Sakai Newsletter

October 2, 2008

1. From the Executive Director

2. Tentative Fall Sakai Conference Schedule Now Available / Registration is Open

3. The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives in Palm Springs

4. Sakai 2.5.3 Released

5. Discussion --> Forums Conversion

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

7. Announcing the 2009 JASIG Spring Conference

8. Unicon and John Wiley & Sons Contribute Patches to Sakai Community

9. rSmart Webinar: ePortfolios Made Easy with Sakai!

10. rSmart Releases New Sakai Service Pack: rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.2

11. Position Opening for Instructional Design Consultant, Indiana U.-Purdue U.

12. Recent Email Group Discussions

13. Events

---

1. From the Executive Director

I'm pleased to announce an important extension and expansion of the Sakai Foundation User Experience Improvement project. As you know, the Sakai Foundation initially contracted with Nathan Pearson to begin working on new user interaction designs for Sakai. This work has made excellent progress and a variety of schools are assisting with implementation, including UC Berkeley, Cambridge University, Georgia Tech, University of Michigan and Indiana University. You can review the current progress on the Sakai wiki at: http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/EoDj.

This work has established significant momentum and we would like to accelerate the progress. To this end, I'm pleased to announce that the Sakai Foundation is establishing a UX Improvement Matching Funds program. For every $2 in funding provided by donors, the Sakai Foundation will provide an additional $1 in funds (up to $40,000).

I'm even more pleased to be able to publicly thank both Stockholm University and Indiana University for their initial pledges of $15,000 each! This means that we already have an additional $45,000 to continue the work that has been started. Our goal is a total of $80,000 in pledged funds plus the $40k from the Sakai Foundation for a total of $120,000. Please join me in thanking Stockholm and Indiana for their leadership.

These funds will be used for both design and implementation work on the Sakai UX Improvement Initiative, ensuring that more of the design work that Nathan (and others) produces will find its way into the next Sakai release (after 2.6). While we will use the funds for multiple purposes related to this initiative, we expect a substantial portion of the funds to go towards HTML & JavaScript programming as well as Quality Assurance -- the goal is to ensure the designs are usable in production as quickly as possible. And we'll be establishing a demo server so you can concretely see the progress that is being made.

This method of Foundation-coordinated, community-funded development is a great way to leverage the strength of the community source model. We've all agreed that the Sakai user experience is a priority. Please consider making a contribution of $1000 or more before the end of November and make it clear that Sakai's user experience is your priority. If you would like more information please contact Michael Korcuska (mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org) or Mary Miles (mmiles@umich.edu). We would be happy to send you a contribution agreement and discuss the project with you in more detail.

Thank you.

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

---

2. Tentative Fall Sakai Conference Schedule Now Available / Registration is Open

More information regarding the Virginia Tech Regional Sakai Conference is now available. Registration is open at:

https://educonference.com/sakai/virginiaTech/

More conference details, including a tentative schedule, can be found at:

http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/MGT/Virginia+Tech+Regional+Conference+2008

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

---

3. The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives in Palm Springs

Please join us at The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives in Palm Springs, California on December 7 - 9. The conference provides a unique opportunity for executives to understand, evaluate and increase the strategic impact that openness in higher education provides to each institution.

Exceptional speakers such as John Seely Brown and Brad Wheeler will provide strategic context for a lively discussion. Topics include the strategic impacts of OPEN on innovation and scholarship, the vision and realities of OPEN educational resources, the promise of pitfalls of OPEN textbooks and open access to scholarly journals, and approaches for more effective implementation and risk management of OPEN source software.

Please share this invitation with leaders on your campus, and bring your experience and insights to join this important dialogue. See www.theopenforum2008.com for more information.

Kim Thanos
kim@thanospartners.com

4. Sakai 2.5.3 Released

Colleagues,

I'm pleased to announce the availability of Sakai 2.5.3, the second maintenance release of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment in the 2.5 series. This release includes 39 bug fixes and performance enhancements in Assignments, Blog, Database, Entity Broker, Messages, Forums, Worksite Setup/Site Setup and Wiki. This is an important milestone in the changes the community has been making in its release practices as the fixes selected for inclusion in the release targeted a subset of tools. 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/2.5.3/

I'd like to thank all the QA and release team members that made this release possible: Bryan Batotich, Alan Berg, Angela Henry, Govind Iyengar, Matthew Jones, Huzefa Khalil , Peter Knoop, Michael Lockett, and Anthony Whyte.

Megan May
mmmay@indiana.edu

5. Discussion --> Forums Conversion

I would like to let you know that I wrote a small utility (a sakai quartz job) to convert from the old Discussion tool (sakai.discussion) to Forums tool (sakai.forums) -- or MessageCenter (sakai.messagecenter), if using this instead. You can find the code here:

https://source.sakaiproject.org/contrib/ufp/discussion2forums/trunk

Read the following file for instructions and information on what and how it does the conversion:

https://source.sakaiproject.org/contrib/ufp/discussion2forums/trunk/README.TXT

I have tested it under 2.5.x, but it should also work on 2.4.x.

Please let me know if you have any questions.   Hope it helps,

Nuno Fernandes
mailto:nuno@ufp.edu.pt

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

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 need 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, etc.) 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 developers 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 May
mmmay@indiana.edu
Sakai Quality Assurance Director

7. Announcing the 2009 JASIG Spring Conference

Save the Dates!

Announcing the 2009 JASIG Spring Conference

Sunday, March 1 - Wednesday, March 4
Join JASIG and the greater higher education open source community

Dallas, Texas.
The Sheraton Dallas Hotel
http://tinyurl.com/6ch662

Watch for more information soon!
http://www.ja-sig.org

See you in Dallas this coming March,

The 2009 JASIG Spring Conference Committee

---

8. Unicon and John Wiley & Sons Contribute Patches to Sakai Community

Unicon, in cooperation with John Wiley & Sons, has committed several patches that are now available for use by the Sakai community. These patches are designed to work with Sakai 2.5.x and include more control over the Worksite Setup and Site Info tools, as well as enhancements to portal navigation. Below is a description of the patches that are now available:

- SAK-13883 enables skin-specific override of VelocityPortalRenderContext configuration and template locations as well as fall-back to the ServerConfigurationService-specified skin in the absence of request- or session-scoped skin specifications.

- SAK-14462 makes it possible to restrict the menu items available in Site Info and Worksite Setup via a single configuration property. Existing menu-item configuration options and business rules are still respected, but new one-off configuration properties should no longer be necessary.

- SAK-14464 also modifies Site Info and Worksite Setup to allow preservation of existing site "joinability" state in the event that corresponding UI features are disabled by configuration.

- SAK-14483 adds a field to the Worksite Setup screen for a site URL alias. The default URL includes the site id -- this patch allows for a user-friendly portal-relative alias at the time of site creation. This alias can then be provided to students for direct access to their course worksite.

Unicon is happy to answer any questions regarding these patches on the appropriate Sakai mailing lists. Since these were not available in time for the 2.6 code freeze, we hope to merge them into the trunk after it goes wild again.

John A. Lewis
jlewis@unicon.net

---

9. rSmart Webinar: ePortfolios Made Easy with Sakai!

Join us for our webinar October 9, 2008 at 3:00 PM EDT

Is your institution grappling with an ePortfolio project? Are you unsure about which system to use or how to get started? Come join rSmart and Serensoft, two experts in ePortfolios, to learn about using Sakai's open source portfolio capabilities for your ePortfolio project. The rSmart / Serensoft ePortfolio solution combines rSmart's expert Sakai support and maintenance program with Serensoft's leading ePortfolio expertise. Together, we can jump start any ePortfolio project quickly and efficiently and cost-effectively support it for the long term.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:
- Introduction to Sakai's powerful ePortfolio capabilities
- Recommendations for how to get started with Sakai for portfolios
- How rSmart and Serensoft are working together to make ePortfolios easy

Seating is limited! Reserve your Webinar seat now at:

https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/437140848

Thanks!

Megan Perrone
megan.perrone@rsmart.com

---

10. rSmart Releases New Sakai Service Pack: rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.2

rSmart has released its latest Sakai service pack, rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.2. The service pack delivers to clients 58 bug fixes as well as 17 improvements and minor new features for a total of 75 resolved issues. Based upon Sakai 2.5.3, which was recently released by the Sakai community, many fixed issues were resolved by the Sakai community and picked up and packaged into this release by rSmart. 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 rSmart's code management process.

Part of rSmart's Sakai support and maintenance subscription service includes regular service pack releases for clients. As part of this maintenance service, rSmart tests each fix and regression tests the entire system to ensure that it is ready for immediate deployment. The bi-monthly release of service packs and updates ensures that rSmart support clients are using the latest, most up-to-date Sakai code and provides them with ongoing security, stability, and peak performance for their installations.

"rSmart's package of open source software plus professional support and maintenance provides a much better value to today's teaching institutions for their critical eLearning needs than traditional proprietary and expensive software solutions," said Mike Zackrison, VP of Marketing at rSmart. "Finding good value in today's environment of shrinking IT budgets will become increasingly important to colleges and universities as they look for ways to provide more service and innovation at lower costs."

The rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5.2 is available for hosted or on-site deployments immediately. To experience rSmart Sakai CLE 2.5, please visit http://www.sakaisandbox.com and register for a free account or download a full, easy-to-install version directly from rSmart's website.

Megan Perrone
megan.perrone@rsmart.com

---

11. Position Opening for Instructional Design Consultant, Indiana U.-Purdue U.

Instructional Design Consultant Center for Teaching and Learning Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis is a progressive urban institution enrolling more than 30,000 students in professional and liberal education. Located in the state capital, its mission highlights teaching, scholarship, and service characterized by collaboration, a commitment to diversity, and pursuit of best practice.

IUPUI's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is committed to helping faculty achieve excellence in their teaching through a wide range of support services in instructional design and development, instructional technology, and information resources It is a partnership among Academic Affairs, University Information Technology Services, and University Library.

The Instructional Design Consultant is expected to assist faculty and departments in addressing complex teaching and learning issues including instructional design, implementation, and assessment, particularly in relation to the effective use of

instructional technology in face-to-face and online settings through individual consultations, workshops, and programs. Successful applicants will be able to adapt to the rapidly changing needs of the institution and respond with creative and innovative solutions to address these needs.

Primary responsibilities of the Instructional Design Consultant include:
- Serving as the CTL liaison to the ePortfolio executive committee

- Consulting with faculty on the ePortfolio project design and use of the Oncourse ePortfolio tools

- Consulting with individual faculty, departments, and schools on instructional design issues, particularly in regard to online teaching and learning and the effective use of instructional technology
--- Implementing programmatic activities for instructional support by planning and assisting in the delivery of orientations, workshops and presentations
--- Developing web/print materials on teaching with instructional technology for internal and external distribution

- Coordinating CTL sponsored programs and special projects while supporting campus initiatives

- Exploring, through literature reviews, networking, and action research, innovative ways of teaching and learning with technology

- Disseminating work through national presentation and publication, as well as through preparing internal documents and reports for campus colleagues

- Pursuing professional development through reading, conference attendance and other strategies

Required qualifications include a master's degree in education or related field and 1-3 years experience in post-secondary teaching, research, and program planning and implementation. Doctorate degree preferred. Significant experience with online learning environments and emerging technologies is desired.

The ideal candidate must be committed to the university's goal of inclusiveness and have a demonstrated history of working effectively with persons of all races, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, and religions. Because we place a high priority on the importance of cultural diversity on this campus, candidates should explain how they have been and could be involved in advancing this campus goal. We especially welcome candidates from underrepresented groups.

This position is posted on the IUPUI Human Resources Web site as position #00012833 with the title Instructional Development Specialist. More information about

application procedures is available at http://www.hra.iupui.edu. IUPUI is an EEO/AA, Employer M/F/D. Applications will be accepted until November 2, 2008.

Terri A. Tarr, Ph.D.
Associate Director Center for Teaching and Learning
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
tatarr@iupui.edu

---

12. 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:

"Demo Data" from pedagogy group   PED
Beta jar in Kernel dependencies (Jaxen)?   DEV
Calculated question types   USER
Developments at SpringSource   DEV
Eclipse and KDE4   DEV
Fall Sakai Conference Update   PED, PORT, USER
help with this followings questions - Sakai   USER
Highlighting a Few Patches   DEV
Is there a SASH tag for 2-5 ??   DEV
JNDI and C3P0?   DEV
KNL-62 breaking tomcat startup?   DEV
Mail Archive collection ID   DEV

Need Extension: SAK-13584   DEV
New features in Scorm Player, discussion   USER
Open Teaching > Winds of change are blowing   PED, PORT
Osp portal styles   PORT
Poll tool thread safety   DEV
Portfolio-demo in contrib   PORT
position announcement   PORT
Position opening for Instructional Design Consultant, IUPUI   PED
Problem with oracle, hibernate and/or generic dao ??   DEV
problems with chat and safari on 2.5   DEV
Russian terms in glossary ? viewing   DEV
SAK-14417 Code Freeze Extension   PORT
Sakai 2.6 Code Freeze Exception List   DEV
Sakai 2.6 String Freeze Dates   DEV
sakai and chat capabilities/online instruction   USER
Sakai and Oracle 11G   DEV
Sakai Audio/Video Conference Bridge Ettiquitte   USER
Sakai reporting tools   USER
UMich work on course site creation?   UX
University of Michigan OSP Demo   PORT
UX Components in Jira for Improving the CLE   UX

---

13. 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

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