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**Test
DRIVE**

BY JEFFREY HASTINGS

InterWrite SchoolPad 400

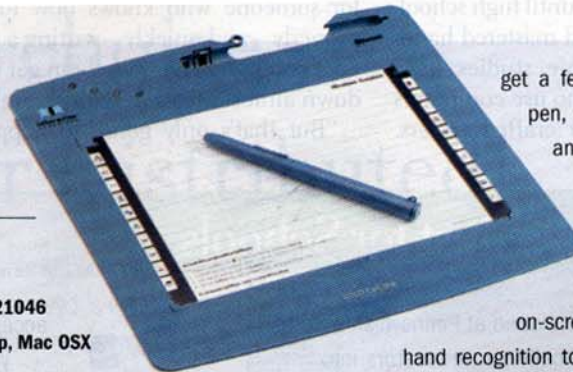
Bluetooth Wireless Tablet

GTCO CalComp, Inc. 7125 Riverwood Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
(800) 344-4723 www.gtcocalcomp.com. Windows 98 and up, Mac OS X 10.2.5 and up. Educator's price: \$497.

The interactive whiteboard was a major boon to teachers, freeing them from their computers to go to the head of the class, navigating and annotating right on the big screen, where attention was naturally focused. Alas, some presenters felt stuck near their whiteboards, and many found the hours spent before the blinding glare of a projector to be a bit rough on the retina.

The wireless SchoolPad represents the next big advance. It gives presenters total mobility, doing everything the best interactive whiteboards can do, but from anywhere in the classroom. Plus, the SchoolPad's patented technology enables up to seven users with tablets to interact with a presentation simultaneously, so students can actively engage in projected lessons, while the teacher still has ultimate control.

The lightweight SchoolPad took about an hour to charge for its initial 40 hours of use, allowing adequate time to install the accompanying InterWrite and Bluetooth software and peruse the owner's manual. Once the pad and pen were fully charged, my newly wireless-enabled laptop easily synced with the unit and I was ready to roll. As with every interactive tablet or whiteboard I've used, it took me a few minutes to



get a feel for the SchoolPad's pen, namely the ideal speed and pressure to use when writing, selecting, and clicking. Once I had the hang of it, I tried the software's

on-screen keyboard and free-hand recognition tools, both of which can

be used to input text directly into standard applications

using the pad's office mode. A range of advanced features enable capturing, saving, and exporting work created on the SchoolPad, including adapting presentations to Web pages and Windows movies. All of its manifold functions worked well.

The SchoolPad can definitely do a lot, but does it try to do too much? My colleague Carole Colburn, who teaches technology literacy and volunteers each month at a "technology camp" for teachers, found the SchoolPad's basic palette of options daunting. "All those little icons on the screen and the pad were a bit confusing," she says. "I think that might discourage lots of teachers from using it."

While I'd have to agree that the SchoolPad isn't the friendliest device for occasional users, experienced whiteboard hands who want total mobility and functionality should find that an investment of an hour or two getting to know this handy tool is time well spent.

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