



Case Study - Education

PHBern

PHBern uses Box to provide its students and professors with collaborative work and storage spaces

“The most important thing for us was simplicity.”

Stefan Schmidhofer
Technical Leader
Center for Computer
Education at PHBern

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When the Swiss university system decided to add pedagogic universities to its structure in 2002, it transferred its teacher development program from the University of Berne to a specialized university of teacher education, PHBern. PHBern contains six academic institutions ranging from preschool education to continuing education.

Challenge

In an effort to introduce its community to the next wave of technology, the University of Teacher Education began to organize Web 2.0 workshops for its faculty and staff. As the group explored new services, they saw the ways in which learning was being hindered by the lack of proper collaboration tools.

Because PHBern was interested in launching a collaboration service, the IT team needed to deliver a tool that the less technically focused students could easily adopt. “The most important thing for us was simplicity,” explained Stefan Schmidhofer, Technical Leader at Center for Computer Education at PHBern. “We also wanted to give students tools they could use even after they finish their studies,” he added.

Solution

After evaluating several solutions, many of which he found to be too complex to understand and use, Schmidhofer decided to deploy Box Enterprise to his faculty and student body. Founded in 2005, Box.net now serves more than 50,000 companies from small businesses to Fortune 1000 that look to Box to simplify online content management, accelerate team productivity and connect employees with a familiar interface that anyone can use.

PHBern students and faculty members now use Box for a widespread variety of functionalities. Classrooms are beginning to implement it to allow students and professors to collaborate in a single online work environment. This allows professors to quickly and easily access the work that students are completing and offer feedback. Other smaller groups use Box to share and collaborate on files for projects or personal reasons. Some are using Box to backup and protect their files. “It’s really the collaboration aspect which is important,” Schmidhofer assessed.

Schmidhofer also praised the flexible nature of using Box both within the university and in other situations. He noted, “You can set up a small workgroup and collaborate with people outside of the university.”



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"It's quite important that Box has a good tool available to import and export users," Schmidhofer expressed, having to manage thousands of users entering and leaving the school each year. When students graduate, he turns their accounts into individual Box accounts, allowing them to continue using Box.net, no longer affiliated with PHBern's Box solution. "It's nice because students can keep the tool," he explained.

The most important thing for Schmidhofer was that his students and professors are able to quickly learn how to use Box. He commented, "Box is really focused on one thing; a lot of solutions try to go in different directions in parallel...Box does one thing and does it well."