

SMART Board Notebook Top 40 (or more!) Tips & Tricks

TIES 2012 Education Technology Conference

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This document contains detailed notes to go along with my presentation. Participants are welcome to use this as a personal reference as a follow-up to attending the session. Please do not reuse or post this information for other purposes. Thanks!

Background Information: I am a Technology Integrationist in Rosemount – Apple Valley – Eagan school district where I provide SMART Board, Moodle, Google Apps and other technology trainings/support. Prior to this position, I was a high school math teacher for 23 years and a district computer coordinator and trainer early in my career. In this session, I will be sharing my favorite SMART Notebook tips, tricks, and short-cuts. This information has been gathered from my own personal classroom experiences as well as from my experiences in working with K-12 teachers and tech contacts over the years. You're encouraged to pick-n-choose tips from this session which you can apply directly to your own situation.

New: Contextual Toolbar: One of the first things you'll notice in Notebook 11 is the contextual toolbar at the top of the screen. It has three main sections: Actions, Tools, & Properties.

Additional Toolbar Tips & Tricks: You can hide/show the contextual toolbar by clicking on the oval-shaped button in the upper right corner of the toolbar. You can move the contextual toolbar to the top/bottom of the screen by clicking on the up/down arrow. You can also move the side toolbar to either side by clicking on the left/right arrow. The floating toolbar can be hidden by going through the SMART Board Tools.

Crucial Page Display Options: The View Screens button allows you to switch from Single Page Display to Full Page Display or Dual Screen Display. You have the option of using two modes: Entire Page vs. Page Width. With entire page mode, the longer your document gets, the wider the gray margins on the side will get. With Page Width mode, you'll be able to use all of your SMART Board real-estate from side-to-side on the screen, but you will have to scroll to see the bottom of longer pages. In the Format menu, there is an option to display a full screen page border guideline to help you plan ahead for the end of a page in full screen mode. This is especially helpful if you're designing a lesson on a computer that is not attached to a SMART Board at the time.

New Text Engine: The new text engine in Notebook 11 provides improved text formatting including numbered lists, bulleted lists, nested bullets, hanging indents, and indented paragraphs. In the Properties Tab, you have the option to add space after paragraphs or change the line spacing. The text editor now includes a font preview feature, and it allows you to enter your own font size, rather than just choosing from pre-determined sizes. There are options for features such as strikethrough and vertical text. The new text engine includes improved legibility of text by closing the space between certain letters. You can customize up to 6 fonts on your toolbar by going to the Properties Tab and saving your changes. A good font size to use for presentations would be between a 24 and 36 point font. If you

experience problems with text formatting issues on Notebook 10.8 being opened up in Notebook 11.0, you can give the following commands to default back to the old, 10.8, text engine. For Windows, the command is “Control-Shift-O.” On a Mac, it’s “Command-Shift-O.” Note: the file needs to be a 10.8 file which has never been saved in 11.0.

Tables Features: The improved tables feature in Notebook 11 allows you to select a cell/row/column. The pull-down menu on each cell provides a large variety of formatting options. You can use the text properties such as vertical text within a cell. Enter text into the cell before adding a screen shade. Screen shades now provide a corner icon where you can click to close it again. To move a table around, use the gray box in the upper left corner of the table.

Time-Saving Tips & Shortcuts: To save time, it’s very helpful to clone objects and pages. The infinite cloner feature is useful when you need many copies of the same object. You can add pages to the Gallery, so they are handy to grab on the go. Handwriting can be converted to text from the pull-down menu on the text object. Under the Format menu, the alignment guide feature is very useful when lining up objects on a page. You can turn off the guides when you’re done design your lesson. It’s highly recommended that you bring in materials from other resources rather than starting from scratch. For example, use the Notebook screen capture tool to take screenshots of pdf files, Word documents, or document camera images. Use a scanner to scan in old documents and bring them directly into Notebook software. You can also drag pdf files directly into Notebook one page or multiple pages at a time. If you copy/paste basic text from Word into Notebook, you will be able to edit the text in Notebook if needed. If you take a screenshot of the information in Word, you will not be able to edit it in Notebook. Depending upon the circumstance, there would be a time and place for each approach. The overall advantage of bringing your content directly into Notebook software is that you can write on the documents without using the SMART Ink feature found in non-Notebook applications. It’s also very convenient to have all of your resources in one place, especially if you want to save your final notes and export them to a pdf file to upload to your website.

Page Sorter Tips: In the Page Sorter Tab, you can rename each individual page/slide to help you stay organized. (The default slide name is the date/time the slide was created.) You can also choose many other features from the pull-down menu on each slide. You can copy/page the thumbnail of a slide from one Notebook lesson to another when needed. This can be a big time saver! You can also drag slides up/down the list to change the order of your presentation. The Auto-Hide feature helps you make better use of the space on your SMART Board. Please note: you’ll need to click/tap on the Notebook page in order to make the Page Sorter tab close. Otherwise, part of your page may be covered up by the open Page Sorter Tab. To get back to the page sorter view, click on the Page Sorter Tab. It’s handy to avoid using the Auto-Hide feature while you’re creating your lesson, because you’ll probably want to view your page thumbnails at that time. You can put your pages into groups to make navigation between sections of your lesson easier.

Gallery Content: The Gallery Tab provides you with thousands of pieces of free clip art and many interactive activities. It’s helpful to look at the example activities in the Lesson Activity Toolkit to become acquainted with various options available. Make note of the names of the activities you like the

most, so you can find them again in the Gallery later. You can also add your favorites to the Gallery which will put them into your “My Content” folder. An important tip: when backing up your “My Content” folder, be sure to save it on a local drive (such as a flash drive or external hard drive) instead of a network drive, as network drives have been known to corrupt the files. This is also true for backing up your SMART Response Teacher Tool files.

Clear/Delete Options: To remove ink, use the eraser or click on it and delete it. You can also use the “circle-tap” shortcut to erase a large amount of text at one time. To remove non-ink objects, delete them. You can delete an entire page through the pull-down menu of an individual page in the Page Sorter Tab. Some other handy clear/delete features include: Clear Ink, Clear Page, and Reset Page. It’s useful to put these icons on your toolbar. Note: the reset feature restores your current page to the last time the document was saved, and it cannot be undone, but it’s a nice time-saver when used at an opportune time.

New Sound Recorder: Click on sound from the pull-down menu of a given object. You can then click on the microphone button to record a sound up to one-minute long. The sound will play when you click on the object during your lesson. It would be great to let students make the recordings for various objects!

New SMART Ink: The most recent update of SMART Ink includes support for Mountain Lion on a Mac. It also includes a new settings feature on the Windows side. SMART Ink is used for non-Notebook applications. The menu bar appears on every non-Notebook application, and the ink feature can be turned on/off as needed. For example, you may want to turn it off in some applications, such as document camera software, where you may want to use that applications built-in ink tools instead. The ink can be captured to Notebook software or completely cleared off the page by using the SMART Ink toolbar. You also have the option to choose various pen colors and line thicknesses from the toolbar.

Background Colors: Click on the background and then the Properties Tab to change the background color. You can choose from solid, gradient, pattern, or image fill. Clicking on “more” will provide the full color wheel with an infinite number of color choices. Clicking on the “eye dropper” tool will let you match the color to any color on the page. The picture transparency feature on a objects pull-down menu lets you remove the extra space around a given object provided the object has somewhat of a clean border. When you bring your own images into Notebook, you may be prompted to optimize the image. This is a great idea, as it drastically reduces the file size without compromising the image quality.

New Irregular Shape Fill & Crayon Tools: You must use a single ink stroke to draw the object, and you must close the shape. Then set the pen down, and use the paint can tool to fill the object. The new crayon tool mimics coloring with a real crayon. The more you color in one spot, the darker it gets. Kids will love this feature! Speaking of pens, it’s good to know you can customize the colors of the virtual pens (on the toolbar) or the real pens (in the pen tray.) To change the virtual pen colors, use the Properties Tab, and be sure to save your changes. To change the real pens, go through SMART Board Tools, and be sure to save your changes and click on “Apply” when done. You can always go back to the default colors at any time. It’s fun to occasionally change the pens to holiday or school colors on special days of the year.

Image Shape Fill: When you fill a shape with an image, you have the option to keep the image size or scale the image to fit.

Hide-n-Reveal Techniques: You can hide words/images in Notebook by covering them up with various shapes or objects. There are some pre-made shapes available in the Gallery or you can make your own. In the Properties Tab, you have the option to animate the shapes to make them fade out, for example, when you click on them. A fun hide-n-reveal technique is to erase to reveal by covering the hidden object with ink that is the same color as the background.

Shapes Tools: There are many great shapes available in the toolbar. You can customize the color, border, and transparency.

Object Manipulation: You can use a drag-n-drop technique to move objects around the screen. You can lock objects in place if you don't want them to move during your presentation. Objects can be grouped/ungrouped by "shaking" the selected objects while working at the board.

Pen Tool Fun: You can choose various pen tools such as calligraphy pens, crayons, highlighters, creative pens, a magic pen, and a shape recognition pen. You have the option to adjust the color, thickness, style, endpoints, and transparency. In Notebook 11, you can set a given pen to fade after a certain number of seconds by going to Fill Effects under the Properties Tab. You can also create a customized creative pen using your own image which is a lot of fun!

Embedded Internet Browser: The new embedded internet browser allows you to embed a website into your lesson without leaving SMART Notebook. You can drag images out of the web browser directly onto your Notebook page. While the images are not of a high resolution, they could still be used for various activities on the fly.

Linking: The link option is available on the pull-down menu of each object. You can link to a web page, a page in this file, a file on this computer, or a current attachment. Tip: if you click on a website link prior to presenting your lesson, it will open quicker when you get to that point in your lesson, as you won't have to wait for the web browser to launch.

New Activity Builder: The activity builder is useful for sorting, matching, or labeling activities. You can have multiple identifiers on one page. You can choose what happens to the object when it is accepted or rejected. You can even have object's sound play!

Mathematical Expressions: You can use the free equation editor in Microsoft Word (or other software) to create mathematical expressions/equations. This is useful for expressions which go beyond the features provided in Notebook. Use the Notebook screen capture tool to put a copy of the expression into your Notebook lesson. Note: the expression will not be editable in Notebook, so you may want to save your Word document to use again later for future editing.

Transparent Background: This feature allows you to "see through" the blank part of your background in Notebook software. Any writing you do in this mode is actually part of your Notebook document. You

can get creative with this option by putting certain objects on your Notebook page, such as a timer or scoreboard if you're playing an online game.

How'd They Do That? As you gather SMART Notebook lessons from other sources such as SMART Exchange, your district server, or other teachers, you are encouraged to ask yourself "How'd they do that?" Save a spare copy of the lesson. Select all locked notes. Unlock all of them. Pull the lesson apart to see how it was designed. Have fun exploring! Learn from the examples, and apply the same techniques to your own lessons. The more often you do this, the more proficient you'll become in your own Notebook journey.

Conclusion: Find your own "take-aways." Try a few ideas and build upon them as you go to create your own SMART Notebook toolkit.

If you haven't already done so, please complete the online TIES evaluation form for this session.

Thanks!

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