



Sakai Newsletter

August 8, 2008

1. From the Executive Director
2. University of Hawaii Adopts Sakai
3. DSpace Foundation and Fedora Commons Form Working Collaboration
4. Sakai Copyright ECL 2.0 -- Nearly Complete
5. Sakai 2.5 Performance Testing Results from John Wiley & Unicon
6. Thoughts on Sakai's Second Life Experiment: The SLakai Paris Conference
7. Columbia Now Using 2.5
8. Welcoming the QA Analyst to the Community
9. K-12 Workgroup Holds First Conference Call Since K-12 Conference Last Spring
10. McGraw-Hill Higher Education Develops Katana to Unlock Content for Sakai
11. rSmart Announces its Latest Service Pack Release: rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.1
12. rSmart Announcement: Open Forum for Higher Education Executives
13. Email Group Discussions
14. Events

1. From the Executive Director

I'm pleased to announce the availability of Sakai 2.5.2, the first maintenance release of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment. This release includes 132 bug fixes and performance enhancements. This is an important milestone in the changes the community has been making in its release practices, starting with the beta and release candidates that preceded the release of 2.5.0. The release is available in source, binary and demo versions from the main Sakai Subversion repository or from the Sakai website at <http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.5.2/>

You may have noticed that this release is 2.5.2 and that I said it is the first maintenance release. What happened to 2.5.1? After we created the 2.5.1 artifacts the QA process found that one of the fixes introduced into OSP for 2.5.1 caused a regression. That fix had to be backed out and we created a new version, namely, 2.5.2. Thanks to the OSP team for identifying the issue, helping us back it out and creating test plans to help ensure this doesn't happen again.

While I'm at it, I want to thank all members of the QA and release team but especially Anthony Whyte, who took time from his vacation to create the release artifacts. And a special welcome to Angela Henry, the newly hired Sakai Foundation staff member working with Megan May in Quality Assurance, who helped verify the release artifacts.

Stay tuned 2.5.3...

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org
mobile: +1 510-599-2586 // phone: +1 510-931-6559
skype: mkorcuska

2. University of Hawaii Adopts Sakai

The University of Hawaii System has adopted Sakai as its official learning and collaboration service effective Fall 2008. Each of the more than 8000 course sections at the accredited campuses of the University of Hawaii will have a Sakai group created through realtime integration with the University's Banner Student Information System.

The system serves about 50,000 students at its 10 campuses and 5 education centers on 6 islands, as well as distance learners throughout in the world.

Hawaii's Sakai implementation is referred to locally as "Laulima," which translates literally from Hawaiian as "many hands" and refers to cooperation, joint action, or a group of people working together. Laulima is replacing WebCT, which was originally licensed from UBC some ten years ago. University of Hawaii WebCT course content is migrated to Laulima on request by faculty. Laulima will also replace use of the Luminis portal MyCourse group tools. In addition to being used for distance and campus-based courses, Laulima also supports over 200 collaboration groups and will be the platform for several e-portfolio projects around the University System.

The University joined the initial group of SEPP (Sakai Educational Partnership Program) members in Spring 2004. Laulima has been available to the University of Hawaii community since Fall 2007, and was integrated in Spring 2008 into the University's TALENT (Teaching And Learning with Electronic Networked Technologies) faculty development program.

For more information:
<http://laulima.hawaii.edu>
<http://www.hawaii.edu/talent>

Kenwick Chan han@hawaii.edu
Hae Okimoto hae@hawaii.edu

3. DSpace Foundation and Fedora Commons Form Working Collaboration

Two of the largest providers of open source software for managing and providing access to digital content, the DSpace Foundation and Fedora Commons, announced plans to combine strengths to work on joint initiatives that will more closely align their organizations' goals and better serve both open source repository communities in the coming months.

This advance comes as institutions such as universities, libraries, museums and research laboratories worldwide are focused on utilizing open source software solutions for the dissemination and preservation of scholarly, scientific, and cultural heritage digital content into the future. Making books, articles, films, music, large and small data sets, scholarly works, multi-media, learning objects and mash-ups from all parts of the globe discoverable and accessible is at the core of the DSpace and Fedora collaboration. The collaboration is expected to benefit over 500 organizations from around the world who are currently using either DSpace (examples include MIT, Rice University, Texas Digital Library and University of Toronto) or Fedora (examples include the National Library of France, New York Public Library, Encyclopedia of Chicago and eSciDoc) open source software to create repositories for a wide variety of purposes.

Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) director Clifford Lynch remarked, "Repositories are a key part of the infrastructure for supporting scholarly work, and they need to integrate more effectively with a range of other evolving components. I think there are great opportunities for DSpace and Fedora to work together not only on repository interoperability but on common approaches to repository roles in the scholarly and scientific workflows."

The decision to collaborate came out of meetings held this spring where members of DSpace and Fedora Commons communities discussed multiple dimensions of cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations. Ideas included leveraging the power and reach of open source knowledge communities by using the same services and standards in the future. The organizations will also explore opportunities to provide new capabilities for accessing and preserving digital content, developing common web services, and enabling interoperability across repositories.

In the spirit of advancing open source software, Fedora Commons and DSpace will look at ways to leverage and incubate ideas, community and culture to:

1. Provide the best technology and services to open source repository framework communities.
2. Evaluate and synchronize, where possible, both organizations' technology roadmaps to enable convergence and interoperability of key architectural components.
3. Demonstrate how the DSpace and Fedora open source repository frameworks offer a unique value proposition compared to proprietary solutions.

The announcement came on the heels of an event sponsored by the Joint Information Systems Committee's (JISC) Common Repository Interface Group (CRIG) held at the Library of Congress. The event, known as "RepoCamp," was a forum where developers gathered to discuss innovative approaches to improving interoperability and web orientation for digital repositories. Sandy Payette, Executive Director of Fedora Commons, and Michele Kimpton, Executive Director of the DSpace Foundation, reiterated their commitment to collaboration and encouraged input and participation from both communities as work gets underway.

About the DSpace Foundation -- The DSpace Foundation (<http://dspace.org/>) was formed in 2007 to support to the growing global community of institutions using DSpace open source software to manage scholarly works in a digital archive. DSpace was jointly developed in 2002 by HP and the MIT Libraries. Today, there are over more than 350 organizations worldwide a using the software to capture, preserve and share their artifacts, documents, collections and research data. To learn more about the DSpace community of users see:

http://www.dspace.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=596&Itemid=182

About Fedora Commons -- In 2007 Fedora Commons (<http://fedora-commons.org/>) was established as the permanent home of Fedora open source software, which is a robust, integrated, repository platform that enables storage, access and management of virtually any kind of digital content. Fedora has been downloaded 25,000 times in the last year, and is used by over 125 national libraries, institutions, and businesses worldwide to do more with their digital collections, enable long-term preservation of digital assets, build on a flexible and extensible, modular architecture, keep control of their data, and participate in Fedora's innovative community. To find out about Fedora organizations, institutions and projects see:

http://fedora.info/wiki/index.php/Fedora_Commons_Community_Registry.

Sandy Payette, Executive Director Fedora Commons spayette@fedora-commons.org

Michele Kimpton, Executive Director DSpace Foundation michele@dspace.org

4. Sakai Copyright ECL 2.0 -- Nearly Complete

One of the key value propositions of the Sakai Foundation is clean intellectual property of our shared code. While things like signed contribution agreements and copyright audits may seem like they are not in the spirit of "open and fun," these are what allow us to truly be open and to freely work together.

They say that "from time to time the tree of freedom must be refreshed by patriots." In intellectual property, from time to time in an open source project "the cleanliness of the IP must be refreshed with a number of emails and a bunch of small commits."

I just cleaned up a lot of lax and unintentionally poor IP practice over the past four days and I very much appreciate everyone's cooperation and understanding as the commits rolled by. The good news is that our IP is much cleaner now than it was for Sakai 2.5. There is more work to do after my informal audit. The Foundation will be hiring experts to do a formal audit.

Here is my report to the community, which I sent to the dev list:

If you have been watching the commits, you have seen a flurry of little changes cleaning up copyright and changing from the Educational Community License 1.0 to the Educational Community License 2.0. Hopefully all of the changes will just come to you on your next svn update.

We picked the timing for this effort to be right before a code freeze, to make branch management as easy as possible.

The good news is that the copyright in Sakai is much cleaner now that it was before. Also, the ECL 2.0 is a very good license compared to the ECL 1.0 license. The ECL 1.0 license dates back to 2004 and the Sakai Project when we were initially just four schools. The fact that we were not experts in license making was OK. (We made up our own license and put in words that sounded good.)

But as we grew and folks interested in Sakai started looking at the license they began to point to our flaws in the ECL license. One organization would not adopt Sakai because of a clause in the license. Sadly, none of those clauses were there because the original license drafters intended to put imperfect clauses in the ECL 1.0. Instead, we were just inexperienced.

Two years ago, folks started researching possible new licenses for Sakai. We looked closely at what was wrong with ECL 1.0 and what our real intentions were. This research led to a summit of lawyers and tech transfer folks funded by the Mellon Foundation and hosted by Brad Wheeler at Indianapolis. This group of folks took the Apache 2 license, changed as few words as they could to meet the unique needs to Universities, and

produced ECL 2.0. Then Chris Coppola and Brad undertook the arduous process of getting the new license approved and on the OSI approved list: <http://www.opensource.org/licenses/ecl2.php> This took months of careful work. Once the license was approved by OSI group Sakai board formally adopted the license in September 2007: <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SBCO/Board+Minutes+of+Sept+12+2007>

At that time we were in the throes of 2.5, so we decided to hold off changing the license until 2.6 for ease of 2-5-x branch management. We also wanted time for dev testing and a QA cycle even though these should only be comment changes.

Over the weekend, the changes were applied. There are still a few little things I am tracking down, such as some files with contributor copyrights instead of Sakai Foundation copyrights, but those will be done in the next days and weeks. The majority of the modifications are done and checked in.

Chuck Severance
csev@umich.edu

5. Sakai 2.5 Performance Testing Results from John Wiley & Unicon

John Wiley and Sons (in cooperation with Unicon) has completed the first round of performance testing a "Cafe" distribution of Sakai 2.5.0. We have now published our test plan and the test results in the "WG: Performance" space in Confluence <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/FAASAg> If you are interested in the performance of the latest release of Sakai, these are worth reviewing.

The goal for this initial performance testing was to test a vanilla Sakai instance running in a two server configuration (4 core Linux server running Sakai and 8 core Solaris server running Oracle database). We extended Alan Berg's data-generation tools to populate tool data, and we plan to merge those enhancements back to the main QA branch. We used Silk Performer (Wiley's standard tool) as our load generator, and in general we found that Sakai performed quite well. We encountered several bugs and found a few areas that need improvement, however we did find we were able to support about 500 concurrent users on this configuration for sustained periods of time.

The known bugs and possible improvements that we identified are detailed in the Performance Testing Results. We are interested in feedback on whether others in the community are also experiencing these issues and if anyone else is already planning to work on these so we can coordinate efforts. These issues include the following:

Forums

- SAK-13188: Messages & Forums Synoptic Tool / More performance improvements
- SAK-11463: Slow queries from Forums

Memory Leak upon User Login

- No known bugs found

CPU Consuming JVM

- SAK-8932: Runaway CPU use on app server
- SAK-13386: High CPU from stuck threads
- SAK-11098: Stuck threads use excessive CPU

Comments, questions, suggestions, and criticisms are all welcome. Please share them with us via the production mailing list. Thanks!

John Lewis

Chief Software Architect Unicon, Inc.

jlewis@unicon.net

6. Thoughts on Sakai's Recent Second Life Experiment: The SLakai Paris Conference

SLakai Paris Introduction -- In early July, U-M's Wolverine Island played host to members of the Sakai community who were interested in having an in-world event. The island was made available to non-U-M participants from July 1-3, the time period that the real-world Sakai conference was being held in Paris. U-M staff, especially Marc Stephens and Patricia Anderson, set up access and provided other support. Participation in the event was modest, but the people who did show up generally viewed the experience as positive. This blog post outlines some of the details around the event, lessons learned and next steps.

Background -- I began asking about access to Wolverine Island a few weeks before the Sakai conference was to open in Paris. There had been interest expressed on some of the Sakai mail lists in "moving the conference online" and it seemed like a Second Life gathering might be one way to do that. After a brief pitch, Ted Hanss agreed to open up the island and put me in touch with Marc and Patricia to work out the details. I sent a call for interest out to the Sakai community and put up a wiki page to gather information from interested parties: <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/ioCzAQ>

Eventually seventeen Sakai community members signed up as being interested in participating. The wiki also included a space for BOF (Birds of a Feather) signups at a few predefined places on Wolverine Island. BOFs are a popular way for individuals with

like interests to get together at Sakai conferences, and this seemed like a nice model to extend to SL.

To continue reading "SLakai Paris Conference Wrap-up" please see:
http://mblog.lib.umich.edu/slum/archives/2008/08/slakai_paris_co.html#more

Sean Demonner
demonner@umich.edu

7. Columbia Now Using 2.5

Hello everyone,

On Saturday, August 2, Columbia upgraded its long-running Sakai pilot to from 2.4 to 2.5.

We are running the 2.5.x maintenance branch. For more detailed information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Seth Theriault
slt@columbia.edu

8. Welcoming the QA Analyst to the Community

I'm extremely pleased to announce, that after an extensive selection process, Angela Henry has been selected for the QA Analyst position. Angela comes to us with a teaching career spanning some 21 years that includes experience teaching with Sakai. She, possesses extensive experience in documentation and training and has QA experience testing a local implementation of Sakai at Indiana University. Angela is a native of the Caribbean Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and will be working from Trinidad.

Day to day Angela's responsibilities will include:

- Collaborate with the development teams to define, document specifications of current functionality.
- Develop / execute test cases and procedures from specified and unspecified project documentation.
- Provide assistance in developing test scripts that support the overall testing plan and project methodology
- Validate test results to expected results and ensure the test requirements are met.
- Report and track defects throughout the development life cycle
- Critically review functional and business requirements of software in development.

If you are part of a project team that is interested in working on the documentation of specifications of current functionality, please send me an email (mmmay@indiana.edu)

Please join me in congratulating Angela and welcoming her to the community in this role! Also, many thanks to the members of the selection committee: David Horwitz, Seth Theriault and Michael Korcuska.

Megan May
Sakai Quality Assurance Director
mmmay@indiana.edu

9. K-12 Workgroup Holds First Conference Call Following the Successful K-12 Conference in Rhode Island Last Spring

The K-12 Workgroup is for those interested in implementing Sakai in the K-12 environment. The project site at <https://collab.sakaiproject.org/> is a place to share ideas and resources.

The working draft of the workgroup objectives is as follows:

- to learn about other K-12 Sakai implementations
- to share best practices for implementing Sakai in the K-12 environment
- to work together to inform the Sakai community about K-12 requirements for the applications
- to spread the word about Sakai as a viable platform for K-12 institutions
- to indentify funding to support development of enhancements for K-12 users

The K-12 Workgroup held its first monthly conference call last week with a great core of implementers looking to spread the word about Sakai in the K-12 environment and work with the larger Sakai community to improve the application for everyone.

Notes from the meeting are posted in the Resource area of the Collab site. The next meeting is scheduled for August 19th at 11:30 Eastern Time. The key topic of conversation for the August meeting will be using Sakai to support professional development, what works and what hasn't worked, and how to use professional development activities to get teachers interested in using Sakai with their students.

If you're interested in K-12 implementations of Sakai please sign up for the K-12 Workgroup and join us on the call on August 19th.

Thanks,

Steven Foehr steve@staff.ri.net

10. McGraw-Hill Higher Education Develops Katana to Unlock Content for Sakai

Today's professors are looking for online content and products that are easy to implement and provide quality educational materials efficiently and effectively through a fully customized learning experience. To address this need, McGraw-Hill Higher Education announces the development of Katana, a new online learning tool designed to deliver McGraw-Hill content within the Sakai platform for complete course customization for instructors.

"McGraw-Hill is committed to identifying and developing innovative solutions for the dynamic higher education world, and the company is eager to continue working with members of the Sakai community," said Jeff Schultz, vice president of McGraw-Hill Higher Education's Learning Solutions. "We are pleased to introduce Katana, which makes McGraw-Hill content available for integration into the Sakai platform and provides access for the online learning community, professors and students worldwide."

"We are excited that McGraw-Hill has developed Katana and is becoming increasingly active in the Sakai community," said Michael Korcuska, Executive Director, Sakai Foundation. "By developing a necessary tool to enable the easy distribution of high-quality educational content directly within Sakai, McGraw-Hill is providing additional options for enhancing the online learning experience. I'm sure the Sakai community will find many ways to use these new choices to improve the online learning experience for students and faculty."

Katana allows the easy development of a flexible, more robust learning experience within Sakai and unlocks the power of the platform in the development of publisher-vetted content-based online courses. By allowing integration of McGraw-Hill content, Katana gives professors the ability to more successfully leverage and customize the Sakai platform, providing a dynamic, quality experience for students.

Katana was created through the alliance of McGraw-Hill Learning Solutions and The ETUDES Consortium, and leverages the code-base of the Melete Lesson Builder, developed by ETUDES. It is designed to efficiently deliver and display McGraw-Hill content in the Sakai platform and was unveiled to the online learning community at the 9th Sakai Conference at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC) in Paris, France, July 1-3, 2008. It is available online now and can be accessed at: <http://www.mhlearningsolutions.com/katana>.

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 McGraw-Hill Higher Education McGraw-Hill -- Higher Education is a premier provider of teaching and learning solutions for the post-secondary and higher education markets worldwide. It 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 has offices in 33 countries and publishes in more than 40 languages. Additional information is available at: <http://www.mheducation.com/>

Nick Nieset
Sr. Business Analyst
Nick_Nieset@mcgraw-hill.com

11. rSmart Announces its Latest Service Pack Release: rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.1

This week rSmart released its latest Sakai service pack: rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.1. Part of rSmart's Sakai support and maintenance service includes bi-monthly service pack releases for clients. rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.1 delivers to clients 153 bug fixes as well as 12 improvements and minor new features for a total of 165 resolved issues. Many issues were resolved by the Sakai community and have been picked up and packaged into this release by rSmart. Many others were issues rSmart discovered and resolved through the normal course of its ongoing support services with clients. Most of these fixes were pushed back into the community code base. As part of compiling a service pack, rSmart tests each fix and regression tests the entire system ensuring it's ready for immediate deployment. This continuous stream of service packs and updates ensures that rSmart support clients are using the latest, most up-to-date Sakai software code and provides them with ongoing security, stability, and peak performance for their installations.

To get a copy of rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.1 please visit: <http://www.rsmart.com/download-rsmart-sakai-cle>

Mike Zackrison
mike.zackrison@rsmart.com

12. rSmart Announcement: Open Forum for Higher Education Executives

Encourage your campus leadership to become more savvy about open source and community source by attending The Open Forum for Higher Education Executives. For details visit: <http://www.theopenforum2008.com>

Mike Zackrison
mike.zackrison@rsmart.com

13. 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:

- 2.5.2 demo and binary testing assistance needed DEV
- 2.6 Code Freeze Dates DEV, UX, USER
- a internationalization problem in blog DEV
- A simple page-authoring design PED
- Anyone using Safari 3-friendly FCK in production? DEV
- Assignment Issue DEV
- Authoring summit -- September 2008 UX
- Axis 2 in 2.6 DEV
- Can we consolidate these two DGs? PORT, UX

Citations Helper Survey available USER
ehcache jar version confusion for 2.5.x DEV
How Sakai does R&D (Re: Thinking about Sakai 2.6 and 3.0) PORT, PED
K1 and ohloh DEV
Need help with Jforum cache configuration... DEV
new set of webservices for 2.6 DEV
Partisipants add to site automaticaly DEV
Portfolio Sharing (SAK-14162) PORT
Presentation Tool and Sakai 2.6.0 USER, DEV
Question about Evaluations (osp.evaluation), Wizards (osp.wizard) and Reports (sakai.reports) tools DEV
Question regarding FormattedText.processFormattedText() DEV
SAK-13146 Branch (Alternative Add Forms and Attachments to Wizard Main Page) PORT
sakai on slashdotv DEV
Sakai Version Change (SAK-13938) DEV
Sakai's history PED
Showing or hiding resources in different contexts DEV, PORT
Why would anyone want to work on Sakai? PORT, DEV, USER, PED
Workflow (RE: 2.6 and 3.0 plans) DEV
XSL to transform POM files DEV

14. Events

JA-SIG Fall 2008 Unconference
University of Wisconsin-Madison
October 6-8, 2008
<https://www.concentra-cms.com/register/start.action?confId=34>

2008 International Eportfolio Conference
Maastricht, the Netherlands
October 22-24, 2008
<http://events.eife-l.org/ep2008/overview>

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

The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives
December 7-9, 2008

Palm Springs, California
<http://theopenforum2008.com/index.html>

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