



Sakai Newsletter

February 9, 2006

Sakai News

1. Over 350 requirements now in Jira!
2. Sakai 2.12 and OSP 2.1 Integration Week
3. Call for Proposals for 5th Sakai Conference
4. New Lead for the Migration DG
5. Unicon Offers Faculty Low-Cost Service for Piloting Sakai

1. Over 350 requirements now in Jira!

From Mara Hancock: The community outpouring of requirements was bigger than we expected! There are over 350 requirements now in Jira!

The Challenge: The Requirements Working Group (while mighty) is a small group of people. In order to make it through the next phase of organizing, clumping and clustering these requirements for the community vote in any timely way we will need some help from you.

We have organized into teams with oversight for different component areas (Assessment, Collaboration, etc.) and assigned a lead for each area (although we need one for Assessment). If you can volunteer some time in the next two weeks to help, please put your name in the Team Member column for one of these groups. Some expertise in the area is helpful, but not required. The lead will contact you regarding what you can do to help out. If you see your name in the team column already it is because someone thought you would be helpful on that team, if you don't want to be on the team, remove your name!

Please visit: <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/8C0> to sign up.

Our timeline? (If we get the help we need):

Post for Community Polling (anyone can vote once) 2/24/06 - 3/05/06

Community Ranking (Member Reps) 3/06/06 - 3/14/06

Final ranking posted to community and hand off to appropriate working groups or tech. lead. (Req. Team) 3/15/06

The WG meets Friday, February 10 at 8 am Pacific Time to do its final strategizing regarding its plan for attack. Look for follow-up communications.

2. Sakai 2.12 and OSP 2.1 Integration Week, 13 Feb - 17 Feb 2006

From Lance Speelman: As with previous Sakai releases, we are having an integration week the final week before code freeze. The big difference this time is that the entire OSP development team will be present and both projects will be freezing the code bases on Friday, February 17. For those of you not familiar with the Sakai release process, a code freeze essentially means that all new functionality must be complete and committed to subversion on or before the code freeze date. This allows us to create our first test release so that the QA process can begin. During the QA process, only bug fixes are allowed to be committed (i.e., developers cannot continue to add new functionality).

You will find the details on this integration week at:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/ZCW>

3. Call for Proposals for 5th Sakai Conference Opens February 15!

From Wende Morgaine: The 5th Sakai Conference Call for Proposals Opens February 15th. Plan now to propose a session for the next Sakai conference ("Sea to Sakai," a part of Community Source Week in Vancouver British Columbia)!

Check out the link to the conference website from sakaiproject.org.

<http://www.sakaiproject.org/index.php>

The Call for Proposals form will be available next Wednesday.

As the Sakai community grows, look for the "Sea to Sakai" conference to provide participants with developer tutorials, in-depth help with crafting a Sakai implementation plan for your unique campus needs, and back-by-popular demand: tech demos!

4. New Lead for the Migration DG

Zach Thomas of Texas State has agreed to serve as the new DG lead for the Migration DG taking over from Robert Cartolano of Columbia University.

5. Unicon Offers Higher Ed Faculty Low-Cost Service for Piloting Sakai Learning Environment

Allows Educators to Fully Test Sakai's Capabilities at Class Level

PHOENIX, AZ - February 08, 2006 -- Unicon, Inc., the leading independent provider of open source-based enterprise portal, collaboration, learning, and integration technology for higher education institutions, today announced the launch of its new "Pilot Sakai" program available to higher education educators and administrators worldwide. (See screenshot below.) A twenty-student environment (www.pilotsakai.com) can be operational in one business day for the total price of \$185 for a six-month program. The Pilot Sakai program allows colleges and universities to easily and affordably develop, run, and evaluate a fully-functional Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment for its students on a per quarter or semester basis. As educational institutions face increasing costs of proprietary software licenses and maintenance fees, Unicon provides an increasingly attractive alternative with open-source and hosted solutions for cost-conscious, resource-constrained organizations for their online campuses and communities. "The Sakai Pilot program is an easy, risk free, and effective way for higher ed faculty and administrators to try out the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment without incurring the cost and commitment of a full-scale deployment," said Joseph Hardin, Sakai Foundation Chairman of the Board. "After they complete their pilot project and full evaluation, I'm confident their positive expectations will have been met and they will expand to a departmental or campus-wide implementation. This offering from Unicon is an important new contribution to the Sakai Community effort."

"Institutions have made significant investments in legacy learning management environments and are reluctant to undertake a total change in their platform," noted Catherine Burdt, Senior Analyst (Educational Technologies) at Eduventures. "By utilizing pilot programs to try new ways of delivering learning, institutions can find the right balance between commercial suppliers and open-source solutions for their learning management systems."

"We've been fairly satisfied with our course management solution but it was quite expensive. My goal is to find a solution that offers the same functionality but at a lower cost," said Massoud Ghyamkhah, Ph.D., Professor of Computer Science at El Camino Community College. "I've heard good things about Sakai and this new Pilot Program is a really easy way for me to fully evaluate the software with my sixty-five students over a full semester. If the pilot works as well as anticipated, I'll present my recommendations to expand to a broader deployment."

Pilot Sakai Program - Features & Benefits Fully Functional: Educators and students can experience the functionality of Sakai's Collaborative Learning Environment and Course Management System. **Fast Deployment:** ASP model enables pilot classroom launch in a matter of days. **Low Cost:** Zero hardware & software costs Minimum development & maintenance fees. **Low Risk:** Very little time, resources, or budget needed to run complete pilot project. **Accurate, Real-World Testing:** Enables educators and administrators to evaluate solution capability and plan for scaled deployment to more classrooms, departments, and campus wide.

Growth of Open Source Technologies in Higher Education Open source technologies for online campuses and classrooms is gaining in popularity from higher education as recent vendor consolidation in the industry has given them few future purchase options and serious choices for the future. Open source solutions have been successfully implemented at many of the largest universities and colleges around the nation. Besides reducing dependency on software vendors, open source allows institutions to enhance the software specifically for their needs. Now higher education organizations can implement more sophisticated technology solutions utilizing open-source technologies, reducing their spending budget significantly. Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment - A community source software development effort to design, build, and deploy a new Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE) for higher education. The technology consists of the Sakai application framework and associated course management software (CMS) tools and components that are designed to work together.

About Unicon, Inc. Since 1993, Unicon has been designing, building and managing technology solutions for colleges, universities, schools, and corporations worldwide. Unicon solutions are based on open-source technology to increase productivity while reducing costs. Unicon is the leading independent provider of enterprise portal, collaboration, learning, and integration technology for higher education institutions. Unicon is the leading commercial supporter of the uPortal open-source web portal initiative, and is a Sakai Commercial Affiliate. The company is the developer of the Academus Enterprise Portal and Web Content Management Solution. Unicon also maintains and supports applications for the Cisco Networking Academy Program. For more information, please visit Unicon on the Web at www.unicon.net.

The screenshot shows the Sakai website homepage. At the top left is the 'Academus Open Campus' logo. A navigation menu includes 'Welcome', 'Pilot Sakai', 'Test Drive Sakai', and 'About Sakai'. The main content area features a large banner for 'Experience Sakai' with the tagline 'The Open Source Collaboration and Learning Environment for Educators.' Below this are two columns: 'Test Drive Sakai' (Experience Sakai 2.1 Today - Risk Free) and 'Pilot Sakai' (The Future of Education Starts Here.). The right sidebar contains a 'Why Sakai?' section, a poll titled 'Which email applications do you currently use?', and a 'Factoid' section. The footer includes the Sakai Commercial Affiliate logo, 'Presented by UNICON', 'Hosted by' with a logo, and 'Copyright 2006 Unicon, Inc. All Rights Reserved'.

Events

5th Sakai (with OSP) Conference in Vancouver

May 30 - June 2, 2006

Sakai 2.1.2 and OSP 2.1 Integration Week

Indiana University
Indianapolis, IN
February 13 - 17, 2006