Business challenge

To host its classes and related projects, butic The New School, S.L.U. needed to create a virtual learning space.

Transformation

Together with IBM Business Partner SimpleCloud, butic launched a cloud-based learning environment for its students. The solution hosted on IBM® Cloud®, lets users access virtual workstations featuring high-end graphics software and processing capabilities through thin client devices for their architecture, construction and engineering coursework.

Results

Offers global reach
attracting and supporting students across two continents

Streamlines license management
through closely-monitored profiles

Keeps costs low
removing hardware maintenance and energy use costs

butic The New School, S.L.U.

Learning shouldn't be limited by technology

Established in 2019, butic is an online learning academy that offers corporate training alongside certifications programs focused on the architecture, construction and engineering industries. The school is located in Madrid, Spain, but it caters to a global student base through its virtual education offerings.

"[T]he IBM brand means security. It means confidence. It means many things—that we are working in a professional environment."

—Marco Antonio Fernández, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, butic The New School, S.L.U.

simplecloud

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Lowering the barriers to knowledge

"Never stop learning" is a time-honored mantra, encouraging each of us to expand our knowledge set, discover new ways of thinking and evolve into something better.

Having access to the right information, the right training tools, the right schools are all critical factors in gaining a new skill and bettering one's situation. However, if learners don't have the funds necessary to pay for this access, or if they aren't physically near—or even in the same country as—one of these sites, their options for improvement are limited.

Marco Antonio Fernández, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of butic, wants to change that.

"I have worked in the education industry for the past 20 years," notes Fernández. "I was employed in a Spanish school that taught through a classic model. When a student wanted to practice outside of class, they had to come to the school and find an available workstation." However, these systems were used for other classes, so the school could not guarantee that a given workstation would be available for students when they needed it.

To make education more convenient—and innovative—Fernández envisioned a new model.

Rather than relying so heavily on physical buildings and workstations, he wanted to transition to a more virtual strategy. "Forget about hardware," he continues. "Forget about software licenses. I wanted a school where with your tuition, you got a virtual, fully-licensed workspace."

Not only would this new school, butic, make it easier to learn, but it would also lower the barrier to entry for students across the globe. Particularly, since the types of courses the school offers—architecture, engineering, construction and technology—demand a robust operating environment, which isn't always the most affordable.

"We do not teach simple things," adds Fernández. "This type of work needs a lot of processor, a lot of memory, a high-end graphic card. But there is a big part of the world where you can't assume that a student is going to have the necessary resources. Just paying tuition can be difficult, let alone paying several thousand dollars for a high-end workstation with advanced graphics."

With a firm vision in place, Fernández began looking for help to make this new school a reality.

Virtually working

Already aware of IBM Business Partner SimpleCloud, Fernández and butic turned to the business for help.

"They are 'the' render farm in Spain," explains Fernández. "Everyone knows them. At any event, any festival, you'll see them. And I've personally known them for the past ten years or so."

SimpleCloud provided the school with a high-performance, cloud-based workstation solution, so now students across the globe can use their personal thin client devices to access the butic learning environment. In turn, butic has built various learning profiles within the SimpleCloud solution that provide users with pre-built virtual hardware configurations and related software licenses.

"Inside my control panel, I can change anything to set up a new profile," notes Fernández. "This control is important since some of the applications we use for our students have very specific technical requirements. We can also easily make sure all of the licenses for a profile are legal."

The school launched in January 2019, offering a host of courses focused on architecture, construction and engineering. In the first year alone, the school supported almost 400 global students. "It was important that SimpleCloud supported us from data centers across the globe," adds Fernández. "Our main market isn't Spain. It's Latin America."

The SimpleCloud solution is hosted within the public IBM Cloud, relying on IBM Cloud Bare Metal Servers and taking advantage of both the Frankfurt, Germany and Dallas, Texas data centers. In addition, the system uses VMware technology to simplify the configuration and management of the virtual workspaces.

School's in session

Since its launch, the SimpleCloud environment, backed by IBM Cloud, has run seamlessly for butic, delivering an effective, reliable learning space for students.

"For me, technology should be the referee in football," comments Fernández. "The best referee is the one that you don't know is there. My responsibility is education, so I don't want to worry about technology—I am not a super-technical guy."

That lack of worry also applies to the management of software licenses, which can grow complicated for a school. "Every application in SimpleCloud is legal,"

notes Fernández. “There are many parts of the world where this is a big change for our students. Since we control what software they are running, we can make sure that things are being properly handled.”

Choosing a virtual strategy backed by SimpleCloud and IBM Cloud technology also allowed the school to avoid large up-front deployment costs, instead building an operating model that matched technology expense—and licensing—to actual usage.

“When I started butic, I only had the money in my pocket,” recalls Fernández. “SimpleCloud and IBM let me get the project running with what I had. Instead of buying 100 workstations for thousands a piece, my students can use thin clients. Without those economics, we wouldn’t have started.”

The virtual architecture also helps to keep IT support costs down. “At my last school, I had five people fixing machines, managing licenses, doing everything,” notes Fernández. “SimpleCloud takes care of the entire platform, so we don’t have IT people at butic.”

Beyond the superior service delivered by SimpleCloud, butic is also pleased with the use of IBM Cloud. “I didn’t want the cloud provider to affect my students,” adds Fernández. “But for me, the IBM brand means security. It means confidence. It means many things—that we are working in a professional environment. And I wanted a professional environment for my students.”

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Solution components

- IBM® Cloud®
- IBM Cloud Bare Metal Servers

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

To learn more about its cloud-based solutions and what SimpleCloud can do for you, please visit: SimpleCloud

About SimpleCloud

SimpleCloud is the operating name for IBM Business Partner SummuS Render S.L. The business offers high performance computing and cloud-based solutions to its customers, and it is presently headquartered in Madrid, Spain with an additional office in Los Angeles, California.

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