

Things are different in Promethean's ActivInspire

I like....

- The fact that it is free (in 2009) to upgrade for existing users of Promethean software
- Tabs so that one can open Multiple Flipcharts simultaneously: this will make it easier to copy pages from one flipchart to another.
- Because it uses a different filing system, one can run ActivPrimary3 (AP3) and Inspire alongside each other
- Inspire will open AP3 files (as well as importing Notebook and PPT)
- 'Profiles' allow one to tailor the Floating Toolbox for different users/purposes (yes, it 'floats' as in ActivStudio)
- One can toggle between FullScreen and Windowed mode
- Handwriting Recognition works even when not connected to Promethean hardware
- The 'Connector' Tool is for joining objects: when these Objects are later moved, the Connector still holds them together (great for Mind Mapping etc.)
- There is now one piece of software that can be tailored to appear as ActivPrimary or ActivStudio (AP3 was always a derivative of Studio but now they have come together as just different 'skins')

Things that will take some getting used to

- The interface is very Mac-like in appearance, taking its icons etc from the Mac version of AP3
- The 'Eraser' is now an Eraser! (while the new 'Magic Ink' tool applies invisibility to Top Layer objects)
- One cannot see thumbnails of the pages in each flipchart by clicking on the Page Selector ...but there is a new 'Page Browser' button. Dragging objects from one page to another using this method gives a Copy by default (rather than a 'Move or Copy' option in AP3)
- There is no right-click in Design Mode except when Marquee Select Tool is active (which makes sense anyway!)
- The 'Resource Library' is now called the 'Resource Browser': the 'Headliner' Grid is not now listed in (my installation of) 'Shared Grids – Other' ...It is instead in 'Shared Backgrounds – Paper' (but I miss the Scale Up/Down buttons to adjust the gaps between the lines); 'Shared Activities' is not now a separate Menu button but is found within the Resource Browser
- There are no Re-size, Rotate handles nor Menu items (Change Order etc.) unless one is in Design Mode ...or unless one right-clicks on the Object
- Circles do not now draw from the Centre out – I really liked that effect in AP3

- Sound Recorder is now listed among the Tools. I miss the visual feedback of the 'sound check'.
- Screen Recorder does not now give an option to record a specified area but defaults instead to the whole screen.
- Where is the 'Pen Modifier' tool? I used to like the Circle and Point-to-Point pens especially (the latter was handy for drawing Scalenes – I will use the new 'Shape Recognition' tool instead).
- The 'Fraction Creator' tool is gone.
- Switching out to Desktop is done via 'Desktop Tools': this gives an 'eBeam-type wheel' set ...but they haven't included Annotation Tools (Pens, highlighter, Erasers) !?

Things I don't like:

- Inspire saves in its own/new ".flipchart" format so is not backwards compatible with AP3
- In 'Page Actions' one does not get a preview of 'another page' one wants to link to (so it is not as easy as it was in AP3 to hyperlink within flipchart pages)

Things more or less as they were:

- Undo/Redo
- Clear Tool
- Page navigation (Forward, Backward)
- Text (except one can now choose easily from all the installed Fonts; there are also Symbols available)
- Spell Checker
- Web Browser (which now goes out to the installed Browser rather than an AP3 internal Browser window)
- On-screen Keyboard (same four options as in AP3)
- Pen
- Fill (but where is the Ink Dropper that accompanied it in AP3?)
- Revealer
- Spotlight
- 'Deconstruct Text' is now called 'Extract Text'
- Ruler (easier to change from Metric to Imperial; easier to extend)

- Protractor (except one can now choose Arc and Open Arc as well as the Filled Arc that came with AP3)
- Compass (looks more like a Virtual one; the measurements of Radius and rotation are not now visible – pity)
- One can still set the default Page Colour to other than White
- Camera (this and Sound Recorder are my favourite tools!)
- Dice
- Calculator
- X-Y Origin (great for Symmetry exercise, as well as for Centres of Rotation)
- Etc.

Completely new features (that I have yet to play with!)

- A 'Student Database' can be created
- Voting Devices and Polling seem to be more integrated
- 'Dual Input' is available for 'on board' use ...but an extra price?

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