Enabling Seamless Integration between a Variety of Interactive Whiteboards and Cisco TelePresence Systems

Interactive whiteboards provide an engaging way to interact with digital information naturally, resulting in enhanced participation both locally and remotely. The addition of Cisco TelePresence adds true face-to-face interaction, further increasing the impact of the learning experience.

Historically, adding interactive video to an interactive whiteboard has been difficult. The result has been an incompatible link between the video and the interactive data, rendering the use of the interactive whiteboard with video unusable. Cisco TelePresence Synch (Synch) solves this problem.

Problems of the Past

The majority of interactive whiteboards are connected to a PC or Mac computer whose image is displayed on the whiteboard via a suitable projector. After the computer has been calibrated to the whiteboard surface, touching any location on the whiteboard aligns with the corresponding location on the computer screen. This effectively allows the computer to be operated by a person standing in front of the whiteboard while presenting to a group of people in the same room or to remote participants.

The software running on the computer can be virtually any application supported by the computer’s operating system. This includes any number of software programs, such as Webex, and including specific features such as multi-colored annotation, instant storage and recall of notes, annotated diagrams and many more.

Adding Cisco TelePresence to bring in an expert, a virtual fieldtrip, or another class adds to the learning experience. However, current systems cannot align the interactive video with the applications and annotations, requiring users to stop to recalibrate the interactive whiteboard each time they select a different layout or re-size the application or video windows.

Problem Solved

Synch solves this problem by intelligently mapping, aligning, and managing the layout of the entire whiteboard so that users can switch between full screen collaboration, full screen Cisco TelePresence, or a variety of both collaboration and live Cisco TelePresence views. The result is an integrated multimedia endpoint that can be used for true interactive collaboration via Cisco TelePresence as well as provide application sharing and annotation capabilities. If the selected display layout is changed during a class, any annotation previously drawn on an image is also automatically realigned to match the new PC image size and shape. Synch allows educators to leverage the power of an interactive whiteboard to its fullest, while bringing in external sites, other classrooms, or experts to expand the educational opportunities, as well as maximize the investment in these technologies.

Synch effectively converts a standard interactive whiteboard configuration into a powerful multi-function educational tool that can still be used with either of the individual technologies in a stand-alone operating mode, or working together for true local and remote student-to-student or student-to-teacher interaction.