

Things are different in Promethean's ActivInspire (version 1.1.11426 July 2009)

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
- Update: Handwritten words etc. can be OCRd later in a session via the 'Object Edit Menu'
- 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') ..via the Dashboard ...Configure

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!)
- Update: Right-click is now available both in Present and in Design mode
- 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

- Update: “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” ...these now appear by default whether one is in Design or Present mode.
- 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) !? Update: switching out to the Desktop is also available via the ‘Desktop Annotate’ button (so that the Pens etc. will still be available) ...or by minimising the Inspire window

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). Update: at least there is now an ‘Apply Changes’ button on the dialogue ...previously, Promethean has not had an ‘OK’ button

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 and Highlighter

- 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)
- Update: 'actions' (such as Sounds) are editable in Design mode but actionable only in Present mode (as was the case in AP3)
- 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?