



Sakai Newsletter

October 18, 2007

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1. From the Executive Director

Next week is EDUCAUSE in Seattle, which looks to be a jam-packed event. I want to let all Sakai Foundation members know that we would like to invite you to meet with members of the board of directors on Monday, October 22nd from 3-5 p.m. in the "Capitol Hill" meeting room at the Sheraton Hotel (the main conference hotel). While we would appreciate knowing if you're planning to attend (just sent me an email) you are also welcome to just drop by. This will be an unstructured session where you can ask questions or share opinions with the board. If you can't make that session, feel free to contact any of us individually. We'd like to spend time talking with you in Seattle

And, while we're speaking of conferences, don't forget to register for the Newport Beach Conference at <https://sakai.educonference.com/>.

Sakai UX Improvement Project

I'm happy to announce that after a few weeks of assessing community interest, I am confident that enough development resources exist for the UX Improvement Project to move forward. While a variety of projects were mentioned, the one with the most support seems to currently be the "Home Page" redesign project.

We have officially started the search for the design lead with an announcement and a position posting to LinkedIn. The position description is available for download at:

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

Two quick notes:

1. I am keen for this search to be available to those outside the US. If there is a job posting service that is useful in your home country please let me know.
2. The UX lead can be an existing member of the community. The foundation will work with your institution to find a way to ensure the project you otherwise would have been doing can move forward. This will potentially make things more complicated in the short run, but I want to make sure that everyone knows we are very open to this.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

Michael Korcuska
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org

2. McGraw-Hill Higher Education and Etudes Form Alliance

NEW YORK (October 17, 2007) -- McGraw-Hill Higher Education, a leading provider of electronic and print learning materials, and the ETUDES Consortium at Foothill College, a community of educational institutions that lead the development of open source web-based tools for teaching and learning, have announced a strategic alliance intended to further the development of content for use by instructors and students.

Working closely with ETUDES, McGraw-Hill Higher Education's instructional designers will create authoritative, thoroughly reviewed content and complete online courses, which can easily be deployed and accessed by instructors and students through ETUDES-NG open source software. ETUDES-NG is built upon the Sakai platform, a higher education project for creating open source tools for use in teaching, learning,

collaboration, and research. Open source is a means of developing and distributing software that ensures it is available for use, modification and redistribution by anyone, generally at little or no cost.

Adoptions of McGraw-Hill Higher Education's online courses developed through this alliance will fund additional research and development within the ETUDES Consortium community. And McGraw-Hill Higher Education's Learning Solutions team will gain insights into how instructors and students use Sakai-supported online course content in both distance and hybrid (online and traditional) learning environments.

"We look forward to collaborating with ETUDES as we expand and enhance access to educational content delivered through the Sakai platform. Through these efforts, we will be able provide even more institutions with the teaching and learning solutions that drive student achievement," said Jeff Schultz, vice president of McGraw-Hill Higher Education's Learning Solutions. "This alliance demonstrates the commitment shared by ETUDES and McGraw-Hill to improve the quality of instructional tools. Our mutual effort also highlights the fact that the technology advancements can empower instructors to successfully create engaging opportunities for learning."

"McGraw-Hill Higher Education and the ETUDES Consortium will be providing faculty with additional options for online curriculum so they can better serve the learning needs of their students and more successfully achieve the learning outcomes of their courses," said Vivie Sinou, project administrator of The ETUDES Project and Dean of Learning Technology and Innovations at Foothill College. "We are paving the way for the Sakai community to really take advantage of the learning and tools that result from this alliance."

About McGraw-Hill Higher Education Learning Solutions -- McGraw-Hill Higher Education's Learning Solutions team combines digital and printed content, technology, and curriculum-development services to deliver holistic "learning by design" solutions. Additional information is available at <http://www.OnlineLearning.com>. McGraw-Hill Higher Education is a unit of McGraw-Hill Education, a leading global provider of instructional, assessment and reference solutions that empower professionals and students of all ages. McGraw-Hill Education, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies (NYSE: MHP), is located in 33 countries and publishes in more than 40 languages.

About The ETUDES Consortium -- The ETUDES Consortium, formed by Foothill College in 2002, is a community of institutions and individuals that support the development of open source (OS) tools for its platform, ETUDES-NG, and the Sakai software. The ETUDES Project, <http://etudesproject.org/>, fosters the development of web-based teaching, learning, and collaboration tools and offers centralized hosting, managed CMS services, training, and support to its members.

The project is housed and managed at Foothill College, continuing the legacy that was started in 1994 with ETUDES Classic. Membership to the Consortium and services is

open to higher education institutions and other organizations that are interested in using ETUDES-NG to deliver and support instruction and need centralized support services.

The ETUDES Project partnered with the Sakai Foundation in December of 2003 and is coordinating its software development efforts with the Sakai community. Foothill has adopted the Sakai framework and is building upon Sakai for its platform, ETUDES-NG.

Contacts:

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3. Sakai Call for Nominations Reminder

REMINDER... Call for Nominations for Sakai board members closes at 5:00 PM EDT (GMT-4) on Sunday, October 21, 2007. There is still time to send your nominations to sakai2007elections@umich.edu.

The Sakai Elections Work Group is pleased to announce the opening of nominations for three positions on the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors. The current terms for Vivie Sinou (Foothill College), Jutta Treviranus (Toronto) and Brad Wheeler (Indiana) expire in December. Brad and Vivie have indicated they do not intend to stand for re-election.

The Sakai Foundation is dedicated to the design and development of collaborative, open source software in support of education, research and related scholarly activities. The Board of Directors provides leadership for the Sakai Foundation by serving the interests of the entire Sakai community, promoting the objectives of the Sakai Foundation, representing and coordinating Foundation projects, ensuring that project management is consistent with the Foundation's mission, and that the Foundation operates within its fiscal resources.

The Board of Directors meets at least twice a year at such times and places as designated by the Chair. Board members regularly conduct Board business electronically. Monthly audio conferences have been the norm. Board members are not compensated for their

work but expenses will be reimbursed in line with Foundation policies. Nominees will be expected to confirm that their institutional leadership approves of this commitment of time if elected.

Board members shall serve for a term of three years. Board members may serve only two consecutive terms. More detailed information about the Sakai Foundation and the responsibilities of the Board of Directors can be found in the Bylaws of the Sakai Foundation.

Nominations must be emailed to sakai2007elections@umich.edu no later than 5:00 PM EDT (GMT-4) on Sunday, October 21, 2007. Anyone can be nominated to stand for election to the Board. Self-nominations are also allowed. Receipt of any nomination you submit will be confirmed. The Elections Work Group will notify all nominees, explain the expectations for board members and confirm their willingness and ability to run for election. If they agree, additional information about them will be solicited.

Board members will be elected by the institutional and corporate representatives as specified in the Sakai Foundation bylaws. A current list of institutional and corporate representatives has been posted at http://sakaiproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=233&Itemid=462

The election is scheduled to be conducted online in early November with results announced in early December.

Thank you very much for helping us present the most qualified slate of candidates. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sakai Elections Working Group:
Carl Jacobson
Mary Miles
Ian Dolphin

4. AuSakai is Nearly Here!

The Australian Sakai Community will be holding a 2-day conference at Australian National University at Canberra on November 5th and 6th. This is an exciting event, bringing together not only a number of ANZ schools (Australian National, Charles Sturt, Macquarie, Melbourne, Monash, New England, University of Technology Sydney) but also folks from Cambridge and the Sakai Foundation's very own Peter Knoop. If you're in the area, you may want to stop by and say hello.

You can find more information about what's happening at <http://ausakai.anu.edu.au/>.

5. Serensoft Working with Blackbaud to Integrate Collaboration and Learning Environment with Administrative Software System

Portsmouth, NH – October 18, 2007 – Serensoft LLC, a Portsmouth, NH based company providing customized solutions to higher education, is working with Blackbaud, Inc. (NASDAQ: BLKB) a Charleston, South Carolina based company providing software and services to nonprofit organizations, to integrate the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE) with Blackbaud's Student Information System -- an administrative software system for higher education.

With this integration, Blackbaud's clients will be able to deploy the same learning management system that is being implemented by schools such as Yale, Stanford, Indiana, Georgia Tech, Northwestern, Michigan, Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the University of California-Berkeley. Serensoft brings its experience and expertise as a Sakai Commercial Affiliate to the integration.

Sakai is a free and open source product that is built and maintained by the Sakai community. Sakai's development model is called "Community Source" because many of the developers creating Sakai are drawn from the "community" of organizations that have adopted and are using Sakai. Many users of Sakai deploy it to support teaching and learning, ad hoc group collaboration, support for portfolios and research collaboration.

Through this relationship with Blackbaud, Serensoft hopes to bring their solution to Blackbaud higher education clients in the form of integration, implementation and training.

Michael Korcuska, Executive Director of the Sakai Foundation said, "This emerging relationship among Blackbaud, Serensoft and Sakai continues to validate the value that the Sakai platform brings to higher education. The Sakai Foundation is always excited to support efforts that drive Sakai's interoperability with other enterprise systems on campus."

Richard Tharp, Serensoft Partner said, "As the relationship with Blackbaud develops, Serensoft is delighted to be able to contribute to the functional integration of Sakai with an already-robust student information system. This process further broadens and deepens Serensoft's position as a premier solution provider to the higher education community."

About Serensoft

Serensoft is a pure services company focused only on what is best for its higher education clients. Serensoft offers a range of solution, many that have no software licensing cost whatsoever. Looking out for an institution's best interests is central to Serensoft's Providence Methodology. Whether it's Learning management / Course management Systems, e-portfolios or Administrative Computing, Serensoft designs fully customized

solutions aimed at an institution's needs. For more information please visit:
www.serensoft.com

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6. MUSE: University of Melbourne Sakai Pilot

The University of Melbourne has established a pilot Sakai system called MUSE -- The Melbourne University Shared Environment. Initially it will be used as a collaboration environment to support projects and communities of interest amongst staff and research higher degree students.

The MUSE gateway can be viewed at:

<https://muse.unimelb.edu.au/portal/>

This pilot represents a collaboration between the university's Information Services and the Australian company Netspot, a commercial hosting service provider:

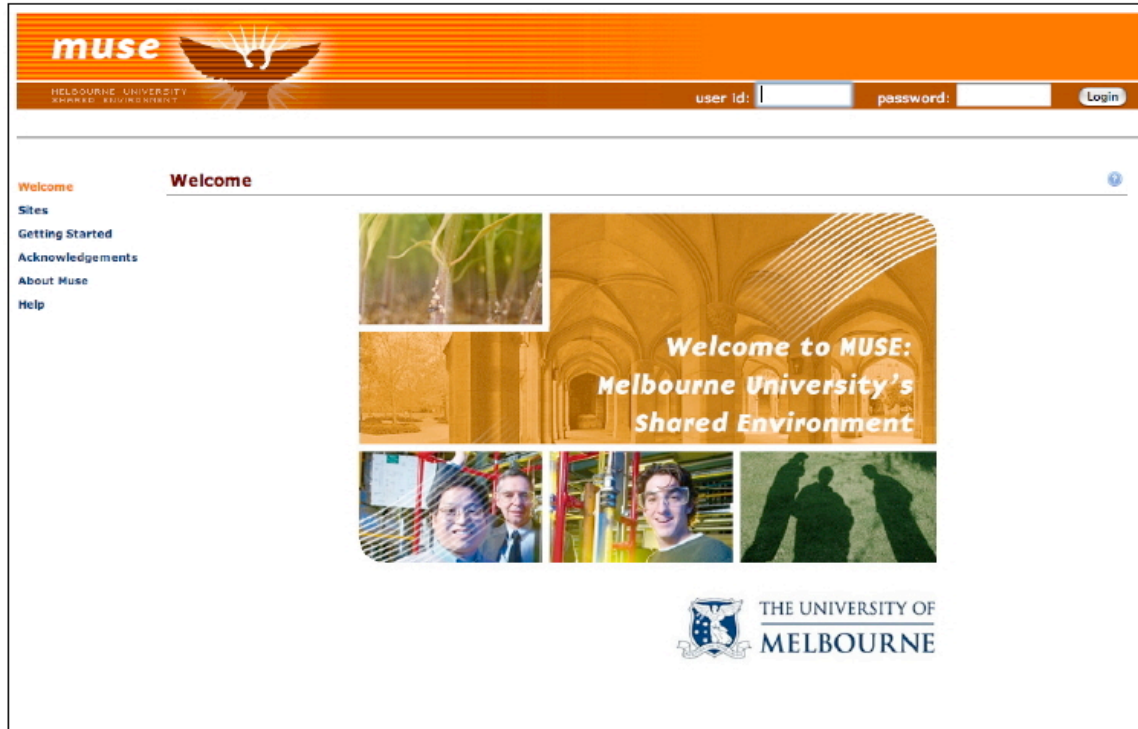
<http://netspot.com.au/>

Many thanks to all of the Information Services and Netspot staff responsible for this exciting implementation.

Regards,

David Hirst

University of Melbourne, Australia
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7. rSmart Client Appreciation Event at EDUCAUSE 2007

Join The rSmart Group for an intimate gathering of friends and colleagues who have been key to a spectacular year. In true northwest spirit, we will meet in the Museum Room at the Pike Pub. Market fresh vegetables, beer and pizza will be served!

This is a great opportunity to meet other rSmart clients and the rSmart team as we celebrate innovation in higher education!

Come see us in Booth 2523 during exhibit hall hours for a chance to win a FREE iPod Nano and for information about The rSmart Sakai CLE, Quali Financial Systems or directions to the Client Appreciation Event.

Pikes Pub
1415 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98101

TO RSVP, please email Megan Perrone, Marketing Specialist, at megan.perrone@rsmart.com

8. rSmart Sakai Webinar

Let's face it – no one knows teaching and learning better than you do. It is at the heart of what you do. That's why Sakai is the right learning management system for higher education. Built by higher education for higher education.

Today, Sakai is evolving at a faster rate than any other LMS. Come join Chris Coppola, Sakai Foundation board member and President of The rSmart Group to learn about today's robust functionality and the service and support models that make it the right choice for your faculty, your students and your institution.

Save the Date: November 6, 2007

To register:

<https://www.yugma.com/scheduler/enroll.php?meetid=UmZYKeJwD0yku+HRg7Lbdw=>
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9. IU Deliverables for December 2007

I am pleased to share with the community the results of our latest Oncourse Priorities Committee voting. Indiana's development resources will be focused on the following deliverables to be completed by end of calendar year 2007.

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=pTtkhWyLMBM2KimrzAeRQUw>

While most of this work encompasses incremental functionality enhancements, it also includes a complete rewrite of the Assignments tool. This rewrite will be available via the contrib repository and has the following high-level goals:

- 1) Greatly enhance the Assignments <--> Gradebook interaction. All grading-related data will be stored in the Gradebook service.
- 2) Refactor data storage into completely normalized relational data structures (i.e., removing XML-based storage).
- 3) Implement the user interface using the RSF framework.

It is expected that in the initial phases of this project not all existing Assignments functionality will be maintained (e.g., some grading scales) as the new implementation will be dependent on existing capabilities of the 2.5 Gradebook. As the tool matures, and the interfaces with the Gradebook service become more capable, the tool will reach

functional parity with the existing Assignments tool.

The other item of note in these deliverables is the approval to begin some design work around a new tool called "TrackIt". The current vision for this tool is a simple tracking tool that could be used for many purposes. One might be tracking attendance. Instead of trying to make the Gradebook more and more complex, the hope is that helper tools like this tracking tool will supplement the Gradebook in manageable and maintainable ways. This is the same approach that is being explored with tools related to the Resources tool.

We will be creating confluence spaces for both of these projects to keep the community updated and to solicit your input on these tools.

Lance Speelmon
Manager Online Development
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10. Sakaipedia Call for Volunteers

The Sakaipedia (<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/ENC>) is a community resource, and everyone with a Confluence account has full permission to add or comment on content. As with its inspiration, the Wikipedia, however, the experience is improved by having a dedicated group of individuals willing to serve as moderators or editors, who can help edit contributions for accuracy, maintain and evolve the organizational structure as needed, monitor comments, and help identify and deprecate information as it becomes obsolete. If you are interested in volunteering as a Sakaipedia Editor, please contact Peter Knoop (knoop@umich.edu), and identify what areas of the Sakaipedia you are interested in helping to maintain.

Thanks.

Peter Knoop
Sakai Project Coordinator

11. eLearning Africa 2008 Exhibition & Sponsorship Opportunities

I would like to present you with the unique opportunity to exhibit and/or sponsor at eLearning Africa 2008, the 3rd Pan-African Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, which will be taking place from May 28 - 30, 2008 in Accra,

Ghana. The conference and accompanying exhibition is under the patronage of the Ghanaian Minister for Education, Science and Sports, the Hon. Prof. Dominic K. Fobih.

General information: <http://www.elearning-africa.com>

Rebecca Stromeyer
Managing Director
marketing@elearning-africa.com

12. Events

AuSakai 07
November 5 - 6, 2007
The Australian National University, Canberra
<http://ausakai.anu.edu.au>

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>

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>

Portal 2008 "Measurement & Assessment" Conference
Gettysburg College
June 3-6, 2008
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA
<https://biz.gettysburg.edu/it/portal08/index.cfm>