# Sakai Newsletter

November 13, 2008

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## 1. From the Executive Director

I'm extremely pleased to announce that the first Sakai book (tentatively entitled "The Official Sakai Handbook") is under development. It will be published next year by John Wiley & Sons (a Sakai Foundation partner institution). The book is the brainchild of Alan Berg, 2008-2009 Sakai Fellow from the University of Amsterdam. I will be a co-author. All royalties from the book will go to the Sakai Foundation. We are working with Wiley to allow educational institutions to use portions of the book without paying royalties. They have been very receptive although specific language is still to be finalized.

Although Alan and I will be listed as authors on the book we are really counting on contributions from the community for much of the content. He and I will be reaching out

to the community in the coming weeks and months to solicit content that we can incorporate. We appreciate your help with this exciting development.

I'd like to thank Carol Long from Wiley for her assistance during the proposal development and contracting phase. And, of course, a special thanks to Alan Berg for being the engine behind this effort!

Cheers,

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

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## 2.  Sakai Foundation Announces 2009 Teaching and Learning Innovation Competition

The Sakai Foundation is seeking nominees for its second annual International "Teaching with Sakai Innovation" Award, which was officially announced during the opening keynote address at the Virginia Tech Sakai Regional Conference this week.  The intent of the award is to highlight examples of innovative and transformative educational applications of Sakai.

The second annual Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award will build on the energy generated at the 9th International Sakai Conference in Paris, France, where last year's first and second place winners, Dr. Aileen Y. Huang-Saad from the University of Michigan and Mr. Salim Nakhjavani from University of Cape Town, South Africa, excited attendees with their examples of how Sakai enhanced the educational experience of their students.  This year's award is being sponsored by the IBM Corporation (www.ibm.com) with additional support from rSmart (www.rsmart.com), both Sakai Commercial Affiliates.

Instructors or other interested parties can visit www.OpenEdpractices.org to learn more about the award and access an online application form and evaluation rubric.  The application deadline is February 27, 2009, at midnight GMT.  Winners will be awarded a trip to Boston, Massachusetts, to present at the 10th Sakai Conference and receive their award during the conference.  Entries will also seed a collection of innovative practices in the OpenEdpractices.org repository, a community of practice for teaching and learning with open/community-source tools supported in part by rSmart, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Marist College.

Joshua Baron
Josh.Baron@marist.edu

## 3. Sakai and Scorm

Hi all,

This is an invitation to join us in improving the Sakai Scorm player.

In Paris, Edia and rSmart (Hannah Reeves) organised a BOF about Scorm, stressing the importance of a properly working Scorm player in Sakai. It seems that many people are interested, but at the same time, the amount of resources spent on it remains limited. The commercial parties are reluctant to invest, hoping it will eventually just come out of the community. The community, however, does not seem to have the time to finish the last 10 percent of the project.

We're involved in a project with the University of Amsterdam that involves a lot of content creation. Some of the authors in the project have indicated that they would like to build their content in Scorm. We've offered to install the UC Davis Scorm player, but I have worries that it is unstable. We would like to put some time into improving the player, but the project has no resources reserved for this. This is a typical situation when it comes to Scorm: authors want to use it but are not willing or able to put money into improving the Scorm player. People have come to simply expect one in the VLE.

Meanwhile, we've put in a little time to find and fix some bugs:

http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO-42
http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO-41
http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO-40
http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO-38
http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO-37

But this is basically happening in our spare time. I would like to see the Sakai community put more development resources into this. We need to get out of this vicious circle of no Scorm support, no development resources, no Scorm demand.

That's why we've decided to put the Scorm player on a demo server of ours for the community to play with. This is a version in which the bugs I mentioned above have been fixed. We're working with the developers at UC Davis to get these fixes back into trunk as soon as possible. Folks on this list can help by either testing their own content in this player and reporting bugs if things do not work as

expected, or by simply browsing through existing content with different types of browsers. So go ahead and create an account at:

[http://scormplayer.edia.nl](http://scormplayer.edia.nl)

and then join the Scorm Player Demo site. You should be able to upload Scorm packages. If you find issues, report them here:

[http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO](http://jira.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SCO)

I'm interested to hear what others think about all this.

Regards,

Maarten van Hoof
[maarten.vanhoof@gmail.com](mailto:maarten.vanhoof@gmail.com)

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## 4. Announcing Mailsender

Over the past few months, Georgia Tech has been working on a revised version of Mailtool. To emphasize the changes introduced and new direction of development, Mailtool has emerged as Mailsender. The project has been reimplemented in RSF, and now supports the original built-in email service as well as the updated Sakai email service, which allows attachments and AJAX adornments in the interface for a better feel and faster load time. This project is in production deployment at Georgia Tech and is working its way into other schools as well. Many bugs have been fixed and development is active.

Carl Hall
[carl.hall@gatech.edu](mailto:carl.hall@gatech.edu)

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## 5. EDUCAUSE Board Appoints Brad Wheeler

Brad Wheeler, Sakai co-founder and Indiana University VP for IT, has been appointed to the EDUCAUSE board of directors:

http://www.educause.edu/PressReleases/EDUCAUSEBoardSelectsOfficersfo/138106

## 6. Open Access to rSmart Knowledge Base Articles

For more than two years, the rSmart team has maintained an extensive knowledge base on the use and maintenance of the CLE. Most of the 600+ articles in this KB are available to anyone through a guest login to our support portal, RSN.

To request use of the guest login, send an email to jonny.brown@rsmart.com. She'll send you the current month's password for the RSN guest login ID so you to view well over 500 of our KB articles.

## 7. Massively Inclusive Subversion Repository (or mSub)

We now have an initial framework in place to provide the Sakai community with a "massively inclusive subversion repository", or mSub, as it came to be known in community conversations. The goal of this effort is to provide organizations with a space in the main Sakai source repository in which to keep a copy of their local, customized Sakai implementation(s). This is desirable for a number of reasons:

- easier to manage local customizations
- easier to share code with other organizations
- easier to compare customizations across implementations to identify important trends
- easier to contribute local code, bug fixes, or customizations back to the community codebase

There are some requirements for organizations interested in participating in mSub:

- mSub space is only available to Sakai Partner organizations.
- Completed Sakai licensing agreements are required for the organization, as well as any individuals needing commit access.
- No confidential or non-public code or data is permitted.
- All mSub directories will be anonymous read-only.

The mSub repository is organized under an "msub" directory at the top level of the current Sakai SVN repository (https://source.sakaiproject.org/svn/msub). Each participating organization is given a directory named for their domain name (e.g., /umich.edu). The organization should create a directory within that directory named for their Sakai implementation or implementations (e.g., /umich.edu/ctools).

Requests for mSub directories and commit access will be handled through the mSub project in Jira. So, if your organization is interested in an mSub directory, please use Jira to submit a Directory Request to get a space started, and Commit Requests to add (or remove) committers for the directory.

Thanks to Indiana University, which hosts Sakai's Subversion repository, for helping make this possible.  Also, thanks to the following individuals for helping organize things and agreeing to assist with administering the mSub area:

Ray Davis, University of California, Berkeley
Jon Gorrono, University of California, Davis
David Horwitz, University of Cape Town
Mike Osterman, Whitman College
Steve Swinsburg, Lancaster University
Seth Theriault, Columbia University

Peter Knoop
Sakai Project Coordinator
knoop@umich.edu

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## 8.  LAST CALL: What are your Institution's Top Five Problems/Issues with Sakai?

Sakai Community Members,

This is your final reminder to list your institution's "Top Five" problems or issues with Sakai, as reported by your end-users in help requests, surveys, training sessions, etc. The deadline is Monday, November 17. On the End-User Support call (Nov. 18), we will discuss these issues, combine them, and work with the Sakai Foundation to identify developers who can help work on these issues.

Please list these issues on this Confluence page:

http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/LACeAg

Thank you for your help!

Steve Lonn
slonn@umich.edu

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## 9.   Cernunnos Project Announces 1.0 Release of Open Source, Reusable Libraries for Java Environments

The Cernunnos Team, a group of developers from leading educational institutions and IT consulting companies, is pleased to announce the availability of Cernunnos v1.0.0, the

first release of Cernunnos for the general public.  Cernunnos is an open source Java project that embodies software industry best practices based on innovative design principals.  Used frequently and extensively by institutions deploying the uPortal open source enterprise portal, it provides a number of programming libraries and templates that dramatically reduce the time and effort in Java development by effectively promoting reuse in common programming tasks. Cernunnos is available as a free download from the project website address: http://cernunnos.googlecode.com

"The University of Illinois has become an active contributor to the Cernunnos project, and we have found it to be an addictive platform for problem solving," said Tim Carroll, technical lead and service team manager for a University-wide portal initiative at the University of Illinois. "We have grown to depend on Cernunnos for all the typical uPortal integrations, and we have also quickly developed solutions to more general problems involving application deployment and environment reloads. Cernunnos has enabled us to quickly automate routine service management tasks, and repurpose that time to providing value added portal and portlet enhancements for our end-users."

"We are very pleased to see that Cernunnos has reached its 1.0 release," says Jonathan Markow, JA-SIG Executive Director. "The utility has proven to be extremely valuable to the uPortal community already. Used as a migration tool, it is able to save developers considerable amounts of time upgrading from one uPortal release to another.  Cernunnos developer Drew Wills has been an active and generous participant in JA-SIG for a while now. With Cernunnos, he has provided a very handy technology solution for a long-recognized need."

Cernunnos is ideal for Java developers who have more ambition than time. It allows them to boost their effectiveness and productivity well above traditional industry practices. Cernunnos effectively utilizes an innovative LEGO-like building block design, which enables software code sections to be instantly joined together with other pieces of code without having to write any additional code to make them work together.  For user documentation, examples, and an overview of features see the Cernunnos Manual online at: http://cernunnos.googlecode.com/svn/manual/index.html

Within the uPortal environment, Cernunnos is a valuable import/export tool, enabling the efficient transfer of the following types of objects:

- Entity Types
- Structures
- Themes
- Users
- Groups
- Channel Types
- Channels
- Memberships

- Permissions
- Layouts

Drew Wills
Cernunnos Lead Engineer
wills.drew@gmail.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:

Changing a matrix name    PORT
[ePortfolio] #259: FCK Editor: Spell Checker missing dictionary    PORT
Forms broken after upgrade 2.4 - 2.5    PORT, UI
getsession in SakaiSigning    DEV
Grails meets K2    DEV
How to find central controller of sakai application.]    DEV
how to get Sakai/OSP to include presentationFiles in the download-zip, even if they're not
      included in src="" or href=""?    PORT
IMS packaging and XML validation    DEV
Interest in a Turnitin-Sakai Integration?    PED, USER, UX
K2 Research: 1st POC    DEV
KNL-75 Terracotta clustering of Sakai Session    DEV
Languages in Preferences    DEV

LAST CALL: What are your Institutions' Top Five Problems / Issues with Sakai?    PED, USER

Massively Inclusive Subversion Repository (or mSub)    UI

Metaobj data storage - XML vs tables    PORT

migrating from bb to sakai    USER

Pentaho BI integration    DEV

Personas and Behavioural Axes Analysis    UX

Portlet examples in Sakai    DEV

Possible problem with oracle conversion for 2.6?    UI

Report exporting?

Respondus, Q-Mark, ExamView QTI files....    USER

SAKAI_EVENT_DELAY table?    DEV

synoptic schedule bug    DEV

System Administrator    DEV

url encoding in downloaded portfolios -- in the wrong place?    PORT

UX Improvement - Site Setup & CM - Defining the Problem    UX

UX Improvement Project vs Sakai 3.0 (?)    DEV

Want to know about the central controller of our sakai source code.    DEV

WebDAV to users's My Workspace    DEV

"Wired" quartz jobs, startup dependencies, and 3rd-party jars in 2.5.x    DEV

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## 11.  Events

AuSakai 08
26 - 28 November 2008
Monash University, Caulfield (Melbourne)
http://www.monash.edu.au/eeducation/ausakai08index.html

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

2009 JASIG Spring Conference
March 1-4, 2009
The Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Dallas, Texas
http://www.ja-sigorg

eLearning Africa 29
May 27 ? 29, 2009
Le Meridien President
Dakar, Senegal
www.elearning-africa.com.

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


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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