

# Reliably Yours – The 600 Series SMART Board

by Nancy Knowlton

We often brag about the reliability of our interactive whiteboards, and why not? We started shipping our boards in 1991, and many of those early units are still in service today. Ask us about the estimated lifespan of these boards, and we will tell you that we don't really know. The 600 series boards are so reliable that they just do not fail in the field. Download the latest software and an older board has all of the most up-to-date functionality.

There are many factors that determine the reliability of a product, and we can group them under two categories – design and assembly. Hardware design and assembly must consider long-term reliability of the product as well as serviceability issues, should they arise.



## Sturdy, Strong Design

Our 600 series boards are sturdy and well made. If you examine them, you will see that while some parts are made of plastic and other lightweight materials, they are substantial and not likely to fail, even under rough use by students in the classroom.

## No Special Tools

The fact that no special pens or tools are required to operate our interactive whiteboard adds greatly to their reliability. There is nothing special about the pens and eraser – if one goes missing, the board is still functional.

Any object can be placed in a slot to block the optical sensor. It could be a pencil, an old dry-erase marker, a USB key or a business card. Simply lifting the item out of the tray activates the intended function (e.g., the blue pen) and a touch on the board performs the function.

## Tried and True Technology

Our 600 series interactive whiteboard uses resistive technology. This means two sheets of conductive material are separated by a small air gap. The board reads your touch on the board when the two layers come into contact. Resistive technology has been in use for a long time in other products and applications, and is highly reliable.

## Hard-Coat Polyester Surface

The front sheet of the SMART Board interactive whiteboard is made from a hard-coat polyester that is scratch resistant and tear proof. This means that the surface will last through repeated and long-term use.

## Power Source

Because the 600 series interactive whiteboard uses only a small amount of power, it can be drawn from the connected computer through the USB connector. This means that another potential point of failure (namely, the power cord) is eliminated by design.

## Troubleshooting

SMART Board software has built-in diagnostics to assist our technical support staff in understanding issues that our customers report. This software is our eyes on the scene, just as if we were in the room with each of our boards. The information from this software allows us to quickly diagnose and resolve issues with our hardware.

## Easily Serviced Parts

If there is a problem with the board and a component needs to be replaced, it can be easily handled because we have considered serviceability when designing the board. Cables can be easily replaced. The controller is easily accessed for removal and replacement on the back of the board. Pen tray electronics snap in easily.

## Assembly

The people in our North American assembly operation, which produces the 600 series interactive whiteboards, take great pride in the quality products coming from the plant. It is not sufficient to simply produce volume – the products must be made well and pass our rigorous standards before being packaged and shipped to customers.

## Reliability

Product reliability is one of those elements that can be taken for granted. It is most often noticed only when a product fails or issues arise after purchase. Thinking about all elements of reliability up front and asking detailed questions can mean that there will be no surprises after a choice is made and the product installed. Reliability is not something that is subjective – it can be proven in cold, hard statistics. It is the combination of the product design and quality assembly that makes all the difference.

Nancy Knowlton is the co-founder and CEO of SMART Technologies, the world's leading supplier of interactive whiteboards. Nancy's husband and SMART co-founder, David Martin, is the inventor of the interactive whiteboard product category. Together they have built a company that is focused on delivering easy-to-use, yet feature-rich collaboration tools, including the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Nancy can be reached at [CEO@smarttech.com](mailto:CEO@smarttech.com).