

## OFFICE SWAY AND INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARD IN THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

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**ABSTRACT:** *Using the interactive whiteboard with Microsoft Sway presentations makes the geography lesson more attractive for students sensitive to any gadget. Although Sway has limited design options over PowerPoint, it becomes very useful when the presentation is highly dependent on online content. The application works with configurable panels where text, images, video and audio files can be inserted, links to Internet sources can be created, or YouTube, Vimeo, etc. can be embedded. Grouping information can be done in different ways. Students can interact with the Sway content using the interactive whiteboard pen, such as the Settera online geographic game. Even if the existence of an interactive whiteboard is a beautiful dream for most schools, the Sway application can also be used with common means, such as a laptop and a video projector. Everything is to have teachers willing to create geographic content with this app.*

**Keywords:** *Interactive whiteboard; Microsoft Sway; configurable panels; online content;*

### Introduction

With every day passing, the Internet provides us with even more varied means of education. Unfortunately, the infrastructure of the Romanian educational system does not keep pace, many schools barely having a computer and a video projector. It is often difficult to operate with them even in schools that in different ways had managed to buy several laptops and videoprojectors, because they are only installed in a few classrooms and only the students in that class benefit from them or they have to exchange classrooms so that others can work with them too, or teachers have to walk with them from classroom to classroom, losing time with their installation.

It is harder to get an Interactive whiteboard than laptops or video projectors. It costs more and it needs to be installed in a classroom, so each class of students could benefit from it less often. There is also the interactive bar, which makes an interactive whiteboard from a projection screen or a whiteboard.

The bar can be moved every course hour from class to class, but only in that

classrooms with a screen projection attached on the table or on a whiteboard, and there should be necessarily a video projector too, otherwise installing and calibrating them will take time, making the class inefficient. Using the interactive bar makes classes more attractive, students are receptive to anything that makes the class "differently".

### Sway application presentation

Students like working with the interactive whiteboard, it's something else for them. Such a lesson was "Europe's political map" attended by a sixth grade class. The interactive whiteboard lesson was built with Sway, the newest Microsoft presentation application (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. MS Office Sway logo

Sway has limited design options than PowerPoint, the main Microsoft presentation application, but is very useful when presentation is highly dependent on on-line content (Figure 2).

where the user can, if desired, make changes to information or design.

For the "Europe's political map" lesson, we used content creation by manually entering information. Any Sway project

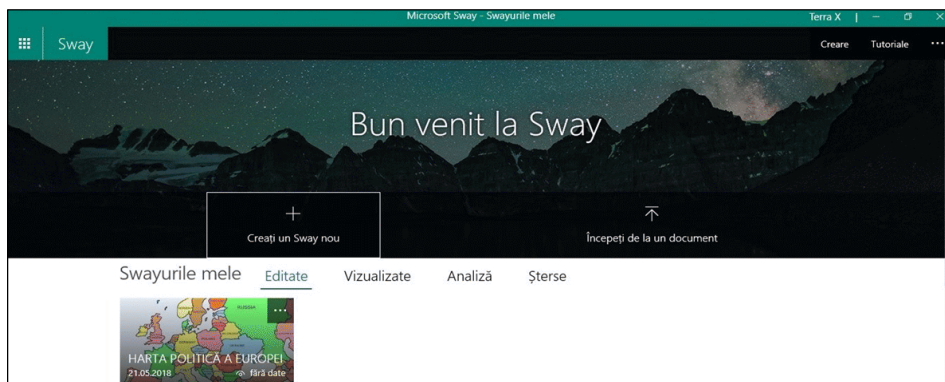


Fig. 2. Sway's main window

Before using Sway, you need to create a Microsoft account (Live, Outlook, Hotmail) that allows you to access all Microsoft products.

Sway works with a configurable panel

begins with frame design (Design page). The application has several predefined frame styles (background, font, page fitting) that can be mixed, but you can also create a personal style (Figure 3).

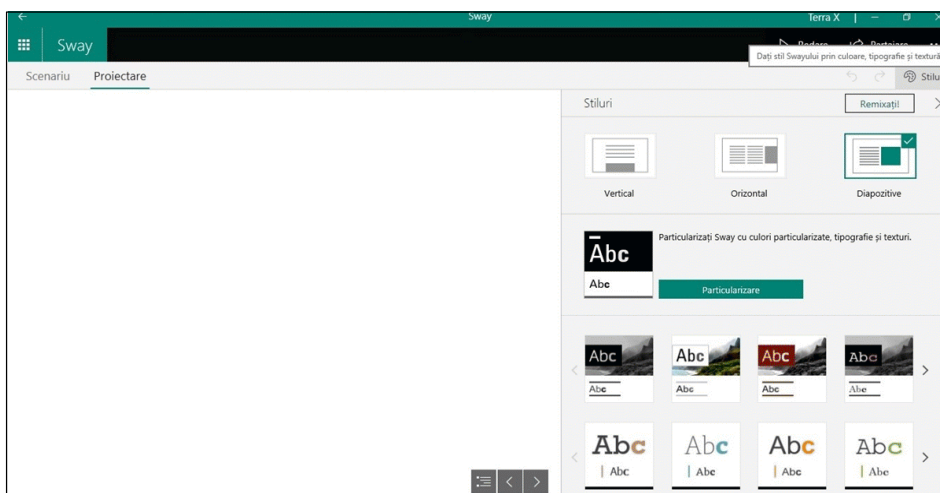


Fig. 3. Design Page

system and lets you create a presentation where the user inserts items into each panel or can upload an existing Word, PDF, and even PowerPoint document. Once loaded, the content is automatically arranged in panels,

The content is placed in the panels created on the Scenarios page. The first panel appears by default when opening the Scenario page and it is for the title. Here you can insert background, image and logo, if

"Details" in the upper left corner of the panel is activated (Figure 4).

Next is the construction of other panels where you can enter text, image, video and audio from your computer or the Internet. You can embed video on YouTube, Vimeo, etc. Links can be created to various sources of online information. Content can be grouped differently (Figure 5).

In the end, the presentation can be played back, shared, or saved in Word or PDF format. What the application can not do is save the local Sway project (on your personal computer or any other external storage). It

only remains online, in the user's Microsoft account.

### Creating "Europe's political map" geography lesson with Sway

The lesson has a simple structure, which includes a classification of Europe's countries according to some criteria, which are exemplified with some images, a map of the EU countries, a sketch of the EU political structure and a link to the Seterra site where, through games, students can fix the position of European countries and their capitals.

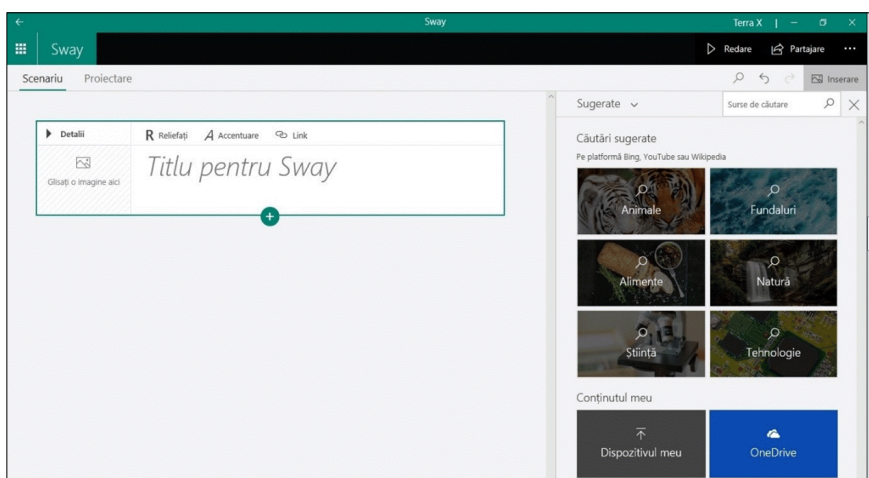


Fig. 4. Sway panel

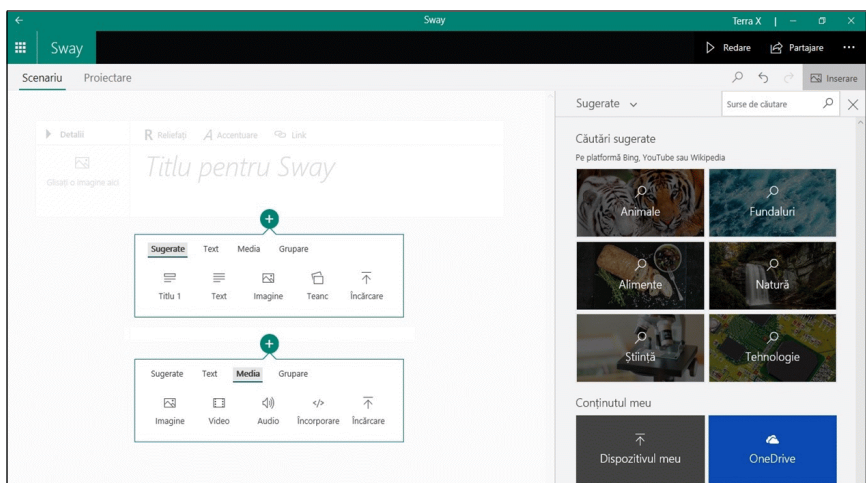


Fig. 5. Creating panels

Each criterion was displayed on a panel, also some images, while others were grouped in a single panel to run in a slideshow when presenting the information (Figure 6-8).

move objects, and save a file they create and send it to others.

In this lesson, students interaction with the interactive whiteboard took place in the

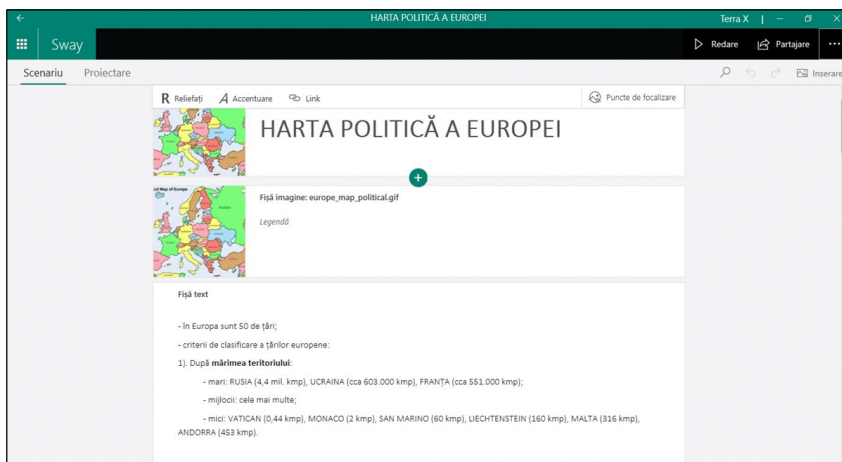


Fig. 6. Title, images and text panels

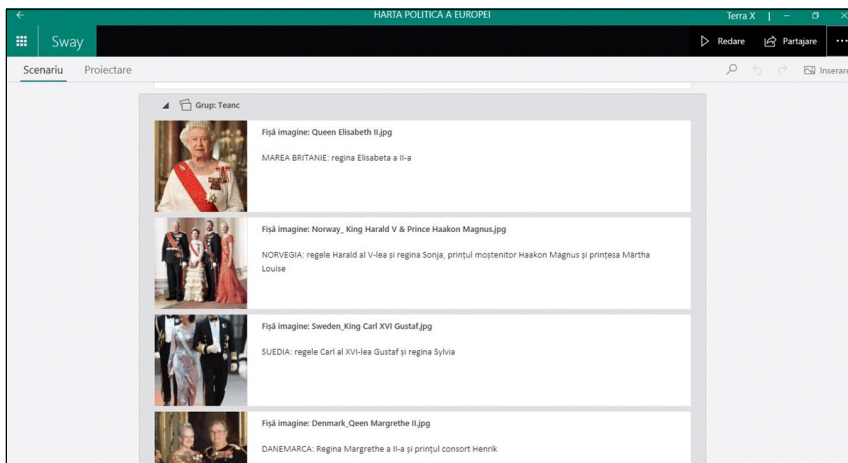


Fig. 7. Grouped images panels

### Conducting the lesson on the interactive whiteboard

The lesson done with the Sway application was projected on an interactive whiteboard using the interactive magnetic bar attached to the board below the projection screen. Interaction takes place thanks to a pen that can be handled by students. On the screen they can draw, write,

second part of the lesson. In the first part, the whiteboard only functioned as a simple projection screen for the sketch of the lesson and for pictures on which students observed or compared European countries. For setting up knowledge with the on-line Seterra program, the students went to the whiteboard using the stick pen to guess the location of the randomly displayed European states (Figure 9).



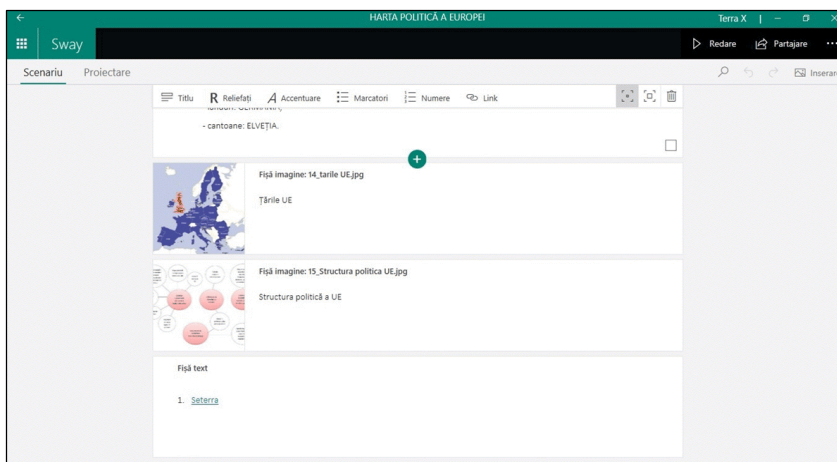


Fig. 8. Panels with images and link

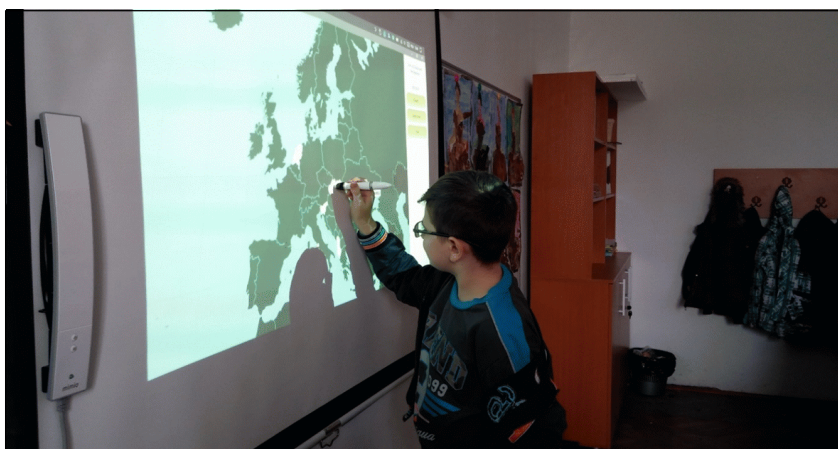


Figure 9. Seterra on-line with interactive whiteboard

## Conclusions

Leaving aside the financial aspect, the existence of an interactive whiteboard in a school is necessary and useful, as long as there are teachers interested in using it, capable of creating content for it, otherwise it is just an expensive piece of furniture.

Using the interactive whiteboard is interesting for students who are receptive to any gadget. Even if it is not possible to use it in every lesson, under the current conditions, the occasional use of it is a welcome excursion from the "monotony" of classical lessons with chalk and blackboard.

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