



## Sakai Newsletter

January 11, 2007

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### 1. Unicon Delivers uPortal 3 Frameworks for Higher Ed Community

As Chief Architect, Unicon contributed \$250,000 of development resources to Next Generation Open Source Portal.

Unicon, Inc., the leading independent provider of enterprise portals, applications, and professional services for the online campus in academic institutions, has announced that uPortal 3, the next generation open source enterprise portal, is now available for higher ed institutions to download from <http://uportal.org/release/allReleases.html>. Institutions can immediately begin working with and testing the portal's latest frameworks and enhancements for their future planned rollouts and implementations. Unicon served as the chief architectural organization responsible for developing most of uPortal 3's technology framework enhancements and for delivering it to the uPortal open source community in its current state.

Work on the uPortal 3 project was initially made possible by a \$250,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation, the Sakai Foundation, and the University of Delaware. Unicon worked on the project "at cost" during the grant-funded period and has since contributed an additional \$250,000 worth of pro bono time to the project to get it to its current release state. Once uPortal 3 is fully tested, meets quality assurance standards, and reaches general availability status, it will then be supported under Unicon's new uPortal

Cooperative Support Program. For higher ed institutions wanting to begin working with the latest uPortal 3.0 enhancements, Unicon offers unmatched technical expertise based on direct in-depth working knowledge of the portal.

"Unicon has been a supporter and close partner of the JA-SIG community for the past six years," said Jonathan Markow, Chairman of the JA-SIG Board of Directors. "Unicon's recent work establishes a solid baseline for the growth of our next generation portal, uPortal 3. We value Unicon's strength in software engineering as well as their commitment to open source in higher education."

"Educational institutions wanting to begin utilizing the latest uPortal 3 enhancements can look to Unicon with complete confidence as a close partner in helping them define and implement their portal technology roadmap," said John C. Blakley, CEO of Unicon, Inc. "We've been closely involved with uPortal from its beginning as a partner in JA-SIG and as technology contributor. uPortal 3 is a direct result of Unicon's contribution of technology vision and development resources and our commitment to delivering this next generation enterprise portal to the open source community."

#### uPortal 3 Enhancements Contributed by Unicon

**Direct Support for Portlet Standards --** The JSR-168 Portlet 1.0 specification is now the primary architectural model. This provides a richer, more natural implementation of this standard and offers better support for the Web Services for Remote Portlets (WSRP) 1.0 specification and for the upcoming JSR-286 Portlet 2.0 and WSRP 2.0 specifications.

**Layout and Rendering Flexibility --** uPortal 3 has an entirely new layout structure that enables many of the visual customizations such as multi-level tabs and content that lives completely outside of tabs. This improved layout structure, along with support for multiple independently-configurable rendering pipelines and adoption of JSP as a typical markup language, makes implementing complex user interface requirements much easier in uPortal 3.

**Modularity & Declarative Configuration --** By using the Spring Framework and its inherent Inversion of Control (IoC) patterns as the basis of its architecture, uPortal 3 is a highly modular application that can easily be configured and customized in a totally declarative fashion. It does not require the custom framework code changes that were common in many uPortal 2 deployments.

**Persistence Abstraction Layer --** uPortal 3 has adopted the widely used Hibernate framework to provide its persistence layer. This allows it to support a wide variety of relational database systems without significant development and testing required for each platform. Database creation, initialization, and maintenance are now much more straightforward than in uPortal 2.

Effective Use of External Libraries -- uPortal 3 has instead leveraged a number of widely-adopted external libraries to provide many of the infrastructure services that an enterprise application requires including Spring and Hibernate libraries, as well as others like Acegi and Apache Commons. This keeps the uPortal 3 code base leaner and more directly focused on the needs of an enterprise portal platform.

About JA-SIG -- JA-SIG, Inc., is a non-profit (501(c)3), international consortium of educational institutions and commercial affiliates supporting open source software development and promoting open computing architectures for higher education. JA-SIG has been in operation for over six years, holding bi-annual conferences and sponsoring open source software applications like uPortal, the enterprise-grade portal solution; CAS, a flexible Central Authentication Service deployed for single sign-on; and HyperContent, lightweight but powerful web content management. For more information, visit the JA-SIG website at [www.ja-sig.org](http://www.ja-sig.org).

About uPortal: From the Java Architectures Special Interest Group (JA-SIG), uPortal is an open source enterprise portal collaboratively developed by higher-education, for higher-education. Utilizing Java, Extensible Markup Language (XML), JavaServer Pages Technology (JSP) and Java 2 Platform Enterprise Edition (J2EE) technologies, the uPortal framework enables easy, standards-based integration with authentication and security applications, single sign on secure access, and end user customization.

More information about Unicon, Inc. and Academus Open Campus is available at [www.unicon.net](http://www.unicon.net) & [www.academusopencampus.com](http://www.academusopencampus.com).

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## 2. 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](http://lessons.ummu.umich.edu/2k/atlantaconference/sakai_atlanta_conference_survey)

If you have any questions, drop me a note at [hardin@umich.edu](mailto:hardin@umich.edu). Thanks, and see you in Amsterdam in June,

Joseph Hardin  
School of Information  
University of Michigan  
Sakai Foundation

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### 3. Sakai and Oracle

On the weblog of Michael Feldstein, who recently started working for Oracle, you will find some more information on the way Oracle is seeing Sakai.

[http://mfeldstein.com/index.php/weblog/permalink/oracle\\_aei\\_at\\_the\\_sakai\\_atlanta\\_conference](http://mfeldstein.com/index.php/weblog/permalink/oracle_aei_at_the_sakai_atlanta_conference)

There are two initiatives that Oracle is working on with regard to Sakai. There is the Academic Enterprise Initiative (AEI) and there is Sakai for Oracle. A tiny quote: "'Sakai for Oracle' is not intended to be a fork; it is intended to be a supported configuration." Please read the complete post to get to grips to what Oracle is doing for the Sakai community.

-Wytze Koopal  
w.y.koopal@utwente.nl

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### 4. Sakai Copyright Reminder

It is now 2007. Remember to update the copyright on any files you check in to include the new year...

\* Copyright (c) 2006, 2007 The Sakai Foundation.

(For example, leave the existing copyright in place, just add a new year to the end.)

Thanks!

- Glenn Golden  
ggolden@umich.edu

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### 5. Curious About Metrics for Sakai?

Ohloh offers a free service to analyze open source code repositories for development metrics. Seth Theriault has done the necessary work to set up Sakai for analysis, and the analysis for all the modules was finally completed over the weekend. You can see the metrics for Sakai here:

<http://www.ohloh.com/projects/3551>.

It's interesting to compare this with Moodle:

<http://www.ohloh.com/projects/25>"

Also note that the Sakai analysis only goes back as far as the svn reorganization last April, and it's only for the modules that are included in the release.

- Clay Fenlason  
[clayf@bu.edu](mailto:clayf@bu.edu)

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## 6. From Campus Technology: "Course Management Systems >> A Tipping Point"

This article by Susan D. Heid makes reference to many people and institutions in the Sakai community. From the article: "Long recognized as a magnet for new concepts and idea-sharing, the CMS as we've known it teeters on a precipice as institutions reassess need and warily eye the pitfalls that may lie ahead." You can read the rest at:

<http://campustechnology.com/article.asp?id=19879>

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