

Inc.

23 SMART TIPS FOR TOUGH TIMES

from the founders of **Whole Foods, Method, Life Is Good, Home Depot, Zappos, Jenny Craig, Kinko's** and more, page 70

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LAUNCH

HORSE RACE | The Whiteboard Jungle

Schools nationwide have been replacing their blackboards with digital whiteboards. On these PC-powered systems, teachers and students can manipulate images, write out math problems, and even watch YouTube videos. Smart Technologies, based in Calgary, Alberta, sold more than 130,000 of its Smart Boards in 2008 and controls about half of the market. Here's a look at its rivals. —Jason Del Rey



Smart's biggest challenger is **Promethean USA**, which is based in Alpharetta, Georgia. The company says its Activboards are more intuitive than Smart's system. The Activboard technology is supported by a website that shares innovative curriculum ideas among 200,000 registered users, and it is priced in the same range as Smart's product line.

BOARDS SOLD IN 2008*: **54,000**



eInstruction, a company in Denton, Texas, links interactive whiteboards to hand-held voting systems (think *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*). Students can vote on the answer to a question, allowing their teacher to gauge comprehension. The voting system "is one of the next must-haves," says Colin Messenger, an analyst with Futuresource, a research firm.

BOARDS SOLD IN 2008: **10,000**



Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania-based **Numonics** is nearly 40 years old, and it has been focusing on the interactive-whiteboard market since 1993, when CEO Al Basilicato led a buy-out of the company. The business goes after smaller contracts and, by offering customers online training, it "sells the benefit of having a more personal relationship with the company," says Basilicato.

BOARDS SOLD IN 2008: **9,000**



Why buy an interactive whiteboard when you can transform a regular whiteboard into one for roughly half the price? That's the question being posed by **Luidia**, a San Carlos, California, company that produces a portable device called the eBeam, which renders whiteboard projections interactive. 3M, Hitachi, and NEC use Luidia's technology in their equipment.

UNITS SOLD IN 2008: **25,000**

THE LINE: Promethean USA has the most recognized brand in the market after Smart Technologies. Interest in hand-held voting systems could push eInstruction to the front of the pack. But as the weak economy forces schools to cut budgets, Luidia—the low-cost option—should accelerate down the stretch.

*All figures represent units sold in the U.S. from January to September 2008.