

TriBeam enables “Palms in the Classroom” for Warren Township Students

With funds from a grant from the Lilly Endowment, educators and administrators at the 11,000 student Metropolitan School District of Warren Township are working to integrate Palms in the classroom for students in Marion County, Indiana. TriBeam products are helping to make it happen.

As one of two project managers for the grant, Thom Feit was charged with researching and implementing a Technology and Digital Curriculum for the students in the district. Specifically, grant writers and managers envisioned the purchase of PDAs to be used in various classrooms district-wide. Ultimately, Feit hopes to provide a PDA for each student in the school district to use.

In order to make Palms in the classroom a reality for Marion County kids, Feit investigated PDA suppliers and available handheld models as well as support

The TC200 Tabletop Charge & Organization Station is “much nicer and cleaner than a ‘farm’ of individual Palm charging stations around a classroom.”

- Thom Feit

equipment and appropriate classroom software. He first came upon TriBeam’s products at the

Michigan Handheld Conference held in fall 2003. Based upon this encounter, and struck by the ease of housing a classroom set of PDAs all in one location, Feit led the school system in obtaining **TriBeam TC200 Tabletop Charge & Organize Stations** for each of the classrooms that would use PDAs. Feit was impressed by the construction, durability and portability of the charging station.

From Feit’s perspective, everyone using the TC200 Tabletop Charge & Organize Station is happy. “The classroom teachers love it! Our technology staff like the idea of one charging location in each classroom, and certainly the fire marshall loves the idea of not having a classroom filled with extension cords and multi-outlet units.”

Inside and outside the classroom

Gina Kurtz Fleming, teacher at Lowell Elementary School in Warren Township, initially proposed the use of handhelds in her classroom in order to seamlessly infuse technology into all learning units. She also hoped to avoid the scheduling conflicts inherent in utilizing the school’s computer lab.

Using their class Palms, Fleming’s students take notes in their outside learning lab, as well as download instructional articles, games, and information within the classroom itself. Both the students and Fleming have recognized the benefits of the PDA’s portability. As the instructor, Fleming can work on assignments and other student information at home in the evenings and then hotsync her Palm with her PC when she arrives at school in the morning. Meanwhile, kids keep their parents highly involved in their education by taking their assigned Palm home to share weekly class newsletters.

TriBeam’s TC200 Tabletop Charge & Organize Station has enabled Fleming to keep all the handhelds charged, freeing up individual cradles to be sent home with students as needed. She also loves the portability provided by the handles on each end of the unit and has offered suggestions for design enhancements to increase user satisfaction.

As many teachers have expressed, Fleming claims that her students love the novelty of working with a small computer of their own. For her part, Fleming feels that the use of Palms has really improved her students’ writing skills, even encouraging the most reluctant writers. Overall, the use of Palms in elementary classrooms like Fleming’s boosts students’ learning so that they are better prepared for future coursework.

Building upon success

Based upon the success that the Metropolitan School District of Warren Township has had with the TC200 Charge & Organize Stations, teachers like Gina Kurtz Fleming look forward to using TriBeam’s beaming technology to administer tests and grade them immediately. Thom Feit has purchased **TriBeam’s TC50 Wireless Transport and Charging Systems** for additional users in the school district.