



Sakai Newsletter

September 18, 2008

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1. From the Executive Director

Sakai Website Re-launch

I'm extremely pleased to announce the re-launch of the Sakai website.

There is still a good deal of work to do in terms of adding content and improving what is already there, so don't hesitate to send us your feedback and suggestions for improvement (a jira is appreciated at <http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SPO>). Still, we feel it is a big improvement and are happy to be going live with a few issues and gaps remaining.

Of course, we always need more hands to create content and improve the visual appeal of the site. In particular, we'll be asking for organizational and individual profiles--you can see where they will go on the "Community" tab. We'd love to see as many organizations represented as possible and we'll be sending out a template you can use to create one--for

your organization or for yourself. This would also be a good time to check to see if you're on the Sakai map. If not, send an email to Anthony Whyte (arwhyte@umich.edu).

In addition to being a big improvement over the previous site, the new site is built on Sakai itself (2.5.x). This, and a lot of the content, is thanks to Anthony. While Sakai isn't designed to be a content management system, it has worked fairly well for our purposes. Moreover, our goals included both understanding Sakai's limitations as a content authoring platform and, if possible, improving Sakai itself. Anthony has ably demonstrated the flexibility that Sakai offers and has built a simple new "markup" tool (in contrib) that makes it fairly easy to add html content. Please join me in congratulating and thanking him for the new Sakai website! We invite you to take a look:

<http://www.sakaiproject.org>

Sakai Foundation QA Director Update

For those who have either expressed interest in or submitted an application for the Sakai Foundation Quality Assurance Director position, I wanted to outline the process and timing so you know what to expect.

I'm preparing for a board meeting this week so not much will be happening between now and the end of the week. Next week the selection team (two members are cc'ed on this email) will be meeting to review all the applications (the application deadline is September 21) and we will select several applicants for phone interviews during the week of September 29. Depending on how this goes we may then schedule follow-up video-conference interviews or in-person meetings. The goal is to have a new QA Director selected by October 12th and begin a transition process at that time.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org
skype: mkorcuska

2. Virginia Tech Conference Update: Registration Is Now Open

Thanks to the diligent efforts of Susan Hardin, we have completed the necessary changes to our PayPal account and Registration for the November 11-12 Virginia Tech Conference is open sooner than we originally expected. Thank you Susan!

Remember that the cut-off date for hotel reservations at the guaranteed Sakai rate of \$129/night is Monday, October 13, 2008. To make your reservation, call the hotel

directly at (540) 231-8000 or toll-free at (877) 200-3360. Remember to ask for the VT Sakai Foundation Fall Conference room block.

If you register for the conference prior to the October 13 date, you qualify for the early-bird discount of \$125 for members and \$175 for non-members. After that date, the rates will increase to \$150 for members and \$200 for non-members. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. If you need to pay by another method, please contact me directly.

Please let me know if you have any difficulties or if I may be of further assistance.

Mary Miles
Sakai Foundation Administrative Coordinator
Phone: 734-764-3614 Fax: 734-763-7829 Cell: 734-395-2650
<http://etudes.org/>

3. OSYL: OpenSyllabus Alpha Release

Hello,

I am excited to make the following announcement!

Following the interest of members of the community at the previous conference in Paris, we are now releasing the first public version of OpenSyllabus.

OpenSyllabus is a Syllabus Editor based on Sakai and the Google Web Toolkit.

WARNING: This release is an ALPHA version! We would not feel comfortable at all if it was to be used in a production environment! A couple of bugs are included and some are rather nasty (especially under Internet Explorer!). Firefox is the preferred browser for now.

The project source code is not yet available in a public subversion repository but in a zip archive available at:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/OSYL/OpenSyllabus+Quick+Start>

Another bundle consisting of an Apache Tomcat instance preconfigured with OSYL (OpenSyllabus) is also available from this page:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/OSYL/OSYL+Tomcat+Bundle>

You will find various documentation about OSYL from our confluence main page, although this page has now become a bit lengthy and finding information is not that easy.

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/OSYL/Home>

OSYL is currently in development against a specific snapshot of Sakai 2.5. We did not have enough time to synchronize OSYL with the 2.5 trunk, and we know that updating the sdata module breaks our compilation. This is why a bundle with this Sakai 2.5 source snapshot is provided. Any help on that matter would be greatly appreciated!

I think this is it! :-) But anyway, don't hesitate to post any question on sakai-dev, we are continuously reading/monitoring the list. Putting OSYL in the Subject would help though! :-)

Cheers!

Rémi Saïas for The OpenSyllabus Team

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HEC Montréal

4. SakaiAdminX Released

Hello everyone,

I am very excited to announce that SakaiAdminX has been officially released!

SakaiAdminX is a web application you can use to administer Sakai with ease.

Using SakaiAdminX you can:

- create and delete sites (either blank or based on templates)
- edit sites (title, skin, site icon, type, contact details, etc.)
- add and remove users with different degrees of permissions
- search for users
- manage people that have 'admin' or 'helpdesk' access to all sites

SakaiAdminX introduces more levels of administrative permissions to Sakai, which allows a single Sakai environment to be used for multiple institutions or clients. This is achieved through the concept of 'clients', where each client has a set of sites attached to it -- with their own branding/look and feel. Each client also has its own admin/helpdesk users who have access to all sites attached to that client.

You also get a helpdesk user, which has access to all sites like an admin user, and you assign users to be helpdesk users giving them access to all sites, much like the admin user works in Sakai at present.

The main function of SakaiAdminX revolves around the 'Site Profile'. This is a place where all editing of the site takes place, i.e., title, skin, icon, contact details, as well as adding and removing users -- all done with far less clicks than the existing Sakai interfaces, and all done on the one screen. The Site Profile is easily extensible, so if you need additional functionality, just plug it in!

SakaiAdminX can also be deployed separate to Sakai itself, or sitting alongside the rest of the Sakai webapps as it makes use of a vastly extended set of webservices written for Sakai.

SakaiAdminX includes a single signon from SakaiAdminX to your existing Sakai installation, and can be CASified easily (instructions included).

Comprehensive information, including screenshots, is available at:
<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/ADMX/Home>

This includes the step-by-step Installation Guide:
<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/ADMX/Installation+Guide>

as well as guides on Using SakaiAdminX (including screenshots), Skinning SakaiAdminX, an Administrators guide and another guide on simple enhancements you can perform on your Sakai environment to make it completely integrated with SakaiAdminX.

You can use SakaiAdminX on existing Sakai installations via the migration utility included, or on fresh installations of Sakai.

SakaiAdminX is currently in production at Lancaster University, UK, as well as a local UK company, which is using it to manage their Sakai installation.

For any comments or questions, please send them along. We would love for anyone that likes SakaiAdminX and wants to extend it, to get involved!

Cheers,

Steve Swinsburg
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5. rSmart's Featured Webinar: Configure the Sakai CLE Before You Go Live!

September 25, 2008, 2:00 PM EDT

Configuring a new learning management system to meet the needs of your faculty is critical for a successful adoption. Join Kara Stiles, rSmart Senior Functional Consultant, as she focuses on the configurable components of the rSmart Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE). Using real examples and stories, Kara will discuss how various institutions have chosen to creatively configure the CLE to meet unique teaching, learning and collaboration needs.

The one-hour Web Seminar will include:

- A brief introduction to rSmart
- Overview of the CLE Adoption Package
- Configuration Requirements Session content
- Configuration Examples & Stories
- Question and Answer

To register: <https://rsmart.ilinc.com/register/xrtbht>

Megan Perrone
megan.perrone@rsmart.com

6. CTools Annual Survey Results Now Available

The CTools Team at the University of Michigan is pleased to announce that selected results from the 2008 CTools Survey for both the Ann Arbor (main campus, residential) and Dearborn (commuter) campuses are now available online:

<https://ctools.umich.edu/> (Click on "Survey Results" in the left-hand menu.)

These selected results include responses from the 1,639 instructors and 3,824 students surveyed about their use of, preferences for, and attitudes about information technologies and CTools for their courses and projects. Overall, 87% of students and 81% of instructors at both campuses combined agree or strongly agree that CTools or another Learning Management System is valuable when teaching or taking a course. Both quantitative and qualitative responses are available.

If you have any questions about the CTools Survey, please contact Steve Lonn (slonn@umich.edu) or Stephanie Teasley (steasley@umich.edu).

Steve Lonn
slonn@umich.edu

7. Help Advance Quality in Sakai by Participating in the 2.6 QA Cycle

Colleagues,

The 2.6 code freeze is rapidly approaching and it is now time for the community to intensely focus on ensuring the highest quality possible. Many different skills are needed so this is an excellent opportunity for everyone in the community to be involved! For example we need help with:

- Functional Testing -- Writing test plans and executing those tests against specific new features. In addition we need full regression testing as well as verification of bug fixes. This is an area that anyone (UX, Support, developers, etc.) can be involved in.
- Accessibility Testing -- Assure that users who use alternate means of interacting with the system (other than mouse, keyboard, monitor, ect) experience no difficulty with new features
- Deployment testing -- Install the latest tag during the release cycle to verify installation success, documentation and scripts. While we get a lot of coverage via the QA network, this does not cover all configurations.
- Release artifact testing -- A less time intensive form of deployment testing.
- Code review -- it is always helpful to have another developer's eyes looking over changes that have occurred. Great opportunity for developers to be involved!
- Log Analysis -- Review logs of QA server network for errors

Participation by all in the community is strongly encouraged and welcomed! The official QA cycle will run from Oct 6 through the end of February so there is flexibility to work with your availability. Please sign up with your testing interests and availability at <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/OQCeAg>. If you have any trouble with Confluence or have questions, please contact me directly.

I look forward to working with familiar faces as well as new ones!

Megan

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu
Sakai Quality Assurance Director

8. Web Tech and Instructional Designer Positions Available

Hello Everyone,

The Kaiser Permanente Hayward Physical Therapy Fellowship in Advanced Orthopedic Manual Therapy is looking for a web technologist and an instructional designer. We are located in Union City, California, just South of Oakland. The PT Fellowship is a postgraduate program in orthopedic physical therapy, which provides advanced specialty training to experienced physical therapists from across the United States. The program is undergoing a major transformation to move from a traditional classroom setting to a hybrid online environment using Sakai.

The job descriptions follow. If you are interested in either, please respond and I will forward your response to our director Carol Jo Tichenor.

Our website: <http://www.kaiserhaywardptresidency.com/>

Thanks.

Steve Ryan
stefanojo@gmail.com

Sakai Web Technologist

We are looking for an experienced Sakai Web Technologist to help us with start up and provide on going web technology development and support for our PT Fellowship program. We would appreciate someone with the following qualifications:

- **Must be Experienced in Sakai** Content Management System (Moodle, Web CT, Blackboard experience may be considered) No other applicants will be considered.
- Must be able to create content within Sakai, create the learner environment including reports, learner's transcripts, information on courses, filtering data according to needs.
- Minimum of 2 years' experience in Sakai (or equal environment) web development and design.
- Demonstrated interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills.
- Thorough demonstrated knowledge of web development best practices, technologies and processes.
- Demonstrated experience in web development including in-depth knowledge of MS Office, Acrobat, Adobe Photoshop, Flash, JavaScript, and CSS.
- Knowledge of a server-side scripting language such as php, jsp, or asp.
- Understand core programming concepts and foundation.
- knowledge of FTP skills and HTML coding, and limitation & cross-browser functionality.
- Strong critical thinking and analysis skills.

- Ability to communicate and train technology information to non-technical personnel.
- Must be able to effectively communicate with an instructional designer/curriculum team to take e-learning course from concept to production.
- Must be able to effectively communicate with team to ensure the system meets the educational needs of the end user client/student.
- Preferred experience: Melete Lesson Builder, Shockwave, Articulate, Dreamweaver, and experience with audio and video production.

Senior Instructional Designer

Duties

- Participates in the development and management of the department for online postgraduate education, including instructing/coaching faculty in the development of online educational units.
- Reviews, edits and prepares for production the online units developed by faculty members, making recommendations for efficient, creative and cost-effective solutions to meet the business and functional needs of the program.
- Plans and manages the deployment of physical therapy online learning systems within Kaiser Permanente within California and inter-regionally.
- Evaluates and selects computer based software and hardware needs for the program.
- Responsible for usability analysis, interface design, storage and content management of the online program elements.
- Develops and oversees production and technology standards for implementation.
- Acts as a liaison to Information Technology department, outside vendors, ISPs or professional consultants.
- Manages outside vendors when appropriate.

Qualifications

- Five or more years of experience in instructional design or related work experience.
- Certification or the equivalent in web-based education, BA in Instructional Design, Education, Communication or related field. Master's degree preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to design, oversee and implement web-based education.
- Experience in university based online education with medical or technical areas preferred.
- Demonstrated experience in web development software and ability to use and oversee use of software relevant for online instruction. **Experience with Sakai**, Moodle and/or related educational platforms strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills.
- Proven leadership skills in project/program management of online/e-learning programs.
- Thorough demonstrated knowledge of web development best practices, technologies and processes.

9. 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:

- Adding roles to existing sites DEV
- Allowing instructors to attach artifacts to student matrix cells PORT
- Anyone using NetMeeting? DEV
- Content and OSP PORT
- Delay in appearance of official photo in roster tool (with fix) DEV
- Fix for the 2.5.x Maintenance Branch DEV, USER
- functions.require question DEV
- Has anyone used Yale's Signup tool USER
- how to you involve faculty? USER
- Improving OSP v1.0 - Week 3 UX, PORT
- Jira Change for Tests & Quizzes (Samigo) DEV, USER
- jquery upgrade for Sakai 2.6 DEV
- Meeting notes, including discussion of Portfolio Tool redesign screenshots PORT
- Meeting software for Linux? DEV
- Needing help PORT
- Null pointer exception in attachment tool USER
- One question about sakai, xalan DEV
- One question about XSLT compile PORT
- Review Branches for Merge for 2.6 DEV
- SAK-13987 for Sakai 2.6 UX
- SakaiAdminX -- issues with sql and mysql DEV

SakaiAdminX: Official Release USER
Sakia/Alfresco project DEV
sdata/flat portal JCR errors DEV
search indexer exceptions DEV
Still looking for a volunteer PORT
UX and open bug: should SAK-10044 be fixed or closed as Won't Fix? UX
UX Components in Jira for Improving the CLE UX
UX Implementation - Status Update UX
VelocityServlet : Error processing the template : Site Info page ASIAN 240 002 F08
PORT
Verifying issues in for 2-5-x queue DEV
WebDav with pubcookie and LDAP DEV

10. Events

Content Authoring Summit
September 23-25, 2008
University of Michigan - Dearborn
Dearborn, Michigan
The Hyatt Hotel and The Hampton Inn
<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/xgFTAg>

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>

Sakai Fall Regional Conference
November 11 and 12, 2008
The Inn at Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia
<https://educonference.com/sakai/virginiaTech/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

The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives
December 7-9, 2008
Palm Springs, California
<http://theopenforum2008.com/index.html>

10th Sakai Conference: Boston
July 8-10, 2009
Cambridge Hyatt
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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