Evaluation: FlatFrog
Board Software - Q4 2019

WAINHOUSE
Research

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Report Excerpt

SUMMARY

FlatFrog Board provides features designed for a multitouch, in-room board experience – pure play local teamwork. Among our key takeaways is that FlatFrog Board is an easy-to-use product that is designed with a sharp focus on in-room collaboration.

We put FlatFrog Board through rigorous testing in our Research Lab and in a remote office across several end user devices, with our evaluators working asynchronously. Our focus with this evaluation is specifically to address ease of use, feature sets, and use cases.

The software is designed specifically to make it easy for the typical knowledge worker to get started with ideation software and touchscreens. Some of its unique features include 36 built-in templates, drag & drop grouping, finger-based lassoing, and global management of touchscreens.

INTRODUCTION

FlatFrog positions FlatFrog Board as an interactive team application optimized for InGlass™, its proprietary touchscreen technology deployed by numerous interactive flat panel vendors. While a lightweight version of FlatFrog Board software is provided for free by many of FlatFrog's partners (as described in our Q2 2019 Dell C7520QT Interactive Touch Monitor evaluation), this downloadable, Windows-only application is designed for organizations seeking even greater functionality on their interactive touch displays.

Priced at $50 per room / device per month, FlatFrog Board runs on Windows 10-based touch displays, PCs, and laptops. The product is integrated with QuickLaunch as well as Intel Unite. And the software is designed specifically to make it easy for the typical knowledge worker to get started with ideation software and touchscreens. Some of its unique features include 36 built-in templates, drag & drop grouping, finger-based lassoing, and global management of touchscreens.

FLATFROG BOARD

FlatFrog Board Features
Using the FlatFrog Board software on the Dell interactive touch display, we created a chart that describes our take on the major software features and some of the "extras" provided by the software.

Features that contribute to a simple, embraceable user experience include

- FlatFrog Board Splash Screen, which presents users with three simple options for creating new boards, opening boards from pre-defined templates, and opening existing boards.
- A set of Agile design templates to help users get started quickly.
- A simple means of importing .JPG and .PNG files.
- A "hamburger" menu (the traditional UX meme for showing users that several options exist) that makes canvas creation and global file operations available.

FlatFrog Board Splash Screen

FlatFrog Board Menu Visibility

Enterprises seeking to create a consistent experience for their users can determine how actions are presented to novice or experienced end users. These can be changed on an individual board if desired within the FlatFrog Board management console. The board menu visibility settings also allow an IT department to set a security level for a meeting room and manage settings per board. Some organizations might want to specify that users cannot do any sharing or saving of canvases.

Working Within a FlatFrog Board Canvas

Our experience of working within a FlatFrog Board canvas on the Dell InGlass-enabled display is that annotation is very natural (we already had experienced this technology during our evaluation of the *Dell C7520QT Interactive Touch Monitor*). We used both the Dell-provided passive pen and a thinner, FlatFrog-provided passive pen. For writing, both pens provide a smooth and accurate experience, and we notice no lag while writing at any speed. We tested up to four pens annotating onscreen concurrently (the limit of the hardware in the lab). We also tested up to ten fingers annotating onscreen concurrently. For erasing, the back of a pen, finger or palm (heel of hand) can be used. There are no settings for sizing the eraser, but the palm eraser can be used for erasing larger swaths of work. Among the features we particularly like in FlatFrog Board is the ability to move items between canvasses via drag and drop on the touchscreen. Groups of content can be created by dragging one visual item over the top of another and releasing it. Touching the back item and moving / scaling the content will manipulate both. Moving the forward entity ungroups it quickly. The grouping and ungrouping feature is user friendly and intuitive.

WHAT WE LIKED

FlatFrog Board is remarkably easy to use – simplicity is the key word here.

- How the software works with an InGlass board, creating an almost frictionless experience of drawing and annotating.
- We consider the palm erase and drag-and-drop grouping to be exceptional differentiators for FlatFrog Board.
- FlatFrog has been smart (and choosy) about its initiatives, focusing on a few integrations (*QuickLaunch, Intel Unite*) that give it good exposure without breaking the bank in terms of development effort.
- The ability to import .JPG and .PNG images and manipulate them is familiar and painless.
- The product has a very low learning curve – we were up and running quickly.
- The software's ability to monitor the degree to which a user wants to rotate pictures, templates and sticky notes – it almost intelligently knows to "snap" these objects to be level within a certain threshold. Within a 15-degree range it will make an object level.

Our ratings on the following page are based on our experience working with FlatFrog Board as a tool for local collaboration.   The following table represents WR's take on FlatFrog Board. Solid Harvey ball, 4 = 4, highest rating. 0 = 0, lowest rating.

Capability	FlatFrog Board
Zoom	○
Canvases	●
Canvas size	●
Resizing element	●
Rotating Elements	●
Import	●
Export	◑
Multiple pen touch	●
Pen widths	●
Pen colors	●
Highlighter	○
Grouping objects	●
Predefined templates	●
Sticky Notes	●
Text Boxes	◔
Compatibility	◕
Latency	●
Touchscreen finger annotation	●
Touchscreen finger erase	●
Ability to use pen and eraser simultaneously	●
Overall user-friendliness	●

FlatFrog's avowed goal is to "make it easy to create a fast framework for getting a more structured meeting." The product indeed succeeds in this manner. The software is available as a free download to trial at www.flatfrog.com.

About the Authors

Alan D. Greenberg, Senior Analyst & Partner. Located in Austin, TX, Alan is an expert in collaboration and conferencing applications for meeting rooms and classrooms. He specializes in ideation technologies, video conferencing, web conferencing, and video-centric products and services. Alan holds an M.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and a B.A. from Hampshire College, Amherst MA.

Bryan Hellard is a Researcher at Wainhouse Research where his primary focus is product evaluation and testing. He has 20 years' experience in the industry across several roles including product engineering and management, R&D, and end user consulting. Prior to Wainhouse Research, he was President of True View Video where he developed video conferencing related products and consulted with end users on best practices for collaboration. He lives in the Cincinnati, Ohio area.

About Wainhouse Research

Wainhouse Research is an independent analyst firm that focuses on critical issues in the unified communications and collaboration market. The company provides end-to-end coverage of the UC&C industry, with areas of focus covering unified communications, enterprise video, meeting room collaboration, personal & web-based collaboration, and audio-conferencing market segments. The company acts as a trusted advisor providing strategic advice and direction for both the UC&C industry and its enterprise users. For further details contact sales@wainhouse.com or see http://www.wainhouse.com.

About FlatFrog

FlatFrog provides interactive business solutions that include whiteboard applications and high-performance patented InGlass™ interactive technology. FlatFrog business collaboration solutions are designed to transform the modern workplace and are available on displays from Avocor, Dell, NEC, Samsung, Sharp, SMART and ViewSonic. Founded in 2007, FlatFrog is headquartered in Lund, Sweden with locations in the U.S., Taiwan and South Korea. For more information, visit https://www.flatfrog.com.

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