Special Report to the JA-SIG Board

Note: CampusPipeline would like this information not to be made public until October 29, 2001. This information will be discussed with Gartner Group on October 19, 2001 with the provision that it not be included in any of their services until October 29, 2001.

CampusPipeline to Use, Support uPortal

Last week CampusPipeline initiated a series of e-mail messages focusing on the licensing of uPortal. We confirmed commercial use is legal. Subsequent discussions identified CampusPipeline's plan to offer two portals to their customers—uPortal 2.0 or iPlanet Portal. CampusPipeline well become a reseller of the iPlant products including iPlanet portal, application, Web, calendar, and messaging servers. They will supply connectors for several of these to uPortal.

CampusPipeline has a new business plan. It is based on making their channel and connector products available for use in these two portals, and subsequently perhaps other portals. The company is leveraging its experience in integration of student information systems into technical services. After discussions with Sun iPlant and review of uPortal 2.0, CampusPipeline selected these two portal products to support.

CampusPipeline is planning to introduce its products—including uPortal—and services at Educause. The company is discussing their strategy, products, and services with Gartner Group on October 19th so this information will be included in the Gartner presentation at Educause.

CampusPipeline said they want to begin attending the uPortal Software Developers meetings and to contribute back to JA-SIG their work. They said they have found a number of bugs in iPlanet products and have provided the company with bug fixes. (Apparently CampusPipeline has the source code to the iPlant products). They also would like to contribute to the portal framework development. The intent is to use uPortal without any modifications or extensions.

The current plans are for campuses to elect to install uPortal 2.0 or to license iPlanet servers. The connectors between uPortal and/or iPlanet portal server and the student information systems would be licensed from and maintained by CampusPipeline. CampusPipeline also is going to change their current channels to use the uPortal IChannel interface. CampusPipeline staff would provide supporting consulting services for all of these. (From the discussions it appears CampusPipeline knows the details about the IChannel interface and other uPortal code).

The Steps

CampusPipeline will prepare a draft press release or press kit describing their strategy. They will send this to JA-SIG to verify its accuracy. This will be sent to the JA-SIG

Board. The review will be an opportunity to add a statement from one or more of the JA-SIG Board members expressing pleasure that CampusPipeline is using this product.

If CampusPipeline needs to know more about uPortal, I suggested that uPortal developers could brief the CampusPipeline staff in Salt Lake City. The reason for this offer is to confirm their decision to use the product and ensure an announcement at Educause.

Beginning with the next Software Developers Meeting, one or more CampusPipeline staff will attend.

In the next few weeks, JA-SIG and CampusPipeline will discuss how CampusPipeline Technical Support can coordinate with JA-SIG and provide bug reports and bug fixes.

Consequences

CampusPipeline acknowledged the company had been in discussions with Interactive Business Solutions, Inc. about supporting uPortal. In these discussions CampusPipeline was "… not able to reach agreement on how we [CampusPipeline and IBS] would work together." CampusPipeline downloaded and reviewed the uPortal code and believed it met their requirements and that they could support it. Reading the license agreement confirmed they could use the code in conjunction with their channels.

IBS may feel they should have been the organization representing uPortal to CampusPipeline. And CampusPipeline may become a competitor with some of the IBS products such as IBS' Enterprise Application Server and the calendaring channel (as compared to connectors to the iPlant Calendar Server).

Before CampusPipeline announces their use of uPortal, WebCT could be made aware firms will be announcing making their products uPortal compliant at Educause. WebCT could be given the opportunity to have a similar press release with a statement from JA-SIG Board members.

Sun, or at least iPlanet, may feel that uPortal is competing with their products. We have attempted to address this issue in recent presentations by identifying requirements for academic portals that are not all available from corporate portals.

Several are expecting Blackboard to claim "uPortal support." Depending upon how they explain their RSS channel, this may appear to be misleading compared to others using uPortal itself.