



Sakai Newsletter

May 29, 2008

1. From the Executive Director
2. Opencast Project Planning Grant Activities Launched
3. Announcing New Sakai 2.4.x Branch Managers
4. Sakai Innovation Award Winners
5. Unicon's Cooperative Support Program Contributes Over 40 uPortal Enhancements
6. Job Opening: Développeur Sakai, Montréal
7. Recent Email Group Discussions
8. Events

1. From the Executive Director

The 9th Sakai Conference in Paris is now just a month away. The program committee has completed the preliminary schedule and the conference website (<https://sakai.educonference.com/paris/index.php>) has been update to include the featured speakers. There's even a Google map that the community is using to indicate some of their favorite Parisian places near the conference site and hotel. Which reminds me, the last day to get the conference discount on the hotel is June 11. The hotel is still a bit costly, especially given the strength of the euro, but breakfast is included and the rooms and location are both excellent.

Registrations are coming in rapidly. 50% of registrants are from outside the US, as compared to 20% in the Newport Beach conference. I expect that proportion to increase further as we're increasing last minute publicity in Europe and it is certainly easier to make late travel plans from within Europe. I also expect a number of the registrants to be "newcomers" -- those who have not attended Sakai conferences in the past. We're hosting a newcomer reception on Monday night, June 30th, to help orient them to the conference and give them a chance to meet a few more experienced members of the Sakai community.

And, finally, don't overlook the "Hackathon" being hosted by Cambridge the week after the conference (July 7 - 11). You can find more information and add yourself to the attendee list on the wiki page for the event (<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/MYBFAQ>). It promises to be a great working session and a lot of fun.

Hope to see you in Paris!

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2. Opencast Project Planning Grant Activities Launched

In April, UC Berkeley received a planning grant from the Mellon and Hewlett Foundations to bring together a variety of higher education experts in podcasting to discuss and document best practices for video and podcasting in higher ed and to facilitate requirements gathering for a community source build project. UC Berkeley will host 3 two-day working group meetings as well as two open houses in North America and Europe to accomplish these outcomes. There will also be a session held by Judy Stern and Josh Holtzman at the upcoming Sakai Conference to talk about the current product from Berkeley that will launch with Sakai integration in the upcoming Fall semester.

Requirements and Best Practices Working Group 1 -- UC Berkeley, June 5-6 (11 participating universities)

Opencast Open House -- UC Berkeley, June 13

Requirements and Best Practices Working Group 2 and OSS Watch Open House -- Oxford University, July 7-9 (includes combined activities with OSS Watch)

Opencast Project Deep Dive -- Berkeley, September or October TBD

We have launched opencastproject.org, our project Blog, which has more detailed information about the project and upcoming events. It will also host the best practices documentation and requirements information that emerge from the working group meetings and community interviews and surveys. A new look and feel for the Blog is forthcoming.

If you are in the area for the Berkeley Open House, please come join us! RSVP here: <http://opencastproject.pingg.com/UCBerkeley/>.

Mara Hancock
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3. Announcing New Sakai 2.4.x Branch Managers

Please join me in welcoming Steven Githens (University of Cambridge), Soo Kim (Boston University), and Stephen Swinsburg, as the new Sakai 2.4.x Branch Managers. They or their institutions have volunteered their time to help with this task, which will greatly benefit many folks who are still running Sakai 2.4 in production. I'd also like to thank Stuart Freeman (Georgia Tech) for his work as the previous 2.4.x Branch Manager, and his help in handing over the reigns as Georgia Tech prepares to move on to Sakai 2.5.

The 2.4.x Branch Managers help with the merging of bug fixes from trunk to the 2.4.x maintenance branch. They help ensure that 2.4.x is well-maintained by only merging verified bug fixes (no new features or untested bug fixes), and by working with the appropriate project team or patch author when conflicts are encountered while merging.

For more information on guidelines governing what is appropriate for a maintenance branch, see that section in the Release Practice Guidelines:

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

Thanks.

Peter Knoop
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4. Sakai Innovation Award Winners

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

Mr. Salim Nakhjavani

Course: International Law

University of Cape Town, South Africa

Honorable Mention

Dr. Fred T. Hofstetter

Course: Web Portal Design

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 on July 2 at the conference.

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 stated, "I am humbled to have received this award for what was truly a collaborative effort between academic lawyers, educational technology specialists and students at the University of Cape Town. I hope that this recognition of African innovation on the international stage would encourage others to use Sakai in ways that bridge rather than deepen the digital divide."

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.

5. Unicon's Cooperative Support Program Contributes Over 40 uPortal Enhancements to Open Source Community

Unicon, Inc. has announced the Unicon Cooperative Support Program for uPortal has developed and contributed over 40 new uPortal enhancements to the open source JASIG community from July 2007 through May 2008. The development contributions include technical fixes, feature enhancements and improvements, along with completely new functions and capabilities. Unicon currently has 34 academic institution members in its Cooperative Support Program for uPortal. In addition to receiving expert technical assistance for their uPortal instance, members vote on and prioritize fixes and features most needed and desired for their enterprise campus portal.

Unicon's Cooperative Support Program is a commercial support program that provides member institutions with many benefits including a predictable cost support solution. The program provides a dedicated team of expert development and technical support specialists for uPortal for direct technical support and assistance. All development work and fixes performed by the team for individual institutions are contributed back and shared with the uPortal community.

"Unicon's Cooperative Support Program provides us with top notch commercial support for our open source enterprise portal solution, and also gives us a forum for networking with other institutions that share the same goals," said Duran Goodyear, Web Developer, University of the Arts, Philadelphia. "As a member, I also like that we are able to vote on and influence which enhancements and fixes are done first under the program."

"Unicon's Cooperative Support Program for uPortal is an example of an open source commercial business model that works for everyone," said Jonathan Markow, JASIG Executive Director. "In the relatively short time it has been in operation, the program has grown to benefit the company, to meet a real need among participating uPortal institutions, and to provide a productive source of expertise for the good of the community at large."

Unicon Cooperative Support Program for uPortal Members Include:

- Brooklyn College-City University of New York
- Heartland Community College
- Jacksonville University
- Sault College
- Shenandoah University
- South Dakota State University
- Southwestern University
- Tacoma Community College
- Trinity University
- University of the Arts, Philadelphia
- University of California, Merced

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 for top priority issues. All development work performed by the team will be done in direct participation with the open source uPortal community. The Cooperative Support Program for uPortal is a strong complement to Unicon's other services for uPortal which include various bundles comprised of implementation, project planning, installation, configuration, branding, and training components.

Joe Waldygo
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6. Job Opening: Développeur Sakai, Montréal

Durée du contrat : 6 mois
Date de début : juin 2008

Nous sommes à la recherche d'un développeur ayant une bonne connaissance de SAKAI pour participer à un projet de développement d'applications chez l'un de nos principaux clients à Montréal. Nous recherchons une personne junior ou intermédiaire, ayant 2 à 3 ans d'expérience en développement Java.

N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec moi pour toutes informations supplémentaires concernant ce mandat.

Julie Lachance
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7. 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:

[Design Patterns] 5/14 OSDPL pattern group meeting update & notes -- UX

Anonymous feedback tool? -- Dev

Configuring Section Info tool -- User

Content Authoring - Dreamweaver, Resources, or Meleteor...? -- Pedagogy, User

Content Authoring -- Ped

converting a JSF app from 2.4 to 2.5 -- Dev

Default Settings for Site and New Account -- Dev

Google Mashup Editor (GME) -- Dev

Google Web Toolkit - GWT 1.5 now available -- Dev

Hidden resource problem -- Dev

how to create a new admin -- Dev

JS/JQuery Grid Control? -- UI, Dev

LDAP configuration problem - 2.5 -- User

mail archive property schema (was Re: Proposals for schema changes) -- Dev

melete and read write directories -- Dev

MOTD unresolved JIRAs (was Re: SAK-11565 Discussion) -- Dev

Plans for integrating web2.0 concepts -Blackboard/Moodle/OpenU -- Ped

problem when "Importing Report Definitions" -- Port

problem when "Importing Report Definitions" -- Portfolio

Problem with entitybroker? -- Dev

Problems with accent display -- Dev

Proposals for schema changes -- Dev

Question about Resources tool conversion -- Dev

Resizing iframe -- DEV

SAK-11565 Discussion -- Dev

sakai-axis and JRE -- Dev

Saving state of tool -- Dev

Tab preferences, SAK-12870 merge to trunk -- Dev

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) latested released ! -- UI

who coded conversion from blobs to filesystem storage? -- Dev

8. Events

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

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

Collab -- collab-admins@umich.edu

Confluence -- confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org

Jira -- jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org