



---

## Overview

### The need

With an aging population in the Netherlands, Saxion University of Applied Sciences sought new ways to attract and retain students and to conduct research aimed at helping organizations discover solutions to real-life challenges.

### The solution

Saxion worked with IBM Premier Business Partner Funatic to implement IBM® digital experience software, efficiently creating an attractive website with innovative online applications that help enroll and engage students.

### The benefit

Potential enrollees can access information about Saxion programs from their laptops and mobile devices and, in combination with other integrated web platforms, even interact with students and staff to learn about campus life, research education options, register and design a course of study.

---

# Saxion University of Applied Sciences

*IBM software helps to attract and retain students and supports research into practical situations*

Saxion University of Applied Sciences is one of the largest institutions of higher education in the Netherlands, with four campuses and approximately 2,500 employees. The university offers a broad range of courses to more than 26,000 students representing at least 55 nationalities.

## Broadening appeal to new students

As in most European countries, the Netherlands has an aging population. For the country's higher education institutions, this demographic trend means stiffer competition for students. Saxion sought to maintain and increase enrollment with an online presence attractive to young people of the Netherlands and other countries. It also wanted one portal platform that could more efficiently serve a wider range of constituencies, including staff members, existing students, the various campus institutes, partner universities and external companies.

---

*Today, the eleven Saxion institutes create targeted content for websites built on a centrally managed IBM WebSphere Portal and Web Content Manager platform. "We used the technology to reorganize," says John Bouwens, the university's business information manager. "By supporting decentralized content creation within a common infrastructure, we can provide a more consistent Saxion experience."*

---



### **Building a unified, multichannel web presence**

Saxion was already using IBM Notes® and IBM Connections software along with IBM iSeries® servers. Also, its internal student and employee portal platforms are built on IBM's Portal and Web Content management software. "We were used to the quality of IBM, so we wanted to build on IBM technology," says Bouwens. "Another factor in our decision was that the IBM solution supported multiple languages, accessibility and responsive design, making it easier for us to reach our intended Dutch-, German- and English- speaking audiences, including people with disabilities, on their preferred devices."

Saxion also had a successful long-term relationship with IBM Premier Business Partner Funatic. The university contracted with Funatic to configure and deploy a solution based on the security-rich, scalable IBM WebSphere Portal platform. As part of the implementation, the Funatic team used IBM Web Content Manager and IBM Forms Experience Builder software to design multichannel, interactive website templates, including a subsite for each of the 11 Saxion institutes. The team is planning to make these portals social by integrating its existing IBM Connections platform and IBM Sametime® capabilities for online chat, awareness and video conferencing. Together with already integrated Public Social Media, Saxion is constantly striving to provide a live stream of actual information and social communication capabilities. Responsive design is applied to make sure these capabilities worked well on mobile devices. Among the capabilities Funatic delivered with the solution were short URLs, analytics on online behavior and inline editing for content authors and managers. Visitors can share all content through social media channels.

### **Drawing people into the Saxion experience**

The new site helps position Saxion as an innovative technology-driven university. It is designed to capture the attention of potential students with an attractive look and practical decision-making tools. For example, young people often choose their new studies together with their parents. Using the Saxion site's "Study Picker" application, family members can work through options on a tablet together. And, by accessing [www.oursaxionworld.com](http://www.oursaxionworld.com), they see Saxion's global connections on an interactive world map and can drill down to learn more about the university's staff, alumni and current student projects, as well as educational and research partnerships with other universities and businesses.

There's also a social corner on the university's website, [www.intosaxion.nl](http://www.intosaxion.nl), where students are available to offer advice and share experiences. Site visitors can find students in a study area of interest and read their blogs, follow them on Twitter or ask them questions. The most recent statistics show that the site attracts close to 1,000 visitors monthly.

---

## Solution Components

### Software

- IBM® WebSphere® Portal V7.0
- IBM Web Content Manager V7.0
- IBM Forms Experience Builder

### IBM Premier Business Partner

- Funatic
- 

## Reinforcing the connection

The interactive experience continues after enrollment. Currently, more than 26,000 Saxion students use their internal student portal to access their class schedules and e-learning programs, see their grades, learn about vacancies for internships, communicate with teachers, staff and fellow students and pursue other educational activities. The student portal alone generates almost 1 million page views per month.

As part of the Saxion experience, the university embeds technology in its educational programs and research. Students learn to successfully use the technological developments in their fields of studies. Saxion calls this experience “Living Technology” and it includes working together with local businesses and students from other programs to devise new solutions for real-life problems.

Going forward, Saxion is working with Funatic to extend the experience with an extranet to enhance collaboration with Saxion’s research and educational partner organizations. By means of providing online guidance, content targeting and personalized, rolec-based information, Saxion is planning to better guide its potential customers through a tailored, attractive and compelling online journey.

For example, consider a student working on a paper. He has two mentors, one on a committee at a related college and the other an employee for an external business. The student also is being tutored by a professor at Saxion University. With the planned extranet, these people from three organizations could collaborate on one platform and share documents in a highly secure environment, all using their own user credentials.

## For more information

To learn more about digital experience solutions from IBM, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

[ibm.com/software/collaboration/digitalexperience](http://ibm.com/software/collaboration/digitalexperience)

For information about Funatic, visit:

[www.funatic.nl](http://www.funatic.nl)

To learn more about Saxion University of Applied Sciences, visit:

[www.saxion.nl](http://www.saxion.nl) or [www.saxion.edu](http://www.saxion.edu)



---

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2015

IBM Corporation  
Software Group  
Route 100  
Somers, NY 10589

Produced in the United States of America  
March 2015

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, WebSphere, Notes, Sametime and iSeries are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at [www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml](http://www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml).

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time.

It is the user's responsibility to evaluate and verify the operation of any other products or programs with IBM products and programs.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.



Please Recycle