WHY BLACKBOARD?

Blackboard knows that academic computing is a competitive, strategic and pedagogical imperative for institutions to enhance the on-campus experience with the online delivery of academic and administrative services.

As an Application Service Provider (ASP), Blackboard offers secure, quick and easy, and affordable answers to your online learning needs. Most importantly, and as always, your institution maintains complete control over your content.

WHAT IS AN ASP?

An ASP is an Application Service Provider. According to the Internet Research Group, ASPs “share the common goal of enabling their customers to concentrate on their core business operations while giving them access to the latest applications.” Through economies of scale, ASPs can offer services and benefits at a lower cost than an in-house Information Technology (IT) department.

WHY AN ASP?

In the past, institutions that did not have the necessary infrastructure and knowledge to host their own software were the primary users of ASPs. However, many institutions that previously hosted all of their own software now use ASPs for a variety of reasons:

- Contracting with an ASP reduces the time required to get the software up and running;
- Paying one flat monthly fee allows for a more predictable cost model and a faster return on investment;
- ASPs allow for 24-hour operations and monitoring without the expense of acquiring and maintaining your own infrastructure or hiring new staff; and
- ASPs offer secure locations, redundant connectivity, all software upgrades and routine maintenance at a much lower cost.

Blackboard’s vision has always been to offer technology as an opportunity rather than a complexity. Blackboard’s goal is to allow the institution to focus on creation of content to support academic and administrative services.

Blackboard addresses all security, network, database, and application issues, allowing institutions to allocate resources to other budget priorities.
**ASP RESPONSIBILITY**

Blackboard accepts the responsibility for every aspect of the institution’s service. From the connectivity rate to the amount of RAM, Blackboard assures that the institution’s application is working at maximum efficiency. Whether your institution is just beginning their online program or is rapidly building its online program, Blackboard will make sure that your application is deployed with the same efficiency.

**QUICK TURN-AROUND**

Once you choose Blackboard as your ASP, Blackboard will have your application live in less than seven days. That’s considerably less time than it takes to purchase, install, and test new hardware. And much less time than it would take to hire any additional IT staff to support the new software.

**SERVICE LEVEL GUARANTEES**

Blackboard offers Technical Support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Two specified institution employees receive Technical Support at no charge. Additional instructors and students can be added for additional fees. Blackboard Technical Support can be reached via email or phone. Your institution also receives a dedicated client relationship manager as a single point of contact.

Some ASPs provide only hosting services, forcing clients to make multiple calls to resolve software problems. Since Blackboard is not only an ASP but also a software development company, the same technical support team that answers software questions can also address ASP concerns with one phone call.

**SPEED AND RELIABILITY**

Blackboard delivers superior response time due to a proprietary Asymmetric Allocation of Packets (ASAP) used by Blackboard’s Internet Provider. ASAP is used to route Internet traffic over the fastest possible routes. Most companies use only BGP routing. BGP finds the shortest route, but ASAP goes further by using both historical data and current traffic conditions to find the fastest, most dependable open route. Whenever packet loss is detected anywhere on the network, network engineering automatically redirects traffic to an unobstructed route.
MIGRATION FROM THE ASP?

Course Web sites can easily be exported from the ASP location to the institution’s server when and if you choose.

ALL INCLUSIVE FEE STRUCTURE

Your vision is clear – to support education online. Your pricing plan should reflect that vision by being simple and affordable. Your monthly fee includes all software upgrades, routine maintenance of the server, security, all network, database and application issues, connectivity, nightly tape back-ups, 24-hour monitoring, 10-20 GB of total storage space, climate control, fire suppression systems, redundant Internet connections and power. Blackboard offers a simple pricing plan without costly per-student fees because we know how important it is to encourage and support education online. No institution should be charged for wanting to serve as many students as possible. After all, education is your business.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Using an ASP reduces your institution’s investment in costly infrastructure development and human resources. Blackboard provides reliable and efficient delivery of your institution’s course Web sites using the fastest, most powerful technology on the market. With round-the-clock support, our services are never more than a phone call away. Content on your institution’s course Web sites always belongs to your institution, and is always secure. Pricing plans are simple, affordable, easy to understand, and within the reach of your institution. Whether your campus is already Web-enabled, or you’re just beginning to explore e-Learning, using Blackboard as your ASP will transform your online teaching and environment.