

Jonathan's JA-SIG Weblog

Observations and musings from Jonathan Markow

Portlet Farm

November 19, 2007

An interesting question was raised at our unconference about how to provide support for shared portlets. uPortal has never had much of a portlet story, which has put us at a disadvantage in portal bake-offs. Other major portals—both open source and commercial—typically ship with a bundle of portlets that will run in the portal's environment pretty much out of the box. uPortal provides a few useful ones, but not a package of comparable breadth.

On the other hand, we are aware of a number of interesting portlets being developed in the community and it would be very nice if there were a good way of sharing them. What's more, because of the dearth of communication about who's doing what, we've seen instances of redundant efforts where two or even three institutions wind up working on the same functionality. It would be great to harness those efforts when possible and put our heads together.

The unconference discussions centered on a way to make this happen. We've certainly got the resources to offer project tools and communication paths to new and existing initiatives. Expect to see more discussion on the lists about creating a process to provide a sandbox for portlet contributions and to "project-ify" (as Andrew Petro likes to put it) those efforts that develop traction in the community. One outcome of this work could be an ever-growing, bundled portlet distribution that is certified to run with each new uPortal release.