

PROFILE**Name:** Davenport University**Location:** Grand Rapids, MI**Founded:** 1866**CHALLENGE**

Provide system-wide interactive and projection technology in each classroom to enhance faculty and student engagement and collaboration, while improving interactive capacity and reliability.

SOLUTION

Standardize with Epson® BrightLink® Interactive Displays in every classroom throughout the 11-campus Davenport University system in Michigan.

Technology Shift Transforms Classrooms

Instructors Using Epson BrightLink Interactive Displays Like Giant Tablets at Davenport University in Michigan

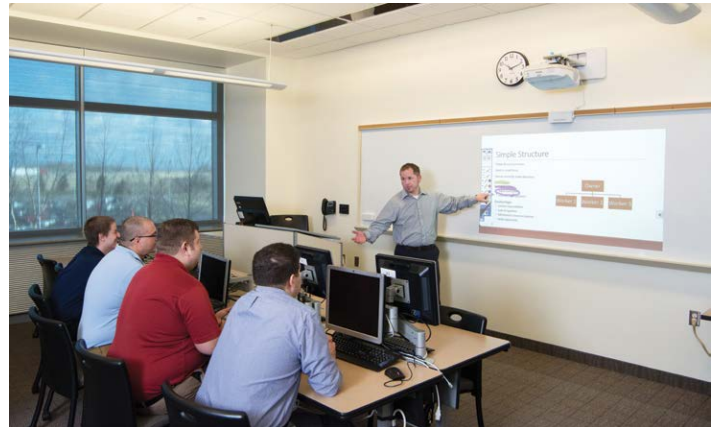
“Especially now that everyone has a smart phone or tablet, the BrightLink has become a natural. Of course you want to use a BrightLink if you’re going to make a presentation, look up something online with your class, or turn over the podium to a student. It’s like a giant phone or tablet, and you can use it in just the same way.”

That’s Brent Bean, ITS/Project Manager for Davenport University in Michigan, explaining why the school has installed Epson BrightLink Interactive Displays in every classroom across 11 campuses—and why they have begun upgrading to the new BrightLinks from earlier versions they began buying six years ago.

“I see our people using the BrightLink, and I see that the students are engaged with what they’re learning. Our instructors are standing up in front of them, speaking with them, working with them, rather than sitting in the corner where the PC is.”

The BrightLink and Davenport University

According to Bean, Davenport has long used interactive displays, but they switched to the Epson BrightLink in 2010 when they built a new academic building on their main, W.A. Lettinga Campus in Grand Rapids. “We loved the fact that the BrightLink was reliable and so easy to use,” he recalls. Jeff Imhoff at Bluewater Technologies in Grand Rapids had mentioned the



BrightLink to him, and Bean sought out Epson at the Educause conference that year.

For its time, that early BrightLink was highly innovative. The electronics built into the display made it easy to write notes on the whiteboard or to write or draw over a projected image, then save the notes and markups for later reference, or email them to students. Using an ultra short-throw display mounted directly above the whiteboard, it reduced any shadows cast by the user.

“The biggest issue for us,” Bean recalls, “was how reliable the new displays would be. We had tried other vendors’ products, and they didn’t always work. You would come in to teach, find a problem, and then you’d have to move 30 students to another room. That’s really awkward.” Yet Bean says his experience with Epson displays installed in Davenport classrooms was totally different.

“When Jeff started telling us about the BrightLink, the bells went off in my head,” he recalls. “He arranged to have Epson lend us one for 30 days to test it. After that I went to my boss and said this is it. This is cool, and it’s Epson. It’s what we want.”

Outfitting the Classrooms

According to Imhoff, Bluewater installed 37 BrightLink displays at in Grand Rapids in 2010, then went on to install one in every Davenport's classroom on 11 campuses across Michigan. In 2016, Davenport began upgrading to the latest BrightLink model, with 52 of the newest version now installed in Grand Rapids, Midland and Lansing, Michigan.

In addition to the display, Davenport has standardized on a 4 x 12' whiteboard from Cig Jan Products of Grand Rapids. This board gives instructors up to a 77" diagonal interactive surface in the center plus up to 2.8 feet of more permanent writing and magnetic posting space on either side. "They love these boards, because they're virtually indestructible," Imhoff says. If someone writes on the board with a permanent marker, they can easily clean them with solvent.

Each classroom includes a Lenovo ThinkCentre desktop computer, a Crestron amplifier and ceiling speakers, an input plate for a laptop, and a Crestron MPC-M10 panel to control the projection source, lights and volume. "It's super easy for everyone to use," Imhoff explains. "We've made sure every classroom is exactly the same, so even if someone teaches at one campus on Mondays and another on Tuesdays, they know just what they're going to find."

The transition to the newest BrightLink has gone very smoothly, Bean says. "Epson still includes the 'electronic markers' that they always have, so teachers don't have to change how they use them, but people love the finger touch once they try it." The finger touch feature, unique to the latest BrightLink, allows up to six users to simultaneously write or draw on the interactive whiteboard, as well as to control a computer. It's finger touch that makes the BrightLink feel and work like a giant tablet.

Bean adds that he's especially concerned about the technology he installs because he cares deeply about Davenport University. Not only has he worked there for 17 years, but he's a Davenport



alum. "When I was a student here, I really felt the instructors and staff cared about me. I still believe they feel that way, that they want to change people's lives for the better. That's the point of everything we do."

For that reason, he's not about to install a piece of equipment that might not work or would be hard to use. "We need to put our instructors in a position to succeed, and so having the BrightLink is a good feeling. We can tell people, 'you're going to be teaching on a Saturday, but everything will work.'"

"Using the BrightLink is a piece of cake," Bean adds. "An instructor can highlight something, or write 10 things on the board their students will need to know for the quiz, and then copy and email them so they can't say they forgot."

"It's all digital as well. There's no paper to lose or to waste. That's good in and of itself, but it also ties into other things the staff and the students are doing digitally. If someone wants to break the class into groups and say, 'Each of you will present what you learn on the board,' it's super easy for them to do. They can train their students in two minutes. 'That's all there is to it,' they'll say, then off they go!"

"This is cool, and it's Epson. It's what we want."

—BRENT BEAN, ITS/PROJECT MANAGER, DAVENPORT UNIVERSITY

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