



Sakai Newsletter

December 28, 2006

1. Sakai Atlanta Conference Quick Survey
2. RSF 0.7 Released
3. A Tool to Import a Test from WebCT or Word Doc into Samigo
4. WebCT CE to Melete 2.3
5. WebCT to Samigo
6. Fedora 2.2 Release Scheduled
7. Running Sakai in Production? Don't Forget to Share!
8. Sakai Video: Mellon Collaboration Awards
9. Events

1. Sakai Atlanta Conference Quick Survey

Dear Sakai Atlanta Conference Attendees,

This is the quick and easy conference survey -- only a few questions that you can answer in a couple minutes. Your participation is of course valuable to the whole community, as it helps us make the next conference better.

http://lessons.ummu.umich.edu/2k/atlantaconference/sakai_atlanta_conference_survey

If you have any questions, drop me a note at hardin@umich.edu. Thanks, and see you in Amsterdam in June,

Joseph Hardin
School of Information
University of Michigan
Sakai Foundation

2. RSF 0.7 Released

After a much longer "slog-n-testing" phase than expected, the RSF team is pleased to announce the release of 0.7 of RSF, a major feature release.

The biggest news in 0.7 is the arrival of the most long-awaited RSF feature, multi-file templating (MFT), which allows any section of markup to become a candidate for reuse either as a "widget", page segment or border.

Widgets

Those of you who were at Atlanta would have seen the demonstrations of the first batch of RSF (Sakai) widgets, including FCKEditor, a fully internationalised date widget and a double selection control whose markup is taken directly from Gonzalo's growing collection.

The template and evolver definitions, together with a simple test app, can be found in the RSF SVN at:

<https://saffron.caret.cam.ac.uk/svn/projects/SakaiRSFSamples/trunk/SakaiRSFComponents>

The Template Checking Tool

A core benefit of RSF is the extreme transparency of round-tripping between designers and developers. However, despite how simple RSF's template decorations are (the single attribute rsf:id) it is always possible for something to get "lost" in the loop. Due to the extreme transparency of RSF's templates and component tree, it is now possible to perform validation and testing on the XHTML templates before they go near the application.

RSF's "template checking tool" is now online at:

<http://ponder.org.uk/TemplateCheckingTool/faces/check>

The idea is that a "master" or original template is prepared for a view, which then may be passed to designers for reskinning or other adjustment. Before the template is handed back to development it may be tested using this tool to verify that it is "equipotent" to the original template -- that is, that it can render all of the components/visible estate that the original could.

Other Updates

The full changelist is available on the RSF wiki at:

<http://www2.caret.cam.ac.uk/rsfwiki/Wiki.jsp?page=Roadmap>. but a particular highlight

of this release is the introduction of the Universal View Bus (UVB), a generalised "web service" automatically derived from the RSF application structure that becomes the single view required to support ANY kind of AJAX client-side component. Together with its client-side partner, the rsf.js Javascript library, this closes the loop, making any explicit AJAX handling code both on the client and server-side redundant. JS hacks may like to think of this as somewhat like DWR, only automatic and transparent!

There have been various other updates specific for the Sakai environment, including correct portal reskinning, TimeZone support and support for running RSF tools both as helpers and within the Mercury portal.

Note that this release does NOT YET include RSF's JSR-168 portlet support library RSFPortlet, since we are still verifying conformance with the upcoming portalised Charon implementation for Sakai 2.4.

The documentation on the wiki is a little behind on some of the new features, but will be being filled in going towards the New Year, including a complete relaunch of the entire website.

Happy Holidays, and happy RSFing -- do come along for any information to the RSF wiki at: <http://www2.caret.cam.ac.uk/rsfwiki> and do not hesitate to bring your questions to the RSF forums at: <http://ponder.org.uk/rsf/>

Cheers!

Antranig Basman
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3. A Tool to Import a Test from WebCT or Word Doc into Samigo

Hello from Claremont McKenna College in Southern California!

At the Atlanta Conference, some of you expressed interest in the quiz converter/generator we developed for Sakai. Here is the link to this tool:

http://webapps.cmc.edu/sakai_quiz_tool

Our programmer, Shawn Than, and I developed this quiz converter since migrating quizzes from WebCT to Sakai is one of the biggest issues here in CMC. This tool creates a QTI XML file for each single-section WebCT quiz. It also converts the quizzes from Word Doc (as long as the questions are formatted in the required way).

If there is enough interest in the community, we plan to recode it and put it in the Contrib next semester.

Right now, it's been tested to work with multiple choice, true and false, and fill-in-the-blank questions in English and Spanish. It works in Firefox, IE, and Safari.

However, if there are images, you will have to upload those images later in the Sakai quizzes one by one.

Please feel free to test it or use it. I'd appreciate any suggestions for further development. Also please let me know if you find any issues and bugs.

Thanks,

Melissa Zhuo
mzhuo@cmc.edu

4. WebCT CE to Melete 2.3

In contrib/rutgers/webct2melete you will find an early version of a tool to convert from a WebCT IMS export to a Melete 2.3 import.

I will eventually make this into a web tool. While it's in development it has to be run manually.

"make" shows how it is used, although you'll probably need to change the path name in "java -cp" to reflect where you put the program.

1. Get the file from WebCT and unzip it
2. cd into the directory created by the unzip
3. Rename imsmanifest.xml to imsmanifest.xml.orig
4. java Ims; this creates a new imsmanifest.xml, and copies the files that are used into a new directory, "resources"
5. Zip -r course.zip imsmanifest.xml resources to create a new zip file, course.zip
6. Load course.zip into melete

Loose ends:

1. If the WebCT object is an HTML file, included images work fine. But there's no way to implement included content referred to by <A>, e.g., , because there's no way I can produce a URL that will point into the uploads directory of the course. Melete import hacks tags to map the URL, but it doesn't do that for <A> tags.

2. There appears to be a limit of 100 to URL length.
3. There is a limit of 50 to title length.
4. Melete limits the character set allowed in titles.

I expect to work around #1 if Foothills doesn't solve it. I'm probably going to live with the others.

Charles Hedrick
hedrick@rutgers.edu

5. WebCT to Samigo

I've just checked in an initial version of WebCT to Samigo Tests and Quizzes migration. It's in contrib/rutgers.

At the moment it has some caveats (which are documented in the README). It's a separate program which produces an XML file that can be uploaded to Samigo. I'm considering using the generic import infrastructure, but wanted to test my algorithms separately.

While I expect to do significant work before we use this in production, if someone needed to do a migration at this instant, this might still be the best approach currently available.

Charles Hedrick
hedrick@rutgers.edu

6. Fedora 2.2 Release Scheduled

All,

The Fedora development team has announced that Fedora 2.2 will release on Friday 19 January 2007. See:

<http://comm.nsd.l.org/pipermail/fedora-users/2006-December/002330.html>

Especially interesting is the fact that the Fedora repository is now a .war file, as this

might allow new possibilities for repository integration with Sakai.

Happy New Year,

Jim Martino
jrm@jhu.edu

7. Running Sakai in Production? Don't Forget to Share!

For those of you running Sakai in production, if you're not already, I would like to encourage you to do two things:

(1) Post (or update) your information in the Production Discussion Group's Confluence space:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/PROD>

(2) Periodically share your experiences on the Production Discussion Group's email list on its Collab site:

http://collab.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/d76d88b5-3bb0-4f42-0020-39a4a_cc04282

Many of you are probably already preparing regular reports to suit your own campuses' needs; simply forwarding those reports to the group is an easy way to share your experiences with the greater Sakai community.

Happy Holidays,

Peter Knoop
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Sakai Project Coordinator

8. Sakai Video: Mellon Collaboration Awards

This is a short video of the Mellon Advanced Technology Awards featuring Virginia Tech and Universitat de Lleida.

<http://www.dr-chuck.com/media.php?comment=adv&id=74>

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation announced their 2006 Awards for Technology Collaboration (MATC). Two important members of the Sakai Community received an award. Universitat de Lleida received an award for their work in Internationalization and

Virginia Tech for overall contribution across the board. The camera work is by Brad Wheeler at the CNI meeting where the awards were presented.

You can view all of my Sakai Video reports at:

<http://www.dr-chuck.com/media.php>

You can learn more about the Mellon awards at:

<http://rit.mellon.org/awards/>

Charles Severance
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9. Events

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