



## Sakai Newsletter

May 15, 2008

1. From the Executive Director
2. Paris Sakai Conference Updates
3. Sakai Innovation Award Winners Announced!
4. Welcoming Fluid's New Project Manager
5. New Video: Overview of the Etudes Course Management System
6. rSmart Launches its ePortfolio Showcase Environment
7. Sakai Boot Camp @ Marist College
8. Report on NITLE: Integrating Library Resources into Sakai Workshop
9. The rSmart Sakai CLE v2.5 Webinar: What You Need to Know!
10. Recent Email Group Discussions
11. Events

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### 1. From the Executive Director

This update is about outreach and adoption. As you may know, a group of Sakai staff members, folks from Sakai Commercial Affiliates and others in the Sakai community, have been meeting occasionally to co-ordinate efforts. Among other things you should be seeing a series of Sakai case studies that show how a variety of different types of institutions are using Sakai.

But the bigger news is that we're working hard on a complete redesign of the Sakai website. We're really excited about the preliminary work we've done and others who have seen it agree that it is a big improvement. We're not ready to unveil it publicly yet, but if you have some time to write some content or do some graphic design work we'll give you access. Just drop me or Anthony Whyte a note. If all goes well we will unveil it at the Paris conference.

I'm also pleased to announce that we have five new Sakai Foundation members in just the past couple of months! You've already seen the announcements from Saginaw Valley State in Michigan and Gert Sibande in South Africa. There are a few more that we haven't announced yet but will be doing so in the next few weeks and months.

Finally, an nice tidbit appeared on the JISC mailing lists this week. Alejandro Chiner of the University of Warwick in the UK has been doing a survey of VLE usage at UK higher education institutions. While the commercial products still predominate (at 63 ) usage he notes that Open Source is becoming more popular and that "Sakai is now also taking off in the UK." Here's the full message from the list:

"Thank you very much for a number of helpful replies to my call for information. This summarises my navigation of HEI websites followed by unstructured interviews with six staff of six different institutions. Most (63 ) of the 38 HEI in the Russell and 1994 (R4) groups are still using centrally one of the VLE products of one main vendor. However, there is a growing number of institutions who have migrated to Open Source (OS) alternatives, and they seem happy with the outcome. The migration process is a major project that can take two years, but the costs associated are quickly offset by the savings in license fees. More importantly, OS allows VLE integration with a range of ad-hoc systems and freedom from vendor lock-in. The HEI community is developing a range of cutting-edge application plug-in and tools to integrate other systems with either Moodle or Sakai. While Moodle remains the most popular (23) R4 OS option, the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment is now also taking off in the UK with a group of four (10.5 ) R4 HEI adopting it centrally. These include two of the very top ranking universities in the UK.

Alec"

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## 2. Paris Sakai Conference Updates

We're currently three weeks away from the deadline for the discounted rate at the conference hotel. The deadline is June 11. You can register for the conference and reserve a hotel room at:

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

We have sent proposal acceptances out (if you haven't gotten one please contact me directly) and are beginning the scheduling process. It looks to be a very exciting event with an increased emphasis on teaching and learning, highlighted by Diana Laurillard, our keynote speaker.

And don't forget the Cambridge "Hackathon" that will occur the week after the conference. You can find out more and indicate your interest at:

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

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### 3. Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award Winners Announced!

The judges for the Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award reached a unanimous decision on the award recipients for the first ever Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award. The recipients are:

#### First Place

Dr. Aileen Y Huang-Saad

Course: Biomedical Engineering Graduate Innovative Design  
University of Michigan

#### Second Place

Dr. Salim Nakhjavani

Course: International Law  
University of Cape Town, South Africa

#### Honorable Mention

Dr. Fred T. Hofstetter

Course: Web Design Portal  
University of Delaware

#### Honorable Mention

Mr. Michael Burns

Course: Advanced Placement English Literature and Language  
Minisink Valley Central School District, New York

The panel of judges consisted of Dr. Paul Elsner, Dr. Karen Swan, and Dr. Ken Bain, all internationally known educators. They reviewed the finalists' applications and participated in a course demonstration and interview via live web conferences with each finalist. The judges were very enthusiastic about the winning course. Dr. Swan noted that the Dr. Huang-Saad's course on Biomedical Engineering was "a really innovative course that fosters collaboration and uses real world problems." Dr. Bain said that it provided the ability to "visualize and utilize a team enhanced environment." Dr. Elsner stated that the

course "was very adaptive and self-organizing." The judges also had considerable praise for Dr. Nakhjavani's course in International Law. Elsner was impressed with the obvious "impact on the larger African community." Bain noted that it provided a "robust learning environment by engaging students in the process of international law."

The first and second place recipients will be awarded reimbursed travel expenses to attend the Sakai Conference in Paris. They will present their innovative uses of Teaching and Learning with Sakai and will be recognized at an Award Ceremony during the opening of the conference on July 1st.

The award is being sponsored by IBM Corporation, with additional support from the Sakai Foundation. It was designed to promote faculty best practices and innovation in using Sakai for teaching and learning. Although there are many ways in which technology can make the teaching process more efficient or productive, innovative applications of both pedagogy and technology can truly transform the educational experience. The intent of this award is to highlight examples of educational applications of Sakai which fall into this innovative or transformative category.

The first place winner, Dr. Aileen Y Huang-Saad stated, "The Sakai platform was critical to the success of my class, and I am grateful to have had such a diverse platform readily available. In particular, the wiki tool was crucial for developing class-based concept design documents, challenging students to evolve their ideas in and outside of class."

Mr. Salim Nakhjavani said, "I am humbled to be selected for this opportunity. This means a great deal to both me and my university to have this award and the opportunity to present my course. The fact that the course is recognized in this way will offer both hope and motivation to the rest of the faculty throughout the University of Cape Town that they, too, can participate in this technology with their courses and provide a quality educational experience.

To view the winning applications and applications from all participants who indicated that they were willing to share their work, go to the Award website at <http://openedpractices.org/twsia> .

Many volunteers from the Sakai community participated in this new collaborative initiative and are very proud that their efforts will help to bring teaching and learning to the center of the Sakai community.

Meet our Judges:

Dr. Karen Swan

Karen Swan is Research Professor in the Research Center for Educational Technology at Kent State University. Her current research focuses on data literacy, online learning, and ubiquitous computing in education. Dr. Swan was the 2006 winner of the Sloan

Consortium's award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual.

Dr. Ken Bain

Ken Bain is Vice Provost for Instruction, Director of the Research Academy for University Learning, and Professor of History at Montclair State University. He is the author of the international bestselling book, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (2004, Harvard University Press). Before coming to Montclair, he was founding director of three major centers for learning and teaching: Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching Excellence at NYU, and the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University.

Dr. Paul Elsner

Paul Elsner was Chancellor of the Maricopa County Community College District 1977-1999. He is one of two leading members of Sedona Conversations, an organization whose goal is to assist leaders in understanding and comprehending new developments in multimedia, the merging of education, technology and entertainment, and understanding future change. He has written and spoken widely on the impact of technology and is a recognized leader in higher education.

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#### 4. Welcoming Fluid's New Project Manager

Hi All,

As you may have heard, Fluid has hired a new Project Manager. I've written a short blog post to welcome Jess Mitchell to our community:

<http://fluidproject.org/blog/2008/05/11/welcoming-jess-mitchell-fluids-new-project-manager/>

Needless to say, we're all really excited to have her on board after a year-long search for the right person!

Colin Clark  
Technical Lead, Fluid Project  
colin.clark@utoronto.ca  
Adaptive Technology Resource Centre  
University of Toronto  
<http://fluidproject.org>

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## 5. New Video: Overview of the Etudes Course Management System

The Etudes project has produced a promotional video that gives an overview of the Etudes course management system. The video features conversations with faculty members, trainers, academic leadership, and technical leadership from the Etudes community.

Etudes is a community of institutions and individuals who are supporting teaching, learning, and collaboration, and expanding educational opportunities to learners through its tools and support infrastructure. Serving about 75,000 students, Etudes is the platform for delivering, managing, and supporting instruction in over 25 colleges. Etudes also provides support, training, and coordinated product development to its members. The Etudes software is open source (Melete, JForum, and Mneme) and is based on the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_jZ25X1m458](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jZ25X1m458)  
<http://www.etudes.org/>

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## 6. rSmart Launches its ePortfolio Showcase Environment

rSmart is pleased to announce the launch of its [ePortfolio Showcase](http://www.rsmart.com/portfolios) environment – [www.rsmart.com/portfolios](http://www.rsmart.com/portfolios). The ePortfolio showcase is designed to highlight sample use cases for the suite of portfolio tools in Sakai. Each sample entry provides:

- A background narrative that serves to contextualize the portfolio
- A list of goals and actors relevant to the portfolio
- A list of steps involved in the process of constructing and implementing the portfolio
- A list of components needed to build a similar portfolio on your own
- A zip file containing the portfolio components, which may be downloaded to your own instance of Sakai for use

We will be adding to the showcase over time and look forward to your [questions](#) or [comments](#) on the new environment.

Hannah Reeves  
The rSmart Group  
[hreeves@rsmart.com](mailto:hreeves@rsmart.com)

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## 7. Sakai Boot Camp @ Marist College, June 2nd to June 6th

Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, will be hosting a 5-day Sakai Developers Boot Camp from June 2nd through the 6th, 2008. The boot camp will be lead by Aaron Zeckoski, Senior Research Engineer, Cambridge University. Participants in the course will gain a better technical understanding of Sakai and the process for making and contributing changes to the Sakai framework. There are a limited number of seats available for Sakai developers interested in attending. There is no cost for attending the workshop. If interested contact Earle Nietzel (Earle.Nietzel@marist.edu) or Howard Baker (hcbaker@us.ibm.com).

Here is a link with additional information. It contains the prerequisites you need, information regarding travel, etc.

<https://ilearn.marist.edu/access/wiki/site/6ea947f9-785a-4bf0-00e7-84ccc26566de/sakai%20boot%20camp%20info.html>

To view the agenda, go to:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/BOOT/Marist+College>

Earle Nietzel  
Earle.Nietzel@marist.edu  
Marist College

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## 8. Report on NITLE: Integrating Library Resources into Sakai Workshop

After a half-hour coffee reception, we got down to business at 9 AM on Friday, April 25, 2008 at Whitman College for the NITLE sponsored Integrating Library Resources into Sakai workshop. First was an introductory PowerPoint presentation identifying the basic architecture of Sakai, then another on Integrating Library Resources into Sakai, followed by discussion. Hands-on work exploring tools and creating content in project sites took the majority of the day, with a final wrap up discussion at the end. The event was well attended by several librarians and IT professionals from Whitman College, Willamette University, Pacific Lutheran University, and the Claremont University Consortium.

During the discussion, Dalia Hagan, Directory of Penrose Library (Whitman), asked about the philosophical question of placing librarian content (subject guides, etc.) behind the login of Sakai, and whether or not it was better to concentrate on placing that content in the open web for discovery by non-Sakai users. The open web allows for anyone to find and use information, yet content in Sakai allows for seamless access for users already in the software, and enables faculty to copy content from a library project site into a course site. Duplication and linking are ways to get around this; tools in Sakai link

to content on the open web yet still provide quick access for users already in Sakai for course work.

Another poignant question in regards to content in Sakai and institutional repositories, and how institutions will assess content created and housed in Sakai that should be permanently housed in an IR. Some discussion about 'disposable' content ensued; a few individuals felt that Sakai content was ever evolving and dynamic in order to relate to current library tools and assignments and was not considered permanent. Discussion needs to occur at the institutional level regarding what is 'disposable' content and what is content that requires preservation.

Discussing Sakai's architecture, a few commented that Sakai's structure is awkward at first, and very tool centric. Some tools are not yet ready for 'prime time' but many others are very effective with what they do. There was much discussion about trying to make Sakai more user-focused, emphasizing pedagogy, and how to modify the structure to do this. Ideas about using the wiki to link to content within Sakai and hiding the Resources tool itself from the student view making the wiki public, or using web pages or Melete were discussed. Many commented that Sakai's flexibility to allow users to link to alternate tools is a plus, therefore incorporating popular collaborative tools, like Google Docs, into the Sakai interface.

Whitman College IT will begin collaborating directly with the librarians and library to incorporate the skills of the librarians into Sakai, and will begin with creating a link to the library's homepage in the tool menu in every course site.

Librarians discussed getting faculty buy-in regarding collaboration within course sites. We want to collaborate, not invade, and moving forward should be done carefully. Creating a passive presence via joinable sites, links to pages and reference information, and sharing material via the copy function are possibilities to contribute without being intrusive. Another option is to jointly develop and define a "Librarian" role to limit the scope to the needed functions.

Discussion of electronic reserves in Sakai was quite heated, with some thinking Sakai was not adequate for copyright clearance. Ideas on how to link to content managed formally by the library or uploaded to course sites were discussed. At present, there does not seem to be a best practice established, largely due to difference in institutional attitudes towards electronic reserve software, but a need for future work was identified.

The group agreed that collaborating in our smaller group, meeting virtually regularly and in person when able, is a good way to maintain initiative to communicate needs back to the larger development community. The institutions represented at the workshop agreed to continue to collaborate together, encouraging the development of tools and prioritizing the needs of smaller schools using Sakai. The Sakai site created for the workshop will remain in order to facilitate such collaboration.



For more information, contact Jezmynne Westcott at [jez@hmc.edu](mailto:jez@hmc.edu) or Mike Osterman at [ostermmg@whitman.edu](mailto:ostermmg@whitman.edu)

The PPT PDF "Integrating Library Resources into Sakai" is available here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/2xqv8s>

Jezmynne Westcott  
Science Librarian  
Claremont University Consortium

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## 9. The rSmart Sakai CLE v2.5 Webinar: What You Need to Know!

rSmart is excited to announce the availability of the rSmart Sakai CLE, version 2.5. Based on Sakai 2-5-0\_RC-04a, the rSmart distribution includes the latest releases of Melete (Lesson) and JForum (Discussion Forums) and numerous other tools not included in the community Sakai release.

With 1500 improvements and fixes, including 300 individual feature enhancements, you need to look at the Sakai CLE 2.5 again! It is well on its way to becoming the best enterprise solution for teaching, learning and campus collaboration.

Join Hannah Reeves, rSmart's CLE product manager, as she highlights the new product features and capabilities and gives a demonstration of the 2.5 release.

May 20, 2008 1:00 PM EDT

To register, please go to: <https://rsmart.ilinc.com/register/shzfsf>

Megan Perrone  
[megan.perrone@rsmart.com](mailto:megan.perrone@rsmart.com)

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## 10. Recent Email Group Discussions

Here are some topics that have been discussed in the last couple of weeks in Sakai email groups. Most of these discussions can be found at these Nabble URLs:

- Sakai-dev - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Development-f18040.html> (DEV)
- Sakai Portfolio - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Portfolio-f18155.html> (PORT)
- Sakai Pedagogy - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Pedagogy-f24248.html> (PED)
- Sakai UI - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---User-Interaction-f25634.html> (UI)

- Sakai Migration -  
<http://www.nabble.com/Sakai-Migration-Group-f27621.html> (MIG)
- Sakai Announcements -  
<http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Announce-f28489.html> (ANN)

To join an email group, go to <http://www.collab.sakaiproject.org>. While you are in your workspace, click the "Membership" link in the left-hand menu and then click the "Joinable Sites" link. Click "Join" next to any of the groups.

### Discussions:

[jasig-ue] [Design Patterns] OSDPL Questions of the day - Goal & Audiences UX UI  
 2.2-->2.5 import problem PORT  
 adding tool icons in 2.4.x - a howto UX  
 Assignment2 update PED  
 Blog tools DEV  
 Blog tools / provisional status DEV  
 branch requests in osp PORT  
 Creative uses of Outline Options Form? PED PORT  
 hackathon DEV  
 IMS QTI & Assessment/Question Pools DEV  
 Instant Messenger – Error DEV  
 JS/JQuery Grid Control? DEV UI  
 Load Testing DEV  
 Need help testing fix for SAK-12992... PORT  
 Resume Wizards UI PORT  
 SAK-12986 merge request (db2 support) DEV  
 SAK-13520 - MatrixManager (dev message) PORT  
 Sakai and Fluid UI  
 Sakai discussion board issue PED  
 sakaiproject.org: css/graphic artist stylist sought UX  
 SCORM packages in Sakai DEV  
 search problems DEV  
 Should generic-dao version be hard-coded? DEV  
 Stupid Maven / Eclipse / Sakai tricks DEV  
 Sitestats 1.0.1 Maven build DEV  
 Support for "authoring" in Sakai PORT UI  
 Tests & Quizzes in collaboration sites DEV  
 Tool dependencies DEV  
 Used icons for Sakai 2.5 left menu DEV  
 Using cayenne in sakai DEV  
 UX Design - Improving the CLE v1.0 - Week 8 (Final Week)!! DEV UX  
 UX Design Implementing the Improved CLE vs Improving the CLE v1.0? DEV UX  
 what is the group to help people learn how to use sakai? DEV  
 Why 2 sakai tags on FCK editor DEV  
 wysiwyg wiki editor DEV

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## 11. Events

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>

CANHEIT 2008 Canadian Higher Education and Information Technology  
Conference

June 15-18, 2008

Calgary, Alberta Canada

<http://canheit.ucalgary.ca/>

2-3-98 Conference: An Open Discussion on Technology in Education SUNY Delhi

June 19-20, 2008 Delhi, New York

<https://snydelwd.delhi.edu:8443/display/ODD/2-3-98+Conference>

EUNIS 2008 European University Information Systems Organisation

June 24-27, 2008

Århus, Denmark

<http://eunis.dk/>

9th Sakai Conference

Université Pierre et Marie Curie

July 1 - 3, 2008

Paris, France

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

ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN 2008

14th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning and Training

December 3 - 5 , 2008

Hotel InterContinental Berlin

Berlin, Germany

[www.online-educa.com](http://www.online-educa.com)

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Here are email addresses to contact if you encounter problems with various Sakai Community systems:

Collab -- [collab-admins@umich.edu](mailto:collab-admins@umich.edu)

Confluence -- [confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org)

Jira -- [jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org)