

# Sakai Newsletter

May 31, 2007

- 1. Sakai 2.4.0 Released
- 2. Submit Your User Support Questions to be Answered in Amsterdam
- 3. Amsterdam U-Camp Attendance
- 4. rSmart, IBM, Stoas to Host Amsterdam Tech Demos and Poster Reception
- 5. Amsterdam Conference Updates
- ---- Number of Registrants: Over 330 so far!
- ---- Make Your Arrangements Soon
- ---- Volunteers Needed
- ---- Recording the Sessions
- ---- Spam Alert: "Sakai Conference Travel Grant"
- ---- OSP Post-Conference Meeting
- ---- Amsterdam Travel and Tourism Information
- 6. Volunteers Needed for Accessibility Heuristic Evaluations
- 7. Mneme Test Center 0.5 Now Available
- 8. Indiana U. Deploying Oncourse 2.4.0
- 9. More New Sakai Pilots
- 10. This Week's Sakai Polling Question
- 11. Unicon Announces Support for Sakai 2.4
- 12. President of San Joaquin Delta College Explains Switch to Open Source
- 13. rSmart Works to Connect Sakai With Global Open Source Community
- 14. Open Learning Partnership Selects rSmart to Implement and Support Sakai
- 15. Article on www.cantonrep.com -- Sakai in High School
- 16. Events

1 Margaret Wagner 31 May 2007

## 1. Sakai 2.4.0 Released

May 22, 2007 -- The Sakai Foundation and community are pleased to announce the release of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment, version 2.4.0.

For more information about Sakai and to download the 2.4.0 release, please visit: http://www.sakaiproject.org/release

Direct URLs to the release files are available below.

Sakai 2.4.0 represents over six months of work by a large distributed group of designers, developers, quality assurers and other contributors. The interval between Sakai 2.3.0 and 2.4.0 saw nearly 13,000 code changes committed to the svn repository, as we passed both the 20,000 and 30,000 revision milestones and the 10,000th JIRA issue.

Highlights of the 2.4.0 release include:

- -- Three provisional tools promoted to core status: Messages, Forums (as two separate tools) and Post'em
- -- Four new provisional tools: Mailtool, Page Order Helper (in Site Info), Polls and User Membership
- -- A significantly extended Course Management Service
- -- A replacement Chat tool, which largely preserves the existing user interface, but improves performance and features
- -- New features in many existing tools, including Announcements, Calendar Summary, Gradebook, Resources, Roster, Search, Section Info, Site Info, Syllabus, Tests & Quizzes, Wiki and the OSP ePortfolio tools.
- -- Complete localization of all core tools, improved support for UI localization, updates to existing translations (Catalan, French, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish) and a new Arabic translation
- -- Better database transaction support and improved performance for realm updates
- -- Expanded and updated Help content
- -- 1339 issues resolved in JIRA, of which 82% were verified by the QA team, and 364 enhancements.

A set of new features originally planned for Assignments in Sakai 2.4.0 has been withheld for a future release. Testing during the QA phase exposed a set of issues related to integration with the Gradebook, which could not be resolved within the time frame of the 2.4.0 release.

Our thanks to everyone who has contributed in large or small ways to Sakai 2.4.0 -- Sakai represents your energy, vision, enthusiasm and commitment. For turning community effort into releasable software, particular thanks to Lance Speelmon and Andrew Poland for release management, Megan May for tireless QA direction, and the QA group and server admins for patiently working through 17 release tags over the last 3 months.

#### Release files:

## \* Windows:

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-demo\_2-4-0.zip (170M) MD5 (sakai-demo 2-4-0.zip) = 9c6123cc157c3b6e2c51893cef548085

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-bin\_2-4-0.zip (163M) MD5 (sakai-bin 2-4-0.zip) = 538b854781cd26475aea1de1de9d8722

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-src\_2-4-0.zip (34M) 1fb6da51e22dd918cf4bb691d6c370c6 sakai-src 2-4-0.zip

#### \* Max/\*nix:

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-demo\_2-4-0.tar.gz MD5 (sakai-demo\_2-4-0.tar.gz) = b562234d856b162343895ac253f657a6

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-bin\_2-4-0.tar.gz MD5 (sakai-bin\_2-4-0.tar.gz) = 4e0a5de9d6f8d81e1690af8d7a05ded7

http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.4.0/sakai\_2-4-0/sakai-src\_2-4-0.tar.gz 253a473b35fb6fa26405a8505293b7e3 sakai-src\_2-4-0.tar.gz

Stephen Marquard stephen.marquard@uct.ac.za Learning Technologies Co-ordinator Centre for Educational Technology University of Cape Town

3 Margaret Wagner 31 May 2007

# 2. Submit Your User Support Questions to be Answered in Amsterdam

In preparation for the "Real-time Sakai Support" -- aka "Stump the Chumps" -- session to be held on Wednesday, June 13 at 4:00pm in Amsterdam, the presentation team is soliciting support questions from the community. From the session description: "Sakai Support professionals from the University of Michigan and Indiana University (and perhaps other institutions) will walk through complex support scenarios and take questions from the audience to be addressed in real time. If you have been wondering how to use a feature or how to achieve a particular effect, now is your chance to ask. This session will impart both specific practical information about support issues as well as familiarize attendees with some of Sakai's Admin tools."

Note that questions should be support and/or end-user related items, not deep technical questions. Questions deemed out of bounds will be dodged, er, that is, waived by the moderator. Questions may be sent to Sean DeMonner (demonner@umich.edu). Selected questions will be added to the presentation agenda, with associated fame and glory accorded to the asker.

Sean DeMonner demonner@umich.edu

# 3. Amsterdam U-Camp Attendance

It would be great to see a wide range of people at the U-Camp at Amsterdam, both in terms of skills and geographic representation. Currently, we have 22 people who have indicated that they are attending, but only 6 from outside Northern America, and we would particularly like to see more Europeans, Dutch, South Africans, Australians etc., so that we can enrich the whole experience! If you are coming it would be a great help to add your name to the Attending U-Camp Roster page, at <a href="http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/OXU">http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/OXU</a>

Tim Archer, Chief U-Camp Herder TArcher@csu.edu.au Testing Coordinator Enterprise Information Management Systems Charles Sturt University

# 4. rSmart, IBM and Stoas to Host This Year's Technical Demonstrations and Poster Reception at Sakai Amsterdam

Come join The rSmart Group, IBM and Stoas at this year's Technical Demonstration and Posters Reception at the Sakai Amsterdam Conference on Wednesday, June 13 from

6:30pm to 8:30pm. As always this will be a great forum for seeing what innovations the community has created around Sakai. Also look for this year's edition of the rSmart/IBM t-shirt. Sure to be a crowd-pleaser again.

Mike Zackrison Mike.Zackrison@rsmart.com VP of Marketing and Strategy The rSmart Group, Inc.

# 5. Amsterdam Conference Updates

NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS: OVER 330 SO FAR! -- The number of overall registrants for the Amsterdam conference reached 332 Thursday afternoon. More will no doubt register in the coming week and at the conference itself. It looks like we will have a very well-attended gathering of the Sakai Community for this first European venue.

MAKE YOUR ARRANGEMENTS SOON -- If you haven't made all your arrangements, do so soon. The conference hotel will continue to honor the conference room rates as long as rooms are available.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED-- We are looking for volunteers to help with convening sessions and helping the Sakai staff throughout the conference. Go to https://sakaiproject.org/conference/volunteer.php to sign up. You need to be registered for the conference to volunteer.

RECORDING THE SESSIONS -- We have been making arrangements for recording the sessions, so look for daily posts of the proceedings during the conference.

## SPAM ALERT -- "Sakai Conference Travel Grant"

A spam email message was recently posted to various groups, offering travel grants for the June Amsterdam conference. Sakai is not responsible for posting this message and we regret that we are unable to offer such support.

Our IT Security Services group at the University of Michigan has told us, "Almost certainly it's an 'advance fee' scam-- the scammer will send an 'accidentally' inflated expense check to the victim and ask the victim to wire back the difference. The check is forged -- many banks will credit an account immediately on deposit, but will subtract it when they discover the check is a forgery (weeks later, long after the victim has already wired money to the scammer)."

If you have questions regarding this issue, do not use the email address provided in the spam email. Please contact Mary Miles at mmiles@sakaifoundation.org.

OSP POST-CONFERENCE MEETING -- This daylong meeting is being hosted by Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Date: June 15 2007Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm

- Location: Universiteit van Amsterdam, Herengracht 182, room 007

- Features: Wireless (and probably wired also) Beamer, Whiteboard, Flipover and lunch

POSTER TEMPLATE IS READY -- To access the poster template, go to: http://sakaiproject.org/conference/amsterdam/sakai poster templateAmsterdam07.ppt

AMSTERDAM TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFO -- For Amsterdam information, including maps, alternative hotels and all kinds of useful information on June in Amsterdam, see the wiki page on confluence in the Amsterdam conference space. The direct link is:

http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/CONF07/Visiting+Amsterdam

See you in Amsterdam!

# 6. Volunteers Needed for Accessibility Heuristic Evaluations

As you have probably heard, the Fluid project is working on a series of heuristic evaluations of uPortal, Sakai, and Moodle. We're looking for volunteers who are interested in helping out with the accessibility side of these evaluations. This includes helping to define the accessibility protocols, mentoring others on accessibility practices, and helping to actually review the software applications.

Heuristic evaluations are an easy and low-cost way to assess the user interface of an application, identifying usability and accessibility problems based on recognized principles or heuristics.

You can find out more about heuristic evaluations in the Fluid wiki: http://tinyurl.com/2by6c2

We've got a great group of accessibility experts -- coordinated by Mike Elledge at Michigan State University -- who can help with training and advice if you're interested in getting involved but need a bit of guidance in the process.

Please let me know if you're interested in helping out.

Colin Clark colin.clark@utoronto.ca Technical Lead, Fluid Project http://fluidproject.org

## 7. Mneme - Test Center 0.5 Now Available

Mneme - Test Center / Delivery 0.5 is now available for use with a patched Sakai 2.3 and possibly 2.4 (not tested). The interim Mneme 0.5 version consists of ONLY the "delivery" module, which allows adopters to administer tests in Test Center; authoring and grading happens in Tests & Quizzes. Upon installing and configuring Mneme, students see TC and instructors T&Q.

#### DOWNLOAD & INSTALLATION GUIDES

To download, build, and set up Mneme 0.5 in your sites, see: http://etudesproject.org/mneme/releases/

The above URL includes information on manual or automatic setup, user guides, etc.

## MNEME 0.5 & T&Q DATABASE

Mneme / Delivery 0.5 uses the T&Q database and T&Q's authoring/grading modules. We \*strongly\* recommend that you add and pilot Mneme in a handful of sites ONLY first to see how your T&Q database handles it. While it is possible that Mneme 0.5 will work very well with your particular T&Q database and version of T&Q, you might find that you need to wait for Mneme - Test Center 1.0, which is not dependent on T&Q's database.

Please review the following information prior to putting Mneme 0.5 in production: http://etudesproject.org/mneme/releases/mneme samigodb 0.5.html

#### ABOUT MNEME - TEST CENTER

Mneme - Test Center is a new testing system for Sakai, currently under development. The first generation of Mneme 1.0 is tentatively scheduled to be released in December 2007.

For more information on the rest of the modules, see: http://etudesproject.org/mneme/

#### **OUESTIONS?**

For questions, assistance, or to report issues, please contact the project leads directly, Glenn Golden (ggolden@umich.edu) or Vivie Sinou, or post a message on sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.org.

Vivie Sinou SinouVivie@foothill.edu

# 8. Indiana U. Deploying Oncourse 2.4.0

Indiana University is pleased to announce that we will be deploying Oncourse 2.4.0 into production Saturday, June 2, 2007. This release builds on the solid foundation that Sakai 2.4.0 has created and includes some significant additional functionality that will ultimately be included in Sakai 2.5.0 later this year. These new features include:

#### Gradebook:

- 1) Categorize items; categories can be weighted.
- 2) New percentage grading scale.
- 3) Complete spreadsheet roundtrip export/import; allows instructor to fully utilize Excel as a grade book.
- 4) Instructors can view an individual student's grade report; instructor can peer into the student's view of the grade book.
- 5) Running course grade is accurate throughout the semester; i.e., null grades are not counted as zeros.
- 6) Finalize course grades; an activity invoked near the end of the grading period which converts all null items into zeros.
- 7) Enhanced user interface; e.g. the grade roster screen now has sophisticated "web 2.0" contextual scrolling which keeps the assignment name and the student name always in view.
- 8) See: http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/EpU

#### Portal:

- 1) Greatly enhanced replacement for the "More" drop-down in the site tab navigation. This new method presents course sites categorized and sorted by term, portfolio sites, project sites, and other sites.
- 2) New integrated web search that allows searching of external search engines (e.g., Google, ChaCha, etc.).
- 3) Both of these new features include dynamic animations that provides a more compelling user experience.
- 4) To view these new features in action, download the following screencast and seek to 3:15min: http://tinyurl.com/2b5fs5

Indiana University's deployment of Sakai, Oncourse, has been in production since mid 2005 and supports 9,000 active course sites per semester with some 100,000 users. The release of Oncourse 2.4.0 represents what is perhaps the most significant release ever for our local user community. We take great pride in this project and want to recognize the substantial efforts from across the Sakai community in helping us achieve our goals.

Lance Speelmon lance@indiana.edu

#### 9. More New Sakai Pilots

Two new Sakai pilots:

## Spain

- CETEMMSA Technological Center
- Contact: Josep Rubio jrubio@cetemmsa.es
- We are deploying Sakai in our learning center. We are a textile technological center. in addition, we are in contact with a middle school in our city; they are interesting to use our Sakai infrastructure for their courses."

#### Mexico

- UDG Virtual, Universidad de Guadalajara
- http://investigacion.udgvirtual.udg.mx:8080/portal
- Contact: Rafael Morales morales@udgvirtual.udg.mx
- "Sakai is been used in conjunction with our home-grown LMS, called MetaCampus, to support a project-based course. Basically, all course management is carried out in MetaCampus, while Sakai is used to hold the sites of the student's projects, plus some research staff's project sites."

# Other recently-announced pilots:

#### Russia

- Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- http://dl.smolny.nw.ru/portal
- Contact: Philip Fedchin, philip@smolny.org and Vitaly Khudobakhshov, vitaly@smolny.org
- "Smolny College is a joint venture of St. Petersburg State and Bard College (New York)."

#### **Brazil**

- Molegue de Idéias Educação e Tecnologia Ltda
- http://sakai.molegue.com.br
- Contact: Nilton Lessa, nlessa@moleque.com.br
- "We are a k12 institution in Brazil, Niterói- Rio de Janeiro. and we are beginning to use SAKAI in a pilot program with some of our classes. We are beginning to work also in a Portuguese-Brazilian localization."

#### Turkey

- Sabanci Universitesi
- https://sukaipilot.sabanciuniv.edu/portal
- Contact: Onur Sirin, onursirin@sabanciuniv.edu

Georgia, U.S.A.

- Georgia Tech
- http://t-square.gatech.edu
- Contact: Clay Fenlason, clayf@cetl.gatech.edu
- "This week Georgia Tech officially got its Sakai pilot out the door with the 2.3.x maintenance branch, Banner integration, and a custom tool or three."

#### NITLE

- National Institute for Technology and liberal Education (NITLE)
- http://www.nitle.org/index.php/nitle/opportunities/services/the\_sakai\_pilot\_project
- Contact: Eric Harper, eric.harper@nitle.org

# 10. This Week's Sakai Polling Question

Which three areas of Sakai do think are the most important for your implementation?

This poll will be open from now until 6:00 EDT gmt -4, June 4, 2007

To respond, please access the Polls tool in the "DG: Open Forum" site on Collab. (Note: You need an account on Collab and have to be a member of this site to access the poll. If you need an account, go to Collab's home page and use the New Account tool to self-register for an account; if you are not a member of the site, then use the Membership tool in your MyWorkspace to join the site):

http://collab.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/2e66a685-bcee-40ac-80a1-6d02b 80456f0

Previous poll question and results:

What version of Sakai do plan to be running in production in September 2007?

Sakai 2.1 (n=0) 0% Sakai 2.2 (n=0) 0% Sakai 2.3 (n=26) 24% Sakai 2.4 (n=34) 76%

Please vote!

Peter Knoop <u>knoop@umich.edu</u> Sakai Project Coordinator

# 11. Unicon Announces Commercial Support for Newly-Released Sakai 2.4

Unicon, Inc., has announced commercial support for the new 2.4 release of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment for education. Unicon provides comprehensive consulting, training, and support services for the open source Sakai 2.4 platform. Enhancements done under the Cooperative Support Program are contributed back to the community.

"As a founding Sakai Commercial Affiliate, Unicon congratulates the entire Sakai community on their hard work and dedication to produce another quality release of this important open source project," said John C. Blakley, CEO of Unicon, Inc. "Our cooperative support program is designed to meet the requirements of enterprise institutions that need a commercial vendor with the expertise and resources to assist in their deployment or support needs."

About Unicon's Cooperative Support Program -- Participation in the program requires an annual subscription fee that enables institutions to access the support services and also funds a dedicated support and development team. Support issues are managed on a priority basis with guaranteed service level agreements and an escalation mechanism top priority issues. All development work performed by the team will be done in direct participation with the community source Sakai project. The Cooperative Support Program for Sakai is a strong complement to Unicon's other services for Sakai, which include various bundles comprised of implementation, project planning, installation, configuration, branding, and training components.

Joe Waldvgo joe@topspinpr.com

# 12. The President of San Joaquin Delta Community College Explains Why His College Switched to Open Source, Including Sakai

Raul Rodriguez, President of San Joaquin Delta Community College explains what open source is and why his college has made the switch, in this article titled: "Open Source Software: A New Business Model for Community Colleges." Read the article here: http://www.iccd.cornell.edu/iccd/resources/publications/newsletters/Rodriguez-article-Spring-newsletter.html

Mike Zackrison Mike.Zackrison@rsmart.com

# 13. rSmart Works to Connect Sakai With Global Open Source Community

rSmart recently attended two global open source community events with the aim to broaden the understanding and appeal of Sakai and other educational open source projects. First, rSmart just returned from InfoWorld's Open Source Business Conference (OSBC) as part of the Open Source Elite Showcase where they presented Sakai CLE to attendees from other open source firms, corporate users and venture backers. For more details see:

http://www.infoworld.com/pressreleases/archives/2007/05/infoworlds\_open\_1.html

Earlier in May rSmart was invited to keynote the first Emirates Open Source Lab (EOSL) Forum held at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. They spoke about the trends in the adoption of open source solutions such as Sakai in the education community. For several days after the Forum rSmart, with the help of EOSL, met with numerous colleges, universities, education ministries and government officials about the potential for Sakai in the UAE. Expect greater interest in Sakai from this part of the world. Additionally, EOSL is interested in hosting a Sakai regional conference sometime next year. For more details see: http://www.ameinfo.com/121689.html

Mike Zackrison @rsmart.com

# 14. Open Learning Partnership Selects The rSmart Group to Implement and Support the rSmart Sakai CLE

Open Learning Partnership, a project of eTech Ohio Commission and the Ohio Learning Network, has selected The rSmart Group to implement and support the rSmart Sakai CLE.

Read more here: <a href="http://www.rsmart.com/news/open-learning-partnership-selects-the-rsmart-group-to-implement-and-support-the-rsmart-sakai-cle">http://www.rsmart.com/news/open-learning-partnership-selects-the-rsmart-group-to-implement-and-support-the-rsmart-sakai-cle</a>

Mike Zackrison @rsmart.com

## 15. Article on www.cantonrep.com -- Sakai in High School

"85 Percent of Students in Online School Pass" by Benjamin Duer, Repository Staff Writer

(Sakai is mentioned in the antepenultimate paragraph.)

PERRY TWP., OHIO. Michael Graham was a struggling student until he took an online computer course at Perry High School.

Now he is a star pupil.

"He's awesome," said Jennifer Fischer, Perry's e-learning coordinator. "He's committed."

Electronic learning involves taking courses via computer using the Internet.

By his own admission, Graham, 18, used to "screw around" in high school before enrolling at Perry High.

As a freshman, he got expelled for pulling a fire alarm at McKinley High School in Canton. His sophomore grades were "terrible," he admitted.

Last October, Graham moved here with his family and the picture began to change.

Graham needed extra credits to qualify as a Perry High junior, so he signed up for online courses and quickly fell in love with them.

He spends two hours almost every day in the computer lab doing course work.

"If you get fed up with one (course), you can switch and do another," he said.

Fischer's star pupil is a testimony to Perry's revamped online school.

BETTER GRADE A year ago, Not a single student passed a course at Perry's old digital academy. Zilch.

Looking for improvement, school officials shut down the academy last May. The online program re-emerged under a new format last fall.

Independent lesson plans offered by Tri-Rivers Educational Computer Association (TRECA) were replaced with Florida Virtual - a curriculum program that gives school districts more local control.

Florida Virtual allows local teachers to give input and control everyday instruction of online students.

Also, Fischer was brought into the district to coordinate the revamped online school. She had experience with Florida Virtual, as supervisor at East Canton High School's digital academy.

The result this year has been success: 85 percent of students enrolled in Perry's online school have passed their courses.

Florida Virtual gets a chunk of the credit, school officials say.

Curriculum Director Mike Schreffler said Florida Virtual is "incredibly sound" and has decades of research behind it for support.

Fischer said the program allows her to keep track of students' online progress better because there is more local control. TRECA had its own, "watchdogs," she said.

"This is something our kids want," Schreffler said. Half of Perry's online school population includes honor-roll students, according to Fischer.

Perry's online school now offers three sets of curriculum, Florida Virtual, NovaNet and Learning Springs. NovaNet is meant for class credit recovery. Learning Springs provides online curriculum for students in kindergarten through seventh-grade.

STEERING A PLANE Fischer said in the fall, her online students will participate in a state pilot program. Results of the two-year experiment will determine if the program should be offered statewide.

Through the Stark-Portage Area Computer Consortium Perry is working with eTech Ohio, a state agency dedicated to developing education through technology, on the experiment.

The program tests the effectiveness of a copyright-free computer software called Sakai.

Sakai is an online learning management system. It allows a school district to run its online curriculum and local teachers can upload additional lesson plans for students.

Perry might be joined by Canton Local, Sandy Valley, Alliance, North Canton and Canton City schools as pilot program participants, said Jim Vincent, SPARCC's head of technology integration. Sakai's cost is minimal to free, he said.

Benjamin Duer, Repository Staff Writer benjamin.duer@cantonrep.com

#### 16. Events

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/

15 Margaret Wagner