



**Partner:** Conciety

**Web Site:** [www.conciety.de](http://www.conciety.de)

**Partner Size:** 20 employees

**Country or Region:** Germany

**Industry:** Education—Primary and secondary schools

#### Partner Profile

Conciety is an independent software vendor that focuses on the education market and incorporates Microsoft® technologies in its solutions. Founded in 2004 and based in Erkrath, Germany, the company has 20 employees.

#### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
  - Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007
- Technologies
  - Microsoft Silverlight

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## Educators Save Time, Improve Collaboration with the IQ:on Portal from Conciety

“Office SharePoint Server 2007 gives us the power and flexibility to develop a robust school solution that provides a pleasant user experience and a rich feature set.”

Eckhard Klockhaus, Chief Executive Officer, Conciety

*To take full advantage of IT infrastructure, schools in Germany must implement software that saves teachers time and improves communication processes. The software company Conciety has built its IQ:on educational portal using Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and the Microsoft Silverlight™ browser plug-in. IQ:on saves teachers time in lesson preparation and presents users with an attractive, application-independent interface.*

#### Business Needs

In Germany, K-12 schools generally possess relatively strong IT infrastructures, with devices and Internet connections available to assist in education. “The platform is there,” says Eckhard Klockhaus, Chief Executive Officer of Conciety, an independent software vendor based in Erkrath, near Düsseldorf. “But when you ask teachers and students if computers are used in non-IT subjects, you see that we in fact have poor digitization.”

To take full advantage of educational technology, Klockhaus believes that K-12

schools need to overcome two hurdles. First of all, they must implement software that helps teachers become more productive when they are preparing their lessons. “Technology must help the teacher save time,” he says.

Second, schools must implement software that improves the communication processes between teachers and students. “Assessments, homework, workflows, and managing access to content all have to do with communication between educators and students,” Klockhaus says.



The second problem is especially acute in Berufsschulen, the German vocational or “apprenticeship” schools that in the U.S. system would fit between high school and university. In these programs, students spend two days a week at school and three on the job. In this environment, effective collaboration must include not only the teacher and student, but also the employer.

In short, Klockhaus says, the problem is with software and content. “Everyone talks about how conservative the education market is from the technical perspective,” he says. “It’s true that educators have had little interest in many recent software tools. But we believe they are open to new technologies if those technologies offer them value.”

## Solution

Since its founding in 2004, Conciety has developed a learning portal called IQ:on. IQ:on is built on Microsoft® technologies, including Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and the Microsoft Silverlight™ browser plug-in. It also integrates with the 2007 Microsoft Office system, including the Microsoft Office PowerPoint® 2007 presentation graphics program. “Worldwide, Office PowerPoint is the most-used educator software,” says Klockhaus. “So as a teacher uses Office PowerPoint to prepare lessons, IQ:on uses the unique tools of Office SharePoint Server 2007 to perform process management in the background.”

The IQ:on portal, powered by Office SharePoint Server 2007, offers a user experience customized for groups such as educators, students, or administrators. Berufsschulen can turn on an additional module to include employers as educational collaborators. Klockhaus says, “Office SharePoint Server 2007 gives us the power and flexibility to develop a robust school

solution that provides a pleasant user experience and a rich feature set.”

IQ:on also integrates the SharePoint Learning Kit, which enhances communication processes by adding an assignment workflow engine, target setting, learner progress, and dialogue. “A school or school district can use the SharePoint Learning Kit for content distribution, access, and assessments,” Klockhaus says. This includes content based on the Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) standard for Web-based e-learning.

For the next release of IQ:on, Klockhaus will also investigate full integration with the Microsoft Learning Gateway, an education solutions framework for Office SharePoint Server 2007 that provides Web Parts, templates, and other tools that are specifically designed to better connect people, information, and processes in an educational environment.

## Benefits

When schools deploy IQ:on, teachers save time, users gain an attractive interface, and applications interoperate in a way that can help integrate digital media into daily lives.

■ **Teachers save time.** Because IQ:on facilitates easy integration of multimedia teaching aids, teachers can speed up their lesson preparation. Klockhaus believes that providing such a benefit to educators is a key to unlocking the promise of technology in education. “Our portal has to be good for the educator first,” he says.

With IQ:on, teachers can also have more fun. For example, they can use Silverlight to integrate whiteboards with the portal solution. The rich user interface with Silverlight makes the portal act like an

application rather than merely a Web surface. “Teachers tell us this is a cool feature,” Klockhaus says. “And they want new feature sets when they can see value in them.”

■ **Users gain an attractive interface.** “Ease of use is king,” says Klockhaus. “The user experience plays a major role in most product decisions, and the IQ:on interface is very user-friendly for both teachers and students.” For example, schools frequently comment on its sophisticated search features, powered by Office SharePoint Server 2007, which teachers can use to search inside the school portal, in other dedicated portals such as those of publishers, and across public sites on the Internet.

■ **Interoperability.** School systems often choose IQ:on because of its interoperability with other, existing applications. Furthermore, its use of Silverlight means that the system doesn’t depend on any individual applications such as media players. “Because IQ:on is a browser-based solution, it has the same interface whether you use it in the classroom, the faculty lounge, or at home,” Klockhaus says. By providing an application-independent user interface, while in the background improving communication processes through tools such as the SharePoint Learning Kit, IQ:on helps teachers lead the way in integrating digital media into daily school activities.