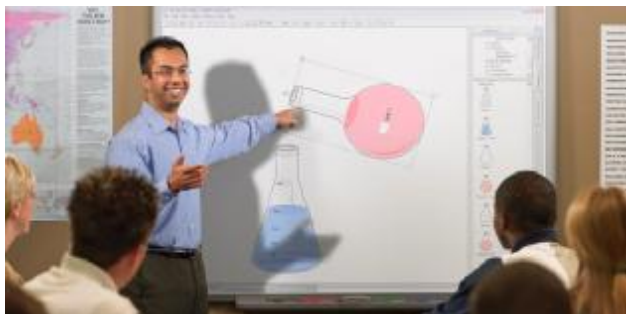


# SMART Board Interactive Whiteboards – Built to Last

by Nancy Knowlton

Just how long will a SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard last? Many teachers ask me that question. Most people budget for a three- to five-year useful life for projectors and PCs, and expect about the same for the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. But the product has a number of unique features that extend its life beyond that.



## Software Upgrades

A substantial amount of the utility of the SMART Board interactive whiteboard derives from the software. SMART provides free, online upgrades to SMART Board software, so no matter when you buy a SMART Board interactive whiteboard, you will always have the same, up-to-date functionality as someone who purchases today.

This benefit is especially important for school jurisdictions, because no financial decisions need to be made about upgrading. Teachers just download upgrades and go.

## Hardware Warranty

The warranty is a full five years upon product registration, including electronics, cables and surface. There's no small print to trip you up should you ever need warranty support. (Of course, the warranty does not cover abuse or deliberate damage.)

## Useful Life

We are often asked about the useful life of our interactive whiteboards. The reality is that SMART Board interactive whiteboards that were purchased eight, ten and fourteen years ago are still in use today. With free software upgrades, they are every bit as functional as new boards currently shipping from our assembly plants.

## Construction of the Interactive Whiteboard

The SMART Board interactive whiteboard is constructed very simply, which makes it extremely reliable once it is installed in a classroom. Two main components deliver this durability.

First, two sheets of resistive material are stretched over a large, flat surface and separated by a small air gap. When you press on the interactive whiteboard's surface, the two resistive sheets touch and an X,Y coordinate is registered. Whether you press on the interactive whiteboard's surface with your finger or a pen tool, very little wear and tear

occurs as you interact with content on the screen, because the surface material is made of a hardcoat polyester, which does not wear out or lose its tension over time.

The second component is found in the SMART Pen Tray. Four pens tools are provided with each SMART Board interactive whiteboard, but there is nothing inherently special about them – they are simply pieces of plastic that serve as visual cues for their function. With the intelligence built into the pen tray rather than the pen (optical sensors detect when a pen tool is selected), all of the pen tools could be removed from the tray, and the interactive whiteboard would still function. For instance, if you pick up a pen tool and begin writing with your finger instead of the pen, your finger becomes the tool and digital ink appears to flow – to the delight of many children – from your fingertip.

## Quality is Built In

SMART takes great pride in designing and building a quality product. One of the biggest compliments we regularly receive from customers is about the reliability of our products in their classrooms.

The company received its ISO 9001 registration in 1996 and has successfully maintained that registration ever since. The designation is important to us, but it also assures users that our systems are solid and our practices are sound.

## Growing Library of Education Resources

Beyond the software and hardware, SMART maintains a large and growing library of classroom-ready, teacher-prepared materials optimized for use with SMART Board interactive whiteboards. And the best part – they're free.

## Getting Better with Age

Not many things get better with age, but we think that's exactly what happens with SMART Board interactive whiteboards. Not only is the hardware durable and reliable, but the product's useful life is dramatically extended by free upgrades to SMART Board software and the wealth of learning resources to which you have access.

Now, that's built to last.

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