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Turning Whiteboards into Smartboards and Standard Notebook Computers into Tablet PC's

If you try to communicate any subject matter to your students using chalk or color pens on a chalkboard or whiteboard, many of your

students will whisper under their breath "borrrrrring." Today's students are so plugged into dynamic communication experiences thanks to their computers, game machines, and cell phones that they expect everyone to communicate in the milieu in which they live.

3M has just introduced the SCP716 super-close projection system, which turns your classroom's whiteboard into a fully functional Smartboard. The key components are the DLP projector and its annotation sensor module. Mounted just 31" from the wall, the projector produces a 64" (diagonally measured) image. With its 2,400 lumens, there is no reason to turn the light off when using this system.

The projector is mounted so that the image projects down to the viewing surface. With this orientation, when you perform annotations at the board, a shadow is not cast over the image that you want the rest of the class to view (Photo 1).

The digital presentation pen functions as your drawing tool and your mouse. When you press the pen's tip to the projected image, it wirelessly signals the location to the annotation sensor by simultaneously sending an infrared and ultrasonic signal. A 3M engineer explained this technology by saying, "The system measures the delay between the light and sound

and determines position. The best analogy is that it is like seeing lightning and then counting the seconds until the thunder boom to figure out how far away the storm is." You calibrate the pen by clicking on registration marks that are projected onto your super-sized screen.

With this system in place, student and teacher presentations can tap into anything on a connected computer, the Internet, a digital camera, or any other device attached to the system. The 3M software allows you complete interactivity as you create,

view, edit, and save annotated projects. The SCP716 system will work with Windows or Macintosh computer systems.

Also, the Hantech Corp. has just introduced Tablo, which lets you use a special wireless pen to write, draw, and perform all the other tasks that you do on a tablet computer on any standard Pentium laptop (Photo 2).

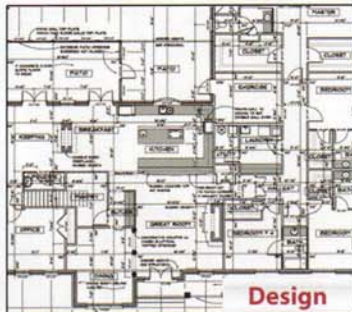
Much like the 3M system, Tablo

has a hardware annotation sensor module and a wireless pen. Hantech developed a magnetic connector that attaches the sensor to your computer screen. After you install the hardware and software, you calibrate the pen by clicking on registration marks that the software places on your screen.

You can use the pen directly on your computer screen to draw, write, take notes, or perform other tablet PC functions. You can also attach the annotation sensor to a pad, switch the tip to an ink tip, and use the included handwriting recognition

Alan Pierce, Ed.D., CSIT, is a technology education consultant. Visit www.technologytoday.us for past columns and teacher resources.

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Photo 1— The 3M super-close projection system lets you write on the whiteboard without casting a shadow.

software to convert your notes into text. Just don't forget to switch the tip back before writing on your computer screen.

Just as with the 3M system, the Tablo's pen combines ultrasonic and



Hantech Corp.

Photo 2—Hantech's Tablo lets you use a Pentium laptop like a tablet computer.

infrared signaling to find your position on your computer screen. If you hook your computer up to a digital projector, you can use the pen to create annotations at your computer that will be projected to the larger

screen for student viewing. If you use it in combination with the 3M system, you will need to avoid dueling pens for control of the computer cursor. You will have to work cooperatively with a student who is using the 3M pen at the super-sized display, since both pens can actively try to control your computer cursor at the same time.

Currently, Tablo is a PC-only product. The company hopes to have a Mac version available in the near future. You can find links to videos on the 3M SCP716 and the Hantech Tablo systems at www.technologytoday.us/id27.htm.

Recalling the Facts

1. How are the two systems similar and how are they different?
2. What determines the size of the image that you work on when using the 3M SCP716 system?
3. What determines the size of the image that you work on when using the Hantech Tablo system? ©

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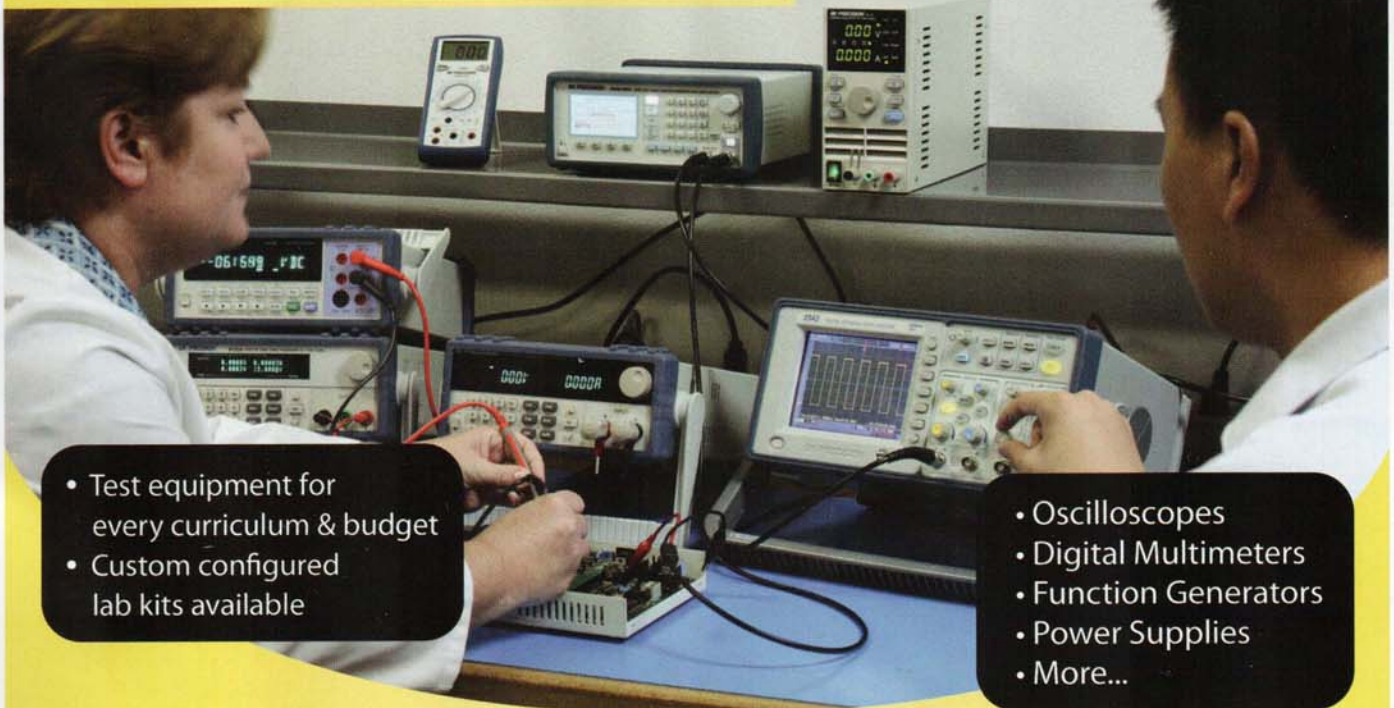
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