

Secure laptop storage and recharging trolley is eco-friendly



PC Locs, the Perth-based manufacturer of laptop secure storage and charging systems, has introduced the Eco Revolution range of laptop trolleys. There are two models, holding 16 and 28 laptops respectively.

The Eco Safe Charge™ provided with the trolley allows teachers to manage recharging the computers' batteries by a hand-held remote control.

This advanced unit offers a choice of a 'safe on' sequential start, or 'timed charging' modes. When 'safe on' is selected, power is supplied in sequence to groups of four computers, to prevent a power surge that could cause a circuit breaker to trip and plunge the school into darkness.

In 'timed charging' mode, the batteries can be charged overnight to take advantage of lower off-peak power tariffs.

The Eco Timer™ is pre-programmed to recharge the batteries for one to four hours – a one-hour top-up after light usage, or up to four hours when the batteries have been drained. An indicator lights up to indicate when each group of four laptops is being charged and there's a manual on-off switch that over-rides the remote control.

The 16-laptop model stores the laptops in two banks of eight and there are two banks of 14 in the 28-laptop model. Unlike competing storage trolleys, PC Locs' models are not enclosed, this allows airflow between the laptops to reduce heat build-up during battery charging.

Secure storage is achieved by two sturdy bars that are padlocked in place to prevent laptops from being taken out of the trolley. Before first use, the supporting tray is adjusted to the height of the laptop model used by the school, and permanently secured by anchor pins. To discourage thieves from wheeling a trolley down the corridor and out of the school, the trolley comes with a chain and an anchor plate, which should be securely attached to the floor or wall.

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Adobe eLearning Suite 2



Adobe eLearning Suite 2 provides an impressive set of software tools that allows educators to author and create elearning modules and courses. The potential of the package is mind-boggling; it is not, however, for the faint-hearted.

The suite comprises a number of well-known Adobe programs including Bridge CS5, Dreamweaver CS5, Flash Professional 5 and Photoshop CS5, along with other tools such as Media Encoder CS5 and Pixel Bender Toolkit 2. But the power of the package lies in Adobe Captivate CS5. In Captivate you can customise pre-existing templates to design a prototype of how your lessons will look. You can also insert placeholders for images, videos and navigation buttons to give your unit a unified look.

Once you have established a template, adding content is relatively easy. Captivate can import pictures, animations or videos from other Adobe programs to capitalise on the range of media available to engage students and enhance learning. Other elements such as audio and even PowerPoint slides can also be inserted.

Assessment hasn't been overlooked with a quiz menu offering options for adding anything from multiple choice to short answer and random questions. Students can get instant feedback and explanations after they have taken a quiz, and the program generates a results screen showing how the student went in the assessment. Individual results can also be consolidated into reports using a quiz results analyser to inform future teaching.

After they are published, lessons can be run in a web-browser which means that they can easily be accessed by students at school or at home. They can also be published on Acrobat.com, allowing collaboration with content experts or colleagues during the development stage.

Anyone who has had experience with Photoshop will know that it's a sophisticated program, and Captivate runs on similar lines. To take full advantage of the technology, users need to be familiar with the other software in the suite and to understand principles of elearning to get the most out of the time invested in creating courses or lessons. With a little help from Adobe's online tutorials, those with less experience should still be able to use the suite to create interesting elearning content.

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New solutions for the interactive classroom

Hills SVL, a leading education solutions provider to schools over 30 years, has introduced two new product solutions for the interactive classroom.

Dan Fletcher, national brand manager, says: "Over the years, we have built a reputation as the place to go for schools wanting audio and lighting... now schools can also come to Hills SVL for expert advice and state-of-the-art AV equipment for the classroom."

Hills SVL has been appointed in Australia and New Zealand as the exclusive distributor of Vivitek projectors and Qomo interactive classroom products.

Vivitek manufactures an extensive line up of DLP projectors. These include portable projectors, fixed installation, short throw and home theatre models.

The Qomo interactive classroom range includes interactive whiteboards, document cameras, annotation devices and audience response systems.

Models in the interactive whiteboard range include infrared and electromagnetic technologies incorporating both stylus and finger touch capabilities. Sizes start from the 4:3 78" right up to the versatile 16:9 105" board.

The Qomo document camera range includes the very popular QD700, which comes with a complete multi-media switching system, video scaler and projector control. Two Macs or PCs (with audio), a DVD player, and a VCR can be connected to the camera.

An interactive RF wireless tablet and 17" and 19" interactive panels make up the Qomo interactive panel range. All three enable



electronic annotation and mark up of electronic files or images of all types, including an object or printed material placed under a Qomo document camera's lens.

Qomo states that its QClick is the most powerful and cost effective interactive wireless audience response system currently available. There are four styles and all are easy to learn and fun to use. The Infrared QClick system integrates into Microsoft PowerPoint and can be used over any application the class teacher may want to test – from paper exams and oral quizzes, to flash files and websites.

Hills SVL provides technical support and training for schools and integrators from its offices and warehouses in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

www.educationav.com.au
tel 1800 502 015

PICAXE-18M2 microcontroller



The new 18M2 can now run four separate tasks in parallel, allowing a logicator flowsheet to contain four separate start cells and four separate flowchart tasks. Multitasking is also supported in BASIC program listings. The 18M2 device replaces all of the older 18/18A/18M/18X parts and has memory capacity for up to 1800 lines of code. It is fully backwards compatible with all existing 18 pin PICAXE project boards and programs written for any older 18 pin PICAXE part.

The lower 1.8V operation makes the 18M2 ideal for use with 3V battery packs, saving the cost of one battery. It has twice as many (now 28) general-purpose byte variables, with a total of 256 bytes of RAM.

- ◆ New 'time' variable counts elapsed seconds.
- ◆ Separate 256 bytes of non-volatile data EEPROM memory.
- ◆ Faster internal resonator (up to 32MHz) means up to 8x faster program processing.
- ◆ Full support for common features such as ring tone tunes, servos, digital temperature sensors and infrared input and output on any pin.
- ◆ Full support for advanced features like DAC, SR latch, hardware serial commands (for much faster baud rates), i2c memory devices and hardware PWM control of motors.

The PICAXE-18M2 is a new custom part factory manufactured by Microchip Inc. for Revolution Education. It is factory engraved with the full PICAXE-18M2 name – no more confusing PIC numbers for students to decipher.

www.microzed.com.au
tel 1300 735 420

Bags protect laptops from hard knocks

Laptop bags manufactured by Targus have passed drop tests conducted by accessUTS Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the University of Technology, Sydney.

The tests subjected education cases to a number of drops at heights of 0.8 m and measured the cushioning and protective performance of each case.

"It is important for schools to choose a protective case that offers adequate protection for laptops, thus safeguarding their IT investment, minimising laptop repair costs and ensuring there is no disruption to learning," said Targus managing director, Alenka Tindale.

Three Targus cases were included in the drop test trials – Hardsided case, Zamba sleeve and Targus Armoured Notebook Case (T.A.N.C.™), which fared the best overall, resulting in the lowest risk of laptop damage. The T.A.N.C. is



Targus' newest case. More than 10,000 students at 50 schools around Australia are using the case.

It features a protective shell and shock absorbing liner as well as heavy-duty fittings, zippers and D-rings which can be personalised. Targus' Hardsided case and Zamba sleeve, which also fared well in the tests, include added protective features. The Hardsided case features a hard shell, carry handle and a neoprene restraining strap to hold the laptop securely.

The sporty look Zamba sleeve has a shock-absorbing, quilted exterior and soft, no-scratch lining, and is suited to insert into school backpacks.

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NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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