

# ABSORBED



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BY JANE SMITH

Today, all educational establishments – no matter how basic – use audio visual (AV) equipment to varying degrees. Whilst there is still a huge installed base of traditional overhead projectors and even some scope for replacement models and growth, the focus is now moving toward a more interactive environment.

Teaching in the classroom, lecture theatre, conference and training suites has changed considerably over the past twenty years. What used to be conveyed on a chalkboard, is now demonstrated by electronic and digital technology. It is generally recognised that we retain 20% of what we see, 10% of what we hear but at least 60% of what we see and hear together. So the provision of audio visual equipment in educational institutions means that presenting information is highly effective and more easily absorbed by the students

It is therefore no surprise that increasingly, especially in higher education, we are seeing more and more sophisticated lectures and presentations using a wide variety of materials, from 35mm slides to live images fed from satellites. The modern day educational establishment has to ensure that it has sufficient AV facilities.

This has led to a large number of institutions refurbishing their facilities often to incorporate state-of-the-art equipment that wouldn't be out of place in some of the country's leading boardrooms.

And there are opportunities for dealers to get involved. We spoke to Paul O'Reilly, sales director of Steljes Trade who confirmed that in Q3 of 2003 unit sales reached 24158, more than double the unit volumes of the same quarter in 2002 (11623) and overtook that of the whole of 2002. He also went on to explain that lower prices generally and entry-level/budget products being developed was contributing to this excellent growth.

Darren Lewitt, business manager with Midwich confirms that they too have seen phenomenal growth in the education sector, particularly amongst the top three projector brands: Sanyo, Epson and NEC.

#### EASY TO USE!

Steljes' O'Reilly told us: "The office equipment dealer is well placed to service the Education sector, which are primarily purchasers of budget projectors. This is a good fit for the office equipment channel as budget projectors

require little installation expertise and are easy for end-users to use, requiring minimal end-user training."

Easy, user-friendly use is not just the reliability of the equipment in the first place but the ability to call on first class after-sales support in the unlikely event that something does go wrong.

Acco, a familiar name in the world of education supply, recently launched its Nobo range of portable and powerful Texas Instruments DLP projectors, offering all of the performance and end-user advantages of advanced digital technology, at highly competitive price points. With it, Acco Multimedia Division's unique aftercare and service scheme was also launched. It is designed to make ownership of the latest interactive digital presentation technologies as carefree and cost efficient as possible with features such as on-site training and a commitment to a five working day turnaround repair service and swap-out scheme, replacing a faulty projector with a compatible unit until the original unit has been repaired.

#### AUDIENCE FACING

In using a wide range of technology, messages and information can be imparted in a variety of ways.

PowerPoint presentations can be made into handouts and theories can be expounded with the support of graphics.

Because of the number of speakers who pass through lecture halls, an AV installation has to be flexible. It has to allow for presenters using everything from flip charts through to 35mm slides, OHPs, and data and graphics from portable PCs. It is essential to take into account future use and ensure the system, and in particular the projector, has enough inputs; we are finding an increasing use of recorded video, live video (possibly even from videoconferencing), satellite feeds and sound within presentations as they become more sophisticated. It is important, therefore, to ensure that any projection system you have is able to cope with these.

#### THE BENEFITS

Using this equipment enables speakers to convey information both effectively and efficiently from both the audience and the presenter's point of view. With sharp, bright and large images the audience is able to see data, graphics and video from wherever they are sitting. Voice reinforcement and a sound system that is able to play sound from video and PCs also means that the