

What is the 'official view' and/or Policy regarding Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) in Ireland?

This document attempts to gather together data (all sourced via the Web) that has been posted by the relevant State and other agencies.

NCTE's 2002 version of the 'ICT Planning Matrix' is on their website at <http://www.ncte.ie/ICTPlanning/ICTPlanningMatrix/>

For the section labelled "ICT Resources and infrastructure" ...Under the 'Advanced' heading, one of the examples reads "Digital projector(s) and interactive whiteboard(s) are in use throughout the school"

The 2008 version of the planning document was released in PowerPoint form (it may also be available on a closed Blog) at a series of seminars for Post-Primary ICT Co-ordinating Teachers.

The 'matrix equivalent' in this document does not make any reference to IWBs. However, the accompanying PowerPoint slides make reference to "Desirable Levels of ICT Infrastructure" with examples which include 'Fixed digital projector and teaching computer with a wireless keyboard and wireless mouse'. Further, in the "ICT Infrastructure (more)" slide reference is made to examples which include "Interactive technologies: Wireless mice, wireless slates, interactive whiteboards (IWBs).

The relevant text from the '2008 Matrix' reads:

ICT Equipment – Initial: Some classrooms have desktop computers. A laptop and portable projector, printer and digital camera are available as shared resources.

ICT Equipment – e-Enabled: Some rooms have digital projectors and computers. Peripherals such as digital cameras and scanners are used for e-learning activities.

ICT Equipment – e-Confident: All learning areas have access to a range of ICT equipment including digital projectors and wirelessly-enabled tablet PCs. Laptop trolleys are used to improve access to resources.

ICT Equipment – e-Mature: All learning areas have access to a range of ICT equipment. Provision is made for incorporation of students' mobile devices.

NCTE has a useful page at http://www.scoilnet.com/YourQuestions_Whiteboards.shtm including the advice that:

"However like any form of ICT they will only enhance the learning experience if they are used imaginatively."

There are links to the CBI Project (described as a "really useful resource") among others.

NCTE has 'Advice Sheets' for a range of ICT equipment: the Interactive Whiteboard one is at

<http://www.ncte.ie/documents/advisesheets/16InteractiveWBsNov08.pdf>

This has been updated (Nov 2008) and contains a useful additional article, referencing some of the more recent research ...including

Judge, M., (2007) Research on Interactive Whiteboard Technology, Education Matters, December 2007:

<http://www.educationmatters.ie/2007/12/04/research-on-interactive-whiteboard-technology-launched/> (However, this link does not find the relevant article)

Note that the original Advice Sheet (June 2007) is still available at [http://www.ncte.ie/documents/advisesheets/16InteractiveWBs\(June07\).pdf](http://www.ncte.ie/documents/advisesheets/16InteractiveWBs(June07).pdf)

The most recent comments of NCTE are to found in: "NCTE recommendations for ICT in Primary schools and classrooms" (Jan 2009) at <http://www.ncte.ie/media/ICTAdviceforSchoolsandClassrooms.pdf> where it emphasises the aspects of 'School and teacher readiness' and professional development. They caution that investing in Data Projectors should be the initial priority.

NCTE supports CPD in Interactive Whiteboards via the network of Education Centres. At <http://www.ncte.ie/courseschedule/> the courses for Spring 2009 indicate IWB Courses in: Blackrock, Cork, Drumcondra, Kilkenny, Laois, Mayo, Monaghan, Sligo and West Cork

EMINENT 2008: At http://blog.eun.org/eminent/workshop_session_2/ one can read that 'Workshop Session 2: Interactive Whiteboards: Jerome Morrissey from NCTE in Ireland is the chair of this session which is linked to the work of the Interactive Whiteboard work group of European Schoolnet.'

Teachnet's Blog at <http://blog.teachnet.ie/?p=459&cpage=1> on the 'Dormant Accounts to Assist Primary DEIS Urban Band 1' has the comment that "The list of ICT resources schools may spend the funds on does not include Interactive Whiteboards. Does this reflect the NCTE thinking on interactive whiteboards? Strange considering how many schools are seeking to buy these devices."

The then Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin's Dáil Response to a Feb 2007 question is at

<http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0631/D.0631.200702080190.html>

She indicated knowledge of the Drumcondra Project (as an important aside, it should be noted that she officially launched the Project at a CESI Conference)

In April 2007, Mary Hanafin included IWBs as possible purchases under the 'DEIS Dormant Accounts Grant': see ...

<http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=10861&pcategory=10861&ecategory=10876§ionpage=13637&language=EN&link=link001&page=1&doc=34945>

...and repeated same in her Dáil response in Dec 2007

<http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0643/D.0643.200712060174.html>

In her Dáil response of October 2007,

<http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0638/D.0638.200710020010.html> Mary Hanafin replied that "I am not convinced of the value of the provision of an interactive whiteboard for every class. I have seen them in action in some places. A good teacher is a good teacher with a blackboard or a whiteboard and a bad teacher is a bad teacher with a whiteboard or a blackboard. All of this must be part of an overall strategy. The strategy group, which is due to report to me, has been examining not only the aid of the computer in the classroom, but other aids such as digital projectors and how they can be incorporated into the curriculum. A broader e-learning culture is important and cannot be achieved by giving each student a laptop."

See http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobervlet/ministers_strategy_group_report.pdf for

'Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools, 2008-2013. The Report of the Minister's Strategy Group' which tells us that

"Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) offer opportunities for student participation and increased classroom interactivity. Effective investment in this technology is dependent on an existing positive ICT culture in schools, teachers who are experienced in using ICT in the classroom and on an existing desirable level of ICT access throughout the school. Given the current high costs of IWBs their deployment within schools will necessarily be limited" p. 21

The authors quoted a reference to: Smith, F., Hardman, F. and Steve Higgins, S. (2006) 'The Impact of Interactive Whiteboard on teacher-pupil interaction in the national literacy and Numeracy Strategies'. British Educational Research, Journal, Volume 32, Issue 3 June 2006, pages 443-457.

CESI has hosted a number of IWB presentations/workshops every year since 2004

In 2004 at the annual conference, one finds 'Choosing and Using Interactive Whiteboards' (see <http://www.cesi.ie/node/103>) where I, David Kearney, state that "As with any ICT tool, success depends on effective use".

All websites in this document were accessed on accessed 1st Feb 2009

Acronyms

NCTE – National Centre for Technology in Education

CESI – the Computer Education Society of Ireland

IWB- Interactive Whiteboard

CBI – Clár Bán Idirníomhach (direct translation of Interactive Whiteboard in the Irish language)

CPD- Continuing Professional Development

This document is made available as a support to teachers undertaking research and/or interested in the topic of IWB use in classrooms. This and other research and resource material for IWBs is available on the Drumcondra Interactive Whiteboard Project website (www.cbiproject.net) which I maintain in a voluntary capacity. I encourage teachers to share their own IWB research and resources with their colleagues through this site: I can be contacted for this purpose via davidk@ict4schools.ie

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