Sakai Newsletter

March 8, 2007

1. 7th Sakai Conference In Amsterdam

2. Call for UX Proposals at Amsterdam Conference

3. Thomson Learning Adopts Sakai

4. JA-SIG Summer Conference Proposals Due March 7

5. Changes Coming to Message Center

6. Debate Tool in Sakai

7. OLPC rendering CW5 / Sakai

8. QA Participation Call Out

9. Two New Job Opportunities at Indiana University

10. Events

---

1. 7th Sakai Conference in Amsterdam

 ------ PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MARCH 15

The Call for Proposals for the 7th Sakai Community Conference in Amsterdam is open.

Develop your proposal and submit it at:

https://sakaiproject.org/conference/proposals/index.php

 ------ Hotel Reservations

The conference will be held at the Moevenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre. Sakai needs the support of the community in helping to keep the conference expenses as low as possible. You can do this by booking your room at the conference hotel as early as possible. If our room block requirements are met, we will receive substantial conference service discounts. Take advantage of the increased opportunities to spend more time with

your colleagues at the conference by staying at the hotel.

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

The Sakai conference rate of $195 euros per night (approximately $250 U.S. dollars) will be available for June 9 to June 17, 2006. There will be free wireless internet service in your room and throughout the hotel. There are three ways to reserve a room: online, by phone, and by Fax. Go to

http://sakaiproject.org/conference/amsterdam

and click the "Hotel Information" link for further information about reserving a room.

------ Conference Logo

If you have an idea for a conference logo for t-shirts and polos, please send the your idea to Pam Dietz (pld@umich.edu).

------ Conference Registration

Online registration for the conference opens March 11, 2007

------ Conference Website Look here for regular updates and information:

http://sakaiproject.org/conference/amsterdam

---

2. Call for UX Proposals at Amsterdam Conference

Hi everyone,

This is a quick reminder that the submission deadline for presentation proposals at the Sakai Amsterdam conference closes on March 15th, one week from today.

The goal of User Experience track is to showcase the human side of Sakai, bringing together presentations which address the design, use, and support of Sakai. User experience was a hot topic at the last conference in Atlanta, and I'd like to see user concerns well-reflected in Amsterdam as well. To this end, I encourage you to submit proposals for sessions related to user interface design and usability, accessibility, user support, and other related topics by March 15th.

If you have any questions or need any help with your proposal, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Also, don't forget that we will be hosting another U-Camp workshop for designers, developers, and user support staff in Amsterdam. This U-Camp will also feature a combined designer/developer session with the Programmer's Cafe. We're currently in the process of planning the agenda, so let me know if you have any suggestions or would like to participate.

Best,

Colin Clark
Inclusive Software Architect Adaptive Technology Resource Centre
colin.clark@utoronto.ca

---

3. Thomson Learning Adopts Sakai

Thomson Learning, one of the largest academic publishers in higher education, has adopted the Sakai open source collaboration and learning environment for supporting the delivery of world-class learning products and services. In becoming a commercial affiliate of the Sakai Foundation, Thomson Learning has committed to assisting the open source community in the shared goal of creating a robust learning environment that combines technology, content and services to meet the evolving needs of higher education. This is an expansion of the company's support for open standards and integration with all learning environments.

"Thomson Learning is truly breaking new ground in its industry. The company's commitment to making significant software investments in the open source community is the first in the publishing industry," said Chuck Severance, Executive Director, Sakai Foundation. "We hope that all members of the higher education learning environment recognize the benefits of adopting open source and contributing to the greater good of the community and follow Thomson Learning's commitment."

Thomson Learning will work closely with the Sakai team and other commercial affiliates, including Unicon, to continue the overall effort to keep the open source models vibrant. The commitment to provide ongoing contributions to the Sakai Foundation in a number of methods, including software contributions and open standards support, is essential to this partnership.

"By partnering with Sakai, Thomson Learning has the opportunity to truly transform education and influence the future of learning," said Ray Lowrey, Chief Technology Officer of Thomson Learning. "The company has always embraced technology innovation and collaboration and is committed to continuing its significant contributions

to enabling academic success. This includes continuing our on-going integration efforts with key partners such as Angel Learning, Blackboard, Desire2Learn, eCollege and others to provide a seamless learning experience."

"The higher education community, specifically students, deserve and expect better learning outcomes at a lower cost," said Harris Morris, Chief Strategy Officer of Thomson Learning. "Partnering with the Sakai Foundation not only adds value for all learners, but enables the content creators to concentrate all their efforts on enhancing the teaching and learning experience, while maintaining a low cost structure."

"In addition, Thomson Learning is glad to see one of its key business partners, Blackboard, Inc., making a move in the right direction to engage the open source community," said Mr. Lowrey.

About Thomson Learning: Thomson Learning delivers highly customized learning solutions for colleges, universities, professors, students, reference centers, government agencies, corporations and professionals around the world. These solutions are delivered through specialized content, applications and services that foster academic excellence and professional development, as well as provide measurable learning outcomes to its customers. Thomson Learning's mission is to shape the future of global learning by delivering consistently better learning solutions for learners, instructors and institutions.

Adam Gaber
adam.gaber@thomson.com

---

4. JA-SIG Summer Conference Proposals Due Wednesday, March 7

JA-SIG With Altitude! June 24-27, 2007 Denver, Colorado, USA

The deadline for submitting a proposal for a presentation, a birds-of-feather session, or a kiosk at the JA-SIG Summer conference in Denver is Wednesday, 07 March 2007. The committee welcomes proposals from all attendees. We especially encourage you to share your experience with

- Using open source offerings from JA-SIG
- Community source projects: Sakai and Kuali
- Enterprise integration issues
- Portals
- Identity Management
- SOA
- User Experience

Submit your proposal through the conference web site at:

http://www.ja-sig.org/conferences/07summer/index.html

by clicking on the Call for Proposals link.

For more ideas and topic suggestions, visit the conference wiki:

http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/07summer+committee+suggestions

We are very excited about the shape the conference is taking. Half and full day seminars will be offered on Kuali, CAS, Sakai, uPortal, DLM, Ajax, User Centered Design, Spring PortletMVC, and Content Management. All that is needed to make this a great conference is your presentation!

Stay tuned for information about keynote speakers and the opening of registration soon.

2006 JA-SIG Summer Program Committee
Susan Bramhall, Yale University, Chair
Tim Carroll, University of Illinois
John Fereira, Cornell University
Cris Holdorph, Unicon, Inc.
Brian McGough, Indiana University
Jason Shao, Rutgers University
Anthony Whyte, University of Michigan
Paul Zablosky, University of British Columbia
Jim Helwig, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Board Liaison

---

5. Changes Coming to Message Center

The tool formerly known as "Message Center" will be renamed to "Messages Forums."

Even more exciting, it will be split into two separate tools by default; i.e. "Messages" tool and "Forums" tool via tool registration files. In addition to the default split view, deployments can still choose to use one integrated tool by using an alternate tool registration file. For further details please see SAK-8443. To accompany this change, the Forums UI has been revamped. Mockups are available at:

http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/download/attachments/7380/Forumsv1.pdf

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu

6. Debate Tool in Sakai

Hi All,

We are thinking of developing a simple text-based Debate tool in Sakai. Features include:

1. Group-aware participants list and access control
2. Instructor/teaching assistant user group can post debate topic with specific start/end time and select participants list
3. Participant can input their comment on the topic and state 'For' / 'Against' / 'Neutral'
4. Instructor/teaching assistant can add instructor comments in between discussion
5. After the end of the debate, instructor/TA can optionally put marks/grade the debate for each participant and able to submit this to grade book

The online debate mechanism is very effective and interesting for students to participate. We have been using similar application written in Perl in standalone basis and the feedback is excellent.

Do you have any interests or comment on this tool? We have not confirmed whether to build this tool from scratch or build upon some of the existing tool in Sakai yet so your input is really appreciated.

William WanTeaching
Technologies Team Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
ctwan@ust.hk

7. OLPC rendering CW5 / Sakai

Here are some pics of the OLPC rendering Coursework 5, our local Sakai version.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/badubadu/397318188/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/badubadu/397315885/

The screen and keyboard are pretty small, but I was surprised that it worked at all.

Casey Dunn
caseyd1@stanford.edu

8. QA Participation Call Out

The code freeze for 2.4 is rapidly approaching (March 15th) and the community will kick off testing on the 16th!

If you will have any time available, please sign up on the 2.4 Release page at http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/QA/2.4+Release or send me an e-mail (mmmay@indiana.edu) with what you are interested in testing. If you aren't sure where to focus your effort, let me know.

I'm look forward to working more with everyone. Remember that any amount of time you have *is* worthwhile. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to speak up!

Thanks,

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu

9. Two New Job Opportunities at Indiana University

The team that supports IU's local instance of Sakai is hiring two new developers:

https://webdb.iu.edu/IUPUIhumanresources/secure/app/itapp.cfm#00010904

https://webdb.iu.edu/IUPUIhumanresources/secure/app/itapp.cfm#00021505

Analyst/Programmer or Senior Analyst/Programmer
University Information Technology Services (PAE11/13)

PAE11

Conduct analysis and programming tasks in data processing environment. Work on programming tasks. Analyze and correct problems with existing programs.

REQUIRED FOR PAE11: Bachelor's Degree plus 1 year's experience in systems analysis and programming. Education and experience may be substituted in a 2:1 ratio. Knowledge of data processing, systems analysis and office automation required. Experience in supporting applications in a Unix/Apache/Tomcat environment, Unix scripting languages, SQL, and relational database structures is required. Demonstrated knowledge of hardware and software for desktop workstations and networks is required.

PREFERRED: Experience in Java, J2EE, Spring, Hibernate, JSF, Junit, JDBC, Oracle, MySQL, object oriented design patterns is desired.

PAE13

Participate in and lead projects to analyze functional processes, determine system specifications, design solutions, write programs and implement critical system applications while maintaining production standards. Collaborate with UITS and university personnel to determine the processing needs and use standard system design techniques to architectures. Participate in the implementation of new applications, and provide troubleshooting and maintenance support for existing systems. Assist in planning and resolution of network configuration. Provide training and support to staff; serve as a resource for problem analysis and resolution.

REQUIRED FOR PAE13: Bachelor's Degree plus at least 3 years of experience in systems analysis or programming. A combination of equivalent work experience and education may be considered at a 2:1 ratio. Minimum of 2 years experience in systems analysis, developing and programming and user application support is required, including experience with creating and supporting applications in a Unix/Apache/Tomcat environment, Unix scripting languages, SQL, and relational database structures. Experience with Java, J2EE, Spring, Hibernate, JSF, Junit, JDBC, Oracle, MySQL, and object oriented design patterns is required.

See: http://hra.iupui.edu/

Lance Speelmon
Manager Online Development / Sakai Release Manager
lance@indiana.edu

---

10. 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

JA-SIG Summer 2007 Conference
June 24 - 27
Denver, Colorado
http://www.ja-sig.org/conferences/07summer/index.html