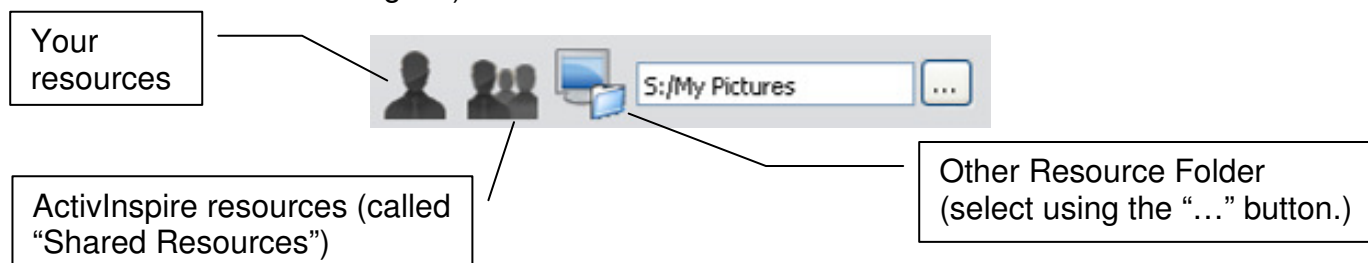


Beyond the Whiteboard 2: Media & Gadgets

The Resource Browser

Use this browser to access your own flipchart files, those supplied with the ActivInspire software and any stored in other resource folders (e.g. a folder shared with colleagues).



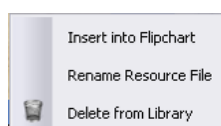
Resources can be backgrounds, grids, images, sound files, tickertapes (see Tools below), text, shapes, and just about anything else that forms part of a flipchart, even flipchart pages or entire flipcharts. (**Note:** if a folder contains a very large number of flipchart files, ActivInspire may take a while to display them, locking the program until it's ready.)

You should find your own resource files are stored in :

S:\Activ Software\ActivInspire\My Resources

You can open this folder outside of ActivInspire and organise the files as you like, creating new folders, adding files, etc.

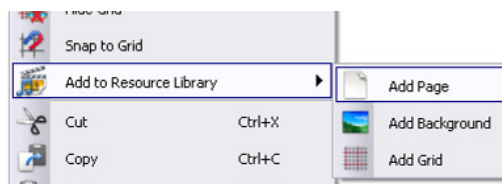
You can add resources directly from your flipchart by dragging them onto the Resource Browser. However, ActivInspire will change the file type, so you won't be able to use it outside of ActivInspire anymore. It will also call it "Resource", so you will need to right-click it within the Browser and select "Rename Resource File".



Right-click on a file in the Resource Browser to see this context menu.

Delete a file from the Resource Browser by right-clicking it and selecting **Delete from Library**.

To add an entire page to your resources, right-click on the page, select **Add to Resource Library** then **Add Page**. This will add it to the currently selected resource folder. Don't forget to rename it.



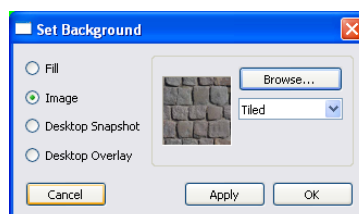
Right-click on a page then use this menu option to store the page, in the resource library. You can also store just the page's background or grid.

The Shared Resources are stored on the computer's C: drive, so it's not a good idea to add anything to this area – it won't be available when you switch computers, and will be erased whenever the computer is rebuilt by the ICT Technicians.

Backgrounds & Grids

Each page can have one background image and one grid (the grid will appear above the background image). You can create your own grids using the Grid Designer, covered in another session (**Advanced Whiteboarding 3: Introduction to the Property Browser**).

To create your own background, Select **Edit / Page Background...** from the main menu. The **Set Background** dialog box appears. Select the **Image** radio button on the left:






- Use Browse to find the image you want.
- Use the drop down list to select the method for applying the image as a background (Tiled, Best fit, Stretch fit, Centred, etc.)
- Hit Apply to try out the new settings and OK when you're satisfied.

You can also use the Set Background dialog box to set a solid Fill colour or a gradient fill. **Tip:** If you apply a gradient first, then an image that doesn't fill the screen (such as Centred), the gradient and image will both be visible.

Add a background or grid from the Resource Browser by dragging the thumbnail onto the flipchart or by double-clicking on it. **Note:** Depending on the computer you're using, you may find some grids in the Shared Resources that are actually images, which means they will replace any existing background while leaving any real grid still on display. You can usually spot the image-grids as their filenames have a different extension (i.e. the characters after the dot); grids end with .ao2 while images end with .as2 or .as4.

Remove a background or grid from the page by clicking on the Clear

icon , then selecting Clear Background  or Clear Grid .

Store a background or grid in your resources by right-clicking on the page, select **Add to Resource Library**, then either **Add Background** or **Add Grid** (see image in previous section). This will add the page's background or grid to the currently selected resource folder. Don't forget to rename it.

Flipcharts & Gadgets

Many of the “Shared Resource” files are for use with voting pads, not covered in this program. The non-voting material can be found mainly in two places:

Flipcharts Shared Resources/Activities and Templates/Activities/

Gadgets Shared Resources/Lesson building tools/Gadgets/

Some flipcharts use just the ActivInspire tools, while others use Flash to create more interactive content. If you are unfamiliar with Flash as well as ActivInspire, it might take a while to recognise which flipcharts contain Flash content. One sign to look for is white buttons with black text, which many of the ActivInspire Flash content use:



Typical ActivInspire - Flash action buttons.

The ActivInspire-only examples are worth looking at as they can be edited, and may give you some ideas for your own creations, and what ActivInspire is capable (and incapable) of.

Some of the included Flash content is, in my opinion, sloppy and limited in use. You won't be able to edit it either. So always test Shared Resources thoroughly before using them.


A few things to be aware of among the Gadgets:


- Timers will reset and switch off if you minimise ActivInspire.
- Many of the animated timers (sand timer, candle, firework, etc.) are very inaccurate (the sand timer, for example, only runs for around 70% of the set time). Don't use them when timing is important (you may find they're more of a distraction under those circumstances anyway).
- Once placed, flash gadgets are hard to move. Select them by dragging over them, then use the Freely Move icon from the Marquee Handles (see the **Beyond the Whiteboard 1: Building Blocks** session).
- The “revealers” (a magnifying glass and a pair of glasses) don't appear to do anything at all. However, **Advanced Whiteboarding 1: Layers & Magic Ink** shows you how to make them live up to their name.

Media


As well as inserting media (images, sound, video) from the Resource Browser, you can insert them directly. The two most common ways are:

Copy and Paste – you can copy images and text from office documents and the internet and paste them onto the page.

Insert Media From File  - use this icon to access your own files and add them to the current page.

 Inserting a sound/music file adds a speaker button to the page. Click to start the sound/music. You may see a small dialog box too, which enables you to adjust the playback or stop it altogether. You can disable this dialog box in the Settings menu (see **Advancing Whiteboarding 1: Profiles & Customisation**).



 A new icon will appear on the top bar, next to the Design Mode button. It's hard to make out, but it's meant to be the speaker symbol with the forbidden symbol on top. Click to stop all sounds.

Inserting video creates a video window on the page. You'll probably find the video will play automatically each time you display the page. At the bottom of the window is a simple control bar, similar to the sound dialog box.




The camera button, when pressed, will take a single frame from a currently playing video and add it to the page. You may find, however, it merely captures a completely black rectangle. **Tip:** A workaround is to Duplicate the video window and place the copy on top of the original. Now the camera button should work. If it doesn't, make further copies until it does! Failing that, seek out better software more suited to the purpose.




You may prefer to use a dedicated video player, such as VLC or Windows Media Player. See the section below on **The Lesson Hub** for details.







Advanced Tools




There are a number of tools that tend not to appear directly on the toolbox. (Some will appear, depending on the selected Profile, and all can be made to appear from the Settings menu – see **Advanced Whiteboarding 1: Profiles & Customisation** for details.) However, the tools icon (shown above) gives access to many of these tools.

Although these tools will appear on the current page, they are separate from it; as you switch pages, they will remain visible. Some are closed by clicking the standard X; some have context menus  that have a Close option. Some you can drag to the Rubbish Bin (though avoid doing this with the XY Origin – see note below).

For tools such as the Ruler, Protractor and Compass, it's important to watch the mouse cursor; its icon will change as you move over the tool to show which action will take place if you click and drag the mouse at that point:

Icon	Action
	Move the tool to a new position.
	Rotate the tool.
	Resize the tool (for the compass, this opens the compass wider).

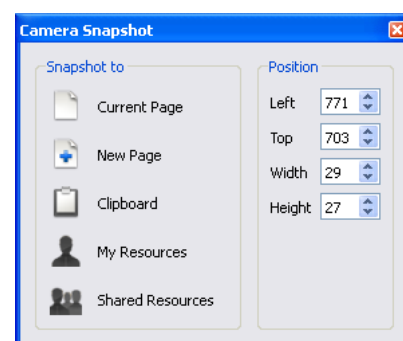
Where found	Icon	Name	Notes	How to close
Maths Tools		Ruler	Draw and measure straight lines. Place the pen near the ruler to make it "latch on". You can rotate it too. Use the context menu to change units.	Drag to rubbish bin or select Close from context menu.
		Protractor	Measure angles and draw arcs. Place the pen near the protractor to make it "latch on". Use the context menu to change the arc type and the protractor type.	Drag to rubbish bin or select Close from context menu.
		Compass	Pay particular attention to the mouse symbols. You can position the compass, open it up, rotate it, and rotate it while drawing to create an arc. Use the context menu to reflect it or mark the centre of arcs as they're drawn.	Drag to rubbish bin or select Close from context menu.
		XY Origin	Normally, shapes will rotate about their centres or some other point set in their Properties. With the XY Origin on, objects will rotate around it instead.	Select it from the Tools menu again. Dragging it to the rubbish bin can cause problems. <i>If you ever think you've lost it, look under the bin!</i>
		Dice	Roll between 1 and 5 dice. "Output to Flipchart" will copy the <u>total</u> of all the dice to the centre of the flipchart.	Close button.
		Calculator	A basic calculator (does not follow BODMAS). When repositioning, make sure you grab the very top edge of the calculator. If you drag the "titlebar", you will copy the contents of the "history" onto the page.	Close button.






Where found	Icon	Name	Notes	How to close
More Tools		Clock	Shows current time, but can also count up and down, and also trigger various events / play sounds.	Close button.
		Tickertape	<p>Display scrolling messages across the top, middle or bottom of the screen. Set the font, colour(s), scrolling speed. You can temporarily halt and drag the message with the mouse.</p> <p>Store tickertapes in your resources. If you drag a stored tickertape onto the page, a small action button  will appear. Click this to start the tickertape.</p>	Close button.

Camera

There are five versions of the camera tool. The first three are for cutting out images from a larger image, page or desktop: use the tool to highlight the area you want, then select the destination from the Camera Snapshot window.

The last two versions are for getting images of individual windows and the entire screen respectively. They are equivalent to using Alt+PrtScr and PrtScr on the keyboard, then pasting onto the page.



Camera Type	Icon	Description	Use it for:
Area		Places a rectangle with size handles on the page. Position and resize over the image you want. ActivInspire remembers the last position and size you used, so you can easily get identically-sized images.	Cutting out rectangular images that match the orientation of the page.
Point to Point		Use like the Line-Chain Shape tool (<i>see session notes for Building Blocks</i>): each click adds a straight line to the previous point, building up a polygon. Double-click to finish.	Cutting out irregular shapes, particularly if close to other images you don't want.
Freehand		Use like the Freeform Shape tool (<i>see session notes for Building Blocks</i>): click and drag to draw an outline around the image you want. Double-click to finish.	Cutting out irregular shapes, particularly if close to other images you don't want.
Window		Make sure the window you want an image of is at least partly visible on the screen. Once activated, this tool waits for you to select (click) the window you want an image of.	Getting an image of a window. You can also use Alt+PrtScreen and paste.
Fullscreen		Once selected, you don't need to do anything except select the destination in the Camera Snapshot window. It will grab the entire screen.	Getting an image of the entire screen. You can also use PrtScreen and paste.

Importing PDFs & PowerPoints

You can import PDF documents and PowerPoint presentations into ActivInspire using File / Import from the menu.

PDFs

- You can import directly into an existing flipchart.
- You can choose which pages to import.
- You will lose quality compared to the original.

PowerPoint Presentations

- You can only import PowerPoints into new flipcharts.
- You cannot select the slides you want; everything is imported.
- Notes are imported into the Notes Browser.
- Animation is lost.
- You can import PowerPoints in two ways: as images or objects.

Images	Objects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActivInspire turns each slide into a large image. • Quality is reduced compared to the original. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActivInspire attempts to create image and texts objects from the slide contents. • Some images may be corrupted and/or have pink borders. • Some items might be repositioned. • Links to other slides, websites, etc., are recreated.

Page Turn Effects

A simple if frivolous creative addition to your flipcharts is the inclusion of Page Turn Effects, similar to page transitions in PowerPoint. To apply them to the entire flipchart, select **View / Page Turn Effects** from the menu.

A window showing all the various effects appears. Select a particular effect or choose **Random** to have ActivInspire make a random selection each time, or **None** to remove effects.

It's also possible to add effects to individual pages using the Properties Browser. In such circumstances, the effect is played as the page is exited, not as it is entered. See **Advanced Whiteboarding 3** for details.

Note: *the effects can be demanding on the computer, and I've witnessed more than once the effect being corrupted. This sometimes manifests as a rapid flickering of the page. If in doubt, don't use it.*

The Lesson Hub

Many things you'll want to include in a lesson cannot be done with ActivInspire. Visiting a website, loading an office document or other software, or watching a video (on a dedicated video player like Windows Media Player or VLC) are all beyond the limits of a flipchart page.

However, to increase cohesion in your lesson, a flipchart can make a good central hub, launching the external programs as required. Once finished, you return to the flipchart ready for the next part of the lesson.

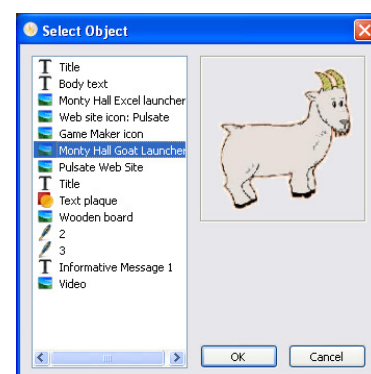
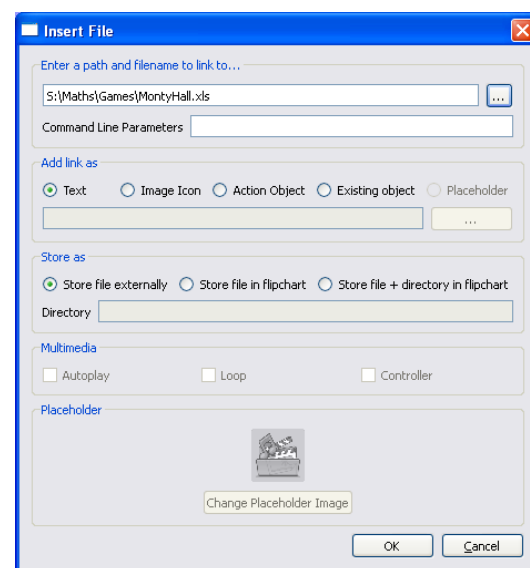
Adding File or Program Launchers

The easiest way to add a button that loads a file or some other program is as follows:

1. Locate the file or program executable in its folder OR find the program you want to start on the Start menu.
2. Click and drag the file's / program's icon onto the page.
3. This should create an icon that, when clicked, will load the file / program.

If you want more control, you can select Insert / Link / File... from the menu. This will open the Select File dialog box:

1. Locate and select the file or program executable and press Open. The Insert File window will open (see right).
2. Choose how you want the launcher to appear from the "Add link as" section.
 - a. **Text** will give you a text object showing the file location – you can edit this using the Edit Text marquee handle.
 - b. **Image Icon** will use the file's own icon as a button.
 - c. **Action Object** – **Do not use!** It creates an invisible square on the page!
 - d. **Existing Object** – Use the "... " button to choose an existing object on the page. (See the Select Object window, right.) This object now becomes the launcher.
3. Ignore the rest of the Insert File window and click OK.



Some warnings:

- **Some programs will not work due to the way they are set up on the network.**
- **If using the program executable, make sure you are selecting the correct file (you need to be a fairly confident computer user to do this, otherwise just drag the file from the Start menu onto the page).**
- **Launch buttons will not work if the file moves or is otherwise unavailable, e.g. trying to launch files on your own network drive from someone else's login.**

Adding Videos

You can add videos just like any other file – the launch button will then open the video in a separate window, but still using ActivInspire’s internal video player. You can also set the video to play automatically, loop and hide the controls using the Multimedia section of the Insert File window (see above).

A better option might be to use a dedicated player like Windows Media Player or VLC. This is a little trickier to set up, so follow these steps carefully:

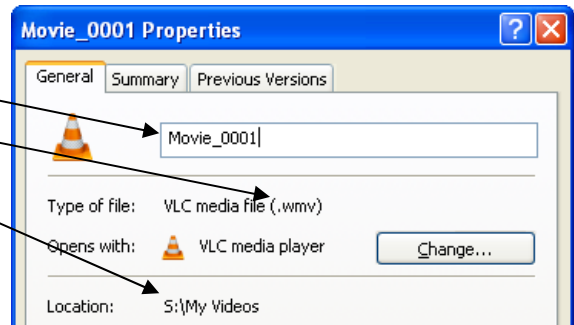
1. Select Insert / Link / File from the menu.
2. Navigate to the video player (not the actual video) you want to use. In most cases, this will be on the C: drive so bear in mind, if you move computers, the launcher will look for the video player in the same folder location. Also make sure you’re selecting the actual executable file:
 - a. **Windows Media Player** - *C:\ Program Files \ Windows Media Player \ wmplayer.exe*
 - b. **VLC** - *C:\ Program Files \ VideoLAN \ VLC \ vlc.exe*
3. When the Insert File window appears you can make the normal selections, but you also need to enter the location and filename of the video in the **Command Line Parameters** box. To do that:
 - a. Open the folder containing the video file.
 - b. Right-click on it and select Properties.
 - c. Look at the Properties window for the 3 pieces of information you need.

i. The filename

ii. The file extension

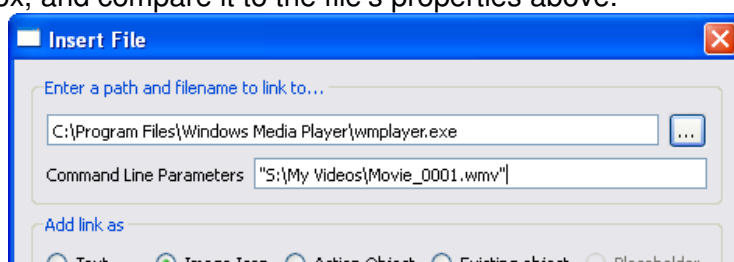
iii. The file location

4. Type in or copy and paste the information into the **Command Line Parameters** box.



- a. You **MUST** start and end with inverted commas.
 - b. The file location must come first.
 - c. Next type an extra backslash '\'. (Don't put spaces either side of this!)
 - d. Add the filename.
 - e. Add the file extension.
5. Click OK when you're done.

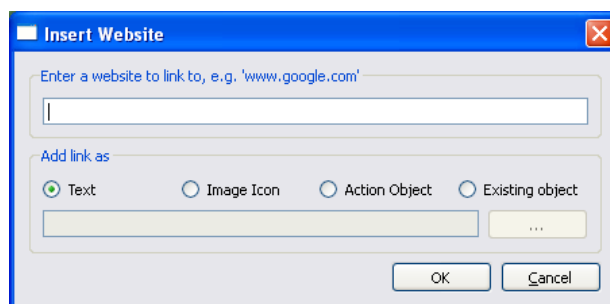
See the image below for an example of what to type in the Command Line Parameters box, and compare it to the file's properties above.



Adding Websites

You can add a text link by dragging the URL from the browser onto the page. This gives you a text object, similar to the Text option described above. For more control, use select Insert / Link / Website from the menu. This will open the Insert Website window:

1. Type in or copy and paste the web address into the first box.
2. Select the Add link as method, as described above for files and programs.



Moving a Launcher

Because a launcher wants to launch things, you might find you trigger its action when you really want to move it on the page. There are two ways round this:

- Right click on the launcher and use the Freely Move marquee handle.

OR

- Switch the Design Mode button  to orange  to deactivate all launchers. Don't forget to switch it back to blue once you've finished.

Editing a Launcher

You can change what file, program or website is launched using the Action Browser. This is covered in **Advanced Whiteboarding 2: Profiles and Customisation**.

Storing a Launcher

After all that effort to create a launcher, particularly for launching video files, you might want to store your efforts for later use. This is easily done by dragging the launcher onto the Resource Browser.

- Select the appropriate resource folder first.
- Once added, don't forget to rename it (and give it a useful name, possibly including the selected video player if it's for a video file).
- When you need it again, just add it like you would any other resource.