



Sakai Newsletter

February 23, 2006

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1. Sakai Community Practices (SCP) Working Group Needs Your Comments and Feedback

From Clay Fenlason: The SCP Working Group (WG) was established during the Austin conference in order to try to capture and clarify the operating procedures of our community source collaboration. The most problematic issue considered thus far -- and for good reason -- has been the practice of Sakai groups: what the different sorts of groups are, how they are established, and how their efforts drive the project forward.

The SCP WG prefers to proceed from existing practice as a general rule, but there are times when the discussion prompts a re-evaluation of current practice, and the consideration of alternatives. Rather than posit some new practice on its own initiative, the SCP WG will make it a matter of its **own** practice to bring such issues before the community as a request for comments (RFC). We can't do such things on our own, and we need your input.

Our discussions on groups and group management have teased out one such departure from established practice. The case is laid out on a Confluence page for all to comment,

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SCP/DG+Granularity> and we hope to get your considered opinion on the directions we're considering.

I also shouldn't miss the opportunity to offer up a reminder that we welcome and encourage everyone to participate in our discussions on the scp collab site: scp@collab.sakaiproject.org. The RFC is a targeted appeal, but comments from the broader community are always welcome, on this and other issues that we're considering. See the Confluence space -- <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SCP/Home> -- for more information on the group and what we're doing. Membership in the SCP WG is not a prerequisite for participation.

2. Sakai 2.1 Deployed at University Fernando Pessoa

From Feliz Ribeiro Gouveia: University Fernando Pessoa deployed Sakai 2.1 in February as the elearning platform in traditional and blended learning, after a year-long pilot with Sakai 1.0. The platform, named UV, after Virtual University, is a central part of the University's concern with distance education.

The platform is fully integrated with the Student Information System and the Course Roster, granting access to 5457 users (instructors, students and staff), and to 2088 sites. Although is too early to gather statistics, use of the platform has been increasing, and 25% of the population is currently active, with regular visits.

University Fernando Pessoa is located in Porto, Portugal, and offers twenty undergraduate study programs, thirty master degrees and two doctorate program in three faculties: Social Studies, Science and Technology, and Health Studies. UFP has been establish since 1989, and has a long-standing effort to use Information and Communication Technologies in its activities, an example being the introduction of laptop computers for freshman students since 1994.

3. CANS Exploration 45-Minute Live Webcast

From Chris Amelung: As part of our CANS (Context-aware Activity Notification System) Exploration, we are planning a 45-minute LIVE webcast on Friday, March 17 at 10 am our time here in central US (GMT -6) to present our latest work on CANS and answer your questions. We plan on talking about our current research, the future of CANS, how you can get a copy of it to use, and share some ideas on how we hope to present CANS at the upcoming Sakai conference (I think we have some interesting ideas :-). Additional information will be provided in early March.

4. The Sakai 2.1.1 Release is Now Available

The spirit behind the 2.1.1 release is to make fixes to the 2.1.0 code base that has been proven in a production environment available to the community. This release offers a total of 71 bug fixes to the software. Of these fixes, 55 were issues unearthed in 2.1.0 since the release was cut and most notably 45% of all fixes applied to the Tests and Quizzes tool.

Sites moving from the 2.1.0 to 2.1.1 release will need to perform a small database conversion operation. The details of the steps necessary to upgrade are specified in the release notes.

The release is provided in demo, source, and binary distributions, and can be downloaded from www.sakaiproject.org/release

5. Anthony Whyte will represent Sakai at SUNY's Wizard Conference

Sakai Foundation's Anthony Whyte will give a Sakai briefing to representatives from the State University of New York colleges and universities at their February 28 - March 2 Wizard Conference in Syracuse. The program provides perspectives on SUNY's forthcoming Course Management Systems procurement and implementation. Mike Zackrison from Sakai commercial affiliate Unicon, Inc. will also make a presentation. The primary panel discussion includes Pat Carey from IBM, Stuart Sim from Sun Microsystems, Deborah Elias-Smith from SunGard SCT, Chris Vento from WebCT, Carol Bell from Blackboard, and Craig Lending from Angel. Jeffrey Watkins from Moodle Partner ClassroomRevolution.com will present the Moodle learning system.



SUNY's Patrick Masson and Michael Feldstein will summarize SUNY Learning Environments at the close on March 2.

SUNY Wizard Conferences are geared toward the technical community in SUNY and are held as needed, usually twice a year. They address specific technology-related issues that are important to SUNY at the time. The attendees are from throughout SUNY and include IT professionals from campus CIO's to DBA's to technical assistants.

6. Peter Knoop is the New Sakai Projects Coordinator



From Joseph Hardin: Peter Knoop will be the new Sakai Projects Coordinator (PC), taking on the task of keeping everyone apprised of what is going on in the Sakai Community and coordinating activities between all the myriad projects in our community as much as possible. He will be taking over much of the work that Michael Elledge had been doing for us, and expanding that work to encompass more aspects and practices of our growing open community. As the community continues to grow, and become more open, and as more projects come online, this will be a critical effort.

Peter, like Megan May before him, is transitioning from "volunteer" or "institution sponsored" to Sakai Foundation staff, so he now works for the Foundation, i.e., for all of us. We feel this is a key position within our community and want to make sure that an experienced and active staff person could dedicate time to it without being pulled away by local concerns.

Peter has been working as the Bug Manager and so knows all about the work that is underway in our community and our ways of doing things. He will continue in this as he transitions to the Projects Coordinator work, and will keep an eye out for someone to pick up the Bug Manager work in the future.

7. Article: "Course Software Could be Replaced" (University of Pennsylvania)

Read an article published in University of Pennsylvania's [dailypennsylvanian.com](http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com) site about how university officials are taking an interest in Sakai. The article also contains comments about Sakai from a Yale student.

<http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2006/02/20/43f97aa2555d1>

8. Sakai Skin Contest Document Available for Review

Aaron Zeckoski: The Sakai 2.2 Skin Contest Document that the Default Skin WG has labored to produce is available at the URL below. Please look it over and feel free to discuss and even edit the document in Confluence. In particular, we want feedback on the dates and specifics of the process.

(The contest has not actually started yet -- this document is still a draft.)

Sakai 2.2 Skin Contest

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

9. Events

5th Sakai (with OSP) Conference in Vancouver
May 30 - June 2, 2006

SUNY's Wizard Conference
February 28 – March 2 Wizard Conference in Syracuse

CANS Exploration 45-Minute Live Webcast
Friday, March 17 at 10am (GMT -6)
More details will be provided soon