



Sakai Newsletter

April 5, 2007

1. U. Michigan & Foothill Launch Mneme - Test Center Project & Website!
2. Article by Chris Coppola in Campus Technology -- "Invest Locally"
3. Sakai Conference in Amsterdam Updates
4. Sakai Requirements Group Call for Submissions
5. Press Release - Unicon Assists GA Tech Switch to Sakai from WebCT
6. OpenEAI Announces ESB 4.0 Open Source Development Platform/Enterprise App. Integration
7. Job Opening at UC Merced -- Web Interface Developer
8. Events

1. U. Michigan & Foothill Launch Mneme - Test Center Project & Website!

In collaboration with the University of Michigan, the ETUDES Project team at Foothill College has launched the development of a new open source testing tool for Sakai, Mneme - Test Center (TC).

Project lead, Vivie Sinou, Foothill College, and technical lead, Glenn Golden, University of Michigan, have been working closely on the delivery module of Mneme for five months, with a focus on performance and design/usability issues.

Planned to be released in a few weeks, the "delivery" module of Test Center will use T&Q's authoring and grading modules. This work was in response to the community's pressing request for a high-performance delivery engine to handle high-stakes testing and concurrency. Institutions will be able to run Mneme's delivery module alongside T&Q with Sakai 2.4 or Sakai 2.3. Beyond this initial release of delivery, Mneme will be completely independent of T&Q.

This successful collaboration, as well as the common vision and urgent testing needs, have inspired the University of Michigan and Foothill to invest resources and continue to work together to write a new testing system.

Mneme - Test Center is a new testing system for Sakai that, once completed, will consist of:

- 1) a delivery module that is high performance, able to handle large loads
- 2) a test manager module to manage the publication of tests
- 3) a module for grading tests, optionally integrated with Sakai's Gradebook
- 4) an authoring module to create questions and manage pools

For information on the plans for Mneme - Test Center, the story and meaning behind the name, and to learn more about our work, please visit the project website:

<http://etudesproject.org/mneme/>

Glenn Golden and Vivie Sinou will present a session on Mneme at the Sakai Conference in Amsterdam.

Additionally, for those of you who will not be able to attend, we will schedule two webcasts in May to walk you through the four Mneme modules and answer questions. We'll announce the events on sakai-user and sakai-dev.

As always, we'll keep users and developers informed on our work, and we'll continue to seek input through the lists. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the leads:

Project Lead: Vivie Sinou, Foothill College, sinou@foothill.edu

Technical Lead: Glenn Golden, University of Michigan, ggolden@umich.edu

2. Article by Chris Coppola in Campus Technology -- "Invest Locally"

Over the last several years I've begun to pay a lot more attention to what my family eats, and where it came from. Recently, I've become very interested in sustainable agriculture-- both for my family's health, and to make a positive contribution to the health of the planet. I've found ways to buy more locally produced food through community supported agriculture (CSA) organizations and community buying clubs. I've come to the conclusion that food produced locally using sustainable agriculture practices tastes better, is healthier, and is better for the planet. But it's also harder from a consumer perspective. The dilemma we face is that if we choose massively industrialized food because it's easier and appears cheaper, the money we spend goes elsewhere and sustains that system.

If we spend locally, our dollars are invested in the local community. As more people do this, and more money flows into the local community, the services and distribution channels will develop and make the better choice an easier one. This will lead to more people making the choice, more investment, better services, and ... you get the idea.

The sustainable agriculture movement is a lot like the open source software movement in higher education today--simply replace "better food" with "better software." Okay, it's not quite that simple, but there are a lot of similarities. Communities like Sakai, Quali, uPortal, Moodle, and others are taking advantage of a better way to build software through open source communities. Interest in these communities is growing rapidly, certainly outpacing the capacity of these communities to provide all services necessary for new community members to be successful with the software. Additionally, within these communities there are key underdeveloped or entirely missing services that exist in other software communities (vended software) that help users mitigate risks, particularly in production use, and ensure long-term sustainability of the products.

The tipping point that makes the better choice an easier one will occur when more of us invest 'locally' in the educational open source communities. 'Close to home,' so to speak. Spending dollars on open source ensures that these communities have the resources necessary to be sustainable over the long term. More spending also attracts more investment in the form of grant funding, venture funding, and other types of investment made by organizations that can add value and fill in the under-developed and missing services. More dollars spent and more investment means lower risks and greater benefits to the entire user community, as the ecosystem grows more diverse and more sustainable.

You might be thinking, "I know open source software isn't free, but my options for spending on it are not clear." Although not as straightforward as buying software licenses from a proprietary vendor, there are many ways to spend your dollars locally on open source software. For instance, you might join the Sakai Foundation and/or Quali Foundation as more than 100 institutions around the world have. This contributes directly to our community's ability to develop great software. You could also pay salaries to employees who contribute their time and energy to these open source projects, thereby becoming project experts. You could spend money to implement and support these solutions on your own campus. You could spend dollars on subscription support agreements for these products from commercial support providers that will safeguard your production use of these systems. You could hire consultants to help customize your unique environment, pay hosting providers to run your systems for you, or pay to have your staff and users trained to use these systems. As you can see, there are a variety of ways to spend locally on open source. The point is that you need to spend money. When I talk to my friends about my family's choice to spend locally on sustainable food, many ask me why I do it. My answer is simple. If I don't, who will? My answer is the same with open source software in education. I choose to invest in it, and I'm suggesting that to reach the tipping point, you must too. Spending dollars, even in small ways, gets the ball rolling.

Let's consider for a moment how one institution is "spending locally." San Joaquin Delta College (CA) is a school that exemplifies many of the ways in which colleges and universities can invest locally in open source communities. Delta College is one of the founders of the Quali Financial System (KFS) project and the Quali Student (KS) project. Delta is a paying member of the Etudes Alliance, a not-for-profit organization that hosts Sakai for many of California's 109 community colleges. Delta has also back-filled a number of positions to dedicate people who contribute time and expertise to Quali while building local capacity at Delta. Delta College also engages commercial open source firms to assist with implementation, contributions to the projects, and to provide subscription support services. This diversified approach to spending their open source dollars is a way to ensure their own success, as well as the success of the communities.

Institutions differ greatly in ways that make one form or another of "spending locally" more or less feasible. What can you do? Do you have the people and skills to contribute talent and/or implement the software at your institution? Are you able to invest in the Sakai and/or Quali Foundations to invest in the development of the software, ensuring these organizations have the resources to produce software you'll want to implement at some point? Are you ready to implement one or more of these systems and need help from a hired expert? Have you already implemented and want to protect your investment by engaging a commercial support provider? You have a lot of options to invest locally in a community that will make your life better. You also have the option to do nothing. Or, in other words to passively support the industry that exists, which may appear easier and cheaper, until you find the hidden costs and switching barriers. Make a choice. Invest locally in open source software. If you don't, who will?

3/28/2007

Christopher D. Coppola is president of the rSmart Group, a provider of open source solutions for education. He is a board member of the Sakai and Quali foundations.

This article can be found on the Campus Technology website:
<http://www.campustechnology.com/articles/46385/>

3. Sakai Conference in Amsterdam

KEYNOTE SPEAKER -- Hal Abelson is a founding director of the Free Software Foundation and of Creative Commons. He also serves as consultant to Hewlett-Packard Laboratories. At MIT, Abelson is co-director of the MIT-Microsoft Research Alliance in educational technology and co-head of MIT's Council on Educational Technology. He is also active in MIT's OpenCourseWare and DSpace (institutional digital archiving) initiatives.

Abelson is Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT and a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. He is winner of several teaching awards, including the IEEE's Booth Education Award, cited for his contributions to the teaching of undergraduate computer science. Abelson's research at the MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory focuses on 'amorphous computing', an effort to create programming technologies that can harness the power of the new computing substrates emerging from advances in microfabrication and molecular biology. He is also engaged in the interaction of law, policy, and technology as they relate to societal tensions sparked by the growth of the Internet, and he is active in projects at MIT and elsewhere to help bolster our intellectual commons.

THE CONFERENCE TRACKS -- Teaching and Learning Track -- In the Teaching and Learning Track, instructors and all those interested in exploring new pedagogies can share innovative examples and discuss their use of technology (regardless of the scale of their Sakai implementation). Presentations that highlight best practices tied into current Sakai functionality (i.e., using a variety of different tools), and presentations that focus on alternative approaches to engage students while delivering on educational objectives, are welcome.

Technology Track -- Targeted at programmers, developers, and system administrators, this track covers the technical aspects of Sakai. It will focus on topics such as Java technologies (Spring / RSF / Portlets), programming best practices, and server technologies like Tomcat.

User Experience Track -- 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. It will cover topics related to user interface design and usability, accessibility, user support, and more.

Researcher's Track -- The Researchers' track highlights the use of Sakai to facilitate collaboration in the research community. Presentations will include best practices for facilitating research activities with Sakai, as well as results from a range of recent research on the use of Sakai in research settings.

Implementation Track -- The intended audience for this track is administrators, Information Technology management, and the like, who are interested in implementing Sakai in their organization. Sessions will include opportunities for sharing implementation experiences.

ONLINE HOTEL RESERVATIONS -- The Movenpick Hotel online reservation system has been fixed. To make a reservation, please use the special Sakai Conference Movenpick reservations form:

[https://www.trustinternational.com/mBooker/moevenpick/2B?
LANGUAGE=en&i=sakaiconference&property=TXL-MK-HKAMSHH](https://www.trustinternational.com/mBooker/moevenpick/2B?LANGUAGE=en&i=sakaiconference&property=TXL-MK-HKAMSHH)

Note that if you will be making reservations that include a night that is outside of the June 8 to June 17 room block, you should fax your reservation or call your reservation in directly to the hotel. If you use the online reservations system and ask for a room outside that date, it may incorrectly tell you that the block is full, or that the room rate is not available for that night.

If you are trying to make reservations within the Sakai dates of June 8 to June 17 and still receive messages that the room block is full, please contact Mary Miles at mmiles@umich.edu immediately so she can help to resolve any problems.

AIRLINE DISCOUNT -- Northwest and Continental Airlines have offered Sakai a zone discount program for the Amsterdam conference. This discount will be effective June 2 through June 24, 2007. To take advantage of this program, you must follow these steps:

- Contact Conlin Travel at 1-800-783-9559 and identify yourself as being with the Sakai Conference.

- Ask the travel representative for the zone discount program available through Northwest Airlines and Continental.

Please be aware that a \$37 charge is applicable to each ticket, but the savings should more than offset that charge. Discounts will vary depending on the part of the world you are flying from.

4. Sakai Requirements Group Call for Submissions

The Sakai Requirements Working Group (REQ-WG) extends an invitation to you to submit new ideas, improvement suggestions, and requests for features in Sakai. As Sakai continues to grow and evolve, new things become possible that may have been difficult before. As you use Sakai to aid teaching and learning in your organization, you might have ideas for improvements. Maybe an existing tool would better meet your needs if it did one thing differently. Possibly a whole new tool is needed. Perhaps you have different integration requirements or need new web service, etc. It doesn't have to be about tools. These are the things we want to hear about. If you have something that you think is bug, you should submit it as a bug using Jira.

Your input will lead to review of Sakai requirements. The Requirements WG conducted a review last year and of the top 25 suggestions from the last round, 12 were implemented in the 2.3 or 2.4 releases of Sakai. The community has also made some significant progress on some global issues identified in the last review.

* Call for Submissions *

The Sakai Requirements Working Group (REQ-WG) extends an invitation to you to submit new ideas, improvement suggestions, and requests for features in Sakai. As Sakai continues to grow and evolve, new things become possible that may have been difficult before. As you use Sakai to aid teaching and learning in your organization, you might have ideas for improvements. Maybe an existing tool would better meet your needs if it did one thing differently. Possibly a whole new tool is needed. Perhaps you have different integration requirements or need new web service, etc. It doesn't have to be about tools. These are the things we want to hear about. If you have something that you think is bug, you should submit it as a bug using Jira.

Your input will lead to review of Sakai requirements. The Requirements WG conducted a review last year and of the top 25 suggestions from the last round, 12 were implemented in the 2.3 or 2.4 releases of Sakai. The community has also made some significant progress on some global issues identified in the last review.

* How to Submit a Request *

1. Make sure you have a Jira/Confluence account. If not, please contact: jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org
2. Give some thought to what it is you'd like
3. Submit it using the form at:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/jira/secure/CreateIssue!default.jspa>

More information and examples of submissions can be found at:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/M5o>

* Suggestions *

Your input will be reviewed by the Sakai REQ-WG Review Team and eventually included in a community prioritization exercise. There are some things you can do to help that process. These will also make it more likely that your suggestions will be implemented.

1. Explain your request clearly and fully.
2. Include examples, use cases, or external references if you have them. If you need design help, mention that.
3. If you have resources (developer, designer, QA) to contribute to this effort, make a note of them.
4. Use the priority field to indicate how important this is to you.

* The Review Process *

This is the second Requirements Review. You can look at the results of the first one at:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/uDg^>

While we are making some changes to improve the process this time, the Review Team will follow essentially the same process as before, see:

<http://issues.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/2Bw>

1. Collect your idea, suggestions, requirements, and feature requests using a Jira form.

2. Review each submission

----1. Categorize the submission

----2. Eliminate duplicates

----3. Clarify it working with the person who submitted it

----4. Flag it as reviewed

3. Prioritize open requests

----1. Qualify requests for prioritization (based on review)

----2. Create a list for voting

----3. Invite the Sakai community to vote on requests

----4. Summarize and communicate the results

----5. Feed results into the Sakai development process

Mark Norton

markjnorton@earthlink.net

5. Press Release - Unicon Assists Georgia Tech Switch to Sakai from WebCT

March 26, 2007 - Unicon, Inc. today announced it has begun working on the initial phases of a multi-stage project for the Georgia Institute of Technology. The project's goal is to migrate the university's students, faculty, and administration from the WebCT Learning Management System to the open Source Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment for Education. After careful analysis of the technology and service provider options, GA Tech selected Unicon, Inc. to plan, manage, and implement key facets of the project which began in December 2006.

"GA Tech extensively analyzed all of their technology options, future growth needs, and budget concerns before finally deciding to switch from their proprietary software system to the open source Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment," said John C. Blakley,

CEO of Unicon, Inc. "We believe they made the right choice as the open source Sakai will give them a much lower total cost of ownership, allow them to own and control their own software enhancements, and also allow them to contribute to and participate in the growing and thriving Sakai community."

Donna C. Llewellyn, Director of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at Georgia Tech, added, "We are very excited about the potential that Sakai represents - for us to be able to use the creative technological talents of Georgia Tech to provide innovative solutions to improve educational and research collaborations. Our partnership with Unicon has allowed us to keep to our very aggressive timeline. We look forward to being active contributing members of the larger Sakai community very soon."

6. Press Release - OpenEAI Software Announces ESB 4.0 Open Source Development Platform/Enterprise Application Integration

March 26, 2007 – The OpenEAI Software Foundation, a non-profit corporation organized to develop and promote open source enterprise application integration, today announced the general availability of the OpenEAI 4.0 Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) Development Platform, Software Utilities, and Sample Enterprise 2.0. Targeted primarily to educational institutions and other enterprises, OpenEAI 4.0 provides an open source architectural framework and development platform that includes a comprehensive set of software APIs, utilities, reference implementations, and other administrative tools designed to enable mission critical data integration between enterprise applications.

The OpenEAI Sample Enterprise 2.0 includes the OpenEAI ESB 4.0 along with a pre-developed set of gateways and open source applications packaged to provide immediate functionality and a ready-made environment for testing, prototyping, and pre-deployment evaluation. Sample Enterprise applications include uPortal, Sakai, CAS (Centralized Authentication Service), and generic ERP systems among others. Both OpenEAI 4.0 and Sample Enterprise 2.0 are available for immediate download from: www.OpenEAI.org. And, there are numerous product demonstrations available for viewing at the site as well.

"Our latest ESB version 4.0 and software represents a new and higher level of functionality, reliability, and usability for allowing organizations and companies to quickly integrate enterprise applications," stated Tod Jackson, President of the OpenEAI Software Foundation. "We're especially thankful to our institutional and commercial partners for contributing their valuable resources and knowledge to keep moving the OpenEAI Project forward and growing the community."

"For open source applications and technology to be truly effective and implemented on a broad scale in higher education, enterprise application integration between mission

critical applications and other systems is an essential requirement," said Jonathan Markow, Chairman of the JA-SIG (Java Architectures Special Interest Group) Board of Directors. "The OpenEAI ESB is based on proven technology and provides the architectural framework, tools, and open source environment needed for higher education to effectively integrate their applications."

About OpenEAI ESB & Development Platform

OpenEAI 4.0 software contains an open source ESB and comprehensive set of runtime management and monitoring scripts and documentation for managing deployed messaging gateways and applications. Complete reference implementations of typical message-aware applications and message gateways as well as critical infrastructure applications such as message routers, message proxies, point-to-point destination polling applications, and testing applications are also maintained and documented by the project.

OpenEAI Reference Implementations Include:

- Enterprise Router
- Enterprise Request Proxy
- JMS Relay Servlet
- Enterprise Sync Logger
- Enterprise Sync Error Logger
- MOA Generation Application
- OpenEAI TestSuite Application

About the OpenEAI Software Foundation

Founded as a membership-based, non-profit corporation in October 2002, the OpenEAI Software Foundation's mission is to build and sustain the OpenEAI Project by providing organizational, legal, and financial support for the OpenEAI project and closely-related endeavors. The foundation was created with the assistance of the University of Illinois and Open Integration Incorporated.

About the OpenEAI Project

The OpenEAI Project is an open-source project dedicated to discovering and documenting the controlling dynamics, principles, and practices of enterprise application integration and to present, implement, and promote those findings to its members and community through the open source licensing of its software. The Project is comprised of six distinct, but closely-related departments, which address OpenEAI Methodology, Application Foundation APIs, Message Object API, Message Definitions, Reference Implementations, and Deployment and Administration which together form the foundation of the OpenEAI ESB. The development, availability, and evolution of open source Enterprise Application Integration software is important to IT managers at enterprise corporations and especially within the higher education community and

healthcare industry. More information about the OpenEAI Project software, documentation, and licensing information is available at: www.OpenEAI.org.

7. Job Opening at UC Merced - Web Interface Developer

UC Merced is looking for a great interface design/developer who can work on Sakai, uPortal and other web apps.

If interested please go to <http://jobs.ucmerced.edu/n/staff/position.jsf?positionId=874> and apply.

Faust Gorham
fgorham@ucmerced.edu
Chief Information Technology Architect & Web Services Manager
Information Technology
UC Merced
Cell: 209.658.7149

8. 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, 2007
Denver, Colorado
<http://www.ja-sig.org/conferences/07summer/index.html>

Defining the Scientific Evolution of Technology Enhanced Learning: The
Kaleidoscope 2007 Symposium

Hotel Intercontinental, Berlin

November 26 - 27, 2007

Berlin, Germany

<http://www.noe-kaleidoscope.org/group/symposium/>

1st International Conference ONLINE EDUCA MOSCOW 2007

September 30 - October 3, 2007

President Hotel

Moscow, Russia

http://www.online-educa-moscow.com/index_eng.php