



Sakai Newsletter

September 20, 2007

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1. From the Executive Director

The Sakai Foundation Board met on September 12th (via phone conference). In addition to the typical business of a board meeting, approving minutes and reviewing finances, there were two significant decisions I'd like to relay to the Sakai community.

First, the User Experience Initiative, which was on hold given the Executive Director transition from Chuck Severance to myself, has been reframed and is moving forward. The goal of the project is to bring new thinking to the Sakai user experience by targeting a frequently-used set of functionality for a significant redesign based on user-centered design principles and practices.

You can read more about it here:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SBCO/UX+Improvement+Project>

Second, the Board has approved moving Sakai to the Educational Community License 2.0. This license is a minor variant of the Apache 2.0 license and carries with it a change to the individual contributor agreements that Sakai asks contributors to sign (the CCLA 1.1). We don't know if we'll be able to get this work done in time for the 2.5 release due in November, but it will certainly be complete by 2.6.

You can find the language of the license and contributor agreement at:
<http://www.osedu.org/licenses/>

I'm off to New York next week, where I will visit Columbia, NYU, Rutgers, Marist College and LaGuardia Community College. I'm sure I'll blog about the trip (sakaiblog.korcuska.net) as well as having an entry for the next newsletter. Until then...

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2. Fluid and Sakai Collaborate on User Experience

To address the usability and accessibility of the Sakai user experience, Sakai has helped to develop and is an integral part of the Fluid Project. The Fluid Project, launched in April 2007, is an open source community dedicated to improving the user experience of participating open and community source projects, which include Sakai, uPortal, Moodle, and Kuali Student.

Fluid builds accessible, rich user interface components that can be reused across web applications. Many Fluid components will enable new approaches to navigation and content management within a portal and learning environment. Fluid also provides design guidance and accessibility support for user interface designers and developers within open source projects, with the goal of building a strong community dedicated to inclusive design.

The Fluid Project is led by the University of Toronto, represented by the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, with core participation from the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Cambridge, the University of British Columbia, York University, University of Michigan, Michigan State, University of Colorado, and Open University UK. Many other universities are contributing resources and expertise. Corporations participating in the project include IBM, Sun Microsystems, the Mozilla Foundation among others. The project is funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

One of the primary goals of the Sakai User Experience Initiative is, as Michael Korcuska puts it, to "interact in a meaningful way" with the work of the Fluid Project. This is a topic that will be discussed, along with many other technical and user experience topics, at the upcoming Fluid Project summit in Toronto next week.

<http://wiki.fluidproject.org/display/fluid/Fall+2007+Fluid+Summit>

For more information about the Fluid Project or to get involved, please visit <http://fluidproject.org>.

Jutta Treviranus
jutta.treviranus@utoronto.ca

3. NYC Sakai Meet-Up!

Please join us for the first NYC Sakai Meet Up!

All are welcome to attend and participate!

There will be a projector, WIFI and snacks!

When:

Tuesday September 25th, 2007 1:PM - ??

Location:

New York University
110 Fifth Ave, 5th floor between 16th and 17th St.

For more information, check out the NYC Regional Site on

<https://collab.sakaiproject.org/>

Nicola Monat-Jacobs
nicola@nyu.edu



4. OSP 2.5 QA Coordination

Hi everyone!

Code freeze was Monday morning. Lynn and I touched base last Friday (September 14) about how to best coordinate the QA for OSP 2.5. Given that the test scripts for 2.5 aren't

yet complete, we're advising the volunteers interested in running through the scripts begin with the system test scripts and 2.4 scripts to begin with.

Testing objectives and a matrix to coordinate testing is located at <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/OSP/2.5+QA+Testing>. Ideally, I'd like to see testers enter in "start" or "completed" and their initials in the cells when they are running through a script. For instance, if I began testing Activity Three on the.001 tag, I'd enter in 'start - MMM.' This will give everyone testing an idea of who is testing what and the testing that is still needed.

To begin testing, we need volunteers to work through the following areas

- System test scripts (activities 1-8)
- Goal Management (there are four different test paths)
- The 2.4 Matrix Authoring Flexibility
- 2.4 UI Rework and Refinement

Let's try to get people assigned to these areas. Some, like the system test scripts, can be completed by groups of individuals that can pass off work once an activity is completed. If you see information in any of these test scripts that is incorrect, please update them as you go through the scripts. I know many of you are new to the process, so please don't be shy about asking questions of this list. We're excited to have your involvement and want to make this as easy as possible. No question is a dumb question!!

Lastly, for those of you participating in QA, please join the WG: Sakai QA email list at collab (<https://collab.sakaiproject.org/portal/>) if you aren't already a member. We'll be posting out changes to expect, when a new builds are being deployed, etc., so it's important to subscribe to this list.

Thanks,

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu

5. Your Participation in Sakai 2.5 QA is needed!

Hi everyone,

The 'official' QA cycle for 2.5 began this week and we still need volunteers to assist!

There are many areas that still need someone to commit to focused testing. This release we'll be focusing on regression testing the entire application rather than verifying specific fixes. As usual there are a few areas where there is a lot of interest (Assignments, Resources, Gradebook) but let's not forget there is a rich set of tools in Sakai that all need testing. To name a few that need "adoption" – Admin tools, MyWorkspace toolset and Tests & Quizzes (a.k.a. Samigo). Your involvement in testing is critical for the success of this release.

As an added incentive, a small number of cute, cuddly Sakaigers will be given to those who contribute greatly to the 2.5 QA effort. If you aren't sure what a Sakaiger is, you can find more information at <http://www.sakaiger.com/> and can view Sakaigers in the wild on flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=sakaiger>.

If you will have any time available, please sign up on the 2.5 Release page at <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/HIEe> or send me an e-mail (mmmay@indiana.edu) with what you could commit to testing. If you aren't sure where to focus your effort, please contact me.

A high level overview about the 2.5 changes are available <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/HYEE>. If you are new to the QA process for Sakai, a good place to begin is with our FAQ at <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/QA/FAQ+QA>.

The current set of test scripts can be found at:
<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/wRs>

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to speak up!

All the best,

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu

6. Sakai 2.5 Status Update

Code Freeze for Sakai 2.5 occurred at 12:01AM U.S. Eastern Daylight Time on September 17. As of that time we already have some 200 enhancements and 786 bug fixes that will be in the first QA tag of 2.5! Release of 2.5 is currently scheduled for Monday, 12 November 2007. A summary of some of the most interesting and important changes expected in 2.5 is included below. (Note, if you are a project lead, and you haven't updated your information in Confluence yet, please do so ASAP!)

For full details on the changes, the following Jira filters are a good place to start:

Sakai 2.5.0 Bug Fixes [Tentative]

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/jira/secure/IssueNavigator.jspx?mode=hide&requestId=11267>

Sakai 2.5.0 Enhancements [Tentative]

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/jira/secure/IssueNavigator.jspx?mode=hide&requestId=11188>

Between now and next week, when the second QA tag (002) is cut, project teams will be removing code associated with features or functionality that they ran out of resources to finish by the code freeze. In addition, they will be shifting their focus to bug fixing, as QA ramps up when 2.5.0.001 is deployed to the QA server network.

We can always use more help with QA, so if you have the time, please volunteer! Contact Megan May (mmmay@indiana.edu), for more details, or follow this link to the QA space in Confluence:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/HIEe>

Summary of 2.5 Plans

SAKAI TOOLS:

Chat Room

-- Ability to delete all chat history for a given room.

Citations Helper

-- Import citations in RIS format from other tools such as RefWorks and Endnote.

-- Sort citation lists by author, title, or date.

-- Search for and embed citations from within the WYSIWYG Editor (similar to Twin Peaks).

Data Warehouse [Provisional]

-- Separated from OSP module to generalize its functionality.

Forums

-- Ability to delete forum messages.

Help

-- Support for help content in multiple languages.

-- Added `sakai.properties` setting to hide help collections.

-- Added tool registration property to register additional help collections.

-- Updates to help content from IU Knowledge Base for 2.5 functionality (as provided by project leads and IU KB team).

Messages

- Ability to bulk Move and Delete Message.
- Ability to forward Messages.

OSP

- Promoted from Provisional to Core status.
- New XSLT portal.
- Aggregated View of Matrix and Portfolios.
- Expanded sharing capabilities for Portfolios.
- Many user interface bug fixes and improvements.
- Group-aware matrices.
- Assignment references within Matrix/Wizards.

Page Order Helper [Provisional]

- The page order tool is taking major steps toward being fully keyboard accessible for the 2.5 release.
- Adding support for page grouping.

Podcasts [Provisional]

- Permissions should be a reflection of permissions in Resources.

Poll

- Minor UI improvements (add rich text editor, date picker widget), better validation.

Reset Password [Provisional]

- Added to the release as a Provisional tool.

Resources

- Students and Instructors can now choose to email each other when they upload to a Dropbox.
- Instructors can now see a visual indication of which folders contain recently updated content.
- Removal of inappropriate options from Dropbox interface (e.g., 'availability and access' settings that appear in Resources tool should not appear in Dropbox and have now been removed).
- Replaced dropdown widget for Add and Action menus with an accessible one.
- Improved performance by rewriting underlying Storage of entities to reduce memory usage and cpu load, and refactoring database to eliminate bottlenecks in the underlying content hosting service.
- Preliminary support for the integration of JSR-170 repositories.

Roster

- New UI with a separate tabular view for profile and official institutional photos.
- Integration with Course Management API to display enrollment status information.

- Expanded permission scheme to retain the Roster's general use purpose while incorporating course-specific features.
- Dramatically improved performance.

Schedule

- iCal subscription export service and import, available by setting `ical.experimental=true` in `sakai.properties` (note that reoccurring events are not yet supported).

Section Info

- Download or print a roster list that provides each student's section memberships.
- Better enforcement of the maximum section size.

Tests & Quizzes (a.k.a. Samigo)

- Promoted from Provisional to Core status.
- Allow ability to move/copy/remove multiple questions to other pools.
- Allow ability to adjust score in edit assessment screen.
- Allow ability to remove published assessments.
- Add event logging for user operations.
- Allow copying of all questions in a part to a selected pool.
- Allow students' responses to be exported to Excel.
- Allow point values of questions to be reset when a random draw from pool part is created; All questions from the pool are copied to the part.

SAKAI SERVICES:

Content Review

- Minor changes in APIs and to integration with Assignments. Not visible except in sites which have a content review implementation (e.g., Turnitin) running.

User Directory Service:

- Improved performance when retrieving provided users.
- Support for login IDs (for Kerberos authentication, for example) which differ from user EIDs.
- Optional short-term authentication caching to greatly improve DAV performance.
- Can now enable or disable User Directory Provider implementations via the `sakai.properties` file.
- Reduced number of required methods in the User Directory Provider interface.

Internationalization:

- Updated Dutch translation.
- New Russian translation.
- Support for localized Help text.

Peter Knoop, Sakai Project Coordinator, knoop@umich.edu

7. Sakai Newport Beach Conference Updates

For more information about each of the following, please go to:

<https://sakai.educonference.com/conference/index.php>

**** Registration is now open ****

**** Schedule change for Newport Beach proposals **** -- The deadline for proposal submissions for the Newport Beach conference has been changed to September 22. They will be reviewed by October 5 and you will be notified shortly thereafter if your proposal has been accepted for presentation at the conference.

**** Pre-conference sessions **** -- The following pre-conference sessions will be offered: Introduction to Sakai, Introduction to OSP, Pedagogy Session, the U-Camp, and the Programmer's Café.

**** Post-conference sessions **** -- Sakai Faculty Training: Cerritos College, in conjunction with the rSmart Group, will be offering two free sessions: The Sakai Faculty Training is designed to guide faculty through the process of configuring and customizing Sakai course sites. The Sakai Administrative Training is designed to guide your institution's Sakai administrators through the process of configuring and customizing Sakai.

**** New track names **** -- The tracks have been renamed: Using Sakai, Deploying Sakai, Building Sakai, Multiple Audiences, and Showcasing Sakai. If you submitted under the old track names, not to worry as the track leads will place in the appropriate track -- you don't need to re-submit.

Mary Miles
mmiles@umich.edu

8. The JA-SIG Winter 2007 Unconference is Coming!

WHO? WHAT? WHERE?

-- Dates: November 12-13, 2007; (November 14-16, 2007 -- optional post-conference activities)

-- Place: New Brunswick, New Jersey (Home of Rutgers University)

-- Details: Info about fees, lodging, meals, etc., will be coming very soon. Costs will be low, as making this an affordable event with low barriers to participation is a key focus.

WHAT'S AN UNCONFERENCE?

"An unconference is a conference where the content of the sessions is driven and created by the participants, generally day-by-day during the course of the event, rather than by a single organizer, or small group of organizers, in advance." -- Wikipedia

JA-SIG has always been about people coming together to share and learn in an open environment, and this is what an "unconference" is all about. As demonstrated by the success of the Summer 2007 Conference mini "BarCamp" (another spontaneous approach), the unconference format fits very well with our community values and goals.

The November event will provide both spontaneous and planned opportunities to collaborate on all JA-SIG community initiatives and topics. (There will not be a separate Winter Conference or a Fall uPortal Developer Meeting.)

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ?!

It's up to you! Ideas people are talking about so far include the following:

- Lightning Talks - Volunteers talk for up to 10 minutes. Any topic goes.
- Code Clinics - Bring your uPortal, portlet, or CAS code or problem and work on it with core developers.
- Screencast Factory - Show off your work while a facilitator captures it to share with the community.
- UCamp - Fluid Project members will lead a workshop and collaborations about user experience design and accessibility.
- Strategic Planning - What should JA-SIG be focused on next year? In three years? Join the conversation.
- How-to's. How-not-to's. Tips and techniques.

As part of the unconference format, the final schedule will be determined in real-time, interactively with the attendees. So come prepared to participate.

You can view a list of potential activities on the wiki at:

<http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/Winter+2007+UnConference+Activity+Ideas>

OK, I'M INTERESTED! WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If you're hoping to join us, please do the following two things for now:

- Register yourself at: <http://opensource.meetup.com/74/calendar/6047091/> RSVP there whether you are a "Yes" or a "Maybe."

- Visit the Unconference Planning Site on the JA-SIG wiki:
<http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/Winter+2007+UnConference+Participants>

- This is a great place to indicate your interests---what you'd like to discuss, learn, share or teach.

- If you'd like to participate in planning or logistics, join our mailing list:
<http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JSG/winter-07-unconference>

Best regards, and we hope to see you at the Unconference,

The Winter 2007 Unconference Committee

9. Invite to AuSakai 07

The Australian National University / Charles Sturt University are pleased to announce AuSakai 07 in November in Canberra. AuSakai 07 is open to all universities who are using or considering using Sakai. There will be no charge to attend AuSakai 07. This is an information exchange in the spirit of open source, rather than a "sit and listen" conference. Please suggest a session (40 to 60 minutes) which you would be able to facilitate, lead or take part in. Group sessions will include:



-- "Sakai at. {insert name of your uni!}," where each participating university will have an opportunity to provide a short snapshot of their situation regarding Sakai.

-- "Tool roundups" aim to highlight the uses, cool features and watch points for tools which you are using – you don't need to have expert knowledge of the

tool to present. Several universities may present an aspect of the same tool.

-- "Squash a bug" – roundtable discussions on how to find solutions getting responses from dev lists and build our Australian Sakai expertise and networks.

When: Monday 5 & Tuesday 6 November 2007

Location: The Australian National University, Canberra (includes: Tuesday 6 November 3pm, Melbourne Cup drinks and race)

For further details, a 'draft list' of sessions, and to register online, visit:
<http://ausakai.anu.edu.au>

Regards,

Candida Spence
Division of Information
The Australian National University
RG Menzies [Bldg 2], Canberra ACT 0200
Telephone: 02 6125 4965 Fax: 02 6125 3215

10. Call for Papers for the eLearning Africa 2008 Conference Programme is Open

Please send us your proposal (which can be for a session, presentation, workshop, or discussion) by December 7, 2008, using the online submission form submission at www.elearning-africa.com.

The conference will take place at the Accra International Conference Centre Accra, Ghana on May 28 – 30, 2008.

Themes of eLearning Africa 2008 are:

- Unleashing the Capabilities of Universities Through Information and Communication Technologies
- Corporate eLearning in Africa and Beyond
- Introducing eLearning into the School System
- Designing and Delivering eLearning
- Building the Infrastructure for Education in the 21st Century
- Open Source and Open Content
- eLearning in Medical Education and the Fight Against HIV and AIDS
- Advanced Technology Developments
- eLearning Supported by Development Partners
- Empowering Women Through ICT and eLearning
- Improving the Quality and Outreach of Technical and Vocational Education
- Libraries as Access Providers to Resources and Expertise
- Quality Development and Quality Assurance



- Achieving Inclusivity Through eLearning
 - eLearning for the Public Sector
 - Policy Issues and Large-Scale Take-Up of eLearning
-

11. JISC Videos Showcase Virtual Research Environments

Now that research teams are often scattered across many miles and even continents, and collaboration in research has become more important than ever, the life of a researcher is anything but straightforward.

JISC has released two videos which explain how projects from the first phase of its Virtual Research Environments (VRE) programme are bringing researchers together through VREs to tackle complex research questions in a wide range of subject areas.

Projects highlighted in the videos show how researchers in the material sciences, for example, have been able to share results in real time with other remote teams of specialists; how dancers have been performing in remote environments; how groups of historians have been 'meeting' remotely and collaborating across more than a dozen institutions, and so on.

The two films focus on slightly different perspectives: the first on 'Research Needs' explores those projects which identified a research need and set about finding a way to meet this, while the second, called 'Technical Solutions', explores those projects needing specific technological solutions from the outset. Both films emphasise the degree to which VREs can and indeed should be tailored to a particular team's requirements and, looking to the future, suggest how VREs are likely to become increasingly established as a research tool in the future.

Frederique van Till, JISC's Programme Manager for the VRE programme, now in its second phase, said, "We're delighted to have such a range of perspectives and research backgrounds on these films. What has really come through is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, just as no two research projects are the same."

She continued, "VREs can be seen sometimes as a solution to scientific problems but in fact what these videos show is that they are applicable to research across the arts and humanities and social sciences as well, as the Political Discourse and dance visualisation interviews testify. We really want researchers across the board to see what the benefits can be, and we are already working on seeking to engage the community to a greater degree through the projects in phase II of the VRE programme, which is currently underway."

To look at the videos, please go to:

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme_vre/projects

For further information on VREs, please go to:

www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme_vre.aspx

12. Sakai Mention in Industry Research Group Report

Here is a quote from Michael King at IBM:

Sakai has been getting a lot of attention lately. Sakai has attracted major suppliers and publishers in the past but this latest wave is different. In the last few months very large commercial providers like Oracle and IBM have created dedicated service divisions centered on the platform. IBM has committed programming resources to the project and has started donating code. IBM's Michael King said in the press that, "We believe an open cycle of innovation that leverages common platforms such as the Sakai framework will become the model for developing and broadly deploying new solutions for educational institutions."

Here is the full report:

http://www.ambientinsight.com/News/AmbientInsight_Waves_of_Innovation.aspx

13. Events

NYC Sakai Meet-Up

September 25, 2007

New York University

<https://collab.sakaiproject.org/>

(See the announcement in this Sakai Newsletter.)

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

Eportfolio 2007 Conference

October 17 - 19, 2007

Maastricht, The Netherlands

<http://events.eife-l.org/ep2007/overview>

AuSakai 07

November 5 – 6, 2007

The Australian National University, Canberra
<http://ausakai.anu.edu.au>
(See the announcement in this Sakai Newsletter.)

JA-SIG Winter 2007 Unconference

November 12 - 13, 2007 (November 14 - 16 – optional post-conference)
New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA
<http://opensource.meetup.com/74/calendar/>
<http://www.ja-sig.org/wiki/display/JCON/Winter+2007+UnConference+Participants>
(See the announcement in this Sakai Newsletter.)

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/>

8th Sakai Conference

Newport Beach Marriott December 4-7, 2007
Newport Beach, California, USA
<https://sakai.educonference.com/conference/index.php>

e-Learning 2008

February 16-19, 2008?St. Petersburg, Florida, USA
<http://www.itcnetwork.org/elearning2008.htm>

eLearning Africa 2008

May 28 – 30, 2008
Accra International Conference Centre
Accra, Ghana
<http://www.elearning-africa.com>
(See the announcement in this Sakai Newsletter.)

Portal 2008 "Measurement & Assessment" Conference

Gettysburg College
June 3-6, 2008
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA
<https://biz.gettysburg.edu/it/portal08/index.cfm>

