SMART products integrate with mobile devices in Learning2Go project

Wolverhampton, West Midlands, UK

SynchronEyes software provides a wireless collaboration tool for mobile learners

When play and learning are intertwined, learners are the leaders of innovation and students can access information anytime, anywhere. This is the daily experience of the growing number of primary students of the Wolverhampton Local Authority. Using mobile devices that are equipped with wireless connectivity, high-resolution screens, digital cameras, digital video, GPS and advanced software, Wolverhampton's students are flourishing in an environment that has been adapted to fit their interests and learning styles. The mobile devices seamlessly integrate into the classroom with SynchronEyes™ classroom management software, which enables students to easily collaborate as they record interviews with each other, find resources on the Web and engage in learning games. With SMART's help, Wolverhampton is breaking new technological ground in the classroom and extending learning beyond the classroom walls.

Leading the Wolverhampton initiative is David Whyley, a lead member of the United Kingdom's largest collaborative mobile learning project, Learning2Go. He feels it is vital for learners to have a mobile device that gives them the freedom to learn when, how and where they want. Whyley sees information and communications technology (ICT) as a key capability for 21st-century students – education success today equals future economic well-being as students are equipped to become technologically apt participants in the future workforce.

Challenge
Integrate mobile devices with existing classroom technology

SMART solution
SynchronEyes classroom management software

Result
Mobile devices wirelessly integrate with SMART Board interactive whiteboards, enhancing classroom collaboration and lesson sharing.

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The first phase of the Learning2Go initiative began in 2004 in two primary classrooms. The initiative's success led to a second phase, in which over 1,000 mobile devices were given to students across 18 Wolverhampton schools in the following year. Learning2Go continues to expand with more than 2,500 devices now being used in classrooms.

The challenge for Whyley was finding a way to integrate these mobile devices with the existing classroom technology. Wolverhampton schools already had a SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard in almost every classroom, and teachers and students sought to share information between the interactive whiteboard and their mobile devices. Whyley turned to SynchronEyes software, which enables a teacher's computer to be connected with every computer or mobile device in a classroom. Wolverhampton's need for integration led to the enhancements found in the software, which is now compatible with most mobile devices and supports both wired and wireless connections. With SynchronEyes software, teachers are able to work with students one-on-one or interact with their entire collaborative learning environment.

Before Wolverhampton chose SynchronEyes software, they experimented with other potential solutions. Other software packages required cables to broadcast the screen of a mobile device on the interactive whiteboard and were limited to one connected device at a time. Students had to physically move about the room to share their work, and precious learning time was wasted. With SynchronEyes software, sharing lessons is easily managed through a secured, wireless network that simultaneously recognizes all the mobile devices in the room. Whyley notes that the software "enables the learner to take control if they want to demonstrate something, present or talk about their learning on the device."

The flexibility that SynchronEyes software offers teachers leads to enhanced use of classroom time. Teachers can ask small groups of students to work together to solve challenges on their mobile devices. Since the teacher is able to see every student's screen, it is easy to identify groups that need additional help. Students can privately send the teacher a question at any time, and the teacher can immediately respond through the software. If more than one student has a question, the teacher can open a chat session and collaboratively work toward a solution.

The 21st-century student is quickly becoming an expert with technology. "But what students are not expert at is learning with it," notes Whyley. Teachers play a critical role in navigating the path of learning for their students. "To put SynchronEyes software into a teacher's hands is to create an environment for them to do their job properly," Whyley says. According to Whyley, Wolverhampton teachers describe SynchronEyes software as energizing their classroom and enabling them to "spend more time on encouraging and enabling quality learning."

The Learning2Go project has been a great success. After the initiative was launched, participants showed significant improvement on KS2 tests across the three core areas of English, mathematics and science. As a participant in the mobile device project explains, "It's fun . . . and because it's fun we learn more." Whyley agrees. "If we're asking kids to give up more of their own time to learn," he says, "we've got to make it fun."

The enthusiasm of Learning2Go students has also contributed to better attendance. When attendance went down throughout the authority, students in the Learning2Go school actually saw as much as a 30 percent improvement. Parents have become more involved in their children's learning – students are eager to use their mobile devices to show off their schoolwork at home.

The Wolverhampton Local Authority first implemented SMART Board interactive whiteboards in 2001, and as the relationship with SMART developed over the years, Whyley felt affirmed that the authority had chosen the right company. He explains, "When we had ten-year-old children that said, 'Look, we've got these mobile devices, we want to be able to share our work within the classroom, and we don't want to have wires connected,' I contacted SMART. SMART listens." As a result, SynchronEyes classroom management software plays an integral role in supporting Whyley's successful Learning2Go mobile learning initiative and creating a collaborative environment where students flourish, both at school and into the future.

Combining SynchronEyes software and the SMART Board interactive whiteboard in a mobile learning environment enables students to share their learning with the whole class.

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David Whyley, head teacher and e-learning consultant for the City of Wolverhampton

About SMART

SMART Technologies ULC is both the industry pioneer and a global market leader in user-friendly interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. SMART products include the award-winning range of SMART Board interactive whiteboards, interactive response systems, pen displays and digital signage as well as wireless slates, conferencing applications and software. SMART products are designed to meet the requirements of today's education and corporate environments. Teachers can access and share the information they need to improve student learning outcomes and streamline lesson planning. The SMART Board interactive whiteboard is used to teach over 18 million students in more than 600,000 classrooms in more than 100 countries around the world. SMART's education customers include New York City Board of Education (U.S.), Oxford University (UK), Kobe City Board of Education (Japan), Barnier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany), Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (U.S.) and Harvard University (U.S.).

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 1,000 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Kanata, Ontario, and offices in Bonn, Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, New York City, Chicago and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in joint product development and marketing efforts, and Intel's equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. To learn more about SMART as a company and its products and programs, visit www.smarttech.com and www.education.smarttech.com.

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