≈ AIRTAME | Making screens smarter
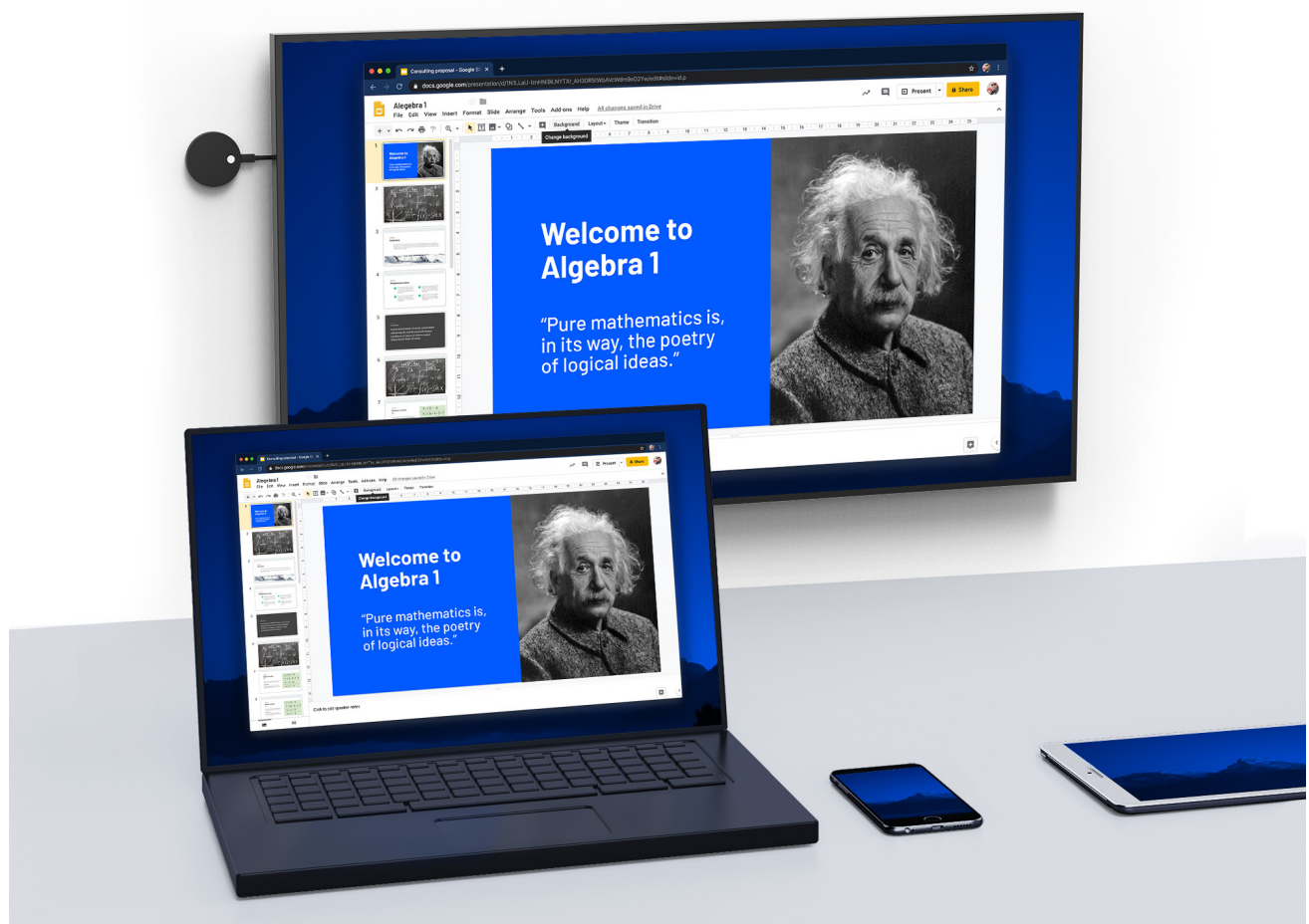
Why Do Schools Choose Airtame?

Find out how Airtame's screen sharing and digital signage solution compares to using cables, Interactive Flat Panels, Apple TV, ScreenBeam, Solstice, and wePresent.

A 2019 Futuresource report[1] found Airtame to be the most sold screen sharing solution across schools in North America. But how is Airtame different from the many solutions on the market? This document focuses on the most popular screen sharing options found throughout K-12 and higher education. These options have been selected according to industry reports as well as customer feedback.

Cables and Interactive Flat Panels will be looked at first. While these products do offer screen sharing, we have not measured them against the same criteria as the other solutions which are categorically more similar. Airtame, Apple TV, wePresent, ScreenBeam, and Solstice all produce a physical device that connects to a TV or projector via HDMI. All provide wireless screen sharing, with varying support for remote device management and digital signage. They are compared within two tables. The first table compares "core functionality", which is everything you get when you buy the physical device. The second table compares "the extras", which are optional device management and digital signage tools that you can access with an additional subscription. Individual features and related terms are explained within the Index.

1 Futuresource Consulting Ltd, May 2019. Global Wireless Presentation Solutions Report 2019.

Airtame vs. Cables

	Airtame 2	Cables
Cons	• Is more expensive than a cable (at least in the short-term).	• Often break or go missing, increasing the cost of maintenance. • Tether teachers to the front of the classroom. • Create clutter, especially if you need multiple cables to support different types of computers and mobile devices.
Pros	• Offers wireless screen sharing to everyone, from any device. • Gives teachers the mobility to teach in the power zone. • Requires minimal maintenance, with free access to remote updates in Airtame Cloud Lite. • Eliminates the need to invest in stationary PCs normally tethered to the classroom display. Airtame lets teachers stick to using laptops and mobile devices for wireless screen sharing.	• Offer a secure way to connect two specific devices without any additional functionality.

Airtame vs. Interactive Flat Panels

	Airtame 2	Interactive Flat Panels
Cons	• Relies on you bringing a device to class and screen sharing from the device.	• Are expensive. • Require teachers to stay at the front of the classroom to move through class material. • Sometimes fall short of teachers' needs, especially when there is too much latency between touch and the panel's reaction. • Usually come with limited screen sharing options (e.g. Windows-only).
Pros	• Brings wireless screen sharing to the TVs and projectors you already have. • Offers device-agnostic screen sharing with the Airtame app, Miracast, Google Cast, and AirPlay. • Supports touchback via Miracast from Windows and Android devices when hooked up to an Interactive Flat Panel.	• Offer interactivity with touch, annotation, and drawing tools.

Comparing Core Functionality

Device	Airtame 2	Apple TV 4k	Screenbeam 1000 Edu	Solstice Pod Gen 3	WePresent WiCS-2100
Wireless Screen Sharing					
Miracast	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
Google Cast	**Yes**	No	Yes	No	Yes
AirPlay	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One-to-many screen sharing	**Yes, with the desktop app**	No	No	Yes	Yes
Extended desktop	**Yes, with AirPlay and Miracast**	Yes, with AirPlay	Yes, with AirPlay and Miracast	Yes, with AirPlay and Miracast	Yes, with AirPlay and Miracast
Moderator mode	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pin code protection	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Touchback support	**Yes, with Miracast**	No	Yes, with Miracast	No	Yes, with Windows and Mac
IT Management					
Free firmware updates	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Free software updates	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Free, unlimited device management	**Yes**	No	Up to 5,000	No	Yes
Free customer support	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Included Digital Signage					
Image	**Yes**	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Website	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
List Price Excl. VAT					
Cost per device	**$399**	$179	$599	$1199 – $1399	$919

Comparing the Extras

Device	Airtame 2	Apple TV 4k	Screenbeam 1000 Edu	Solstice Pod Gen 3	WePresent WiCS-2100
Subscription	**Airtame Cloud Plus**	N/A	ScreenBeam CMS + 3rd party provider	3rd party provider	N/A
Power Saving					
Sleep Schedule	**Yes**	No	No	Yes	No
When not in use	**Yes**	Yes*	Yes*	Yes	Yes*
Digital Signage Apps					
Website	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
Homescreen	**Yes**	No	Yes	No	No
Room Overview	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
Youtube	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
Google Slides	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
OneDrive Gallery + Video	**Yes**	No	No	No	No
Dropbox Gallery + Video	**Yes**	No	No	No	No
Unsplash	**Yes**	No	No	No	No
Trello	**Yes**	No	No	No	No
World Clock	**Yes**	No	Yes	Yes	No
Digital Signage Planning					
Looped Content	**Yes**	No	No	Yes	No
Scheduled Content	**Yes**	No	No	Yes	No
Cost Per Device					
Annual subscription	**$120**	N/A	Up to $270	Up to $300	N/A

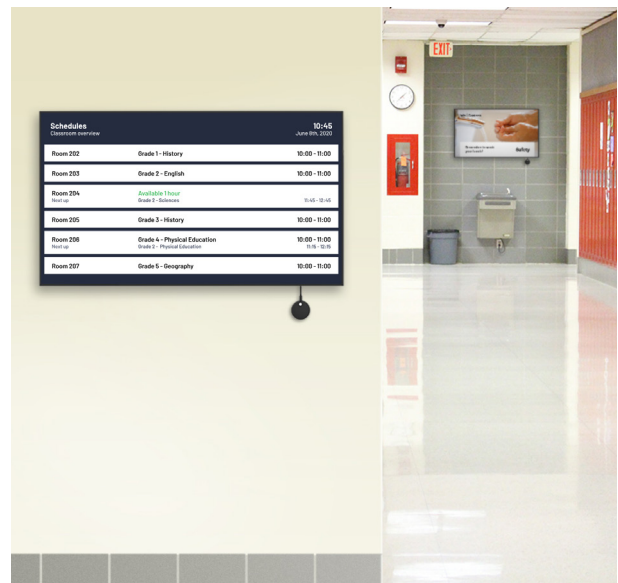*Included in cost of hardware

So, why do schools choose Airtame?

Schools choose Airtame because it offers premium screen sharing and digital signage tools at an accessible price point.

Whether or not Airtame is the solution for your school comes down to your specific needs. If you are an Apple-only school that uses, say, MacBooks for teachers and iPads for students, then Apple TV might be the best option. But if your school has a bring-your-own-device setup where a mix of computers and mobile devices are used by students and staff, then you are more likely to choose Airtame.

Airtame offers one-to-many screen sharing, which is particularly useful when teaching across large spaces or different rooms. ScreenBeam offers a unique messaging tool that lets students ask questions anonymously or in groups. Preference for one such feature above another can sometimes be the deciding factor.

More often though it comes down to budgets. Which is also why solutions like wePresent and Solstice are often eliminated. A wealthy college may choose an expensive product simply because high prices can be reassuring. We (humbly) suggest that schools can do more with the resources left over after investing in a solution that's both just as good (if not better) and more affordable.

So, Airtame or ScreenBeam? Another factor to consider is that, after the first year of using ScreenBeam, schools are charged a license fee for continued use of the Classroom Commander. Another solution with a perpetual license fee is Solstice, with an annual license costing roughly 20% of the original price of hardware. With Airtame, you get lifetime updates at no additional cost, including free access to Airtame Cloud Lite for remote, limitless management.

Instead of passing on the baton of customer service to our partner AV integrators, Airtame takes an active role in customer satisfaction. We offer free, direct technical support. Anyone using Airtame can get step-by-step guidance via our help center and video tutorials, live chat, or a phone call. Our network specialists are readily available to help with a preemptive deployment plan that meets your infrastructure and security needs. Once the setup is ready, a customer success manager will follow up and help to ensure that people are actively using Airtame.

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Screen Sharing

Miracast is an app-free screen sharing protocol used by Microsoft Windows devices and some Android devices, notably Samsung and LG. In addition to screen sharing, Miracast also lets you use wireless touchback when screen sharing to an interactive display.

Google Cast is an app-free screen sharing protocol available on the Chrome browser, ChromeOS, and most Android devices. It's what lets you share wirelessly from any computer running the Chrome browser and from your Android device.

AirPlay is an app-free screen sharing protocol used by macOS and iOS devices. It's what lets you share wirelessly from your MacBook, iPhone, or iPad.

The Airtame desktop app is a screen sharing app available for macOS, Windows, Linux, and Chromebook. You can choose to share a single "window" (document, app, browser tab), or your full screen. You can also use video playback with audio support. Additionally, the app supports one-to-many screen sharing.

One-to-many screen sharing lets you share the same class material from a single computer to multiple displays at the same time. This is practical when teaching within large spaces or across different rooms. One-to-many screen sharing is exclusively available with the Airtame desktop app. Miracast, Google Cast, and AirPlay connect you to one display at a time.

Extended desktop lets you use an Airtame-equipped TV or projector as an extension of your desktop, just like when using an extra monitor. As with sharing a single window with the desktop app, extended desktop lets you keep your speaker notes private during a presentation. You can use extended desktop from your MacBook (with AirPlay) or Windows computer (with Miracast).

Touchback support makes an interactive display an extension of your personal device; whatever you do on the display will be reflected on your Windows computer, Android smartphone, or tablet—and vice versa. Teachers can easily switch between controlling any slide show, educational game, etc. from their personal device and the interactive display.

Device Management

Device management is free with Airtame Cloud, available for all Airtame devices whether they are on Lite or Plus plans. You can log in from anywhere to update an unlimited number of devices in bulk. Airtame Cloud also lets you invite an unlimited number of colleagues to your organization's Cloud account. You can even assign different user roles according to access levels. For example, certain roles grant access to firmware updates while others may limit access to updating digital signage content.

Free software updates refer to new versions of the desktop app. The app is publicly available on Airtame's website. Administrators can also mass deploy the app for Windows, macOS, and ChromeOS.

Free firmware updates refer to updates on an Airtame device. For example, a firmware update might bring support for a new screen sharing or digital signage tool. Bulk firmware updates can be easily and quickly carried out from Airtame Cloud.

Moderator mode is a free, cloud-based tool that lets teachers and other staff members disconnect any presenter from an Airtame. This helps to nip any distraction in the bud in the rare case that someone has forgotten to disconnect.

Digital Signage

Digital signage is any visual content (digital images, video, web pages, etc.) shown on TV screens, projectors, and similar types of displays. Digital signage is increasingly displayed within classrooms, meeting rooms, school hallways, cafeterias, and similar common areas. Digital signage can help people find their way around, get live announcements, and learn about extracurricular activities.

The Website app lets you display a public URL and select a refresh interval to ensure that any recent changes are reflected. Although it's possible to display a website with Cloud Lite, the refresh interval is exclusive to Airtame Cloud Plus.

The Homescreen app syncs with classroom and meeting room calendars to show the agenda and duration of an upcoming session. The Homescreen app also shows the time, your school's logo, a custom image, and instructions for wireless screen sharing.

The Room Overview app also syncs with classroom and meeting room calendars. While Homescreen shows the agenda for a single room, Room Overview shows a list of upcoming events so that students, staff, and guests can get to the right room at the right time.

The YouTube app lets you share informative and inspiring videos that are pre-recorded. The app also supports YouTube Live, letting school representatives broadcast announcements and other news at set times.

The Google Slides app offers a dynamic way to share information while keeping confidential information safe. Some solutions rely on all digital signage content being publicly available, whereas Google Slides with Airtame can display content that's locked and not possible to find online.

The OneDrive Gallery app lets you select and showcase images submitted by the school community. Schools can use image drives to foster a sense of community by celebrating graduation ceremonies, sporting events, theatrical performances, and more. They also offer a way to include students and staff who might be working and learning remotely.

The OneDrive Video app lets you select and showcase videos connected to your OneDrive account.

The Dropbox Gallery app offers the same benefits as the OneDrive gallery app as it syncs with your school's file sharing system.

The Dropbox Video app lets you select and showcase videos connected to your Dropbox account.

The Unsplash app lets you display publicly available images according to a theme, such as "graduation", "fall", etc.

The Trello app keeps track of projects shared by students and/or faculty. For example, a teacher can set up a Trello board to visualize which student is responsible for which part of a project. They can also see what's been done, what's currently being worked on, and what's left to do.

The World Clock app can tell the time for up to three time zones per display. Digital clocks can help nudge people towards increased punctuality while also reminding us of different places around the world.

Looped Content lets you display digital signage apps according to switch intervals (one minute, five minutes, etc.).

Scheduled Content lets you display digital signage apps according to specific times of day and days of the week. You can use a combination of Looped and Scheduled Content. If there's no Scheduled Content planned for a specific time of day, your display will default back to Looped Content.

Sleep Schedule lets you automatically power displays on and off according to set hours and days of the week. This lets you save on power, extend the lifetime of displays, and decrease your school's environmental footprint. Airtame also supports standby mode, which powers displays off and on depending on how long they've been left idle. Sleep Schedule is the smart choice for displays that are used for screen sharing and digital signage.

Pricing

The listed pricing reflects the prices available online. Volume pricing is available for Airtame devices as well as Airtame Cloud Plus seats. Direct orders are possible, but we also work with many local AV partners and integrators.