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Research Paper

Wiimote Smart-Boards

The setting is a high school class in Clarkston, MI. It is a history classroom that is set up with desks in rows facing the whiteboard. There are three computers stationed in the back of the room for the students to utilize. The teacher also has his own computer at his desk. The computers are a great way to connect to these kids. Not only do they get the chance to work with the computers, but they also get to work with the progressive programs that are on the computers. The program that is of the most use to this classroom is the Wiimote smart board. This program designed to sync Nintendo Wii remotes to computers to create a one of a kind smart-board allows kids to get excited about learning.

As described the technology being used in this classroom is the Wiimote. This is an amazing concept that has recently been added to classrooms. Using the infrared light that comes from the Wiimote instructors can turn virtually any flat surface into a smart-board. For years many have contemplated using expensive smart boards. According to smart-boards.com these interactive white boards can cost upwards of \$1,000. This is a whopping cost for schools, and it is not ideal for the budget committee. Thanks to the Wiimote made by Nintendo, professors and teachers alike have found a cheap and effective alternative to the smart-board. This new technology has the potential to help teachers out a great deal. The fact that this technology is available for merely a fraction of the cost of related products opens up opportunities for school districts all over the nation. Not only is this device cheap, it is easy to assemble. While conducting my research I

stumbled upon a man who is a master of the Wii remote smart-board, who goes by Johnny Lee. His informational site provides links that will show you how to set up a Wiimote smart-board. He explains how the technology works and the amazing things that this product is capable of. He states, "Since the Wiimote can track sources of infrared (IR) light, you can track pens that have an IR led in the tip. By pointing a wiimote at a projection screen or LCD display, you can create very low-cost interactive whiteboards or tablet displays. Since the Wiimote can track up to 4 points, up to 4 pens can be used. It also works great with rear-projected displays" (JohnnyLee.net). This is truly amazing, not only can the teacher interact with the board but also the students have a chance to join in on the action. The fact that the Wiimote is capable of all of this creates endless possibilities for instructors and students. Presentations have the ability to come alive and children get the chance to really interact with technology while learning. This also has great potential to save schools a lot of money. Think about it this way, if a school district switches from dry-erase markers to LED pens, they will save big time in the long run. This will be of great value considering all of the budget cuts that schools have been forced to introduce.

This product shows amazing promise, and educators who look towards the future of educating are buying in. I noticed while searching this topic that I could not find a lot of information, besides the testimonials of teachers on blogs and Johnny Lee's stunning presentation. After further research I now realize that this concept is very cutting edge and not all of the bugs have been worked out. According to Jonnylee.net, the software programs for the Wiimote are to be downloaded at the risk of the user. There is no promise that the software being provided will be backed up. Now taking that into

consideration, it is amazing to see that many teachers have gone right ahead and tried out this product. According to weblog-ed.com teachers all over are jumping on the Wiimote bandwagon. The testimonials of the teachers show that those who have tried putting together this makeshift smart-board have had success. Not only have they put together a working smart-board, but also it cost them less than \$100. This success has not come easy to all though, a few of the instructors were having trouble syncing the Wiimote to the computer. While other teachers that were trying this out with a Mac OS had no success whatsoever. The overall problem with this technology is that it is a hacked program. The Wiimote was never intended to perform such a task. The problem for educators is to risk spending \$100 out of pocket for a program that may not work, or may not even be permitted by the school. There are no real drawbacks to implementing this into the school, unless the district pays for it. If a teacher is willing to pay for this technology and sets it up properly he/she should be allowed to take advantage of this opportunity.

To me this product shows great promise for the future educators worldwide. Not only is it inexpensive and easy to use, but also it is fun and exciting. I was lucky enough to observe a classroom that used the Wiimote smart-board, and from what I saw it was amazing. The teacher informed me that it was easy to use and that the kids thoroughly enjoyed it. I was very excited to see the technology I had been researching in use. I can now attest to the Wiimote, like the other teachers, as an easy to use program. I am excited to see that teachers are looking towards the future. I am also interested to see if this technology can catch on and make a splash in the world of education.

References

- <http://www.smart-boards.com>
- <http://weblogg-ed.com>
- <http://Jonnylee.net>