



BASCOM Global Internet Services, Inc. develops industry-leading Internet management solutions for schools and libraries. Since 1996, BASCOM has produced patented security and filtering software, Internet curriculum building tools, and community building Web portals for various learning environments.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

- > Developer of Internet management and curriculum enhancement solutions for K-12 education market
- > Three applications deployed on appliances: Global Chalkboard, Patronus and Frontera
- > Appliance platforms are scalable to fit a range of end-user organizations, from small to large

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- > Due to the progressive nature of Web content and Internet vulnerabilities, applications need frequent updates
- > Multiple applications and platforms affected time to develop, troubleshoot and support
- > Schools and libraries have limited IT resources for software implementation and maintenance

THE SOLUTION

- > Develop applications in open source Linux to streamline software engineering
- > Deploy a consistent platform for each application with common branding for product recognition at tradeshows and in data centers
- > Ensure continuous availability of curriculum tools and secure Internet access

THE RESULTS

- > Standard hardware platforms are easier to update and support
- > Remote software upgrades and maintenance avoids user interruption
- > Real-time data on order status and shipments available through the MBX Customer Portal

BASCOM fills a void in a market that balances the traditional needs of networking security professionals and the special needs of educators in learning environments tasked with integrating the Internet into their curriculum. This educator-centric approach combines specialized security functionality that only learning environments require, with a centralized framework for systematically creating, storing, sharing, and delivering a Web-enriched curriculum. No other company offers an integrated software solution that combines Web enhanced curriculum building tools with classroom/program-based, educator managed Internet filtering.

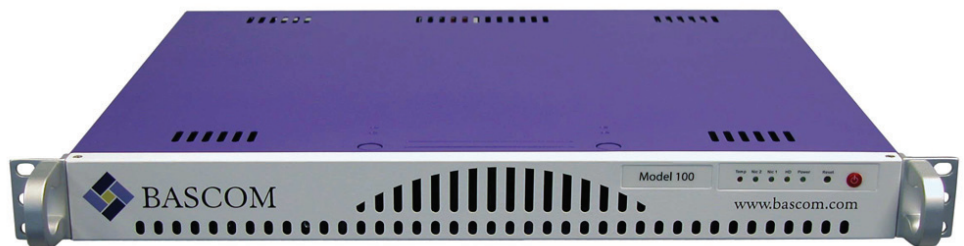
Complementing BASCOM's award-winning solutions is an innovative approach to application deployment: the BASCOM solutions are deployed on custom-branded server appliances. On the outside, the systems feature a purple powdercoated chassis and custom-designed faceplates including the BASCOM logo and brand name. Under the lid is a platform engineered specifically for each BASCOM application. This "purple box," as customers refer to it, is rack-mountable and easily drops straight into the network for quick implementation.

THE CHALLENGE

An appliance-based software deployment is a marked change from the way BASCOM initially delivered its solutions. They were originally developed to run on standard servers, but customers were specifying a variety of vendors' hardware and BASCOM genuinely tried to support it all. Occasionally the software was incompatible or too CPU intensive for a customer's existing hardware and BASCOM would provide both the software and the hardware.

Bob DeRosa, BASCOM's Chief Technology Officer recalls, "We acknowledged that a single, stable hardware platform would streamline software engineering and improve our productivity. It would save us measurable time and effort to develop, test, implement and support the solutions." With that, BASCOM embarked on a search for a solution.

➤ *"We acknowledged that a single, stable hardware platform would streamline software engineering and improve our productivity. It would save us measurable time and effort to develop, test, implement and support the solutions."*



➤ **BASCOM's flagship product, Global Chalkboard**



From the beginning BASCOM developed the solutions to run in an open source environment, choosing Linux operating system for application development. Open source is widely supported on server appliances and minimizes the distraction of creating multiple variants of the solution. Developing for a single environment also expedites new releases, allowing BASCOM to concentrate on creating innovative new functionality.

The next step was finding an OEM appliance builder with Linux experience that could also understand the environment in which BASCOM operated. DeRosa explains, "In the educational market the demand for computer-based lessons is increasing faster than the IT personnel on hand to support it. Since teachers are the conduit to the technology used in the classroom, the more the solution is designed for the non-technical user and can demonstrate its reliability, the more useful it becomes."

Of course, teachers are generally not the single decision maker when it comes to selecting instructional software. For a solution to be competitive it needs to show relevance to administrators – the solution needs the flexibility to support lesson development for the overall curriculum goals. It must also appeal to the people who implement technology in the facility or school district – if the technology isn't relatively hands off to operate, it won't matter how feature-rich the software.



MBX Systems
1101 Brown Street
Wauconda, IL 60084

800.560.1195
847.487.2700

www.mbx.com
©Copyright 2010.
All rights reserved

THE SOLUTION

Standardizing on server appliances was the right decision for BASCOM, and MBX Systems proved to be the right appliance partner. First, the appliances MBX builds provide a turnkey solution: BASCOM's solution arrives bundled with the hardware, operating system and any other requirements to make it operational. Right out of the box, installing the appliance is straightforward and requires very little technical expertise to get it working on the network.

Software maintenance is handled remotely by BASCOM and without user intervention. Upgrades, patches, content updates and backups are all automatically and remotely administered each night. BASCOM communicates product updates with customers via email, and users who need product support can access online help for every menu item. Live telephone support is always available for customers with questions.

Diane Hagan, BASCOM Marketing Communications Manager says, "Whether a customer needs technical support or simple troubleshooting, they're never left hanging. We always have someone available to walk a new user through the installation process. After that, the solution runs effortlessly."

The reliability of the appliance model minimizes the chance of a system malfunctioning in the field or users losing live access to Web sites. However for an even higher degree of assurance, BASCOM offers its enterprise users a hot standby appliance option. Designed to perform on demand, this redundant system assures all users maintain secure Internet access.

DeRosa explains, "In large school districts with a heavy user base, customers appreciate that a redundant appliance is ready to take over so they are never without Internet access. If there is a system failure, the security features of the redundant system kick in to protect the network and users."

THE RESULT

"As a hardware partner, MBX goes far beyond engineering and manufacturing our systems," DeRosa says. "MBX is involved behind the scenes, managing the overall appliance program – from designing the custom branding of our legendary purple boxes, maintaining our current and past software images, managing the lifecycle of components, packaging systems with BASCOM marketing materials, keeping inventory at the ready for new or replacement systems, and more."

BASCOM uses the MBX Customer Portal to view up-to-date status on their orders and inventory, including bills of material, serial numbers, system ship dates, warranty information and various other data reports maintained in the portal. MBX also deploys appliances on demand to support BASCOM's "Express Exchange Warranty": in the event a component malfunctions, orders received by noon at BASCOM and by 4:00 p.m. at MBX ensure the replacement system will be expedited for next-morning delivery.

BASCOM's success lies in continuing as an innovation leader and adapting its solutions to meet the needs of educators and networking security professionals. MBX will continue to support BASCOM by providing the most secure, reliable hardware platforms that are easy for BASCOM's customers to implement and use.

➤ "As a hardware partner, MBX goes far beyond engineering and manufacturing our systems...MBX is involved behind the scenes managing the overall appliance program."