

11

Mistakes

Schools Make When Buying
Charging and Storage Carts
and **How to Avoid Them**

11 Mistakes Schools Make When Buying Charging and Storage Carts



1 Assuming a cart is a cart is a cart.

Mobile device carts from various manufacturers can have great variability in construction, design, features, and functionality. One really needs to take the time to learn, understand, and fully evaluate the differences before making an informed long-term decision.



2 Thinking short term, not long term.

You shouldn't base a purchasing decision only on the mobile devices you have now or will soon purchase. It is highly recommended that you think further down the road and consider what will happen in three or four years when you want to update your technology. What will the form and factor be of that next device? The cart or locker that you choose should have the flexibility and design that either allow shelves to adjust or comes with shelves that provide adequate headroom should your device of choice be larger in the future.



3 Not specifying a minimum warranty for the cart.

Some manufacturers offer very limited warranties, while others offer very comprehensive lifetime warranties. Also understand the warranty on the electronics. These can vary from six months to three years. Read the fine print. What is covered and what isn't? Limited liability workmanship-only warranties don't cover the same thing as all-inclusive warranties.



4 Not clearly specifying cable management.

Some carts come with very robust cable management while others have only very limited or no cable management at all. It can take as much as two hours per cart to effectively wire and secure all of the components. However, there are other carts on the market that wire in fewer than 30 minutes. Wiring time is often underestimated, but it can put a major strain on IT departments when the number of carts that need wired is significant. In addition, all cable management should be guaranteed for life, as many plastic clips used by certain manufacturers easily come off, get lost, or break.



5 Forgetting mobility.

Carts on the market today come with a wide variety of casters. Five-inch hospital-grade casters are preferred for maximum mobility because they tend to travel much easier over thresholds, cracks, crevices, uneven surfaces, sidewalks, and outdoors. As the size of the caster decreases, so does its ease of movement. Be careful: Some cart manufacturers today provide casters that are only two inches in diameter and they are very difficult to move. They simply cannot support the weight when 25 to 35 devices are loaded in the cart. Carts should also have protective corner/edge bumpers. These will protect not only the cart but doorjambs, drywall, etc.

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6 Not specifying construction materials.

100% steel construction is best. Be careful of carts where lots of plastic, wood, or laminates are used. Plastics tend to break over time. Carts in an education environment take a beating. Make sure the cart you are purchasing is heavy duty and ruggedized. Lightweight carts have trouble supporting a full load and are also very difficult to push.



7 Not considering safety.

Some manufacturers do a much better job of eliminating pinch points, launch points, and tripping points. Open hinges, large stabilization feet, and pullout drawers are all potential hazards in schools. Other carts are so light, they easily tip when force is applied to the open door. One should also keep in mind that swinging doors can serve as a carnival ride in the classroom. Options are available for zero-clearance sliding tambour doors.



8 Not understanding power draws.

Many carts on the market come standard with a charging timer. This simply means that devices are charged on certain time increments. However, there are a number of carts that do not come standard with a charging timer. Some also don't come standard with power distribution strips. Make sure to ask the questions. If you're not sure whether or not you will need a charging timer, consult an expert. In most cases, charging timers should be used as a cautionary measure. In addition, the charging timer on the cart should be UL® listed. Furthermore, primary power cords should have a right-angle plug for connection to a wall outlet, saving wear and tear on the plug and very expensive replacements.



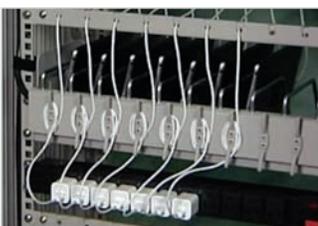
9 Not considering assembly.

If you don't clearly specify no assembly or minimal assembly required, then expect there to be lots of assembly required. While some manufacturers are very clear about selling carts assembled and unassembled, others tend to play smoke-and-mirrors and hide behind carefully phrased words.



10 Forgetting about delivery costs.

Some manufacturers include delivery and others don't. Some also include lift gate and inside delivery. If you don't clearly specify your requirements, get ready for a 53-foot tractor-trailer outside your school, or very high add-on costs.



11 Using carts to sync mobile devices.

Schools don't need to purchase pricey syncing carts when better, lower cost alternatives are available. Device management is a more cost-effective way for schools to make sure all their devices are synced.



Charging Carts and Lockers Suggested Specifications

1. Carts ship fully assembled with all shelves, device dividers, minimum three power strips, and all other specified items.
2. Cart frames should be 100% steel, 16-gauge or heavier.
3. Carts include four-bank charging timer unless otherwise specified. Timer must be installed. Timer must be UL® Listed.
4. Carts have large (5" preferred, 3" minimum) locking casters.
5. Cart frames come with a Lifetime Warranty that provides coverage for all aspects of the cart including manufacturer defects and accidental damages, at no additional cost.
6. Cart electronics come with manufacturer's warranty of at least three (3) years, which provides coverage against defects and accidental damage at no additional cost.
7. Carts include front and rear integrated cable management for power cords.
8. Carts have locking 16-gauge or heavier steel door or (optional) sliding, locking tambour front doors.
9. Carts have removable, locking back access panel, with a different key pattern than front locking door.
10. Carts have protective corner/edge bumpers.
11. Cart design features a flexible racking system to accommodate future device requirements/sizes. Racking must be able to adjust.
12. Power strips and timer are included with cart at no extra cost.
13. Primary power cord has a right-angle plug for connection to a wall outlet.
14. Includes laminate top work surface (optional).
15. Shipping should include lift gate and inside delivery (if not receiving a bulk delivery).

Download the suggested specifications template at blackbox.com/TabletCarts.

About Black Box

Black Box iPad®, Chromebook®, Tablet, and Laptop Charging Carts and Lockers can safely store, charge, and transport all types of e-learning devices. Their rapid wiring system, safety-first design, and future-proof technology, all in a small footprint, make them ideal for today's classrooms and administrative areas. Visit blackbox.com/TabletCarts to find the cart that's right for your application and for free access to brochures, videos, a buyer's guide, and more.

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