



Bromcom MIS versus SIMS.net

The following is an account of a typical demonstration of the Bromcom MIS to a prospective user school considering changing their MIS from SIMS with I-Behave. We urge you to see for yourself by booking a demonstration to see how the Bromcom solution can transform your MIS within and outside of school.

Bromcom MIS Cloud Computing Ready

Bromcom

Behaviour demo to Director of Achievement (DoA) Andy Blackford

Maintaining the good behaviour of students at St Peter's School is a high priority. The behaviour management system currently being used has many good features but lacks flexibility and customisation in its reporting and analysis. Bromcom demonstrated that behaviour policy is created via pathways setup, showing the DoA how easy it was to notify relevant people around the school and build a pathway reflecting the schools policy. The DoA appreciated the flexibility to setup different types of policy which could email Heads of Year about behaviour issues. This is not done automatically in the current system.

Bromcom showed the DoA how easy it was for teachers to enter and view behaviour records; he liked the quick-select icons that highlight groups of students based on their type of attendance (eg all students who are present) which would save time. Another key feature for him was being able to see the behaviour data entered for a student by a particular teacher, so we demonstrated the Student Information feature in Teacher's WebFolder. He was pleased to see how easy it was for teachers to view plenty of information, not just about behaviour but contact and attendance data!

Bromcom then ran through behaviour reports and he was pleased with the selection of built in reports, which is better than the school's current package. Bromcom went on to cover data export into Excel and the use of pivot tables. At the end of the demonstration the DoA stated that he really liked the product

Demo of e-Administration to Personnel staff

This was an introduction to the Bromcom admin solution, with a Q&A session about links to other products. Bromcom started by showing the staff record maintenance pages, where the main area of comment was favourable comparison to SIMS staff management. They really liked being able to view the staff timetable from a tab on the page instead of opening another page as they do in SIMS. Another key feature was the User Defined Fields (UDF) which in the Bromcom MIS can be added to any section of a staff record. The UDFs in SIMS are all shown in one place which does not make things very user friendly. They liked the data check sheet report we can produce, covering CRB Checks and List 99, again something they found hard to produce on SIMS. Overall, the personnel staff were very pleased with Bromcom's built in reports.

Bromcom touched on other areas of the system and were asked about linking back to the LA. Bromcom explained that we provide school workforce and school census returns which can be sent to the LA or direct to the DfE. In general, it was explained that if LAs required additional data they are more than welcome to ask Bromcom about linking, but otherwise data can be exported in CSV or XML files which the LA could use, and they were happy with this.

One feature which was discussed was keeping records of school governors, yet another task that cannot be done very easily in SIMS. In fact throughout the Bromcom demonstration, the staff were saying "this is easier than SIMS" or "SIMS can't do that".

Bromcom confirmed that the school could to continue to use the SIMS FMS package stand alone for Finance, or alternatively to use another accounting package.

e-Exams and e-Assessment to Data Manager (DM) Cathie Cantwell and Exams Officer (EO) Tania Priestman

This meeting's focus was to demonstrate these modules, and answer questions from the EO and the DM. Bromcom were asked a number of questions about how exams data was passed around, and what kind of information was available. e-Exams was thoroughly covered by the end of the demonstration, answering all the customer's questions. The DM asked about a course manager, and Bromcom explained that the way Bromcom MIS manages candidates means, unlike in SIMS, they don't need a separate course manager. After seeing the demonstration the EO agreed that it was much easier. As the new Exams Officer, she is still learning to use that SIMS module but said we offer something that she finds more natural, and does not see any problem using our package.

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The demonstration moved on to the Assessment module, covering all aspects from the beginning through to generating reports. As a user of the SIMS Assessment product, the DM found the way in which we setup marksheets straightforward and very similar to SIMS. Bromcom covered the way in which teachers can review, import, and export data using Teacher's WebFolder. This was seen as another major benefit, because the DM could see how easily teachers can directly access Assessment data for their students. The DM had a quick overview of Teacher's WebFolder to see that it is a one stop shop for teachers and fully agreed!

e-Timetable to Assistant Head (AT) and Data Manager (DM)

Bromcom gave an overview of e-Timetable and e-Cover which went down very well. Currently the school use both Nova- T6 and T4 for timetable creation and the AHT explained that he has had only one year's experience timetabling using Nova-T6. Bromcom demonstrated how to set up a curriculum, creating blocks and bands, and the various views of the curriculum plan and timetable.

The AHT really liked the user friendly nature of e-Timetable, and that it gives clear warnings when mistakes are made. Another big win was basic automation, which worked very well. The AHT commented that SIMS equivalent automation is very long winded and involves much exporting and importing between the SQL databases. He explained that as a result he cannot easily set up rules; something he saw was simple to do with e-Timetable. Class assignments were demonstrated, which again led to the AHT to comment on how much easier the processes were than SIMS. Both the AHT and DM were becoming wowed by the package.

Next e-Cover was shown, and this really seemed to show how simple our system is to use. They liked both that e-Cover can email teachers about cover, and also updates their timetable when placed on cover.

MIS Presentation to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (Nigel Park)

This was a general overview, demonstrating why the school should switch MIS from SIMS to Bromcom. Bromcom explained first of all how the system is streamlined to be an efficient and effective communication and management tool, which was obviously felt to be important as people all around the room started smiling and nodding as the key points were made.

Teacher's WebFolder was shown and because many of the SLT had Apple iPhones, the TWF Mobile could also be shown to them. This was extremely well received, and really counted as a bonus over SLG and SIMS in the classroom. The team was extremely impressed that teachers could have access to the information they need, in a product designed for them, instead of requiring MIS access. Bromcom reminded the SLT that security is very important when making information available, and after demonstrating some of our features, again the team was pleased with the security of our system.

The MIS Student Summary page was shown to the SLT so they could see again how easy it is to view a variety of key data in one place; very useful for parent's evenings and to gain a quick insight into any student. All agreed that this was very impressive.

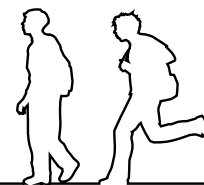
Continuing the theme of parental information, senior staff were present for the MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) demonstration. They thought the product was very well organised and presented, full of really useful features like homework and the 'contact us' section.

The SLT then asked a number of questions about the pricing and number of schools using the Bromcom solution. In summary, all present had a very good day and thanked Bromcom for their time in demonstrating the MIS to key staff.

Finally, Bromcom was asked about support and had no difficulty in singing the praises of our support team, pointing out that the school would be allocated a special MIS support number and team member to work with them. This was very important because earlier in the day AT had said how poor support had been for their SIMS MIS.

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What schools are saying...



Greater Functionality at Thorpe St. Andrew, Mr Bayliss, IT Manager

Thorpe St. Andrew in Norwich with 1,700 students, were not entirely happy with the MIS they had in place. As it was coming to the end of its life they decided to investigate what other systems were on the market. They wanted to have an online system with greater pupil information available than their existing MIS as well as a system that allowed parental access from home.

Although the Local Authority recommended upgrading their existing Phoenix system to Pearson e1, Thorpe St. Andrew was not confident with the functionality available. They reviewed the main MIS providers including Serco and SIMS but concluded that Bromcom offered a better package overall which not only offered greater functionality but was also more intuitive and user-friendly.

Bromcom's excellent record of reliable Customer Support, both remotely and on-site, was also crucial in the decision by Mr. Bayliss, the IT Manager at the school, to opt for the Bromcom system.

Why schools should opt for the Bromcom MIS

Mr Staniforth, Director of Attendance & Behaviour, Ashby School

- You will get teacher support and enthusiasm because the system is so user friendly
- I have not met a member of staff yet who I couldn't train in the teacher interface within thirty minutes
- Parents will receive information they have never received before and it will enable the schools to develop partnerships that are essential in modern education
- The systems are very flexible and will allow different schools to adapt them to suit their particular circumstances
- The core information for a schools to run and develop is accessible anytime, anywhere
- Support is outstanding and you would be working with a company that listens to its stake holders and does act to develop and improve all the time

Background to Bromcom Computers Plc

Since the late 1980s Bromcom has been a pioneer in the education market. The initial entry of Bromcom into the education market was through the 1988 Education Act where schools had been delegated local management and hence required their own "administration system". Working with local authorities, Bromcom addressed the need to provide multiple user, secure and easy access to the school administrations applications, thereby enabling school staff to simultaneously use their new management information system. Whichever the MIS used, Bromcom offered an integrated turnkey solution and helped local authorities exploit its use within schools. Not content with facilitating administrative and school management access to their MIS, Bromcom developed facilities for teachers, and in 1992 became the world leaders in the provision of computerised systems for capturing classroom data. Today the wireless network is a standard that we all know and love, but in 1992, it was the future that Bromcom predicted. Bromcom has worked with local authorities, numerous schools and colleges over the years to ensure it developed hardware and software to meet their ever changing needs. Integration is the common theme and whilst Bromcom can nowadays offer the complete school MIS package, it has remained committed to provide products with seamless integration with third party products and services, thus providing customers with the best possible complete solution. Cloud Computing will facilitate closer integration.

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