



Sitecore  
**Case Study:**

THE COLLEGE OF  
**WOOSTER**

**College of Wooster – New Site Debuts “iWooster” and Highly Interactive Features to Maximize Continuous User Engagement**

**Summary**

A private, coeducational institution located in Wooster, Ohio, The College of Wooster offers students a comprehensive liberal arts and sciences education that culminates in a rigorous, in-depth senior project of inquiry called Independent Study. The college emphasizes its approach of “independent minds, working together” by combining rigorous academic programs with unique opportunities that enrich student development, and cultivate qualities of leadership and service.

Working with Sitecore partner, BigBad, the College of Wooster built a new site that reflects Wooster’s growing stature as the nation’s premiere liberal arts college for mentored, undergraduate research, and reflects the school’s values by providing a high degree of personalization for each student, both now and throughout the student’s life of learning.

**Challenge**

Initial discovery sessions revealed a vibrant academic community in transition: A new president had arrived. Admissions sought to attract more students from outside the Midwest. Content authoring and workflow was challenging. Organization of information was neither compelling nor scalable. The underlying technical components were outdated and cumbersome. It was clear The College of Wooster needed a powerful Web presence that would set itself apart from the pack. The new site needed to incorporate effective tools for providing the flexibility to integrate with multiple content and profiles sources to deliver an experience on the level of today’s popular social Web sites.

**Solution**

BigBad, a Sitecore partner, was chosen to build a new Web site for the College of Wooster. BigBad’s integrated team of experts worked together to create innovative site elements that push the envelope to demonstrate the distinctive Wooster student experience.

A large part of the site is Sitecore’s CMS, which allows contributors across the campus to easily update the site and provides a powerful platform to drive ongoing personalization and scalability. BigBad leveraged key Sitecore functionality to deliver a site that meets the primary objectives of the Web site redesign effort.

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The College of Wooster  
Site

[www.wooster.edu](http://www.wooster.edu)





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**—John Hopkins, Associate Vice President for College Relations & Marketing at The College of Wooster**



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**—Jeff Johnson, Chief Creative Officer at BigBad**

“Our project team was inspired by Wooster’s willingness to let students craft their own, personal educational experiences,” said Jeff Johnson, Chief Creative Officer at BigBad. “We conceptualized a number of ways to translate this powerful quality to the Web. Ultimately, the strategy, design, functionality and user experience came together to create a site that’s unparalleled in the academic world, making it an exciting advancement for both BigBad and the College of Wooster. Using Sitecore as the CMS platform enabled us to accomplish this dynamically and effectively.”

## Result

Today, the College of Wooster’s site provides users with tools to customize their own unique experience with site content. Among the notable new elements:

“**Wooster Is...**” is a Home Page feature that showcases Wooster’s core tenets and communicates the College’s distinct personality. A merger of smart design, IA and functionality, “Wooster Is” presents the Home Page as a bulletin board-replica with jumbled papers, notes, photos and doodles. Key places on the site are revealed upon user interaction with items on the virtual bulletin board. For example, rolling over the Tootsie Roll (a Wooster icon) reveals specific information about the academic requirement of Independent Study at Wooster, and links to related site content. Rather than bringing site content into the feature, “Wooster Is” enables an alternative navigation method to draw visitors deeper into the Web site.

**iWooster** gives users an experience similar to one found on highly functional sites like iGoogle, allowing them to collect the content that is most interesting to them personally, all in one designated, branded place.

After creating a profile, users are allowed to add and delete pieces of site content to their profile as their role within the Wooster community changes. For instance, a prospective student might save admissions content in her iWooster initially. After she’s accepted, that content could be replaced with information on academics, athletics and student life. Then, after graduation, items from news, events and alumni pages could populate her iWooster area. Essentially, it’s a valuable feature that adapts with the user, even as the user’s role changes over time. This is a major shift in thinking from traditional higher education Web sites that primarily target prospective students, which is essential, but then abandon their needs once accepted.

**Other items of note:** “The Social Toolbox” is an interactive Web 2.0 element that appears on every page of the site. This toolbox enables the user to easily interact with content, providing the ability to e-mail, share or post any page — text or multi-media — with the click of a button. It also reveals specific options for the user to share the content to popular social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace. The “Areas of Study” spotlight on the Home Page immediately engages prospective students with access to all majors and minors through an easy scrolling feature of the complete list in alphabetical order.

“When people ask me how I feel to have the site launched, I tell them it feels great, but like Churchill after the Battle of Britain, I know that ‘This is not the end, nor even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning,’” said John Hopkins, Associate Vice President for College Relations & Marketing at The College of Wooster. “We’ve got a much more powerful, robust set of tools to work with, thanks to BigBad and Sitecore. Now, it’s up to us.”



Sitecore’s Web Content Management System (CMS) and portal software solutions enable companies to deliver compelling web experiences. Sitecore’s award-winning CMS software makes it easy for businesses to create and update dynamic, full-featured websites of all types. Sitecore’s industry leading flexibility and scalability allows companies to better leverage their content, improve customer experience and drive business growth.

Thousands of public and private organizations, including national governments and Fortune 500 companies utilize Sitecore solutions for their websites. These organizations have created and now manage more than 20,000 dynamic websites with Sitecore including Microsoft, Sara Lee, Siemens, Toshiba, Omni Hotels, Computer Associates, ISS and Atlanta Falcons. Sitecore has offices and representatives in more than 50 countries around the world.

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