Overview Report
Sakai Project

March 27, 2007

Funding Period: January 2004 - December 2005

Project Goals

The primary goals of the Sakai effort is to develop an open source collaboration and learning environment and develop communities of adopters and developers around Sakai to sustain the software over time.

We chose the traditional Learning Management System application space for Sakai because it is very important to have some control over the software we use for teaching, learning, and collaboration. Commercial offerings in the LMS space really tend to limit innovation because the vendor of the software controls the pace of innovation and as their customer bases grow - they are not motivated to innovate.

We understood from the beginning that not all universities would have the resources and talent to participate in the shared development of the Sakai software - but these universities in time could simply adopt and use the Sakai software - either through a commercial provider of Sakai or simply by downloading and using the software.

If you have time, there is an 11 minute video overview of the Sakai Project available at:

  http://www.sakaiproject.org/media2/2006/overview/overview.htm

Participating Institutions

The Sakai Foundation has about 110 Members - both commercial and non-commercial and about 160 institutions are using Sakai in production for their collaboration and learning needs. The best way to see the Sakai community is to visit the Sakai map at

www.sakaiproject.org/sakai-map/

Milestones and Deliverables

Sakai does major releases twice per year and the Sakai community determines the content of the releases. During 2006, Sakai released versions 2.2 and 2.3.

The current release page gives details of the contents of each release and is available at:

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.2.0/
http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.3.1/

The 2.2. Release completed a re-factor of the code base that was started in Sakai 2.0.
Sakai 2.2 was a much cleaner and more modular release.

The Sakai Foundation hosts two annual conferences each year for the worldwide Sakai
community. The June 2006 release was in Vancouver Canada and the December 2006
conference was in Atlanta Georgia - both conferences had over 500 attendees.

In addition to the worldwide conferences there were a number of smaller Sakai regional
meetings in Europe, England, South Africa, and Japan.

In 2007, there will be two releases (Sakai 2.4 in June 2007 and Sakai 2.5 in December
2007) as well as worldwide conference in Amsterdam June 2007.

Contributors

According to www.ohlo.net the Sakai core plus contributed tools represents 60 active
developers and the Sakai software represents about $20 million of development
investment. The developers come from a wide range of institutions and are distributed
around the world.

Users

Sakai runs in daily production serving about a million users around the world in 160
organizations. The Sakai adopters range in size from large statewide systems like Indiana
University with 150,000 users down to small collaborative communities supporting
teacher mentoring such as the KEEP Toolkit funded by the Carnegie Foundation
(http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/kml/keep/).

Plans for Development

The Sakai Requirements process guides Sakai development priorities. Requirements
gathering is done once for each Sakai release. The Sakai community submits their
requirements and then those requirements are reviewed and prioritized and the report of
the requirements analysis is presented to the community. You can take a look at the
Sakai requirements process in action at:

  http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/f3

The Sakai Project Coordinator tracks the overall community activity and communicates
activity across the community and produces the following report.

  http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/MGT/

Sustainability

The Sakai Foundation was founded to provide a model to sustain the Sakai efforts around the world when the initial grant-funded Sakai project was complete. The Sakai Foundation raises a million dollars per year from member fees. This money is spent on Sakai Foundation staff and supports the Sakai Foundation conferences.

The primary purpose of the Sakai staff position is to support and enhance the efforts of the volunteer Sakai community and to provide a single point of contact for people and institutions interested in Sakai.

The Sakai staff currently consists of the following positions:

- Executive Director
- Membership Coordinator
- Community Liason
- Requirements Coordinator
- Project Coordinator
- QA Director
- Webmaster

The Sakai Board is currently raising funds and preparing to hire a User Experience coordinator to help improve the usability of Sakai.

These positions are not generally directly involved in the development and production of the Sakai software; instead they focus on enhancing and supporting community efforts around Sakai.

Synergy Opportunities

A collaboration and learning system touches many aspects of an enterprise leading to many opportunities for collaboration.

- **FLUID** is a Mellon-funded effort to improve the usability of Sakai and a wide range of open source software efforts. FLUID will improve accessibility and usability for open source software by building and integrating technology that allows users to control and transform their user interface to best suit their needs. Sakai is a major participant and supporter of the FLUID effort.

- **uPortal** - Sakai has a goal of integration with an institutions enterprise portal. A significant amount of effort has been expended working with uPortal. This effort includes - the development of JSR-168 portlets for Sakai, WSRP (Web Services for Remote Portals) Producer capabilities for Sakai, RSS feeds, and JSR-168 support for Sakai.

- **IMS** - Sakai institutions have participates in the IMS Standards effort and Sakai has been instrumental in the development of the IMS Tool Interoperability and IMS Common Cartridge standards. These are breakthrough standards in the area of reuse of tools and content across multiple LMS systems.

Sakai has a very flexible and extensible service oriented architecture that allows for many different types of learning and collaboration oriented tools to be deployed through Sakai. This has led to some long-term relationships between Sakai and otrher communities developing learning oriented tools including:

- The **Bodington** LMS system has been under development since 1995 at Leeds, Oxford, and the University of the Highlands and Islands. Bodington has a number of significant innovations including the use of GuanXI to harness SAML technology (similar to Shibboleth) to provide a secure federated view of learning resources from many sources.

- **LAMS** is a learning design system which allows the development of learning sequences where the instructor can lead students through sequences of learning activities in a synchronous or asynchronous manner. LAMS 1.0 was integrated into Sakai 2.1 and work is just being completed on a basic integration of LAMS 2.0 into Sakai 2.4. We are exploring options with LAMS to produce a much tighter and richer integration between Sakai and LAMS to allow both systems to reuse each other's tools natively.

Looking Forward

The Sakai Foundation, Sakai software, and Sakai community are very solid at this point in time. We have successfully launched Sakai and matured the software over a three year period. Sakai runs solidly in production at a number of sites and we have systems and processes in place to move the software forward.

The next steps are to enhance functionality and move to a point where we are truly starting to innovate beyond the commercial offerings in this space. Enhanced support for standards for tool and data interoperability are a critical element in achieving the next set of goals for Sakai.

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