Unit 10: Interactive Whiteboard

Jason Griggs

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| **Product** | **SMART Board 885ix interactive whiteboard system** | **ActivBoard 500 Pro (Promethean)** |
| **Price** | $4500 approximately  | $4500 approximately |
| **Customer Support** | SMART support: Choose from a range of support options, from our extensive knowledge base of easily accessible technical documents to one-on-one, direct contact with experienced technical support staff via webchat, e-mail or telephone | Mostly phone. Knowledgebase provides a searchable database for users. Does not seem as flexible as Smart.  |
| **Board Sizes** | 87" Claims “20% more workspace than a standard interactive whiteboard system” | 78", 87", 95" |
| **Learning Resources** | Teachers can access free, ready-to-use educational resources, including thousands of standards-correlated SMART Notebook lesson activities, anytime on the SMART Exchange website. | Promethean Planet’s 50,000+ free teacher Resources and online Professional Development give teachers everything they need to create more active, inspired and engaged classrooms. |
| **Collaborative Capabilities**  | Dual-User functionality | Dual-User functionality |
| **Software** | SMART Notebook: A powerful and easy-to-use application, SMART Notebook software enables you to readily deliver interactive lessons that keep your students engaged and interested. | ActivInspire Professional Edition or Promethean ActivOffice Promethean Apps |
| **Warranty** | 5 Years (Lamp also has a limited warranty) | 3 Years |
| **USB Ports** | Unknown | 2 |
| **Installation Options** | Multi-axis, adjustable wall mount. The projector is mounted directly above the interactive whiteboard, so virtually any classroom can accommodate the 885ix without needing complicated wiring or ceiling mounting. | Fixed, Adjustable, Mount or Mobile System with a choice of Extreme Short or Short Throw Projectors. ActivBoard 500 Pro requires installation by a Certified Promethean Installer.  |
| **Sound Options** | Non-integrated.  | Integrated |
| **Lamp Life** | SMART UX60 lasts for 3,000 hours in standard mode and 4,000 hours in economy mode. | Unknown |

Sources: http://smarttech.com and http://prometheanworld.com

Since I have been on a quixotic quest for the past three year begging anyone with control over a budget at Troy University Dothan campus to consider installing just basic interactive whiteboards in all classrooms, as a flight of fancy, I will briefly provide my rationale for choosing which top-of-the-line interactive whiteboard I would purchase if I had my druthers and control over a budget. Since the prices of the SMART Board 885ix and ActivBoard 500 Proare roughly equivalent, other factors are needed to determine a winner. If I was purchasing one without any sort of practical or organization concerns (say for some weird instructional man-cave in my home), I would purchase the SMART Board 885ixfor its extended warranty, ease of mounting (does not require a specialist), and learner-centered functionality. If, however, I was purchasing a large number of these boards for a real organization (like Troy University, Dothan Campus), I would probably be inclined to go with the ActivBoard 500 Profor its variable screen size options, various installation options, and projector options. The reality of various classroom sizes and configurations makes the ActivBoard 500 Promore attractive due its flexibility**.** Without hands-on trials to put each board through the proper paces, judging these high-end interactive whiteboards from their own respective company websites is a bit like judging cars on a dealer’s lot without taking them from a test drive. Of course, even lemons are waxed and shiny on the lot.