Sakai Project

A Collaboration and Learning Environment

Sakai

Community Source: By Higher Education, For Higher Education

Beginnings

The Sakai Project began in 2004 when Stanford, Michigan, Indiana, MIT and Berkeley began building a common Courseware Management System rather than continuing their homegrown systems or licensing software from a commercial vendor. The Mellon Foundation provided initial funding for the project.

These universities recognized that research collaboration would be as important as teaching applications and developed a Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE) that scales across many kinds of academic uses.

Today, the Sakai CLE is the enterprise system of choice at over 100 institutions, in production settings ranging from 200 to 200,000 users. The Sakai CLE is open source software that is freely available to everyone.

Sakai's Four Ingredients

Sakai is more than just an enterprise software application. The functionality, reliability and scalability of the *Sakai CLE* are all critical to organizations that have adopted Sakai. But the story doesn't end with the Sakai CLE.

The *community* that develops and uses Sakai is fundamental to Sakai's value. Sharing product development, academic and e-learning best practices with peer institutions around the world is a unique aspect of Sakai, a rare cross-institutional collaboration in higher education information technology.

The *open source code* that is freely available is crucial for those who have the resources to do their own development. But the ability to make that one small change for your campus is important to even smaller schools.

Finally, the *Sakai Foundation* runs Sakai conferences, coordinates community activities, distributes the software releases and cares for the intellectual property of Sakai. The Foundation is a member-supported non-profit organization with a small staff.

Every organization that has adopted Sakai values each of these aspects of Sakai. We invite you to learn about why you should consider Sakai.

SAKAI'S FOUR INGREDIENTS

SAKAI CLE

OPEN SOURCE CODE

COMMUNITY

FOUNDATION

University of Cape Town

UCT decided to move to open source in 2004, migrating from WebCT & a home-grown system. Open source offers the advantages of flexibility & avoids the risks of vendor lock-in & escalating license costs. We were attracted to Sakai by the size & expertise of the community around it.

Stephen Marquard, Learning Technologies Coordinator

The Sakai Foundation - www.sakaiproject.org - info@sakaifoundation.org

The Sakai CLE

While Sakai has all the major features and functions of a commercial Courseware Management System, the product vision reaches beyond teaching and learning applications. Many Sakai deployments include as many or more project and research collaboration sites. In addition, the Open Source Portfolio e-Portfolio system is a core part of the Sakai software. Finally, the Sakaibrary project links library resources to Sakai. You can try Sakai for yourself by downloading and installing the demonstration from the Sakai Foundation website or by visiting one the sites of our Commercial Affiliates, several of which have running version of Sakai where you can simply create your own account-. No installation necessary.

The Sakai Community

The Sakai community draws on the contributions of many organizations and individuals around the world. The Sakai community is responsible for all aspects of evolving the Sakai CLE. No one is closer to the needs of users than the teams designing and developing Sakai. The Sakai CLE is truly designed by higher education, for higher education. Members of the Sakai community believe this community-driven development model will inevitably lead to the best product for use on campus. Whether large or small, institutions may also opt to work with Sakai commercial partners which offer hosting, development and support options.

Open Source Software

Sakai is distributed as free and open source software. Access to this code is extremely valuable to those who want to customize their on-campus instance or wish to develop innovative new tools. But open source code is important to the entire Sakai community. The ability to make that one change to the code for your campus can be crucially important and that change can be added to the Sakai code base, removing the need for customization as you upgrade. And the source code serves as the ultimate insurance policy, ensuring that you aren't locked into a single vendor.

The Sakai Foundation

The Sakai Foundation is a member supported non-profit corporation with a small staff and modest budget. While membership in the Foundation is optional, over 100 organizations around the world support the foundation so that it can continue its important community activities. These include managing the intellectual property of Sakai, organizing conferences and planning meetings, maintaining the Sakai technology infrastructure including the bug tracking system and project wiki, coordinating development activities and quality assurance, publishing the Sakai CLE releases and functioning as a public advocate for Sakai.

We welcome your inquiries about Sakai. Write us at info@sakaifoundation.org