JA-SIG
Newsletter - 200709 - September 2007

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1 Welcome

1.1 Editor's Message

Welcome to the September 2007 issue of the JA-SIG Newsletter.

We have a lot of great content this month, including some very exciting news on the Winter Unconference and a wonderful little Q&A-style profile of Jason Shao of Rutgers University.

As always, feel free to send your comments or content to newsletter at jasig dot org.

Enjoy!
Mark Rogers (*University of Manitoba*), Editor, JA-SIG Newsletter

2 Education and Training

2.1 uPortal Administration Training - Unicon Inc.

Following up to Unicon's announcement on http://www.uportal.org (Unicon Announces September uPortal Administration Training at Sacramento State), we would like to add that this is the first time that this class will use uPortal 2.6 and JDK 1.6. Since DLM is now the de facto uPortal standard, students will be able to learn ways to migrate from using ALM to DLM.

The class is coming up very soon, September 25-27, and it will be hosted by Sacramento State (http://www.csus.edu). For more information and to register for the class please go to http://www.unicon.net/training/uportal/admin

Thank you,
Adam Rybicki, Professional Services, Unicon, Inc.

2.2 CampusEAI Offers uPortal Training at University of Dundee (Scotland)

CampusEAI's 5-Day, Training Course will cover uPortal and CAS topics.

The CampusEAI Consortium (CEAI), a non-profit, strategic partner of JA-SIG, has recently announced that it has sponsored a peer-to-peer training conference for uPortal which will be hosted at the University of Dundee (Scotland).

Event: CEAI uPortal Peer-to-Peer Training
Dates: October 15-19th, 2007
Location: University of Dundee (Scotland)
Instructor: Jason Shao, Rutgers University

Topics:

- uPortal Design Concepts & Labs
- CAS Design Concepts & Labs
- CAS Overview & Architecture
- CAS Configuration & EAI
- Portal Topology
- Portlet Development Overview
- Portal Administration
- Integration Strategies

Pre-requisites: Programming and general web development experience is required. Familiarity with Java and XML programming is desired.

- Fees (per person): USD $1,299
- This fee does not cover accommodation, meals or refreshments.

Registration: Send an email to jonathan_mullapudy@campuseai.org
There are only five seats available!

3 Project Updates

3.1 Central Authentication Service (CAS)

The CAS team is currently working on a 3.1.1 maintenance release for its 3.1.x branch. This release will include bug fixes and enhancements as well as minor updates and additional languages for internationalization.

The CAS team is also currently working on an update to the JA-SIG CAS Client for Java which will offer support for SAML 1.1 (and attributes) as well as Single Sign Out.

Contributed by:
Scott Battaglia (*Rutgers University*), Lead Developer, JA-SIG Central Authentication Service

3.2 uPortal

Since [the previous newsletter], Eric Dalquist has generously taken on release engineering activities around a near-term uPortal 2.6.1 patch release, towards which an RC1 is already available on the uPortal downloads site. This release includes fixes to the improved portlet deployment utility contributed by Drew Wills and maintained in this patch via collaboration with Brad Johnson and others. This release may also include a fix for UP-1816, which tracks a serious issue in support for JSR-168 portlet sessions and a proposed fix spearheaded by Eric Dalquist and successfully tested by an increasing number of uPortal developers. It is not too late to help test this patch and thereby to expedite its inclusion in uPortal. Several other bugs are also fixed in [2.6.1 RC1].

Progress towards a near-term, evolutionary uPortal 3 release continues, with Maven2ization (the first major architectural change identified in the roadmap) completed in an exploratory branch and ready for merge into the trunk, thanks primarily to the efforts of Eric Dalquist and Elliot Metsger. The planned next major effort towards this near-term evolutionary uPortal 3 release is using Spring more extensively and in a more principled way, possibly via adoption of Spring WebMVC as the top web tier of the software, and possibly including adoption of Acegi (Spring Security).

Increasingly, uPortal developers are discussing and collaborating in an IRC chat room hosted by freenode. Connection information and [logs] are available in the wiki.

Andrew Petro et. al.

4 Community News and Events

4.1 The JA-SIG Winter 2007 Unconference is Coming!

Who? What? Where?

Dates: November 12-13, 2007 / November 14-16, 2007 (optional post-conference activities)
Place: New Brunswick, NJ (Home of Rutgers University)
Details: Info about fees, lodging, meals, etc. will be coming very soon. Costs will be low, as making this an affordable event with low barriers to participation is a key focus.

What's an Unconference?

"An unconference is a conference where the content of the sessions is driven and created by the participants, generally day-by-day during the course of the event, rather than by a single organizer, or small group of organizers, in advance."
-Wikipedia

JA-SIG has always been about people coming together to share and learn in an open environment, and this is what an "unconference" is all about. As demonstrated by the success of the Summer 2007 Conference mini "BarCamp" (another spontaneous approach), the unconference format fits very well with our community values and goals.

The November event will provide both spontaneous and planned opportunities to collaborate on all JA-SIG community initiatives and topics. (There will not be a separate Winter Conference or a Fall uPortal Developer Meeting.)

What are we going to do?!

It's up to you! Ideas people are talking about so far include the following:

- Lightning Talks - Volunteers talk for up to 10 minutes. Any topic goes.
- Code Clinics - Bring your uPortal, portlet, or CAS code or problem and work on it with core developers.
- Screencast Factory - Show off your work while a facilitator captures it to share with the community.
- UCamp - Fluid Project members will lead a workshop and collaborations about user experience design and accessibility.
- Strategic Planning - What should JA-SIG be focused on next year? In three years? Join the conversation.
- How-to's. How-not-to's. Tips and techniques.

As part of the unconference format the final schedule will be determined in real-time, interactively with the attendees. So come prepared to participate.

You can view a list of potential activities on the wiki at:
http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/Winter+2007+UnConference+Activity+Ideas

OK, I'm Interested! What do I do next?

If you're hoping to join us, please do the following two things for now:

Register yourself at http://opensource.meetup.com/74/calendar/6047091/ RSVP there whether you are a "Yes" or a "Maybe".

Visit the Unconference Planning Site on the JA-SIG wiki: http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/Winter+2007+UnConference+Participants

This is a great place to indicate your interests---what you'd like to discuss, learn, share or teach.

If you'd like to participate in planning or logistics, join our mailing list: http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JSG/winter-07-unconference

Best regards, and we hope to see you at the Unconference,
The Winter 2007 Unconference Committee

4.2 Fall 2007 Fluid Summit (University of Toronto)

The Fall 2007 Fluid Summit is being held in Toronto from September 24-28, 2007.

http://wiki.fluidproject.org/display/fluid/Fall+2007+Fluid+Summit

The summit will be a working meeting for designers, testers, and developers on the project. We will focus on building consensus and defining concrete direction for our component road map, technical architecture, and user experience work. Most agenda items won't be brainstorming exercises; we expect to build on the concrete plans and proposals brought by each attendee. By the end of the summit, we plan to have defined a project direction in more detail, built solid collaborations, and delegated deliverables across the community.

Contributed by:
Colin Clark (*University of Toronto*), Technical Lead, Fluid Project
http://fluidproject.org

4.3 University of Alaska Fairbanks Joins JA-SIG

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) is new member of JA-SIG. UAF is part of the University of Alaska state higher education system, along with major campuses in Anchorage and Juneau and 13 rural locations. The MyUA portal serves all the campuses and is powered by Luminis.

UA portal developers and managers have been regular attendees at the summer conferences and look forward to ongoing and more in depth involvement in uPortal development and strategic development.

Contributed by:
Tom Moyer, MyUA Project Manager

5 Community Member Profile

5.1 Q&A with Jason Shao of Rutgers University

Jason Shao of Rutgers University generously agreed to answer a few questions about his involvement in the JA-SIG community. Here are his responses.

Q. How are you connected to JA-SIG?

I became involved in JA-SIG while part of the myRutgers team. I've served as committer, development coordinator, conference committee chair, newsletter editor, and general busy-body 🙂You can generally find me hanging out on ##uportal.

Q. What have you learned from your JA-SIG experience?

The experience I had participating in JA-SIG and working on JA-SIG projects has made me the developer I am today.

Q. What is your current job?

I work at Rutgers as an Application Developer focused on Instructional Technology. I'm responsible for our Sakai implementation and active in the Sakai community, as well as being involved in evaluating new tools like: blogs, wikis, social networks, video, collaboration, etc. for their applicability in instruction.

Q. What did you do before that?

I was previously a developer on the myRutgers Student portal. Some of the areas I focused on in myRutgers were UI, service integration, strategy and planning, processes, and communication.

Q. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your work?

JA-SIG has given me an opportunity for incredible professional development – both technically and in understanding of the education industry. The level of the participants within the JA-SIG is higher than any comparable group I've seen. Best practices, development tools, design, and development all occur at such a high-level, and so routinely in JA-SIG projects that we sometimes forget how lucky we are to have a deep collection of talented and dedicated individuals.

Q. What would you like to be doing five years from now?

Feverishly working to launch my own company – from my home office on the beach 🙂

Q. What would you change about the higher education open source movement to improve it?

I think we need to be careful to be inclusive at all times. While JA-SIG is a congenial and welcoming community – barriers to entry are still too high, especially for people from small schools, or with lighter technical backgrounds. As open-source matures, we need easier on-ramps, and better ways to engage non-developers in building software.

Q. What new technologies do you think look promising for higher education?

I see 2 trends that really excite me. Mobile devices could be huge – with the iPhone and s60 expanding the reach of real web browsers to the palm of your hand, I think we have an opportunity to provide richer services both to more people, and in wider situations than ever before (and we might get to leave our desks 🙂I also think the growth in GPS and context –

location, presence, social graphs – will allow these broader services to simultaneously be more customized and relevant than ever before.

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Thanks, Jason. You can find more of Jason's thoughts on his web site at http://jay.shao.org.

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Archives available in the JA-SIG wiki at:
http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JSG/Newsletter

If your institution or company has items of interest to the JA-SIG membership, please submit them via email to newsletter@ja-sig.org.

The next JA-SIG Newsletter will be published on October 15, 2007. Articles for that edition of the newsletter should be submitted no later than Friday, October 12th, 2007.

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