



Sakai Newsletter

October 19, 2006

1. Sakai - Blackboard Patent - Software Freedom Law Center - Update News - Project News
2. Announcing the Tetra Collaboration
3. eLearning Africa 2007 - Exhibition and Sponsorship Opportunities
4. Samigo (Tests and Quizzes) Update and Future Plans
5. Resources Content View/Structuring - REQ-9, REQ-63, REQ-111, REQ-268
6. Interview with Charles Severance at EDUCAUSE
7. rSmart Releases its Sakai CLE 2.2
8. rSmart Survey from EDUCAUSE
9. Atlanta Sakai Conference Updates and Reminders
10. Events

1. Sakai - Blackboard Patent - Software Freedom Law Center - Update News - Project News

Dear Sakai Community Members,

A few weeks ago I sent a note to members of the Sakai Foundation describing our retention of the Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC) to advise us on matters regarding the Blackboard patent. (See this note at http://sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=442&Itemid=312) We feel this patent is a hindrance to the free flow of innovation and communication in higher education technology. At the recent EDUCAUSE conference in Dallas there were a number of sessions where Blackboard was challenged about this patent. Many attendees showed their displeasure at both the patent and the way Blackboard has been aggressively

attempting to enforce it and spread fear, uncertainty and doubt (FUD) in the minds of anyone considering alternatives to the Blackboard system.

Indeed, the EDUCAUSE Board has just made a public statement on this. From the October 11, 2006 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education "...Brian L. Hawkins, president of EDUCAUSE, said the organization's Board of Directors had voted unanimously on Sunday to encourage Blackboard "to drop the patent, drop the lawsuit," and put the technology "in the public domain."

"We think that it is in their best interest and the best interest of the broader higher-education community," Mr. Hawkins said.

Similarly, the IMS Global Learning Consortium Board issued its own statement regarding the patent and prior contractual relationships between IMS and Blackboard. These are examples of the breadth of the concern over both this patent and the constraints on open communication and useful innovation in educational systems that the patent could impose. We encourage similar recognition of these problems with this patent, and the problems of software patents in general, from throughout the educational community.

The Sakai Foundation Board has been working with the Software Freedom Law Center over the past weeks and will continue to do so. We have been working with counsel at the SFLC, who represent us and our colleagues in the Moodle and ATutor open source software communities in this matter. We have not said much about these efforts, since public discussion and legal actions often do not mix well. We have been following the SFLC counsel's advice on such communications. As we can prudently make public pronouncements, we will.

If you have any concerns or questions, I'll be glad to answer all I can. Don't hesitate to talk with me directly. I can be reached at 734 763-3266.

Joseph Hardin
Sakai Board Chair
hardin@umich.edu

2. Announcing the Tetra Collaboration

The Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Hull, and the UHI Millennium Institute announce the formation of the Tetra Collaboration (1), the outcome of a series of meetings and a major summit held at the University of Oxford on 25 -26 September, 2006.

The goal of the Tetra Collaboration is to coordinate activities across the member organisations so as to more efficiently develop and deploy open source enterprise

applications of use to UK and European universities and colleges. By working together we can share common solutions to better serve the needs of students and academics, and each of the institutions named is committed to making tangible contributions into the collaboration (2).

The Tetra Collaboration will work together on projects that address the needs of education, research, technical infrastructure, service oriented architectures (SOA), federated systems, and application frameworks.

Tetra will demonstrate the potential of the JISC's e-Framework, will be built on open standards and IMS specifications, and is committed to developing sustainable community source solutions for education (3).

One of the first Tetra projects will be to continue the work of the Bodington (4) open source learning management system to produce Bodington - Next Generation or Bodington NG. This will combine elements of the Sakai open source framework with the pedagogically strong Bodington toolset. A major design goal of Bodington NG is to develop and implement an SOA enterprise e-framework.

It will provide a smooth transition for existing Bodington users to the Bodington NG platform, preserving and extending the trusted enterprise functionality used daily by these institutions. The Tetra Collaboration is open to working with other institutions who wish to join this exciting effort.

Tetra will both maintain and evolve the Bodington user interface as well as making the Bodington toolset available to Sakai users. The joint effort between Sakai and Tetra will then begin collaboratively to merge the Bodington toolset with the Sakai framework, as well as extend the latter to accommodate the full range of Tetra's pedagogical and institutional requirements.

"This is an exciting development for the Sakai community. Tetra's Bodington NG effort will be a significant enhancement to Sakai -- many of the features needed by Bodington NG, and already available in Bodington, have been high on the list of needed Sakai features around the world." -- Charles Severance, Executive Director, Sakai Foundation

"Tetra is an exciting development for Bodington, Sakai, and open source collaboration and development in UK higher and further education." -- Randy Metcalfe, Manager, OSS Watch

"It will be exciting to see the Bodington tools and pedagogy to continue to evolve and to be made available to the broader Sakai community." -- Jon Maber, Bodington Designer

"We see in Tetra a vehicle for realizing an important institutional objective of developing and deploying an e-Framework enterprise solution." -- Sean Mehan, Head of e-Frameworks, UHI Millennium Institute

"Oxford is pleased to be part of the Tetra Collaboration and to continue its support of the development of tools in response to the needs of UK University teachers and students, which can be freely used by others." -- Stuart Lee, Director, Oxford University Computing Services

"We are looking forward to working closely with UHI, Oxford and Hull in the Tetra Collaboration. Tetra offers a model for sustainable development of software solutions that address the special requirements of scholarship in academia for our institutions and the wider world." -- John Norman, Director, CARET, University of Cambridge

"The Tetra collaboration offers a significant opportunity to pool expertise and help to realise the potential of a flexible, service-oriented approach for Higher Education enterprise software. This will better enable the partner institutions to meet the needs of learners and staff into the future." -- Ian Dolphin, Head of eStrategy and eServices Integration, University of Hull

For more on Bodington, go to <http://bodington.org>

(1) The four signatory institutions are represented on the Tetra Collaboration Board, whose members are Stuart Lee (Oxford), John Norman (Cambridge), Alun Hughes (UHI) and Ian Dolphin (Hull).

(2) Relevant technologies deployed by the signatory institutions include Bodington, Sakai, uPortal, DSpace, Fedora

(3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_source

(4) Bodington was initially developed at Leeds University and is currently in production use at the University of Leeds, the University of Oxford, and UHI Millennium Institute.

3. eLearning Africa 2007 -- Nairobi, Kenya, May 28-30 -- Exhibition and Sponsorship Opportunities

I would like to present you with the opportunity to exhibit and/or sponsor at eLearning Africa 2007, the 2nd Pan-African Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, which will be taking place from May 28 - 30, 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference and accompanying exhibition is under the patronage of the Kenyan Minister for Education, Science and Technology, the Hon. Dr. Noah Wekesa, MP.

eLearning Africa has established itself as Africa's largest international eLearning conference with over 800 registered delegates from 80 countries (70% from Africa), spanning all continents, taking part in eLearning Africa 2006. It has become the target destination of Africa's key educational decision makers, opinion-leaders, experts and practitioners from governments, public and private education and corporate HRD, who use this international forum to discuss leading-edge developments and proven solutions in the field of technology supported learning and training within the African context.

Major donors, who are spending billions of dollars on ICT for development programmes in Africa, have recognised that the millennium goals on education can only be achieved through ICT supported learning and training. African governments are launching ambitious ICT infrastructure programmes, networking schools, universities, hospitals and municipalities. ICT as an accelerator for development is playing such an important role that Africa is poised to become the future market for eLearning.

The event will offer a unique opportunity to gain invaluable insights into the latest activities and achievements from the ever-evolving eLearning world and to build eLearning capacities in Africa.

Don't miss the conference's:

- Workshops, Seminars & Meetings
- Plenary & Presentation Sessions
- Debates and Discussions & Special Focus Sessions
- Practical Demonstrations & Best Practice Showcases
- Sponsorship Opportunities & Parallel Exhibition Hall

eLearning Africa 2007 is accompanied by a trade exhibition, where as an exhibitor or sponsor you will have the opportunity to promote your activities to the most important multipliers and decision makers within the African eLearning community from the education, business and government sectors. As an exhibitor and/or sponsor of eLearning Africa 2007, you will be able to participate in the marketing and PR strategy carried out before and during the conference.

Besides the sponsorship packages described in the brochure (available at the link below), it is also possible to collaborate with the conference's organisation by supporting African participation in the form of bursaries, which should cover the participation and accommodation fees of African delegates, who are in need of financial assistance to attend the conference.

You will find more detailed information on the different packages available in the brochure at the link below. Exhibition space, sponsorship opportunities and vendor track slots are limited and are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, therefore we recommend you reserve early!

- General Information about the conference: <http://www.elearning-africa.com>

- Information on Sponsorship and Exhibition Opportunities:
http://www.elearning-africa.com/sponsor_exhibiting_opportunities.php

- A Full Report on Last Year's Conference:
http://www.elearning-africa.com/pdf/report/postreport_eLA2006.pdf

- Information on the Call for Papers: <http://www.elearning-africa.com/proposals.php>
- To see the Themes that will be addressed: <http://www.elearning-africa.com/themes.php>
- You can also read articles and interviews about eLearning Africa at:
<http://www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/index.php> and press releases at:
http://www.elearning-africa.com/press_release.php

For further details on the opportunities to exhibit or sponsor this event or if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rebecca Stromeyer
Managing Director
rebecca.stromeyer@icwe.net

4. Samigo (Tests and Quizzes) Update and Future Plans

This is to update you on Samigo, the quiz and test component of Sakai. Samigo was based on work by Stanford and Indiana University, and has been extended considerably during the past two years and linked to Gradebook and the Sakai Framework. Stanford University is the "home" institution for Samigo. While you have probably seen our Samigo team, Lydia Li, Marc Brierley, Daisy Flemming and Karen Tsao on the dev and assessment mailing lists addressing specific questions, we thought it would be helpful to offer the community information about the status and plans Samigo. Stanford has, and will continue to contribute resources to Samigo's development, work with others in the community to resolve problems, and to coordinate the contributions of others who are providing bug fixes and new features. Others are working with us as well, and many have asked how they can help.

To read more about the status, plans, and how you can get involved, go to:
http://www.sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=471&Itemid=547

Please feel free to send an email to me, lbrooks@stanford.edu and to Marc Brierley, brierley@stanford.edu, with questions, ideas, and comments. We welcome your interest and participation.

Samigo's Home Page on Confluence:
<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SAM/Home>

Lois Brooks
Stanford University

5. Resources Content View/Structuring: REQ-9, REQ-63, REQ-111, REQ-268

You may be aware that a group of Sakai partners have collaborated this past year to develop and implement REQ-375 (Timed release of resources) and 378 (Ability to customize order of resources), both of which will be included in release 2.3.

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/RES/Post-2.2.0+Resource+Requirements+Work>

This is to update you on what we might be looking at in the coming months and to determine interest from other institutions or individuals in participating. The next Resources related requirement(s) that we may/could address are those related to the presentation of resource entities. Four requirements from the previous round touch on these issues:

9 : Structuring content for presentation

63 : New tool for structure presentation of content

111 : Resource viewer tool

263 : Need for "Melete-like" rich content authoring tool for fully online courses

All four describe in some way a need to view resource entities in a structured or grouped manner. REQ-111 is perhaps the easiest to affect as it describes a need to "lay out" the resources files in an alternative display, possibly with added headings and descriptions.

The other three requirements aim to present the actual content, not just the files (links), in an ordered/user-defined manner with various levels of complexity and navigational styles. It may be that since the requirements process took place, these requirements have in some way or another been met by developments in Melete and the rWiki.

Our first effort would focus on gathering detailed use cases and scenarios and deciding which of these requirements would be most beneficial to the institutions partaking in the development work. Have a look at the comments and examples already added to the specific requirements or add your own.

Perhaps you have already started with or implemented a solution to these requirements and would like to share it or your ideas with us? If you are interested in joining this effort and contribute time and capacity we would like to hear from you. We would also like to hear from those institutions or persons who originally proposed the requirements whether it is still relevant / may have changed.

Francette Myburgh
UNISA ICT
fmyburgh@unisa.ac.za

6. Interview with Charles Severance at EDUCAUSE

Open the URL below to see Charles Severance being interviewed by Keith Russell at EDUCAUSE.

<http://edutrip2006.blogspot.com/2006/10/interview-over-sakai-nu-en-in-de.html>

7. rSmart Releases its Sakai CLE 2.2, Delivering Commercial Support for eLearning Collaboration and Enhanced Portfolio Tools

The rSmart Group Inc., the first provider of commercial support for the open source collaboration and learning environment Sakai, has announced the availability of the rSmart Sakai 2.2 release. This rSmart release builds on the Sakai Community version and introduces powerful new functionality that includes an enhanced user interface and expanded tool set. The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 enhances and extends functionality for e-Learning by offering:

Teaching & Learning -- The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 provides online spaces for fully online courses, blended face to face and online courses. Use the CLE to post documents, conduct tests and quizzes, present sequenced content, post syllabi, and assignments, manage a course calendar, engage in online discussions and chat, construct group edited documents (Wiki's), and much more.

Small Groups & Projects -- The unique approach to individual and group collaboration spaces gives the CLE the flexibility to support virtually any form of group collaboration.

Electronic Portfolios -- The CLE includes the open source portfolio (OSP) which provides tools for individuals to collect and organize work across courses and other learning experiences.

Open Platform for Scholarly Collaboration -- The CLE is the premier example of a new generation of open platforms for scholarly collaboration. It is developed by education, for education using modern technologies and a design that is flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all types of institutions.

Building on the work of a Global Community -- The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 marks the second major release for rSmart in 2006 and the fourth major release for the Sakai Community in two years.

"Our goal was always to deliver a fully supported Sakai Solution with enhanced capabilities, greater stability, and easier integration; this is another significant step in that direction," said Anthony Potts, Chief Technology Officer, rSmart. "Through the power of open source we are dramatically reducing the cost of e-Learning solutions while delivering a simple-to-use, enterprise class system, where faculty and administrative personnel, rather than developers, can set-up and implement a true collaboration and learning environment."

The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 Preview and General Availability

The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 is currently available to review in the rSmart Sandbox. The rSmart Sandbox provides easy access to the rSmart Sakai CLE software. Users can view pre-populated course sites and evaluate the innovative features and functions of the software by building their own course site. The rSmart Sandbox is free and accessible to all at: <http://www.rsmart.com/products/cle/try> A real world evaluation of the rSmart Sakai CLE 2.2 called "My Sakai" is available for \$165 and allows users to deliver an on-line course or in support of classroom based activities for up to 6 months. It's the perfect solution for Instructors who want to stay focused on teaching, learning, and assessing the functional capabilities of the software. My Sakai is currently available at: <http://www.rsmart.com/products/cle/try>

8. rSmart Survey from EDUCAUSE

215 participants took rSmart's Sakai survey.

1. How are you using Sakai today?

- 45% not using
- 15% just playing around with it
- 26% in pilot phase
- 3% in production at department level
- 5% continuing enterprise implementation
- 7% in production at enterprise level

2. What are your plans over the next 12 months for implementation of Sakai?

- 22% not planning on using it
- 31% just plan to play around with it
- 19% deploy pilot
- 7% put in production at department level
- 9% put in production at enterprise level
- 13% maintain or expand current implementation

3. What are (or were) the key inhibitors to implementing Sakai?

38% resources

26% support

10% reliability

32% features and functions

35% other

Top "other" reasons:

A. transition

B. everyone already knows how to use bb

C. other product in use

D. don't know enough about it

E. present obligations, scale, resources (that is time to figure things out)

F. APIs

G. lack of knowledge

H. already have two LMSs

I. migration if chosen

Ashley Rose

Marketing Specialist

The rSmart Group

9. Atlanta Sakai Conference Updates and Reminders

Date change for the Atlanta Sakai Conference proposal approval notification:

Due to a large influx of proposal submissions on the final submission deadline, the committee will require additional time to review and select proposals for the Atlanta Conference. The notification date for proposal approvals has been moved from October 15 to October 25.

A reminder from the Sakai Atlanta Conference Program Committee about the dates for the conference. The conference is December 6, 7, and 8, with preconference events on the 5th.

Please note that the Atlanta Marriott hotel conference rate guarantee ends on November 6.

Important dates:

NOW: Conference registration is open. Hotel reservations are open. The rooms are going fast – reserve now for best selection. The hotel conference rate guarantee closes November 6th. The conference rate is effective December 3 through December 10.

The main conference web site is

http://www.sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=418&Itemid=567

September 30 -- The first round of proposal submissions closes.

October 25 -- This is a new date -- accepted presenters notified and tentative schedule published.

November 1 -- **BOF (birds of a feature meetings) signup** begins.

November 6 -- Hotel conference rate guarantee ends.

December 5 -- Preconference events. Sakai for beginners, Sakaibrary, hands-on workshops, case studies, and more.

December 6 -- Conference opens. Keynote speaker is Eben Moglin, opening ceremonies, Wednesday reception.

December 7 -- Tech demos and poster presentations at evening reception. Keynote speaker is Aggie Booth

December 8 -- Final day. Closing ceremonies, committee/staff debriefing.

Brigid Cassidy

Sakai Atlanta Conference Program Committee

10. Events

6th Sakai Conference

December 5 - 8, 2006

Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Atlanta, Georgia

http://www.sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=418&Itemid=567

LAMS Conference 2006

First International Learning Activity Management System (LAMS)

Conference December 6 - 8, 2006

Conservatorium of Music

University of Sydney

<http://lamsfoundation.org/lams2006/index.htm>

eLearning Africa 2007

KICC – The Kenyatta International Conference Centre

May 28 - 30, 2007

Nairobi, Kenya

<http://www.elearning-africa.com>

Sakai Amsterdam Conference

Movenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Center

June 12 – 14, 2007

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

www.sakaiproject.org