

Revolutionizing fashion with artificial intelligence

Istituto Secoli uses IBM watsonx to
empower students in the concept creation
phase

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Going beyond traditional thinking patterns

Istituto Secoli is a prestigious and historic institution in the fashion industry based in Italy, recognized internationally for its training in fashion design, pattern making and tailoring.

One of the first milestone that students encounter during their journey at Istituto Secoli is the collection design process. Central to this process is the concept development—the central idea that inspires and guides the creation of a collection—that plays a central role in sparking creativity and innovation.

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This phase came with its challenges. Indeed, students often struggled to fully develop their initial concept. The overwhelming amount of online information led to shallow research, while personalized algorithms of social networks limit exposure to diverse perspectives. To address these challenges, Istituto Secoli decided to explore artificial intelligence (AI) to help students find reliable sources and expand their creative thinking, so they could move beyond traditional approaches and develop more innovative ideas.

100%

of all students involved in the testing acknowledged CreativIA as a valuable tool.

65%

of student research actively used the tool's core features.

Leveraging generative AI (gen AI) technology to enhance the creative process

To help its students, Istituto Secoli partnered with IBM Client Engineering to explore how AI could enhance the creative process. Together, they developed a Point of View (POV), leveraging the [IBM® watsonx.ai™](#) AI studio, [IBM Cloud® Code Engine](#).

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The team developed an AI-powered tool, CreativIA, designed to support students in two key stages of developing a new concept for a collection:

- The first stage involved using gen AI to expand and refine the initial idea provided by the student. Starting from a sentence entered by the student, CreativIA rephrased and enriched the concept by expanding on the original idea, while providing additional perspectives and complementary alternatives. This process helped students move beyond abstract ideas and explore diverse points of view.
- The second stage featured an intelligent search engine that drew from a curated database of resources selected by professors, including articles and images. By interpreting natural language queries, CreativIA identified semantically relevant articles, helping students find references to enrich and deepen their concepts.

The aim of CreativIA was not to substitute students' creativity but to enhance it by offering features that provided a deeper exploration of their initial concept.

To ensure its effectiveness, IBM and Istituto Secoli engaged a group of students in a user testing phase. The students were given access to the demo environment where they evaluated the tool's ability to meet their needs and gave valuable feedback on the features and overall user experience for further improvement.

CreativIA provides tangible benefits in concept development

The integration of IBM watsonx™ portfolio of products into the proposed POV yielded remarkable results, aligning with Istituto Secoli's goal of developing an AI-powered tool to support students in their creative process.

The solution enhanced the research phase by facilitating the exploration of themes, subthemes and concepts linked to the students' core ideas, while also optimizing the time needed to define concepts and, subsequently, develop them into a final solution.

Testing showed that 65% of student research actively involved AI, with 85% of students expressing satisfaction even though they had access to data from a single integrated website. Despite this limitation, all students found CreativIA a valuable source of inspiration, underscoring its effectiveness in enhancing their creative workflows.

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In addition to expanding students' creative perspectives and helping them break free from traditional thinking, CreativIA has the potential to offer significant benefits to Istituto Secoli. This innovative tool not only enriches the institute's educational offerings but also reinforces its reputation as a pioneer in combining technology with fashion education.



About Istituto Secoli

[Istituto Secoli](#) (link resides outside of ibm.com), founded in 1934 in Italy, has its main headquarters in the heart of Milan, in the Porta Venezia district. It's an institution dedicated to promoting sartorial culture and professional training in fashion. It stands out for its practical teaching approach, aimed at promoting the culture of *made in Italy*. Istituto Secoli delivers Bachelor's (BA) and Master's degree programs along with professional courses ranging from fashion design to pattern making, prototyping, garment construction and collection development designed for those aiming to enhance their skills and advance their careers.

Solution components

IBM® watsonx.ai™	→
IBM watsonx.data™	→
IBM Cloud® Code Engine	→

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