

Case Study

The Conax collaboration

An in-depth interview with
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Conax develops television encryption, conditional access and content security systems for digital television operators in 85 countries. Labatus has tested the company's products for more than a decade.

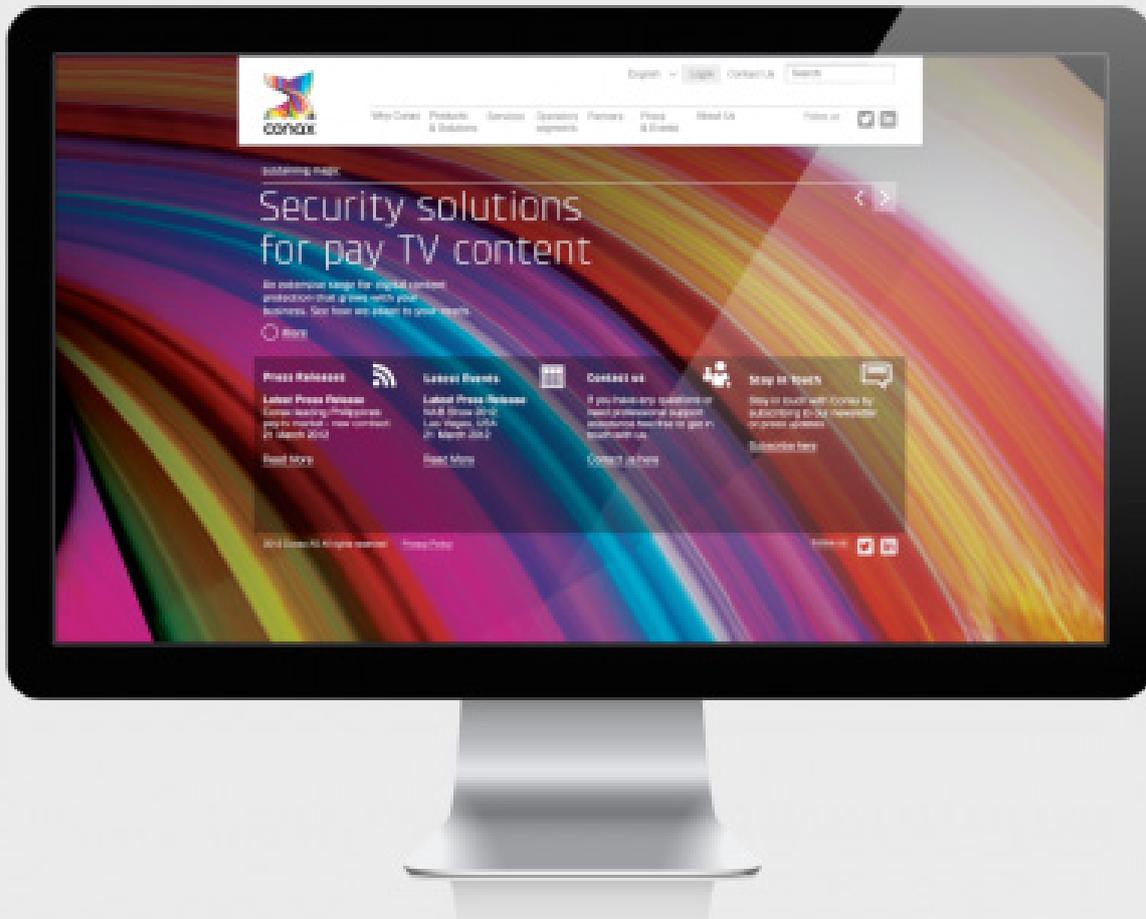
"If the products work as planned when they are launched on the market, our efficiency and profitability are greatly improved. If they don't, then we have to spend time and energy to identify the fault and rectify it. Worst case scenario is that we might have to go into the CA system and find a workaround. This is a drain on resources and costs money," says Morten Solbakken, managing director of Conax.

Labatus tests set-top boxes and chipsets made by Conax' partners on behalf of Conax. While the set-top box itself does not handle any security data – this all takes

place in the CA system – it needs to handle the signals correctly. Labatus ensures that Conax' functional requirements are correctly implemented and conforms with the requirements.

The CA system protects the programming content from unauthorised viewing. If the security system functions poorly, the viewer may not get access to content he has paid for. To prevent this from happening, Conax has the hardware tested and certified to guarantee correct functioning.

The objective is to ensure that the set-top boxes used by Conax' customers operate correctly and that they perform robustly in relation to any disruption during operation. Labatus tests the CA functionality of the set-top boxes according to a set of requirements provided by Conax.



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“When a Conax security system is added to a system, which may be a set-top box or a chip, Labatus will check the third party’s equipment to ensure it meets the minimum requirements and issue a test report. We have designed a test for Conax, including software, that tests all the relevant parameters,” says Niclas Edoff, chief operating officer, Labatus.

“Conax manufactures the security systems and then gives details to manufacturers on how to integrate the systems. This is an approach that gives a lot of freedom to manufacturers, enabling them to focus on developing the features they know best.

But it obviously depends on the integration between the security system and the rest of the hardware being 100% successful. We go through all the documentation Conax issues to manufacturers on how to integrate the systems, to ensure this provides all information needed for successful integration,” he says.

Labatus has been working with Conax for the last decade. Labatus was initially contracted by operator Com Hem to upgrade the existing user base of set-top boxes with new software to handle Conax encryption. This worked so well that Labatus has been working with Conax ever since.

Close to a hundred systems are tested each year, so in practice, the Conax test is an ongoing, never-ending process.

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