

Windesheim University Showcases Next-Generation Student Experience - All Accessed Via Remote Portal

Innovative collaboration initiative, based on SharePoint web portal and virtualization, enables flexibility for students and staff to interact with university network and applications at any time, anywhere, from any device

The Situation

Windesheim's 17,000 students make it one of the largest of the fifty-five Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. It places a strong emphasis on student-focused, practice-oriented education, and so, after its merger with another university, looked to overcome the challenge of restructuring the IT estate and drive its organic approach to staff and students through its infrastructure design. The University seized the opportunity to modernize the services offered to its students and staff, improve working, quality of life, and ultimately give it a competitive edge when attracting future intakes and new teaching staff.

Traditionally, the school had the typical plethora of IT systems

—back-office Novell and Windows servers running administrative systems, and a network of desktops providing standard applications and resources to staff and students. The IT server and desktop estate was labor-intensive to manage and too rigid to adapt to changing needs. Windesheim envisaged a new scenario whereby centrally-run services could be tapped into flexibly, yet securely, from any location, on any device. This would enable productive out-of-hours working, facilitate remote working and resource access as well as advanced collaboration between students and staff. The overall goal: to improve the 'user experience' for staff and students.

“ This has been a true partnership, we wanted to showcase a next-generation education environment, and Sogeti has helped us on that journey in a truly collaborative effort. The results are what we'd been hoping to achieve. ”

**Gertjan Flinterman, Manager
Infrastructure & Application
Management at Windesheim**



The Solution

Because the new scenario demanded more than straightforward platform consolidation, or the implementation of a portal, Windesheim sought the consultancy and integration expertise of Sogeti. The Group had extensive Web 2.0 collaboration experience and specialist knowledge of the Education sector, in addition to the requisite technical integration and systems management skills. Fielding experts from across its Application and Infrastructure practices, Sogeti helped Windesheim define a strategy that would consolidate the university's sprawling IT estate. It also set out ways of cost-effectively supporting a range of new flexible collaboration features for students and staff.

Windesheim was able to reduce the number of physical servers with VMware virtualization software. This meant that core applications, including those used to manage class scheduling, could now be run and managed centrally, and accessed remotely. On this platform Sogeti designed new, advanced Web 2.0 collaboration functionality based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, accessible via a secure browser and personalized user portals on any device. This advanced collaboration was backed by Microsoft Exchange Server, System Center Suite and Windows Server. The portal thus created enabled collaboration between students and staff, as well as the downloading and sharing of web applications, mail, news, schedules and documents.

Additionally, through the use of Microsoft System Center and App-V, the management and delivery of desktops, laptops and application was greatly improved.

The Result

The new IT environment has simplified and reduced the cost of administration and improved resource utilization at Windesheim, while introducing significant new flexibility and scalability. The original physical IT estate has been significantly reduced, while the new server and

application platforms, through virtualization, can now support the rapid roll-out of new systems and applications, without additional impact on IT staff. Previously, it might have taken from two to four weeks to deploy a new application: the process now takes less than half that time. Existing applications can be deployed to new users in minutes, instead of many hours. The success rate of these roll-outs has dramatically increased, since virtualized software causes no disruption to individual machines.

The costs saved as a result of the overall reduction of the estate, and more efficient IT, have been redeployed in the form of investment in collaboration and remote working. The significant sums—representing a 30% improvement on a like-for-like basis—were put directly towards the new collaboration functionality to improve productivity, and quality of work, for staff and students alike. This has improved life for the campus's IT maintenance engineers, too, with half of the original support team now redeployed to more cutting-edge projects.

How Windesheim and Sogeti Worked Together

Sogeti's innovative approach to the Windesheim project, including its vision for 'the new world of work', was crucial to its appointment.

"Windesheim was not looking for a quick-fix to a partly outdated IT environment; it saw an opportunity for positive, transformational change that would add value for students and staff, and took it," comments Ron Moerman, Infrastructure Technology Officer for Sogeti's Dutch practice.

While the traditional approach might have been to work on the desktop consolidation and virtualization work separately from the Web 2.0 collaboration initiative, Sogeti identified that the cumulative impact would be critical in achieving the broader vision the University was striving for. This meant treating the entire project as a single entity. To ensure that the broader goals were kept in sight, Sogeti introduced its own practitioners into Windesheim's operations to work alongside internal staff.

About Capgemini and Sogeti

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