



Sakai Newsletter

January 25, 2007

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1. Patent Office Orders Reexamination of Blackboard Patent

Today, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ordered reexamination of all 44 claims of the Blackboard patent. This news represents a victory for both the open source and educational software communities.

For further updates about the status of the reexamination, watch Software Freedom Law Center's web site at:

<http://www.softwarefreedom.org/>

throughout the next few days.

2. Join us in June for the 7th Sakai Conference with OSP in Amsterdam!

Once again the Sakai community will come together to share experiences, knowledge, and vision, this time at the Moevenpick Hotel in Amsterdam.

The conference will take place Tuesday through Thursday, June 12-14, with pre- and post-conference sessions and activities on Monday the 11th, and Friday the 15th. The pre- and post-conference sessions will take place at the University of Amsterdam.

As with previous conferences, sessions will focus on teaching and learning, the future of the Sakai codebase, Sakai governance, the integration of other community source projects such as OSP (the Open Source Portfolio), eResearch such as OpenCourseWare (OCW), the Open Knowledge Initiative (OKI), the IMS Global Learning Consortium, and much more.

As always, you can create a BOF (Birds of a Feather meeting) on the topic of most importance to you.

Come join us in celebrating the achievements of the Sakai Community. This promises to be a valuable and exciting time to learn something new about Sakai, share your Sakai experiences, and meet with our worldwide Sakai community. This is also a great opportunity to visit Amsterdam, one of the world's most beautiful and colorful cities.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: The call for proposals will open on February 1, 2007. The deadline for proposal submissions will be March 15, 2007.

Presenters will be notified about whether their proposals have been accepted on March 25, and will find out their session timeslots on April 1.

REGISTRATION: Conference Registration will open in early March.

HOTEL ROOMS: The conference will be held at the Moevenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre. You can book a hotel room at this time -- the room block is already set up. Free wireless is available throughout the hotel and in each room.

The hotel is non-smoking. The hotel is on the water's edge between the adjacent Passenger Terminal Amsterdam and Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam's newest Music Hall.

To reserve a room, call + 31 20 510 1200. The room rate is \$195 EUROS/night (approximately \$250 US dollars). Online room reservations for the Sakai conference discount will be available in early February.

CONFERENCE WEBSITE: The conference information will be updated this weekend and we will send an announcement when it is available.

3. 7th Sakai Conference Wiki Space on Confluence

The Wiki space (and more) for the Seventh Sakai Conference to be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 12-14 June 2007 is here:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/CONF07/Home>

4. Bootcamp in Amsterdam!

If you always wanted to know what developing and programming for Sakai is like, you should take note of the Bootcamp page on our wiki. This is the page where you will find all the information on this great workshop for programmers...

<http://sakai-nl.blogspot.com/2007/01/bootcamp-in-amsterdam.html>

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5. Amsterdam Conference UI attendance?

Hi All,

I wanted to take a quick poll of who from the UI DG will be attending the Amsterdam conference. My sense is we may have depleted representation from the US UI folks, but perhaps increased attendance from the EU/UK side. If this is accurate, it would be great to have some of the folks from EU/UK help take the lead on planning for the U-Camp.

So,

- 1) Will you be there?
- 2) If yes, can you help with u-camp?

Thanks, Mara
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6. Rijksmuseum Art Widget

Those of you going to Amsterdam (I am jealous) might be interested in the Rijksmuseum Art widget. It gives you a daily masterpiece from their collection, and a little information about. Handy for brushing up on your Dutch art.

<http://rijksmuseum.nl/widget/>

Ben Brophy
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7. The Universiteit van Amsterdam Has Now Started OSP 2.2 (r2224) in Production

OPS version: r2224

Purpose: support student learning, self presentation

No. of users: 450 February - July 2007 (expectation)

Using Sakai: in pilot Sakai 2-2-x [18370]

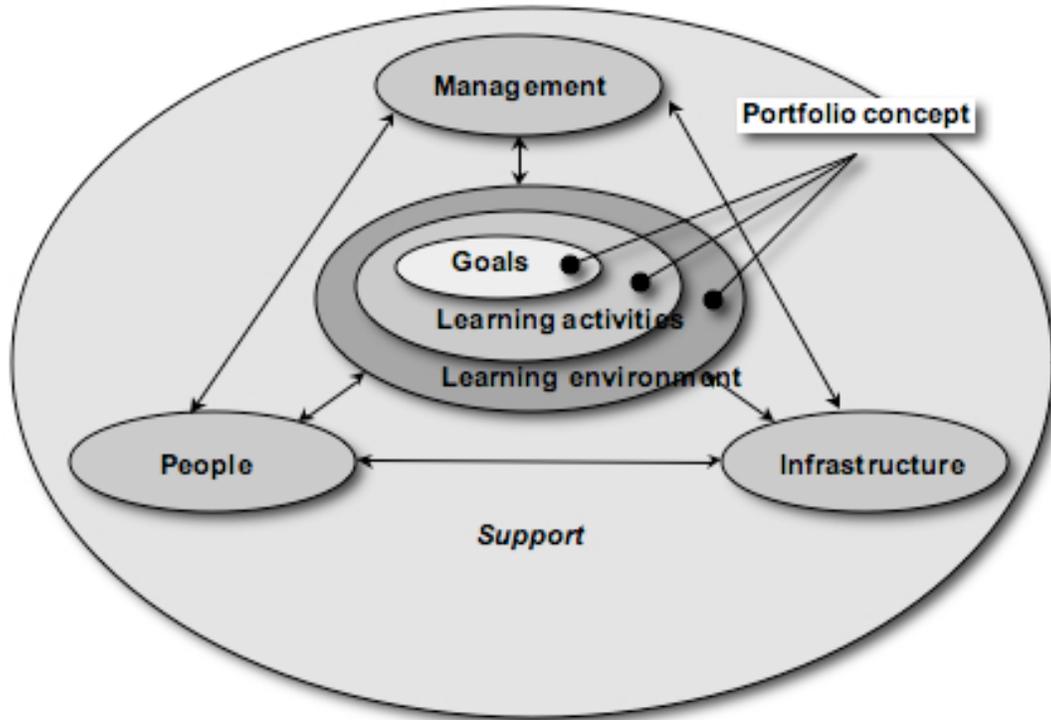
After months of preparing, testing, and debugging we have made it this far. It was a long way...

The Universiteit van Amsterdam started with the UvA GO Portfolio project in April 2005. The main focus of this project was to implement one online portfolio system for the whole university. We had several areas of attention: education (in the centre); management-infrastructure, and the users (people) in a balance model.

In the fall of 2005, we did a pilot with OSP 2.0 and decided in January, 2006 that OSP is suitable for our university. But we had to wait for the new release 2.1. During the Sakai conference in Vancouver it was clear that it was better to start with the Sakai /OSP release 2.2.

The delay was easy for the technical participants to understand, but faculty members had already been waiting for a new portfolio application since 2004. During the waiting time we spent a lot of energy promoting the portfolio concept in the educational area of attention. Thanks to extra financial support from the university board, we could support four new portfolio initiatives for taking time to think about the different competencies in their field, the educational goals, and special learning activities. Everything was done as preparation work for building up the "OSP Matrix." In the summer of 2006, we hope to present their results. <http://portfolio.uva.nl>

(In 2001, we had our first portfolio pilot. In 2002, we started with a product that was built together with seven universities in the Netherlands, but that failed in 2004.)



8. CANS 1.5.2 Now Available

The next public version of the Context-aware Activity Notification System (CANS) is now available at <http://www.cansaware.com>.

CANS is a notification system for Sakai that is designed around the importance of a user's social context and personal notification preferences. It is designed to provide only the notification information users want and to allow users to choose where and how they want to receive that notification information.

This version of CANS offers several new administrative features including a user import and a data export feature. This version also makes the configuration of CANS a little easier.

Finally, with this version, I'm also providing a Tool and Service for Sakai 2.3. The Service uses a Java event listener to monitor Sakai events and send those events, with needed parameters, to the CANS Server. The Sakai Tool is used to start the Service and to monitor the status of CANS. This marks the first full public release of CANS that

gives you everything you need to monitor events in Sakai, manage user accounts in CANS, collect CANS activity data, and send activity notifications to users via email.

An updated CANS Desktop Widget will be made available soon.

Enjoy!

Chris Amelung
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9. Results of the Sakai Atlanta Conference Survey

Thank you to all of the 129 people who took the online Sakai Atlanta Conference Quick Survey! Here is a sampling of the responses.

What Attendees Liked

As with previous Sakai conferences, face-to-face networking, communicating, and meeting people were the most popular aspects of the Atlanta Conference. "Being able to network, find like-minded individuals, and discover new resources for future work on Sakai." "Sakai community is always the best part of the conferences!"

In contrast with the last Sakai conference, the wireless internet in Atlanta received lots of positive comments. People also liked the Tech Demos, the U Camp, and the Pedagogy track. Several respondents mentioned that it was valuable seeing how others are using Sakai and hearing about instructor experiences with it: "I also liked hearing about HOW various members of the community solved some problems. There were approaches to problems I hadn't considered and hearing what didn't work was also equally valuable." "Information gathering -- finding out what people are doing in their courses using Sakai (Effective Use of Sakai in Promoting Best Practices session) was valuable because it expanded my knowledge of how LMS's can be used to enhance learning."

The Software Freedom Law Center's Eben Moglen's keynote was praised by many: "I thoroughly enjoyed the keynote presentation by Eben Moglen. It was excellent in every way." And while several respondents liked the lunchtime session with Eben Moglen and Mathew Small, attorney for Blackboard: "Eben Moglen's lunchtime discussion with Matt Small was a surprising treat." "The lunch debate was fascinating." Others were not as positive: "This did not feel like the right venue for this event, it diffused focus of the conference."

Some cited specific conference sessions that they liked: "The presentation on Considerations and Concerns When Moving from Commercial to Sakai was well attended and received warmly -- folks stayed afterwards for 45 minutes. I think this type

of presentation is critical for institutions who are currently using commercial products like Bb, WebCT, Angel, Desire2Learn, etc." "The Project Coordination Meeting" "One-on-one question and answer session with Peter Knoop and Chris Coppola." "UI Designs by Mark Brierly, Schedule tool by Steve Lonn, Tool Carousel -- Message Center by Megan May, Tool Carousel -- Samigo by Mark Brierly -- Those were the 4 that stood out but the rest were also good and I learned a lot from them. Technical sessions were very good." "The overviews by Peter Knoop and Joseph Hardin."

And one more response: "Meeting everyone and seeing the energy that we all have over the Sakai product. Especially with an open source product one can become worried that support and excitement for the product would eventually begin to lag. I never get this sense from the people that are involved in making Sakai what it is. Also, I really like the Sakai tool. This is my second conference, and each time I come back full of fire to try and convince the powers that be that Sakai is the way to go."

What Attendees Didn't Like

In this section of the survey, noise from the hotel construction was the hands-down winner: "Jack hammers!" "Someone should really look into hotel repairs before deciding on a hotel."

The problem of having to decide between concurrent sessions was mentioned often, with some respondents suggesting possible solutions: "Consider bundling several similar presentations into one session, with 15 minutes per presentation. If necessary, become more selective." "Since every hour involves multiple great sessions, is there any way to hold the BOFs outside of regular session times? Perhaps have an hour at the end of the day when they don't conflict with scheduled sessions?"

Several conference attendees missed having opening and closing sessions, and there were lots of requests for more power outlets. Others would have liked more detailed OSP sessions, both advanced and introductory. Also mentioned: "Feeling like a fish out of water... I'm from a small school using a production instance of Sakai. Few of the sessions were geared for our type of user."

Suggested Improvements

Several attendees requested more sessions for those who make the decisions in academic institutions -- those who will decide whether to switch to Sakai: "I was hoping that the tool presentations would not be so much about step-by-step how to use the tool or navigate the interface, but rather would compare the functionality of the tool to tools available in other applications (Bb/WebCT), and would openly discuss problems, challenges, outstanding bugs, motivation, etc., just a step or two back from the tool, and placing it in the bigger picture of the product landscape... not the kind of demo we'd be giving to faculty who are trying to use it. Maybe that's the key difference... focus the

presentation on decision-makers and educational technologists, not so much on the end user (faculty and students)."

More introductory sessions were also requested: "Have more sessions where new people can get a better feel for the interface and what would be required for institutions to bring the bare bones into a working product. I came away still unsure as to what comes out of the box and how much I will have to do in house to make this work." "Better introductory sessions. A lot of the people at the conference are not currently using Sakai, including us. You need to cater to us. This means providing sessions we can take to our CEO demonstrating what Sakai does that other products do not."

Several people said that more presenters need to put materials up on the conference site. Making the session descriptions more informative was also suggested: "Clearer schedule with distinctions made for newbies and seasoned users." "The session abstracts often didn't provide enough information or thorough enough descriptions. I found myself several times in sessions that didn't meet my needs or, more relevantly, my expectations."

A few respondents suggested a hands-on demo and hands-on training for Sakai: "Have a Sakai project or course set up where the conference attendees are the students and we have various resources and space to share work, etc. This would turn the conference into a living lab on using Sakai in both standard and innovative ways." "Hands-on session to install/configure Sakai. This could be one day prior workshop." "Have a hands-on lab so that people can actually see the system in operation, see the different tools available, see how a live course works within the system."

10. Indiana University Deploys Sakai 2.3+

On 31 December 2006, Indiana University successfully deployed Sakai 2.3 plus some additional capabilities into production to support the Spring 2007 semester. The deployed enhancements to Oncourse include:

1. Assignments
 1. Importing of Assignment items should have draft status optional (from original or CL).
 2. Assignments can be linked to existing Gradebook assignments.
2. General
 1. Provide site to site export-import capabilities for Home, Chat, Web Content and News tools.
3. Gradebook
 1. Support commenting of grades in Gradebook.
 2. Ability to selectively release assignment grades to students.
 3. Ability to import assignment grades into gradebook.

4. Message Center
 1. Support importing of Forums and Topics in Discussion Forums from another CL site; in addition, draft status should be optional.
 2. Ability to organize forums and topics in Discussion Forums.
 3. Message Center group aware for Discussion Forums.
 4. Show indication of awaiting messages and forum postings across sites in My Workspace.
 5. Enforce enhanced privacy management settings.
5. Portal
 1. Remove IFRAME from tab navigation
 2. Improved rendering for screen resolutions under 1024x768
6. Portfolio
 1. Several new synoptic tools (wizards, matrices, evaluations, portfolio sites)
 2. ePortfolio Dashboard view containing synoptic tools
 3. Updates to language and terminology
 4. Reporting infrastructure
 5. Numerous bug fixes
7. Privacy Management
 1. Provide a mechanism whereby individuals can declare to be hidden or visible on a site-by-site basis.
 2. Add Privacy Status tool to home page of each site.
8. Resources
 1. Ability to reorder content.
 2. Ability to schedule release and retract dates.
9. Roster
 1. Add group/section support to tool.
 2. Add new print friendly view.
 3. Enforce enhanced privacy management settings.
10. Sectioning
 1. Ability to combine sections into one site (combined roster).
11. User Presence
 1. Users who are online appear as present within the site along the left tool bar.
 2. Enforce enhanced privacy management settings.
12. Wiki
 1. Add new commenting feature to each wiki page.
 2. Add new visual icons to action links.
 3. Enhanced tool bar in the Edit view (bold, italics, tables, etc).
 4. Enhanced Preview mode in Edit view.

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11. Article in *EDUCAUSE Review* by Brad Wheeler: "Open Source 2010: Reflections on 2007"

From the article: "Much has happened since the 2004 prognostications of my *EDUCAUSE Review* article, "Open Source 2007: How Did This Happen?" The article peered into the future through the lens of two possible outcomes for open-source *application* software by 2007. In the first scenario, higher education and commercial firms overcame many challenges to evolve a new "community source" model for developing and sustaining enterprise-scale, quality software. In the second scenario, the obstacles for collaboration and coordination of investments were simply too great: institutions could not find ways to agree. The article thesis asserted that the actual outcome for 2007 would reflect the collective actions of colleges and universities. For those of us in higher education, it was *our* outcome to choose..."

Here is the PDF of the complete article:

<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm0712.pdf>

12. uPortal Consortium Expands Membership Outreach and Benefits to Institutions & Commercial Partners

JA-SIG has announced a new membership program and benefits designed to attract worldwide educational institutions and commercial supporters of its enterprise open source applications, including: uPortal, CAS (Centralized Authentication Service), and HyperContent (the full-featured web content management application). The uPortal Project has reached new levels of maturity as adoption continues and technology contributions are received from institutions and commercial partners. With this increasing market penetration, JA-SIG is expanding its membership outreach and program benefits to support additional organizational growth, increased institutional participation, and broader commercial support. Membership information can be found at: <http://www.JA-SIG.org/membership.html> and the uPortal software can be downloaded at: <http://uportal.org/release/allReleases.html>.

"As the uPortal community expands globally, it is important that the JA-SIG organization also grows and evolves in order to best serve the community, our institutional members, and commercial affiliates," said Jonathan Markow, Chairman of the JA-SIG Board of Directors. "The success of our new membership program will allow us to provide the product development planning and organizational structure needed to maintain uPortal, and our other applications, as robust open source alternatives to proprietary software. And, our members will now be able to actively participate in the organization by nominating and voting on board members and by serving on project steering committees."

To read the rest of this article, please go to:

http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release_html_b1?release_id=206562

13. IU Podcasts to be Available Through Apple's iTunes U Service

Indiana University has signed an agreement with Apple Computer, Inc. to make online content available through iTunes U. This service, to be available during spring semester 2007, will allow students and others to easily subscribe to and download podcasts of audio, video and graphic content to their iPods and other supported portable devices or personal computers for listening or viewing anytime and anywhere.

"This agreement provides another way to distribute IU content 24 hours a day and 7 days a week," said Elizabeth Van Gordon of University Information Technology Services (UITS). "With this agreement signed, we're now ready to develop the interface and the tools that will enable faculty and departments to distribute podcasts world-wide via iTunes U."

Through this agreement, IU will join the University of Michigan, Stanford, and Berkeley as early adopters of iTunes U.

The agreement complements other initiatives at Indiana University designed to meet the needs of an increasingly mobile and "wired" population of learners. The Sakai podcasting tool became available to all IU faculty in August 2006 as part of the university's online course management system, Oncourse. UITS is also working with IU Creative Services to release an Indiana University podcasting portal in spring 2007, which will link to iTunes U. Each of these services will support audiences internal and external to the university.

Alan Dennis, Professor and John T. Chambers Chair of Internet Systems, Kelley School of Business, is an experienced podcaster, having used the technology to support his S305 Business Telecommunications course throughout 2006. According to Dennis, the student response has been "overwhelmingly positive."

"Students told me that they listened to the podcasts when they missed classes and when they studied for exams. They also used the podcasts when they realized they didn't understand their notes from a class," he said, adding that students could listen to the material again to hear what they had missed the first time. Dennis warned that podcasts do not substitute for classroom experiences, however. "I want my students to be engaged with the topic and to actively think about the issues. Students listening to the podcast might skip over classroom exercises and just listen to my answer, rather than taking time to work through an exercise and think about the issues on their own."

A number of IU schools and departments are currently creating and hosting podcasts, including the Jacobs School of Music, the IU School of Law, the IU Office of Academic Affairs, and the IU School of Education. The IU School of Medicine's weekly "Sound

Medicine" program on WFYI and IU's "A Moment of Science," are also available as podcasts.

For more about Apple Computer's iTunes U service, see <http://www.apple.com/education/>

14. 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