time?

Connectivity

- [ ] How many connectivity ports do you need?
- [ ] Which types of connections do you need?
- [ ] Will you need to charge an external device through your ports?
- [ ] Will you be sharing 4k video?

Security

- [ ] What android operating system is the device running?
- [ ] Is the operating system inline with Cyber Essentials certification?
- [ ] Is the operating system future proof?
- [ ] Does the data storage and processing systems meet your relevant industry standards?
- [ ] Does the manufacturer offer over-the-air updates, free of charge?
- [ ] Does over-the-air updates include patches, fixes and security updates as a minimum?
- [ ] Can you lock down user settings?

Remote Display Management

- [ ] Can you control multiple devices simultaneously from your MDM account?
- [ ] Can you login to a device remotely and shut it down, restart it or wipe it completely?
- [ ] Can you remotely troubleshoot?
- [ ] Does the device include anti-theft modules?
- [ ] Can you share maintenance messages instantly to any of your devices?

Checklist

Warranty

- [ ] Does your warranty include components and all parts?
- [ ] How long is your warranty for?
- [ ] Do you need to register your warranty for it to be valid?
- [ ] Do you have to pay for shipping if needing a repair?

Training

- [ ] Is training free?
- [ ] Do you have a dedicated support person?
- [ ] Is there on-line support or training?
- [ ] Are you offered training on installation day?
- [ ] Do you receive free refresher training once set up?

Support

- [ ] Does the manufacturer offer 24/7 after care support?
- [ ] Do you have access to manuals, training materials and how to guides?
- [ ] Can you contact the manufacturer for help?

Contact us for more details

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