

Promethean Help Herefordshire Education Action Zone

A resource shared is planning halved!

Promethean help

Herefordshire Education Action Zone (EAZ)

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- Make greater use of shared resources
- Support and training
- Enhanced learning environment

Hereford (EAZ)



The Challenge

When Herefordshire Education Action Zone (EAZ) was established in September 1998, one of the first actions undertaken was an ICT audit, revealing that all 22 schools in this rural area had fallen behind in terms of ICT capability as compared to other places in the country. Identification of this issue led to the implementation of a programme to gradually develop school ICT facilities, which in its third year resulted in the exploration of more innovative teaching and learning techniques. Through conversations with other EAZs, consulting the LEA

and visiting various exhibitions, Hereford EAZ reached an informed decision that the most impressive technology available for the classroom was the interactive whiteboard.

Michele Horsburgh, LEA Advisory Teacher for Hereford, explains: "As Hereford is largely a rural area, a solution to reduce the isolation of certain schools was required. It was thought that the introduction of interactive whiteboards would help us to achieve this by enabling us to develop and make greater use of shared resources."



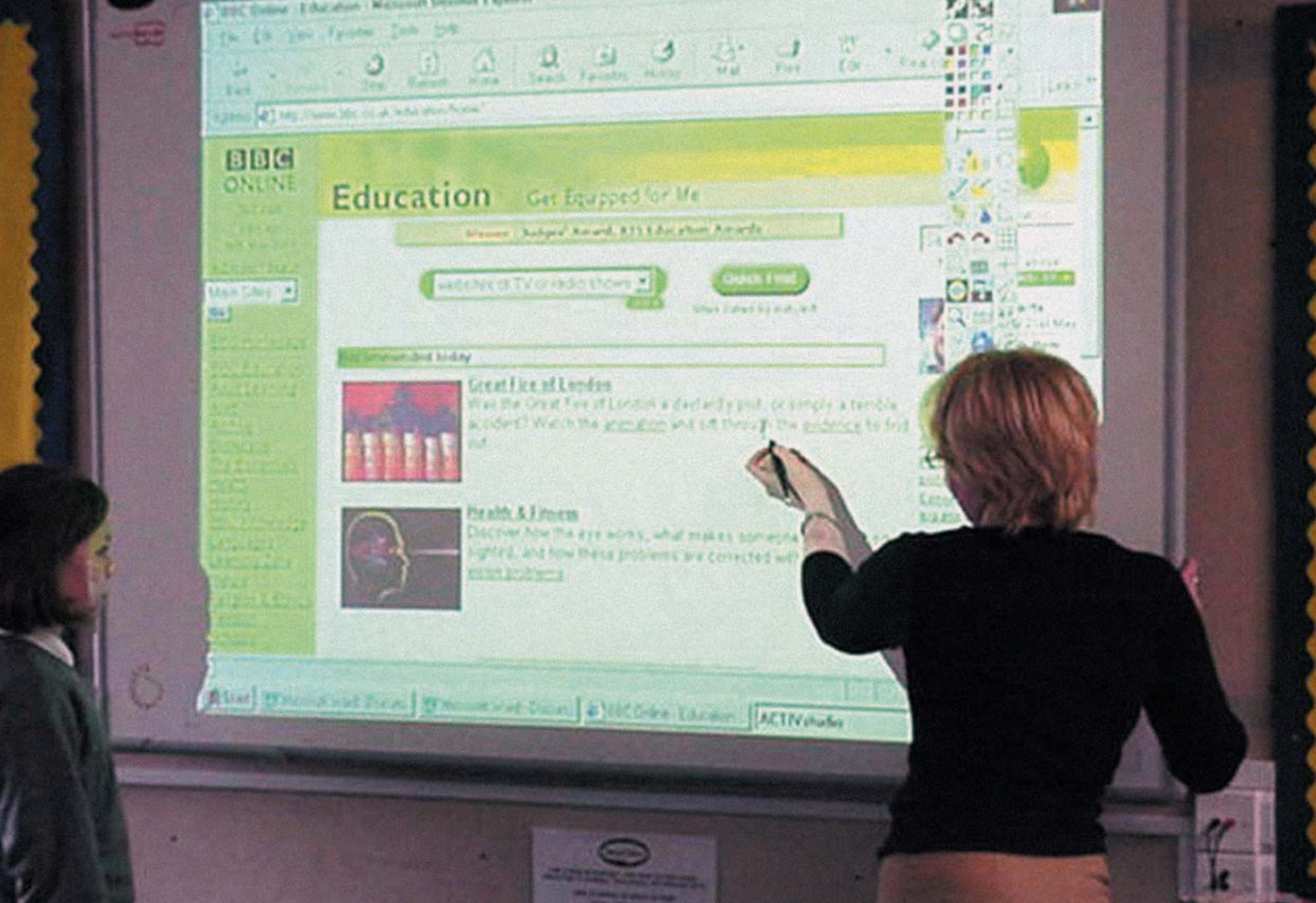
The Promethean Solution

To test schools' initial feeling towards interactive whiteboards and to gain greater insight into the potential of the technology, Hereford EAZ launched a pilot scheme. Following demonstrations by several companies and evaluations by groups of teachers from Zone schools, Hereford decided to work with leading education ICT supplier, Promethean. Michele explains why: "When choosing which company to go with, we had to look at many factors, including what support and training could be provided. In evaluating many packages from various suppliers it became clear that Promethean could offer us the most fully rounded solution."

Four schools within the EAZ were fitted with Promethean ACTIVboards, which were then subjected to a period of assessment. The majority of feedback identified that Promethean's technology had given teachers the ability to model concepts far more effectively than when using traditional 'chalk and talk' methods. Positive comments such as these led to a full scale implementation of Promethean's ACTIVboard

technology across the Zone, and prompting Hereford to investigate ways of further maximising the ACTIVboards' potential .

Striving to ensure every school was equipped to make the most of its technology, Hereford established a training scheme closely based on Promethean's certificated programme. Further demonstrating its commitment to maximising use of ICT in its schools, Hereford seconded a teacher, to develop the use of interactive whiteboards and ensure best practice across the Zone. Michele, the Year Six teacher seconded to take up the post, explains how the project evolved: "I was initially drafted in to help develop the use of ACTIVboards in Zone schools, but this role soon widened as I became involved with training, technical and installation issues for schools beyond the Zone boundary. My role also evolved as I became charged with the task of developing digital presentation materials as well as assessing the impact of the boards in real terms – evaluating the technology's effect in terms of improving teaching and learning opportunities."



The Benefits

By encouraging schools across the Zone to invest in Promethean technology, Hereford EAZ was able to achieve its aim of developing and making greater use of shared resources. Led by Michele, a Resource Making Group was established to create pre-prepared ACTIVstudio flipcharts, which could then be disseminated to all county primary schools.. Michele describes the process undertaken: "Working to literacy and numeracy objectives for Key Stage 2, we developed resources based on DfES materials. Once these materials were made we sought to gain the approval of Herefordshire's Literacy and Numeracy Consultants . Our aim was not only to reduce the preparation time required of teachers, but to also guarantee a consistent standard of materials that would be useful for them."

Disseminated throughout Herefordshire as the 'Over 100 flipchart' CD, and made available to download on the Promethean website, flipcharts created by the Resource Group are now benefiting schools up and down the country. Teachers using these pre-prepared and standardised resources have frequently reported that the flipcharts have enabled a greater focus on teaching as opposed to producing resources. Michele gives her perspective: " By creating these resources teachers could focus on planning their lessons rather than the time consuming task of making teaching materials. There are two functions of Promethean's ACTIVstudio software that help

engage pupils . Affectionately known as 'rub off and reveal' and 'drag and drop', these techniques encourage pupils to remain focused and help illustrate particular teaching points. Wherever possible we have included these in the flipcharts to enhance pupil interaction."

An increase in pupils' enthusiasm for learning has been observed across a spectrum of subjects in Herefordshire. Numeracy in particular has been identified by pupils as the subject in which the interactive whiteboard has helped them the most. Michele agrees: "It doesn't come as much of a surprise that pupils feel the whiteboards help them with numeracy the most. The nature of the software on the interactive whiteboards can support explanations of mathematical concepts by providing a level of visual support that may be more difficult with traditional methods."

The tangible benefits of Promethean's technology do not stop with numeracy though, Michele explains: "Classes that have been deemed to be quite challenging in terms of behaviour seemed to respond very favourably to the technology. With a wealth of resources available from the computer that is then displayed through interactive whiteboards, teachers are often able to re-focus these pupils by using the boards to display a different challenge instantly that will grab their attention."

The Future

With interactive whiteboards now the rule rather than the exception, Hereford continues its commitment to the development of their use in schools by extending the focus of the Resource Making Group to making Science, Geography and History digital resources. Hereford is also investigating the potential of hardware peripherals to further enhance interactive learning. They are currently reviewing Promethean's ACTIVote, the remote device designed to be used whenever a whole group response is required. Hereford also intends to produce a set of guidelines that will ensure its schools make the most of all their interactive tools.

Herefordshire Education Action Zone was instrumental in introducing Promethean's interactive technology and provided the initial funding that enthused schools to finance further whiteboard installations. Schools in Herefordshire are now readily benefiting from the technology in many ways, Michele sums up the experience: "The potential of interactive

technology to enhance whole group learning cannot be underestimated. As we move up a level by examining the use of peripherals in interactive learning we will start to see how classroom environments can become truly collaborative. What we have learned, and what we must remember as peripherals do become a bigger part of the classroom, is that this incredible interactive technology will never replace traditional methods, instead it will continue to provide teachers and pupils with an enhanced learning environment."

"About Promethean"

Promethean is dedicated to the development and supply of ICT solutions as teaching tools in the classroom to accelerate learning gains across the whole curriculum.

Promethean systems create an interactive teaching environment that enables multimedia delivery to whole groups.

A UK manufacturer, Promethean offers full installation, full system training, hot-line support

by telephone and e-mail, in-field support and repair. We provide the complete solution to education, distance and flexible learning, collaborative working and training.

Solutions include:

ACTIVboard Interactive Whiteboards, ACTIVstudio multimedia software and ACTIVision video-conferencing systems.

Wide format displays for data and video and all encompassing solutions for presentations.



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