



## Sakai Newsletter

November 2, 2006

1. Polls are Open for the Sakai Foundation Board Elections
2. Atlanta Sakai Conference Updates
3. Announcing the Atlanta Conference U-Camp!
4. Reminder: Sakai Project Coordination Meeting, 8-9 December, Atlanta, Georgia
5. Looking for People Experienced with Java Presentation Technologies
6. Kualu Foundation Announcements: Open Source Financial System, Research Administration System Project, New board members and Corporate Partners
7. Stockholm University Kicks Off a Major Sakai Deployment Project
8. Texas State Offers Video Interviews -- Faculty-to-Faculty Help Tips
9. Jacksonville University Chooses Unicon's Academus Powered by RedDot
10. WebAuth and Sakai
11. From the etc@bmc Blog: Educause Asks Blackboard to Drop Patent
12. Two New Sakai Video Reports from Chuck Severance
13. Events

---

### 1. Polls are Open for the Election for Three Vacant Positions on the Sakai Foundation Board

The Sakai Board and the Elections Work Group are pleased to announce that the polls are open for the election for three vacant positions on the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors. The online voting site is now available to voting members, and will remain so through Wednesday, November 22. One voting representative from each member institution has been invited to cast votes for the three open positions. Results of this election will be announced in early December and new Board members will take their positions at the Sakai Conference in Atlanta. The Board of Directors provides leadership for the Sakai Foundation by serving the interests of the entire Sakai community, promoting the objectives of the Sakai Foundation, representing and coordinating

Foundation projects, ensuring that project management is consistent with the Foundation's mission, and that the Foundation operates within its fiscal resources. Board members serve staggered, three-year terms. Seven candidates have accepted nominations for board service. A bio and platform statement for each candidate can be found at <https://sakaiproject.org/election>. Institutional and corporate representatives have received polling invitations and instructions.

---

## 2. Atlanta Sakai Conference Updates

The time for the 6<sup>th</sup> [Sakai Conference with OSP](#) in Atlanta is almost upon us! The conference is December 5-8 at the Atlanta [Marriott](#). The Program Committee has been hard at work putting together the [preliminary schedule](#) of workshops, lectures, and panels. It promises to be an exciting and valuable time to learn something new about Sakai, share your Sakai experiences, and meet with our worldwide Sakai community.

### **The keynote speakers are Eben Moglen and Andrew Booth**

Eben Moglen is Chairman of the Software Freedom Law Center. Professor of Law and Legal History at Columbia University Law School, and General Counsel of the Free Software Foundation.

Andrew Booth is Professor of Online Learning at the University of Leeds and the recipient in 2002 of the prestigious European Academic Software Award (EASA). He is currently interested in the development of inter-institutional learning environments using service-oriented architectures.

### **Proposal submissions are closed**

Submissions for [technical demonstrations](#) are still open, but space is limited so please reserve early! [Poster session](#) submissions are also open. Sign up for BOFs (Birds of a Feather Meetings) begins next week.

Now that the preliminary schedule is ready, we are actively soliciting volunteers to convene and record sessions. Volunteers get free stuff!

### **[Reserve your hotel room now](#)**

The 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 6<sup>th</sup>**. The conference rate is effective December 3 through December 10.

-- November 6 -- Hotel conference rate guarantee ends.

-- November 6 -- [BOF signup](#) begins.

- December 5 -- Preconference events Sakai for beginners, Sakaibrary, hands-on workshops, case studies, and more. Tuesday evening reception.
- December 6 -- Conference opens Eben Moglen's address, opening ceremonies, full day of sessions, Wednesday reception.
- December 7 -- Full day of sessions. Aggie Booth's address, Technical Demonstration reception hosted by rSmart and IBM.
- December 8 -- Final day. Closing ceremonies, committee/staff debriefing.

**- Conference-related URLs**

- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference> (Conference Home page)
- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference/hotel.html> (Hotel Info on our conference site)
- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference/register.html> (Conference Registration)
- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference/schedule.html> (Conference Schedule)
- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference/bof.html> (Conference BOFS)
- <http://sakaiproject.org/conference/demos.html> (Conference Tech Demos)

- Brigid Cassidy, for the Sakai Atlanta Conference Program Committee

---

### 3. Announcing the Atlanta Conference U-Camp!

On the Tuesday, December 5, before the Atlanta conference, the UI DG will be holding their first U-Camp to focus on the usability and user experience inside Sakai.

The U-Camp will provide an opportunity for those interested in the design and support of Sakai to meet, learn, and contribute to the future of the Sakai user experience. This pre-conference session will include a series of workshops and presentations in the morning where participants will discuss design methodologies, accessibility, patterns, and usability. In the afternoon, we will focus on strategies for improving user delight within Sakai and finding ways to better represent user needs within the community process.

We are especially interested in having the user support folks help drive our agenda and focus. In that light, we would like to ask you to submit your top five user experience issues with Sakai. These will become the foci for our hands-on work at the U-Camp. You can add these to our Top Five Issues Wiki on the UI DG Confluence site:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/MHU>.

---

### 4. Reminder: Sakai Project Coordination Meeting 8-9 Dec 2006, Atlanta, Georgia

This is a reminder for those of you involved in Sakai 2.4 design and development: we are hosting a post-conference Sakai Project Coordination Meeting after the 6th Sakai

Conference in Atlanta. We currently have around 25 folks who have already RSVP'ed. So, please join us for this event, which is scheduled to begin directly after the main conference ends, starting at 1:30PM Friday (8-Dec-2006) and running to 2:00PM Saturday (9-Dec-2006). The main focus will be technical discussions and planning for the 2.4 and future releases of Sakai.

Sakai Foundation staff and key Sakai volunteers will be in attendance, including Charles Severance, Glenn Golden, Lance Speelmon, Megan May, Mark Norton, and Peter Knoop. Project Team Leads and Members working on the design and development of the various components of Sakai are also strongly encouraged to attend. Anyone interested in integrating their work in the 2.4-timeframe should also attend.

This event offers Sakai designers and developers an early opportunity to coordinate activities and plan for forthcoming Sakai releases; Sakai 2.4 is scheduled for Code Freeze on 15 March 2007 and release on 1 May 2007. The format of the meeting will be flexible to accommodate the evolving needs of this discussion. In some ways it will be much like an Integration Week, for those of you whom have participated in the past, though without the pressure of a fast-approaching deadline. :) We will kick things off and wrap things up with a group discussion, to brainstorm an agenda and to summarize the outcomes. In between we will have three rooms set aside so that discussions can break out and re-group as needed. We want to leave things relatively informal so that we can maximize our ability to meet the needs of discussions and activities of those that are able to attend. We expect this post-conference (perhaps sometimes pre-) meeting to become a regular feature of Sakai conferences.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Mary Miles ([mmiles@umich.edu](mailto:mmiles@umich.edu)) by Monday, 27 November 2006. (The Conference hotel room rate of \$134 is still available for this event -- it is effective thru Monday, 11 December 2006 -- remember to mention the Sakai Conference when booking.) Coffee will be provided during the meeting. However, participants will be on their own for meals, so we can assemble into groups as needed to sample the many wonderful, nearby local establishments.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks.

Peter Knoop  
Sakai Project Coordinator  
[knoop@umich.edu](mailto:knoop@umich.edu)  
734-647-8042

---

## 5. Looking for People Experienced with Java Presentation Technologies

Aaron Zeckoski and I are developing a presentation for the upcoming Sakai Conference that will explore various Java presentation technologies and highlight their strengths and weaknesses. Needless to say, there are a fair number of these out there, so we'd like to enlist your help.

Do you have experience with any of the following presentation technologies?

- Velocity
- Servlets
- JSF
- RSF
- Struts
- JSP
- XSLT
- Spring MVC
- XUL - Facelets
- (Anything else)

If so, please consider taking some time to answer the following questions:

1. How easy is it for UI designers to work with this technology (templates, etc.)? Did the technology make it easy to separate code?
2. How easy is it for the developer to work with this technology?
3. Have you used this in a Sakai context? How well did it integrate? What did it take?
4. Can advanced web interactions be expressed using this technology (complex lists, file upload, AJAX, etc.)?
5. How much experience do you have with this? How large of a community is using this and for how long?

Feel free to include comments, examples, or horror stories. The results of information will be combined and included in the presentation. All notes will be posted to Sakai confluence for future reference.

- Mark Norton ([markjnorton@earthlink.net](mailto:markjnorton@earthlink.net)) and Aaron Zeckoski ([aaronz@vt.edu](mailto:aaronz@vt.edu))

---

## 6. Kualifoundation Announcements: Open Source Financial System, Research Administration System Project, New board members and Corporate Partners

The Kualifoundation Financial System -- The Kualifoundation has announced the first release of the open source Kualifoundation Financial System (KFS), the first phase of a comprehensive set of open-source software tools to serve the financial system needs of higher education.

"The release of Financials makes clear the growing momentum for colleges and universities to take control of their enterprise software by pooling investments in community source projects," said Brad Wheeler, Indiana University chief information officer and chair of the Kualu Foundation. "The model shows that we can pool our investments, execute a disciplined project, and share the benefits of these efforts as part of a sustainable open source community."

The Kualu Financial System, funded in part by a \$2.5M grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, represents a major first step to establish a comprehensive series of modules for administrative functions in higher education. Designed to serve the financial system needs of all Carnegie Class institutions, KFS addresses core financial operations, including accurate accountability, timely reporting, efficient processing, and strengthened internal controls through computerized business rules. To read more, please go to: [http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506\\_kualirelease.html](http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506_kualirelease.html)

Kualu Research Administration -- The Kualu Foundation also announced its next development project as Kualu Research Administration, funded in part by a \$1.5M grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Kualu Research Administration (KRA) will build on the models used successfully by Sakai and Kualu Financial Systems where the system is based on a proven design. KRA is based on an update of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's proven COEUS system, one of the first cradle-to-grave award management systems in the nation. Indiana University, in close partnership with Cornell University and the Weill College of Medicine, MIT, Michigan State University, and the University of Arizona, will develop the KRA system to meet the growing needs of university Research Administration Offices. To read more, please go to: [http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506\\_kualikRA.html](http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506_kualikRA.html)

Two New Kualu Board Members -- Steven Dowdy of MIT and John Walda, president of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), have also been appointed to the Kualu Foundation Board of Directors. To read more, go to: [http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506\\_kualiboard.html](http://uitspress.iu.edu/102506_kualiboard.html)

The Kualu Foundation also announced its first Kualu Commercial Affiliates to provide support for the open source Kualu software. IBM, Huron Consulting, and The rSmart Group have joined as members of the Kualu Foundation and will be providing for-fee services to support the Kualu software. Interest in the Kualu Foundation has grown significantly since the community source initiative was first announced in 2004, and the Kualu Foundation is now adding new college and university partners. "The Kualu Foundation Partners is the first opportunity for colleges, universities, commercial, and other not-for-profit organizations to join the Kualu Foundation and influence the direction of Kualu's important mission," said Wheeler.

Kualu Days, taking place November 14-15 in Tucson, Arizona, will be the next major gathering for the growing Kualu community.

Additional information about each of these announcements is available at <http://www.kuali.org/>.

About the Kuali Foundation -- The Kuali Foundation is a non-profit organization responsible for sustaining and evolving a comprehensive suite of administrative software that meets the needs of all Carnegie Class institutions. Its members are colleges, universities, and interested organizations that share a common vision of open, modular, and distributed systems for their software requirements. The goal of Kuali is to bring the proven functionality of legacy applications to the ease and universality of online services.

Christine Y. Fitzpatrick, Ed.D.  
Indiana University  
cfitzpat@iu.edu

---

## 7. Stockholm University Kicks Off a Major Sakai Deployment Project

Having spent more than a year supporting a number of pilot courses and projects using Sakai, Stockholm University recently kicked off a major deployment project aiming to deliver Sakai 2.3.x as a fully-functioning enterprise collaboration and learning environment to go into full production for the autumn semester 2007. The deployment project will systematically address the necessary points of integration between Sakai CLE and the University's generalised IT infrastructure, the student information system, identity management, development platform, support infrastructure as well as localised look-and-feel, and other local requirements.

The project will ensure that Sakai CLE (local brand name forthcoming) will be fully available for staff training during the second half of spring semester 2007. It is expected that adoption will be gradual and steady during the following semesters, particularly since there is no incumbent enterprise system at Stockholm University that Sakai replaces wholesale. Already, interest in Sakai and the ongoing under-the-radar pilot is on marked increase, however, which makes us quite confident that the fully supported upcoming enterprise CLE will be a hit among staff and students at Stockholm University.

For more information about Stockholm's deployment project, please contact Per Wising.

Sincerely, Per Wising

Unit for IT and Media Services  
Stockholm University  
per.wising@it.su.se

---

## 8. Texas State Offers Video Interviews -- Faculty-to-Faculty Help Tips

Faculty members at Texas State University who are new to Sakai can now get tips on using the system from more experienced users at any time of the day or night. In video interviews, members of the pilot group who have used Sakai for up to two semesters talk about how they are using specific tools within Sakai and why the tools are useful in their teaching. Each faculty member talks about one or two tools that they find especially valuable. These video "tips" are available on the university support site.

More interviews are being collected to be added to the current list. Support staff members are hopeful that these faculty to faculty help tips will encourage migration from Blackboard to TRACS, which is the Texas State instance of Sakai.

If you'd like to see a sample of these tips, go to:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/USER/Faculty+to+Faculty+Help>

and click the "Faculty to Faculty Help" link near the bottom of the page.

Salwa Khan  
Texas State University  
sk16@txstate.edu

---

## 9. Jacksonville University Chooses Unicon's Academus Web Content Management Solution, Powered by RedDot

Jacksonville University (JU) in Florida has selected Unicon's Academus Web Content Management (WCM) solution, powered by RedDot Solutions, to manage its new Web site and Intranet. Jacksonville University also chose Unicon's Academus Portal software as a unified front-end for all of its online campus services. Academus WCM will be used by university web administrators to manage, control, distribute, and publish administrative and academic content throughout the college's online campus portal. RedDot Solutions is an Open Text company, which is the world's largest independent provider of Enterprise Content Management software.

“As Jacksonville University continues to grow and expand, the online needs of our students and staff are multiplying,” said Gary Farrar, director of systems and planning, Jacksonville University. “The Academus Web Content Management system provides us with an easy and efficient means of updating and maintaining our site so that it becomes the go-to resource for important and timely academic, administrative, and general campus information.”



With Academus WCM, Jacksonville University staff will update the JU Web site and shift content updating duties from the IT department to university staff across various departments. With RedDot's Web Content Management Solution at its core, the Academus WCM system allows administrative staff and faculty members to update sections of the Web site with new content, including information on admissions, registration, financial aid, class rosters, and academic records

“Like many schools around the country, Jacksonville University found that its IT staff was spending a disproportionate amount of time tending to daily, routine Web updates that took away from larger, more pressing tech-related issues. Because Unicon built the Academus Portal and Web Content Management system with unique expertise in higher education, Jacksonville now has the best resource for creating a leading Web resource for the JU community,” said Detlef Kamps, president of RedDot Solutions.

“As we work to fulfill the specific online needs of universities like Jacksonville, working with RedDot Solutions helps us offer an easy to use solution,” said Jim Layne, Vice President of Marketing for Unicon, Inc. “With RedDot, Unicon's Academus WCM is quickly becoming a top choice for universities across the country looking for efficient ways to manage their institution's Web site content and portals.”

**About RedDot Solutions** -- RedDot Solutions, an Open Text company, provides enterprise content management software to create and manage the content that drives business. Recognized throughout the industry as the fastest to implement and easiest to use, RedDot's software products XCMS™ (Extended Content Management System), CMS (Web Content Management Software) and LiveServer are scalable solutions for Web content and document management, business process workflow, personalization and collaboration. More than 1,700 clients worldwide, including March of Dimes, Bank of New York, Honda, Starbucks, STA Travel, Triumph Motorcycles, The National Archives, O2 and London Fire Brigade rely on RedDot to increase productivity, improve operational efficiency and reduce risk. For more information, please visit: <http://www.reddot.com/>

---

## 10. WebAuth and Sakai

Here at Oxford we use WebAuth for web-based Single Sign On (SSO) and when looking at tools we like to see how easily they can be WebAuth enabled. Thankfully Sakai makes it all pretty easy. Sakai has the ability to support two authentication methods at the same time so we can have a login route for both Oxford users (WebAuth) and for internal Sakai users.

Previously we have used the Apache WebAuth module but this time I decided to attempt to use the Java WebAuth Filter developed as part of the SIPE project here at Oxford. One note is that the Stanford WebAuth download pages have a newer version of the Java

WebAuth filter than the SIPE pages. The Java WebAuth implementation only works with Java 1.5.

To read about how this is done, please go to:

<http://thicksliced.blogspot.com/2006/10/here-at-oxford-we-use-webauth-for-web.html>

---

## 11. From the etc@bmc Blog: Educause Asks Blackboard to Drop Patent

Inside Higher Ed has reported that Educause, a nonprofit organization that promotes effective technology use in education, has sent a letter to Blackboard asking them to drop the patent they recently had approved over the summer. Many have said that the patent will prevent innovation in educational technology. From my limited experience (4 years) in this field and reading blogs by leaders in the field, it also seems to violate the kind of open sharing and communication that has existed for years. As many of us are the only instructional technologists on campus, we need to share information and tools with each other in order to be successful. We can't do this alone.

Blackboard has sued Desire2Learn for patent infringement already. A web site trying to fight against the patent by proving that other online learning applications existed prior to Blackboard (prior art) has been established. It has pointed to such resources as the EFF's Patent Busting Project, aimed at finding patents that have a profound effect on innovation and to begin challenging them.

This whole situation is reminiscent of Microsoft's wrangling with the Justice Department over 10 years ago. Sure, Microsoft survived that, but even regular users of Microsoft products often recognize that it participates in some ugly business practices and for many years, was basically a monopoly. And that's where, in my opinion, Blackboard is headed. It bought WebCT, so it is now a giant among proprietary course management systems. The question is, what will it do about budding open source projects like Sakai and Moodle? Will those projects decrease development out of fear of being sued? Is that the kind of atmosphere we want educational technology to function in? I don't think so.

- posted by Laura

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/etc/etcblog/2006/10/educause-asks-blackboard-to-drop.html>

---

## 12. Two New Sakai Video Reports from Chuck Severance

Sakai Video Report: European Sakai Days -- This video is from the European Sakai days September 6 and 7, 2006. I interview Andreas Wittke who is the conference organiser and runs the Sakai system at oncampus.de and with Prof. Dr.-Ing. Rolf Granow who talks about the Baltic Sea Virtual Campus and why oncampus chose Sakai. Details: Flash Video 5 minutes.

<http://www.dr-chuck.com/media.php?comment=feed&id=71>

Sakai Video Report: Jon Maber Produced: September 26, 2006 -- Jon Maber was the original developer of the Bodington Virtual Learning Environment at University of Leeds. Jon describes the history of Bodington development from the early CGI programs and the use of the pre-cursor to Tomcat through the current day Bodington and emerging Tetra Project. Details: Flash Video 6 minutes.

<http://www.dr-chuck.com/media.php?comment=feed&id=68>

---

### 13. Events

#### **Kuali Days**

November 14-15

Tucson, Arizona

<https://www.eventinterface.com/clients/kuali/>

#### **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](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](http://www.sakaiproject.org)