



East Ayrshire Council - Champions of the Promethean ActivPanel

Following a recent major edtech investment, the Scottish council of East Ayrshire is one of the largest Promethean customers in the UK, with ActivPanels in every one of their 52 schools. Now, coming to the final stages of the implementation, the council is looking at how they can work with Promethean's Scottish support team to make the most of the technology. Gary Neilson, ICT Coordinator for East Ayrshire council, knows that the strength of the ActivPanel lies not just in connectivity within the classroom, but in potential for interconnectivity of schools across the region.

To this end, the council are now working towards building a communication nexus, linking all ActivPanels to East Ayrshire's own secure network in a bid to make life easier for teachers and IT staff alike.

East Ayrshire Council in the south-west of Scotland knows that teachers' time is precious. But the council must also be careful when it comes to its own time-management: a centralised IT team helps problem-solve issues from software to hardware engineering for eight secondary schools, 41

primary schools, and three special schools. This sizeable school suite includes the new Barony Campus, a state-of-the-art “Super School”, the largest campus in Scotland.

Gary Neilson likes to see the bigger picture when it comes to providing IT support to his schools. As ICT Coordinator for the council’s education sector, he aims to deliver training and technology to East Ayrshire’s schools using a top-down, streamlined approach. “Education staff are permutating, they don’t have time for things not to run smoothly. And on our end, you can’t have mixed platforms that will mean frequent retraining.”

“The Promethean support team underpin everything I do, and I know they are able to work as a team with the council to drive things forward.”

Gary Neilson, ITC co-ordinator

Looking at how they could best support teachers, while saving time in the long-term, it was decided an authority-wide interactive flat panel rollout would be the best way forward. Careful strategizing went into the operation, which would see investment in thousands of devices. The panels needed to be consistent in terms of software, interface, and connectivity, so that teachers moving from class to class, or even school to school, would have consistency wherever they taught.

The council had already enjoyed a long working relationship with Promethean, beginning with the company’s ActivBoard interactive whiteboards back in the 2000s. Gary knew he could rely on the Scottish team to provide the training, customer care, and technical advice the council needed for this huge operation: “The Promethean support team underpin everything I do, and I know they are able to work as a team with the council to drive things forward.”

Since the project began over three years ago, Promethean ActivPanels have been placed in every school in East Ayrshire. The transition was made smooth by the fact that many of East Ayrshire’s teachers had already been using ActivInspire software with the original ActivBoards, so were familiar with the lesson-delivery program that is supplied with the ActivPanel

In some cases, such as the Barony Campus, the ActivPanels have been bought in conjunction with laptops for staff and students, creating a rich ecosystem of edtech devices that allow for ease of work and screen-sharing in collaborative and independent learning.

Networking potential

The council is now one of the largest Promethean customers in the UK - a fact that Gary is proud of: “I see the full potential of the ActivPanels, and the need to have a champion for them within the council. I am definitely a champion of this technology.” That potential, for East Ayrshire, lies not just in the classroom, but in the ability to connect outside the classroom.

A significant part of the rollout has been linking the ActivPanels onto East Ayrshire’s own wireless network. A substantial task with the sheer number of devices, and the GDPR security-led focuses that inevitably come with IT in schools.

For Gary, it’s worth the effort: “There’s a commonality when the ActivPanels are all connected on the network, it just allows for higher levels of interaction.” Interconnectivity means that not only is work and screen sharing made easier between students and teachers, but that software updates can be conducted simultaneously across the connected ActivPanels, led centrally by the council’s IT team.

And the process is getting easier as they go along. Where it used to take upwards of half an hour to join one ActivPanel to their network, East Ayrshire’s IT engineers can now complete the process in a matter of minutes - an important distinction when there are ActivPanels in every school waiting to be linked.



Looking to the future with Promethean

Over the next year, East Ayrshire strive to have all their ActivPanels connected. As the operation picks up pace, they are now turning their attention to making sure that the full range of applications can be accessed through the council's closed network.



"We've come a long way, and we still have a long way to go, but there's a continuity of support with Promethean that I know I can rely on."

To make certain that this major investment reaches its maximum potential, wide scale training programs will also get underway over the next school year, including a "Train the Trainer" initiative led by the local Promethean team.

Aimed at highly motivated groups of educators, the Train the Trainer programme will enable participants to demonstrate the full interactive

abilities of the ActivPanels. Those taking part will then be equipped to uplift the technical skills of other teachers within their schools.

In keeping with the council's focus on time-efficiency, these Train the Trainer sessions will be highly personalised to skill level, so that the information received is as effective as possible. Concentrated learning in a streamlined way: something East Ayrshire knows that Promethean are more than capable of delivering.

As the council looks at how they will go forward, they are confident in the partnership they have forged with Promethean, and in the potential of this edtech injection as an investment in the future of East Ayrshire's education. "The days have gone where it used to be roller board," Gary reminisces. "The tech has come so far, especially in the last decade. These ActivPanels are not just projectors or displays, they are at the connected heart of modern-day teaching and classroom development."

"We've come a long way, and we still have a long way to go, but there's a continuity of support with Promethean that I know I can rely on."

Gary Neilson, ITC co-ordinator



To learn more visit: [PrometheanWorld.com](https://www.PrometheanWorld.com)