panagenda and Saxion create perspective

Saxion University of Applied Sciences is one of the largest institutions of higher education in the Netherlands, with a constantly expanding 24,000 student's base. Saxion is one of the few institutions in the education sector that exclusively works with IBM Collaboration solutions to:

- utilize IBM Notes and iNotes which is used by every student and staff member
- communicate in real time via IBM Sametime on workstations as well as on mobile devices
- develop and deploy custom XPages applications to enhance collaboration
- collaborate with IBM Connections, both for internal as well as student use

To facilitate this IBM collaboration infrastructure, Saxion has deployed a mix of iNotes and standard IBM Notes clients. These clients are hosted on four IBM Domino server clusters for Saxion employees and ten server clusters for students. Furthermore, 18 clustered Sametime servers and a large number of XPages applications are part of the environment, which is capable of supporting up to 40,000 users.
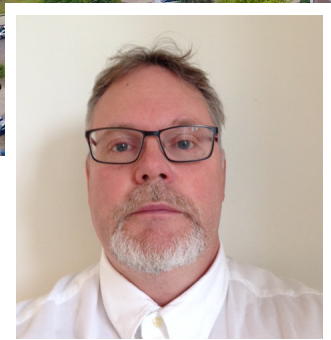
Getting more for less with the IBM Notes client!

Originally, the main focus for Saxion was on web usage of applications and email via iNotes, which is why initially only 200 IBM Notes clients were deployed for selected employees. As more and more applications were developed, this approach was re-considered as IT management felt that true collaboration could only happen if every department had access. So it was decided that all employees should receive their own Notes client for a more feature rich experience across productivity and other applications.

Particularly in the education sector, resource allocation and room scheduling is a critical and highly complex task. While Saxion developers were able to create sophisticated applications to deal with the various workflows, the biggest concern was around adoption. "Resource scheduling is a big issue here for the academic and logistic departments who should be able to work seamlessly together" says Martin Meijer, Infrastructure Specialist at Saxion. "However, even the most elaborate resource scheduling application only works if it's actually being used, which requires all staff to have their own Notes client. The combination of the IBM Notes clients, IBM Connections and IBM Sametime provides us with a solid collaboration environment that allows for a modern and an efficient way of working."

Client Management and Performance Maximization

As the Notes Client landscape grew rapidly at Saxion, so did the demand for a client management solution. While other solutions were tested, IBM Certified System Administrator, Godfried Kleinmeijer, concluded that "MarvelClient is not only the most complete solution, but also by far the fastest for client management." panagenda Marvel Client is now part of every IBM Notes Client roll-out package at Saxion to facilitate agile adaptation of client settings and versions.

As is common across un-optimized environments, some Saxion University users were reporting poor performance of the Notes Client. While complaints like this could only ever be re-acted on previously, MarvelClient can now pro-actively measure and detect the slow clients in the environment, while providing client runtime and network latency as part of the Marvel Client analysis feature. Additionally, the Analyze Database also holds information about users':

Mr. Godfried Kleinmeijer

Mr. Kleinmeijer works as IBM certified System-administrator for Saxion University in The Netherlands. With over 2.000 employees and up to 40.000 students Saxion University fully counts on IBM Notes Solutions.

Implemented product

- Hardware, operating system, disk drives and memory information
- Detailed information about other installed software
- Notes Clients versions, hotfixes, program and data directory location
- Client-Server Communication statistics and performance analysis

This information enables the IT department to figure out precisely why any Client is slow and in addition, which hard- and software tunings could be modified to optimize the end user experience. As Saxion aims to have Notes Clients run as fast as possible, MarvelClient Analysis data is vital to detect lacking memory, missing port compression, outdated ODS' and so on.

A Picture-perfect Server Migration
In order to optimize the server infrastructure and minimize network latency, Saxion needed to redirect several users to a new mail server. Using the MarvelClient Migrate module, Saxion was able to perform this migration of all end user links in an absolutely transparent manner. All that was required was as a few simple MarvelClient actions which seamlessly re-directed the desired users, as soon as their Notes clients were restarted. While it's possible that some users noticed the faster client-server communication, not a single person realized that they had been re-directed to a new server on their replicator page, workspace, location documents and bookmarks. Even more importantly, Saxion was able to perform a server migration without any help desk calls or client issues and without convoluted emails instructing users on how to manually re-point to a new server (provided that those instructional emails would have gotten read, to begin with).

PRO-active versus RE-active
In line with panagenda's best practice recommendations, Saxion University collected the 10 most frequent support tickets every month, related to IBM Notes issues. MarvelClient actions addressing the root cause of those help desk tickets were then setup to apply to all employees, at every startup, which means that the particular set of issues will never occur again. Since Saxions infrastructure is still evolving, new challenges are constantly coming up, but being able to use MarvelClient in this proactive way means being able to fix known problems for all clients with one action, rather than waiting for users to call in, one at the time.

Save the Network and Save Space with Intelligent Roaming
Saxion also operates some multi-user client installations, which allows users to work any workstation in the University. To avoid exponential storage costs, Saxion decided to use MarvelClient Roaming, which uses sophisticated collection and compression methods to store client configuration files totaling between 2 - 4 MB in size. Comparing this to traditional IBM Roaming file sizes of between 30 - 100 MB, which means a 96% reduction in storage needed to provide IBM Notes Client roaming. As an added benefit, this huge reduction in roaming file size also means a much faster roaming experience for end users and a greatly reduced network load.

While Saxion University's infrastructure growth hasn't stopped yet, MarvelClient has already added a significant amount of value, with the Saxion IT staff looking at a promising future where the entire Notes client environment of the University simply works as it should.

Mr. Godfried Kleinmeijer
IBM certified System-administrator at Saxion University

„There was no second guessing whether or not to organize a reference call with panagenda. The quality of cooperation as well as the technical solutions, are very extensive. I can whole heartedly recommend panagenda as a partner for you."

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About panagenda
Leaders in Optimizing Collaboration Landscapes. Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, panagenda develops state-of-the-art solutions for IT infrastructures around communication and collaboration. With locations in Heppenheim, Germany and Boston, USA, our extensive expertise ranges from reducing total cost of ownership (TCO) and workload, to facilitating agile IT transformation. Our solutions enhance performance, increase clarity and control, and deliver exceptional value for money to customers with more than 7 million licenses in over 70 countries. Also part of the panagenda group are the Dutch company Trust Factory located in Den Haag, as well as panagenda Consulting, which are wholly owned subsidiaries.

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