



SUCCESS STORY

E-GADGET FACTORY PUTTING CHILDREN FIRMLY IN CONTROL.

In the last 3 years alone, Lancashire Digital has published hundreds of interactive activities for the learning environment. Lancashire Digital is a small but exceptionally creative company, well geared up for development, with a whole spectrum of new generation skills, including top grade animation. In particular, the e-Gadget Factory series was designed for use with interactive whiteboards.

WHAT WAS NEEDED?

Keen to expand their market both at home and abroad with the popular e-Gadget Factory, Lancashire Digital were looking to develop this further with an interactive voting system. They needed help with marketing and support from a well-established organisation who could also act as resellers. At the same time, Promethean were looking for exciting, easy-to-use new software content to work with Activote SDK, the interactive learner response system.

THE SOLUTION

Len Adam from Lancashire Digital says, "Promethean has considerable experience in the education market and their ethos attracted us. Promethean's technology enhances interactivity - it is not just technology for the sake of technology, and that was important to us." With Promethean's support the e-Gadget Factory developed a radical new approach to voting, which is set to take the market by storm. Len explains, "Uniquely instead of giving simple Yes/No or Right/Wrong answers, the software is directly interactive, with flash activities, known as voting or v-gadgets that enable voters to influence what happens on the whiteboard. As far as the children are concerned, they see an immediate reaction from their voting, which is very powerful." Len Adam says that "In addition many of the activities provide a superb solution to monitoring a child's progress in key areas of learning.



For example, the times table activity, randomly generates a “never ending” sequence of times table problems. If children used that single activity for a short time every day the teacher could check the progress of individual children on a weekly or monthly basis. The difference to other voting software is that the teacher is not involved in having to generate the problems or store any answers – it is fully automatic. This activity alone makes it good value for money! This is the modern alternative to rote learning of times tables.”

Up to 32 children per class are represented on screen by individual characters which change colour in relation to voting status – grey for “Stop” and orange for “Go”. Each time a child presses a button on the handset, a number appears on their character’s T-shirt so everyone can see how many times he or she has voted. The teacher has two options; to conduct the process in one go, or to take things one step at a time, allowing for continuous monitoring. All votes can be displayed in pie or bar-charts, adding to the fun and then stored automatically ready for teachers to analyse at the end of the day. The software works with any interactive whiteboard, and Lancashire Digital are currently negotiating with Promethean to offer its new voting product on line, making ordering more widely available.

THE VERDICT

The first product to be launched using this new approach is the Science, Maths and Technology v-gadget packs which consists of one hundred v-gadgets for Key Stage 1 and 2, and these remarkable interactive tools are being sold in the UK by Promethean, fully supported by training. Len Adam said, “We worked closely with Promethean’s development team and it is now available in the UK and shortly in the US. We have been delighted with the initial response to the trials held in Hertfordshire, which have been very positive. Over several months, participating schools were invited to use the new software along with Promethean’s Activote learner response system. The response from children and teachers alike was immediate. The teachers have come up with some brilliant suggestions, including the step-by-step function, to allow teachers to control the pace of the games, and this was included in the final software.”

“All the children thoroughly enjoyed using the system and picked it up very quickly. Teachers were equally effusive about the ‘clear, colourful activities’; while students agreed the session was ‘cool’ and ‘fun’ before begging to play again. One child particularly enjoyed being a ‘millionaire player’ and even 4 – 5 year olds took to using the handsets with no problems at all. Another benefit for some schools has been the fact that both Activote and e-Gadgets work with any kind of interactive whiteboard. It’s a very exciting time for us and we are looking forward to a long lasting relationship with Promethean.”

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