



Sakai Newsletter

May 3, 2007

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1. Announcing the Sakai Community LinkedIn Group

I am sure that many of us on occasion receive a request from a member of the Sakai community to "Link in" to the popular Linked In social and professional network (<http://www.linkedin.com/>). A member of the community suggested that the Foundation consider creating a Sakai Linked In Group, a new option available in Linked In.

The LinkedIn Sakai Community Group has been activated and those members of the community with a LinkedIn account (and those yet to link in) are encouraged to consider joining the Sakai Community group. Those who join will find it easier, I am told, to network with other group members. Not least, your profile is tagged with the Sakai logo, useful for promoting both oneself and the community.

ALREADY A MEMBER:

Assuming this newsletter reached you at the email address associated with your LinkedIn account, click on the link below:

<http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/3122/57B9773F824A>

If not, send me the email address that is associated with your account along with the name you use with LinkedIn to arwhyte@umich.edu and I'll get you set up.

NEVER HEARD OF LINKEDIN

Check it out at <http://www.linkedin.com/>

If you decide to create an account, dig up this email and click on the link above.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Your request will be routed to a pending list where you will relax in a queue until processed by yours truly in between my other responsibilities. :) So patience is requested.

If there are any LinkedIn aficionados in the Community who are interested in helping me manage the group, which entails little work beyond processing requests to join, please contact me. I could use the help.

I hope Sakai Community LinkedIn members find the group useful,

Cheers,

Anthony

Disclaimer: This is a purely voluntary association of Sakai professionals and you are under no obligation to join.

2. Sakai Now in Production at Stockholm University

Stockholm University on 2 May launched Mondo (<http://mondo.su.se>), an enterprise learning and collaboration environment aimed at teachers, learners and researchers. The launch has been preceded by a two-year pilot of Sakai at Stockholm University which will be phased out by the end of the year. Mondo is based on Sakai 2.3.1 and has been localised in a number of different areas, including:

- Shibboleth identity management
- stand-alone authentication and token management for WebDAV access
- an implementation of Sakai's Course Management Service using LDAP and local SIS data
- Internationalisation of most bundled Sakai tools and help documents
- localisation of the Sakai Help Tool, now pulls content from Jive Knowledge Base

Sakai is now in full production mode at Stockholm University. A minor update to Mondo (Release 2) improving functionality, performance and skinning, will be available 15 June. Technical details about the Stockholm University deployment will be updated shortly at: <http://issues.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/PROD-31>

For more information about Sakai at Stockholm University, please contact Per Wising (per.wising@it.su.se).

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3. Interview with Stephen Marquard: VULA Means "Open"

This interview was published on the Checkpoint eLearning website.

Open Source and informal use of eLearning are buzzwords in the eLearning world. Stephen Marquard, Learning Technologies Coordinator at the University of Cape Town (UCT) will give us a lesson from practice, speaking about UCT's use of the open source environment Sakai under the aspect of informal eLearning.



-- What is your definition of "informal student use"?

Stephen Marquard: We are exploring how students use online environments outside or beyond the direct requirements of the courses they are taking. So by "informal use", we are referring to optional online activity that students are pursuing on their own initiative, for their own goals. This would be the online equivalent of students chatting in the "hang out" spaces on campus or having an ad-hoc meeting about a shared activity. We've seen examples of informal use both directly related to the formal curriculum and independent of it, for example to support student societies or other social pursuits.

-- The Centre for Educational Technology (CET) at UCT introduced Sakai to the campus community in February 2005 under the local name of VULA. What does it imply?

Stephen Marquard: Vula means "open!" in several South African languages. It has associations of opening doors, providing access, unlocking possibilities, and providing an empowering space.

-- What experiences have you had so far?

Stephen Marquard: Vula has been very popular, and we've seen dramatic growth in usage. At present, around 65% of UCT students are using Vula for one or more courses or other activities. Students and staff appreciate how easy it is to get going and create new sites. Around 35% of all sites are non-course sites (some of which fall into the category of "informal use" explored in the presentation), which shows that Vula is meeting previously unmet needs for easy-to-use online collaboration tools.

-- What implications for the design of eLearning systems do you see?

Stephen Marquard: The age of course-centric "learning management systems" and "course management systems" has passed. While the formal course structure in universities will be with us for some time to come, collaboration and learning environments need to support learning processes and social interaction across and beyond courses.

-- Why did you implement Sakai in the first place and how would you describe your experience so far?

Stephen Marquard: UCT took a strategic decision to move to an open source learning environment in 2004, migrating from a proprietary system (WebCT) and a home-grown system (connect). The open source model offers the advantages of flexibility (to adapt the software to local requirements or extend it to meet teaching and learning needs) and avoids the risks of vendor lock-in or escalating license costs. We were attracted to Sakai by the size and expertise of the community around it.

So far, our experiences have been positive. We have learnt a lot about how software evolves in open source communities and how to work with a global community to meet

local needs. Running enterprise open source applications is a different type of adventure to using proprietary systems, with a different set of risks and rewards. So far, the rewards have far outweighed the risks, and we look forward to exciting times ahead.

The text of this article can be found here: <http://www.checkpoint-elearning.com/article/3932.html>

4. 13th Online Educa Conference in Berlin

The 13th Online Educa will take place from November 28 to 30 at Berlin's Hotel InterContinental. Conference delegates are high-level decision makers from education, business and government, as well as educational practitioners, e-learning developers and researchers from many different disciplines with an interest in technology-supported learning and training. Online Educa Berlin is the world's largest international conference on technology supported learning and training. Last year more than 2000 participants from over 90 countries gathered in Berlin.



Proposals for Online Educa Berlin can be submitted regarding the following themes:

- E-Learning in the Corporate and Company Context
- Learning Futures' in Higher Education Classroom Learning and ICT
- Public and Professional E-Learning
- Lifelong and Informal Learning Designing, Teaching and Learning with Digital Media and Tools
- Games and Simulations in Support of Learning M-Learning: Learning in the Hands of the Learner
- Web 2.0 linked to Education 2.0
- Video in Support of Online Learning Quality and E-Learning
- Assessment and Evaluation Online Learning, Equality and Accessibility
- The Application of Research Outcomes in the TEL Field
- E-Learning Policy and Practice

The conference is accompanied by an exhibition with free entry for conference participants and visitors. It will represent international e-learning developers, producers and service providers.

More information about Online Educa Berlin can be found at:

www.online-educa.com

5. Unicon Webinar: Sakai Guided Tour -- *Friday, May 4*

Sign up now for a space in one of Unicon's Sakai Webinars. Learn more about Sakai, see its functionality and what community source technology can do for your educational institution.

The Webinar will be conducted both online and over the phone, to allow you the best opportunity to ask questions and explore the technology thoroughly. Once you sign up for the Webinar, you will be sent a direct URL for the session. To register, go to:
http://www.unicon.net/press_room_551.html

6. Sakai Amsterdam Conference Information



REMEMBER TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE -- Even if you are not staying at the hotel, please register. Go to sakaiproject.org and follow the link under the Amsterdam Conference.

DRAFT CONFERENCE SCHEDULE See the current schedule at:
<http://sakaiproject.org/conference/schedule>

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>

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.

7. Job Opening at Georgia Tech: Senior Software Engineer

Job Title: Senior Software Engineer

Description: Georgia Tech is looking for an experienced J2EE developer to be a leading force in the development of online collaboration tools for teaching and research. The majority of this work will be in concert with an open source community, Sakai, which brings together instructional technologists drawn from the best talent at over 120 institutions across the globe, and Georgia Tech is drawing together a focused team to drive the leading edge of this broader effort.

Responsibilities and duties will include:

- Technical leadership for full development cycles, under the general supervision of the Director of Educational Technology and in cohort with other software developers.

- Collaboration with users, Instructional Designers, Project Managers, and Educational Technologists across Georgia Tech and the Sakai project to translate requirements into scalable services and useful tools.

- Serve as one of the key representatives to the Sakai consortium, and participate in meetings with a multi-institutional team of software developers to plan requirements for the functionality and usability of Sakai and other community source tools.

Strong communication and interpersonal skills, along with creativity and a self-starter mindset, will be critical for success in this highly collaborative, open source development arena. We are looking for an individual who is passionate about good, useful and usable tools for teaching, learning and research.

Minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Engineering, Information Science, Library Science or related field. Three or more years of significant development experience in an object oriented development environment. Additional experience may be substituted for education. Understanding of Java application frameworks (e.g., Spring, EJB3), Java servlet container or application server environments (e.g., Apache Tomcat, JBoss). Experience with OR/M persistence technology such as Hibernate. Experience with source control management. Demonstrated experience with the Unix operating system and environment and multiple programming languages. Strong analytical and problem solving skills with the ability to evaluate options, develop and recommend solutions. Ability to work independently and creatively within a collaborative, dynamic environment. Excellent oral and written communication skills and interpersonal skills.

Preferred Qualifications: Master's degree in Computer Science, Engineering, Information Science, Library Science or related field. Experience with IT in a higher education environment. Experience with Java build tools such as Maven or Ant. Ability to work in an API environment and experience with SOAP and/or REST. Experience with programming best practices, including design patterns and unit test development. Experience evaluating new technologies and developing functional requirements through use case analysis. Ability to communicate with technical and non-technical individuals, including the ability to prepare project documentation to support training and best practices. Experience contributing to an open source project a strong plus.

Apply online with job #CEW6004 at:
<https://ea.ohr.gatech.edu/displayjobs.asp?Catagory=3&typeofjob=ext>

For questions, please contact Clay Fenlason, clay.fenlason@cetl.gatech.edu

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>

Sakai California Symposium -- "SakaiCAL"

Claremont McKenna College

Monday, 9 July 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Claremont Colleges and the University of California, Santa Barbara

<http://web.cgu.edu/sakaisymposium/>

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

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/>

Online Educa Berlin

Hotel Intercontinental, Berlin

November 28 - 30, 2007

Berlin, Germany

<http://www.online-educa.com/>