



## Sakai Newsletter

December 18, 2008

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### 1. From the Executive Director -- Sakai 3: A Proposal and Request for Input

Greetings,

As you may have heard, a number of contributors in the Sakai community have begun talking about, and even working on, something being called "Sakai 3". Sakai 3 would be

a new version of Sakai representing significant change to the end-user experience and, likely, the underlying technology. The beginnings of this conversation go back to the Paris conference, at least, but have recently begun to take a more specific direction and garner some momentum. It is definitely time, therefore, to provide a substantive update about these activities. We also have a desire for input on the vision and want to invite participation in both the conversations and the work. The document at the end of this newsletter pdf describes the rationale for Sakai 3 and strives to give a sense of the changes in user experience and technology it would bring. I encourage everyone interested in Sakai's future development to read it.

This is an extremely important time for Sakai, both as a product and a community. Personally, I feel that the vision described by Sakai 3 is compelling and that it is worth a collective effort to move in that direction as quickly as practical. But, as you know, the Sakai Foundation does not control the direction of the Sakai software. So, as always, it is up to the community to determine how quickly we head in which direction. To that end, we would like to initiate a community conversation about the idea of Sakai 3 and the timing for building/deploying it. While I've irresponsibly cross posted, I'd ask that you direct general discussions about Sakai 3 to the *\*advocacy\** list ([advocacy@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:advocacy@collab.sakaiproject.org)). Technical topics, of course, can cross post to *\*sakai-dev\** ([sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.org)).

I've also built a "Sakai 3 Vision" site on the Sakai 3 experimental server (<http://3sakai.sakaiproject.org>). It contains the same content as the attached PDF. It also contains several poll questions about Sakai 3. It would be terrific if you could take a minute to respond to the poll questions (after reading the content, please!). You can find instructions for creating an account and joining the Sakai 3 Vision site on page 10 of the PDF. The pages in the Sakai 3 site are open for comment as well. And, of course, feel free to send me an email if you'd like.

Finally, a few of caveats:

1. The experimental server for Sakai 3 is a development box. It doesn't represent a final design and there are many bugs and unimplemented features. The features and bugs will change on a regular basis. And it could be that this email results in more load on that server that it is ready for :-). Caveat emptor!
2. If a sufficient group decides Sakai 3 should move forward at the pace described in the document, we are likely to try to pull together a more organized development effort. So stay tuned for more information on what that will look like or, better yet, send your suggestions to the list. We want feedback from everyone, though, so don't hesitate to tell us what you think regardless of whether you think you'll be able to participate in design and development.
3. The ideas described in the document are not mine. It represents my effort to document the thinking of a group of Sakai community members. As the saying goes: Anything you

find compelling is theirs, any mistakes or lack of clarity are mine.

I hope you like the proposal for a Sakai 3. If you don't like it, though, I certainly hope you'll tell us why.

Best regards,

Michael Korcuska  
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation  
[mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org](mailto:mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org)  
phone: +1 510-931-6559  
mobile (US): +1 510-599-2586  
mobile (FR): +33 (0)6 31 11 58 97  
skype: mkorcuska

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## 2. Board Election Results

I'm pleased to announce that John Norman (Cambridge) will be continuing as a Sakai Foundation Board member and Stephen Marquard (Cape Town) will be joining the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors.

This year's slate of candidates was impressively accomplished and diverse -- a real testament to the vibrancy of the Sakai community. I want to thank all of those who were willing to serve the Sakai community and in congratulating John and Stephen. The transition officially occurs with the first board meeting in 2009, currently scheduled for January 15th.

Thanks also to the election committee, Joseph Hardin, Mary Miles, and especially Carl Jacobson, who again ran a smooth elections process.

Finally, special recognition is due to outgoing board members Chris Coppola and Mara Hancock. They have been instrumental to Sakai as both board and community members. I've benefited personally from their insight and advice and have always appreciated the approach that each of them took. I'm certain the rest of the board members feel the same way and will miss their regular presence on our monthly calls. So, Chris and Mara, on behalf of the foundation and the community: "Thank you." We hope your community leadership will continue.

Michael Korcuska  
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation  
[mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org](mailto:mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org)

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### 3. LAMP and Mname Win Mellon Awards for Technology Collaboration (MATC)

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#### Appalachian Sakai Project Wins Prestigious Mellon Award

The Appalachian College Association has received a prestigious 2008 Mellon Award for Technology Collaboration for the consortium's project, "Learning Asset Management Project" or LAMP. LAMP brings together 14,000 students and faculty members of 16 of the Association's member institutions in a shared instance of Sakai, a leading open source collaboration and learning environment.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of New York announced the award at a ceremony on December 8 at the annual meeting of the Coalition for Networked Information in Washington, D.C. Paul Chewning, President of the Appalachian College Association, received the award on behalf of the ACA. Also on hand at the ceremony were Martin Ramsay of CEATH Company and founder and facilitator of LAMP, and Scott Siddall, Managing Partner of The Longsight Group, the hosting and support provider behind LAMP. The Longsight Group has partnered with the project from inception through its rapid growth and success today.

Sakai has provided LAMP participants with a reliable online learning environment and has provided a crucial step towards intra-institutional sharing and collaboration. LAMP has served as a model of cost-containment but additionally, has fostered shared courses and disciplinary content, improved small group collaboration for both academic and administrative purposes. Siddall noted that "Campus leaders in LAMP recognize that it is more strategic to access and share a rich set of pedagogical tools than it is to invest limited resources owning and operating these technologies. By tapping Longsight's expertise in supporting Sakai for large and small institutions, LAMP schools are able to focus on teaching and learning outcomes instead of the technologies."

Longsight hosts and supports the latest version of Sakai for LAMP. One to two LAMP coordinators at each school provide end user support. Coordinators participate in monthly LAMP project conference calls to review policy issues, discuss upgrades and new tools and plan next steps. Users of the system receive a customized theme to match their institutional colors and coordinators from each institution have elevated privileges to help support their institutional users. Longsight provides aggregated authentication services for the institutions that leverage the campus LDAP directories and provides batch user creation tools for campuses without centralized user directories. In addition, Longsight built a system to provide aggregated, detailed statistical reports on system usage by institution, course, participant, tool and content.

The MATC awards provide the recipients with opportunities to strengthen their commitment to inter-organizational collaboration and open source software development. This award provides \$50,000 as recognition of important organizational contributions to

open source projects, which currently or potentially provide significant benefits to at least one traditional Mellon constituency. According to Ramsay, "Smaller schools don't have the resources of large institutions," he said. "Instead of competing our way out of that problem, we collaborated our way out." Siddall added, "This project demonstrates that Sakai is not just for research universities. Combined with experienced support and hosting, Sakai is a strong framework for teaching and learning at institutions of all sizes."

The 2008 recipients were selected by the MATC Award Committee, which includes Sir Timothy Berners-Lee (Director, World Wide Web Consortium), Mitchell Baker (CEO, Mozilla Corporation), John Seely Brown (former Chief Scientist, Xerox Corp.), Vinton G. Cerf (Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, Google, Inc.), John Gage (Chief Researcher and Director of the Science Office, Sun Microsystems, Inc.), and Tim O'Reilly (Founder and CEO, O'Reilly Media). "In recognizing the Appalachian College Association's work in creating and leading the LAMP project, the MATC Award Committee noted the importance of new sustainability models to the long-term success of open and community source software initiatives," said Ira Fuchs, Mellon Foundation Vice President for Research in Information Technology.

Longsight and CEATH have partnered to help other consortia contain costs while accessing extraordinary teaching and learning tools using this model of a shared learning environment. Contact either firm for more information.

The Appalachian College Association (<http://www.acaweb.org>) is a consortium of 36 small, private liberal arts colleges serving 42,000 students in the Appalachian Mountain region of the eastern United States.

The Longsight Group (<http://longsight.com>) provides hosting and comprehensive support solutions to higher education based on carefully selected open source software including Sakai (<http://sakaiproject.org>). The CEATH Company (<http://ceath.com>) has clients on three continents from academic non-profits to Fortune 5 corporations.

For more information, contact Longsight at 740-599-5005 or [information@longsight.com](mailto:information@longsight.com)

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## Mneme Recognized with Mellon Award

Mneme - Test Center is one of ten open source, worldwide, projects that received a prestigious Mellon Award for Technology Collaboration (MATC) on December 8.

Mneme - Test Center, also known as "Tasks, Tests and Surveys," is a comprehensive assessment engine that consists of an authoring module for creating questions and managing pools; a module for publishing assignments, tasks, tests and surveys; a grading

module for evaluating assessments, optionally integrated with the Gradebook; and a delivery module for administering assessments to students. Additionally, a test-drive component allows instructors to take assessments as students.

Mneme is an open source development effort that was launched by the Etudes team in February of 2007 -- a collaboration between Foothill College and the University of Michigan to respond to critical assessment needs by the Etudes and Sakai user communities. Joseph Hardin, University of Michigan, Chair of the Sakai Board of Directors at the time, assigned Software Architect Glenn Golden to work closely with Vivie Sinou, now CEO of Etudes, and lead the architectural design and development of Mneme. Funding support for Mneme was also provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

"Open source communities provide an effective way for contributors to solve a pressing local problem while also helping everyone. The leadership of Foothill, Michigan, and particularly Vivie Sinou on Mneme exemplify why open source is the best path for teaching and learning in higher education," says Brad Wheeler, Vice President for IT and Professor, Indiana University.

The Mellon Awards honor not-for-profit organizations for leadership in the collaborative development of open source software tools with application to scholarship in the arts and humanities, as well as cultural-heritage not-for-profit activities. Foothill College was awarded a \$50,000 MATC Award for leading the Mneme effort." We intend to use the award monies to support the development of features in the Mneme Test Center that have been requested by the entire Sakai Community," says Foothill President Judy Miner. "I am particularly grateful for the expertise and leadership of Vivie Sinou, without whom this award would not have been achievable."

The first generation of Mneme was deployed successfully in Etudes on December 28, 2007. Mneme is now the default assessment engine in 4,039 course sites on Etudes, serving over 90,000 students. "Mneme is the heart and soul of my class," says Leslie Hope, Professor of English at Los Angeles Valley College. Serving a large number of distance education programs, Mneme is used for administering assessments around the clock. The Etudes production now holds 1,488,109 questions in 91,548 pools. Instructors have created 40,828 assessments, which include 883,952 completed student submissions.

Other institutions and organizations that have adopted or are piloting Mneme include: University of Michigan, Universidade Fernando Pessoa (Portugal), Leidse Onderwijsinstellingen (Netherlands), University of Hawaii, Saginaw Valley State University, Johns Hopkins University, Charles Sturt University (Australia), Valencian International University (Spain), Allegheny College Department of Physics, and others. "Mneme was the test tool we dreamed about and you have just concretized it! Special thanks to the Mneme team!" says Nuno Fernandes, Universidade Fernando Pessoa.

"I feel honored by the award and by the very positive acceptance of the system by our users. I look forward to adding in the additional features that will make Mneme even better," says Glenn Golden, now the Chief Architect of Etudes, Inc.

Mneme (pronounced nee' mee) is a muse. In Greek mythology, the nine muses were "a guiding spirit" and "a source of inspiration." Mneme has been a source of inspiration for the users, trainers, and developers who have been involved in the design and evolution of the system. It has taken two years of intense work to deliver a fully-featured release of Mneme. "Assessment is very complex," says Vivie Sinou. "I would not have taken on the development of a testing engine without Glenn's superior talent and expertise in software architecting. I am most grateful to Joseph and the University of Michigan for Glenn's time."

Etudes is committed to evolving Mneme further. With the MATC Award monies, the Mneme team plans to implement several critical user requirements, including QTI import/export of test banks and downloading of assessment results for statistical analysis.

For information about Mneme, contact [sinou@etudes.org](mailto:sinou@etudes.org) or [ggolden@etudes.org](mailto:ggolden@etudes.org).

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#### 4. Bidding a fond farewell...

Hello,

As of Friday, December 19, I will be leaving UHI (and academia in general) and going to work as a Senior Support Engineer for Atlassian Systems in their new Amsterdam offices.

Working with Sakai has been one of the best experiences of my life, and I've enjoyed getting to know so many of you in person at conferences and meetings over the years.

I've learned a lot from the community, and not just in terms of technologies and best practices. I will continue to be inspired by the enthusiasm and dedication of the people I've worked with in the community, and hope to bring that level of engagement and spirit to whatever I do in life.

A few practical notes:

- UHI and the Sakai Foundation are working to find a new home for Collab; you'll hear about that in the future.

- I've just updated the Config Viewer for Kernel 1 and have cut a 2.6.x branch and 2.6.0 tag.

- I've finished an interim review of the 2.6 codebase looking for new configuration options in sakai.properties. Thanks to Stephen Marquard, Jean-Francois Leveque and others for providing key input this time around. That data will be available both as part of the tool and in Confluence in the next few days.

- I am currently in the process of updating the Config Editor for Kernel 1. I may bother a few of you whose names rhyme with "Baron" and "Bantranig" for help with that shortly... :)

- I would appreciate hearing from anyone in the community with the time, expertise and interest in contributing to (and possibly entirely taking over development on) one or both tools.

Thanks again for sharing this part of the journey with me. I hope to see you all out in there in the larger open source and computing world at large.

Warmest Regards,

Tony Atkins  
duhrer@gmail.com

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## 5. Announcing a New Consulting Service for Sakai/OSP

Sean Keesler, Janice Smith, and Michael Heroux are unveiling a new Sakai/OSP consulting service. Three Canoes Consulting wants your institution to become self-sufficient in using Sakai and the Open Source Portfolio (OSP) for teaching, learning, and assessment. We offer on-site and virtual services for assessment planning, ePortfolio design, OSP customization, and documentation and training for your use of Sakai. We are fellow educators with years of experience working with higher ed and K-12 institutions and have been a part of the Sakai and OSP communities since their inception.

By partnering with Three Canoes, you ensure that a portion of your investment is contributed back to benefit the open source community. We work with you to contribute what we accomplish together as a means of promoting institutional collaboration and enhancing shared knowledge on how to use Sakai and OSP to meet local needs like yours. Chances are, if you need help with what you want to do with Sakai, the documentation for that aspect of the software needs improvement and others will need the same assistance. With each new project, we build our reputation by generating new intellectual property for you and the entire open source community.



Find out more about Three Canoes Consulting by going to <http://www.threecanoes.com/> or contacting us at [consultants@threecanoes.com](mailto:consultants@threecanoes.com).

Janice A. Smith, Ph.D.  
[janice.smith@threecanoes.com](mailto:janice.smith@threecanoes.com)

Sean Keesler  
[sean.keesler@threecanoes.com](mailto:sean.keesler@threecanoes.com)

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## 6. JForum 2.6.0 for Sakai Now Released!

The Etudes team is pleased to announce the release of JForum 2.6.0.

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### DOWNLOAD JFORUM 2.6.0

JForum 2.6.0 is available to deploy with Sakai 2.3 or 2.4 or Sakai 2.5 and higher. Instructions on how to download and build JForum 2.6.0 can be found at:

<http://etudes.org/release/discussion/>

At the above web page, you'll also find links to download user documentation and tutorials, and a complete list of features and issues addressed in this release.

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### FEATURES & FIXES in JFORUM 2.6.0

(See summary: <http://etudes.org/release/discussion/2.6/> )

Highlights of this release include discussion scoring enhancements and other issues:

- Ability to "add comments to all users with posts"
- Ability to "adjust all scores to users with posts by \_"
- Make "Grade Forum" column header sortable
- Allow instructors to assign negative scores
- Add "last edited on mm/dd/yyyy, time" information for edited posts
- List discussion items in gradebook by due/lock forum date
- Notifications should not be sent in unpublished sites
- Make topic notifications group-aware (send to group only)
- Don't notify users of new posts/replies in 'Deny Access' forums
- Leave "quote" as the only option when replying to PM messages

Thanks to Diego del Blanco Orobitg, Valencian International University, Jforum 2.6.0 now includes better support for Spanish. (Set under "My Profile" by users.)

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

For information on future development, feature requests, and known issues, see:

[http://etudes.org/jforum\\_features.htm](http://etudes.org/jforum_features.htm)

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CREDITS

Many thanks to Murthy Tanniru, Senior Java Developer, Etudes, for his great work on Jforum.

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QUESTIONS?

To report issues or ask questions about Jforum for Sakai, send a message to: [dev@etudes.org](mailto:dev@etudes.org), [sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.org), or [sakai-user@sakaiproject.org](mailto:sakai-user@sakaiproject.org).

Vivie Sinou  
Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.  
[sinou@etudes.org](mailto:sinou@etudes.org)  
<http://etudes.org/>

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## 7. Mneme 1.2, Milestone 1 Now Released!

Mneme 1.2m1 is now available for Sakai 2.3.x, Sakai 2.4.x, or Sakai 2.5.

This is a milestone release that includes several enhancements and important fixes. It was deployed onto Etudes on 11/13/2008. Adopters of Mneme are strongly encouraged to deploy or upgrade to Mneme 1.2m1.

Highlights of features and enhancements of this release:

<http://etudes.org/mneme/releases/mneme-upgrade1.2m1.htm>

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DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL MNEME 1.2M1

Download Mneme from our release page:

<http://etudes.org/mneme/download.html>

List of Jira issues addressed in this release:

<http://etudes.org/mneme/download.html#issues>

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## DOCUMENTATION & TUTORIALS

Documentation for Sakai Administrators:

[http://etudes.org/mneme/admin\\_sakai.html](http://etudes.org/mneme/admin_sakai.html)

Overview of Functionality & Modules:

<http://etudes.org/mneme/index.html> (see all links at the top)

User Tutorials & Documentation:

<http://etudes.org/mneme/download.html#tutorials>

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## BUGS, KNOWN ISSUES, AND FUTURE ROADMAP

For future development, new features, enhancements, and known issues, see:

[http://etudes.org/mneme/mneme\\_features.htm](http://etudes.org/mneme/mneme_features.htm)

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## QUESTIONS

For technical or user support questions or to report issues, please contact us at [dev@etudes.org](mailto:dev@etudes.org), [sakai-dev@sakaiproject.org](mailto:sakai-dev@sakaiproject.org), or [sakai-user@sakaiproject.org](mailto:sakai-user@sakaiproject.org).

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## ABOUT

Mneme is a comprehensive assessment engine for Sakai that consists of an authoring module for creating questions and managing pools; a module for publishing assignments, tasks, tests and surveys; a grading module for evaluating assessments, optionally integrated with the Gradebook; and a delivery module for administering assessments to students. Additionally, a test-drive component allows instructors to take assessments as students.

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## CREDITS

Technical Lead: Glenn Golden, Chief Architect, Etudes, Inc.

Project Lead: Vivie Sinou, Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.

With this release, Mneme is now available in Portuguese and Dutch, thanks to the contributions of Nuno Fernandes, Universidade Fernando Pessoa (Portuguese translation) and Mark Breuker, Leidse Onderwijsinstellingen (Dutch translation).

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## LICENSE

Mneme is licensed under the Apache License, Version 2.0

Vivie Sinou

Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.

sinou@etudes.org

<http://etudes.org/>

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## 8. Sakai Config Viewer 2.6 Now Available

I'm pleased to announce the release of the Sakai Configuration Viewer version 2.6, the source code for which can be found at:

<https://source.sakaiproject.org/contrib//config-viewer/tags/2.6.0/>

For those of you keeping track, there are 17 new (and 10 deprecated) properties for Sakai 2.6, and there are now 426 total properties from Sakai 2.2 until Sakai 2.6. In addition to updating the list of properties, I've updated the code to compile against Kernel 1, thanks to Ian Boston for the stylesheet that made that process painless. I've also been working with Jean-Francois on a French translation of the tool, thanks much to him for working with me on that, and for all his helpful feedback. It was a short but productive collaboration... :) Thanks also to Stephen Marquard and all the other good citizens who have clued me in to new properties over the years.

I have also updated the Sakai Properties reference in Confluence with the new data:

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

Although I will be primarily occupied with my new job in the new year, I hope to provide

at least rudimentary updates and bug fixes for a while, do let me know if you have problems, questions, or concerns.

Best,

Tony Atkins  
[duhrer@gmail.com](mailto:duhrer@gmail.com)

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## 9. Custom Page Order via Webservice

I have a PERL script I'm using to build sites using SOAP calls. I have multiple lines similar to this to add pages:

```
print $soap2->addNewPageToSite($session, $newsiteid,"Home", 1) ."\n" ;
```

Even though I specify the page order (the 1), the pages in the site are out of order when viewed in the site because the CUSTOM\_PAGE\_ORDERED field isn't set when the addNewSite function is called.

I modified my addNewSite function to accept a new parameter : boolean custompageorder so it looks like this:

```
public String addNewSite( String sessionid, String siteid, String title, String description,  
String shortdesc, String iconurl, String infourl, boolean joinable, String joinerrole,  
boolean published, boolean publicview, String skin, String type, boolean  
custompageorder) throws AxisFault
```

and added this to the function:

```
siteEdit.setCustomPageOrdered(custom_page_order);
```

Not sure if this is release worthy, but here it is if anyone wants to add it to 2.5.x or 2.6 (if its not there).

Jon Wheat  
[jwheat@messiah.edu](mailto:jwheat@messiah.edu)

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## 10. Aeroplane Software Integrates Grails with Sakai

I have created a quick-start project template that allows developers to use Grails to develop Sakai tools. Grails is a rapid web application development framework for the

Java platform inspired by Ruby on Rails.

Grails allows rapidly iterating your design by running in a small, standalone servlet container during development and permitting changes to both code and templates without redeploying the app or restarting the container.

The project template incorporates a mockup of a Sakai environment, so the tool code can simulate interactions with Sakai services during development.

You can see a demonstration screencast (9 minutes) at:

[http://aeroplane.s3.amazonaws.com/sakai\\_heart\\_grails.mov](http://aeroplane.s3.amazonaws.com/sakai_heart_grails.mov)

This integration is in its infancy, but could soon be a viable alternate to other model-view-controller technologies used in Sakai.

Zach Thomas  
Owner, Aeroplane Software LLC  
[zach@aeroplanesoftware.com](mailto:zach@aeroplanesoftware.com)  
<http://aeroplanesoftware.com>

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## 11. Cape Town on 2-6-x

On 17, December we upgraded our Sakai instance (called Vula locally) to run on 2-6-x (r55282). For those interested, the externals that make up our build can be viewed at:

[http://source.cet.uct.ac.za/svn/sakai/vula/branches/vula\\_2-6-x/.externals](http://source.cet.uct.ac.za/svn/sakai/vula/branches/vula_2-6-x/.externals)

We'd like to thank all those who helped fix bugs, verify bug fixes and offered advise over the last couple of months.

David Horwitz For the Vula Team at UCT  
[david.horwitz@uct.ac.za](mailto:david.horwitz@uct.ac.za)

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## 12. Article on the Impact of OSP on Learning and Assessment is Published

I'm pleased to report that the article Luke Fernandez, Susan Kahn, Judi Kirkpatrick, Jan Smith, I wrote summarizing research on OSP has been published in the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching:

"The Impact of the Open Source Portfolio on Learning and Assessment"

HTML: [http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no4/cambridge\\_1208.htm](http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no4/cambridge_1208.htm)

PDF: [http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no4/cambridge\\_1208.pdf](http://jolt.merlot.org/vol4no4/cambridge_1208.pdf)

**Abstract:** The Open Source Portfolio (OSP) software for eportfolio learning and assessment has seen widespread adoption over the last five years. This article surveys the current state of OSP development and use and shares results of research on its effectiveness, conducted through the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research. OSP is being used for personal representation, teaching and learning, and assessment and accreditation. Research at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Kapi'olani Community College shows that use of the OSP Matrix tool can affect learning and engagement when used to promote matrix thinking, the process of reflecting on work originally created in another context in relationship to the intersection of multiple dimensions of a shared conceptual framework. Data indicates that such thinking is linked to advanced reflection, increased student engagement, and enhanced learning strategies. Research at George Mason University demonstrates that matrix thinking also can help institutions learn about their students' practice of leadership, while Weber State University's study suggests that OSP can create an environment for systematic assessment of general education if effectively integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning practices. The Syracuse College of Education successful accreditation using goal aware tools suggests one such means of integration.

Darren Cambridge  
dcambrid@gmu.edu

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### 13. Reminder: Multi-Institutional Survey of Sakai Instructors & Students

Sakai Community Members,

This is a reminder call for participants in a multi-institutional analysis of how instructors and students at academic institutions are using Sakai for teaching and learning. We hope to work with all participating institutions to arrive at a core set of questions via conference calls and email next January (see below for a general plan of action). A list of institutions that have already indicated their willingness to participate is available here:

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

Also, since our last email, we have received requests to participate by institutions that are running different versions of Sakai. We are therefore extending our call to participate to any institution that is planning to run Sakai 2.4, 2.5 or 2.6 in production for March 2009.

If you are interested in having your institution participate, please send Steve an email by December 22. We will then schedule a conference call for early January to begin working on the core set of survey questions.

Thank you.

Steven Lonn  
Doctoral Candidate, Learning Technologies  
School of Education, University of Michigan  
[slonn@umich.edu](mailto:slonn@umich.edu)

Stephanie D. Teasley, Ph.D.  
Research Associate Professor  
School of Information, University of Michigan

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General Plan for Multi-Institutional Survey Initiative:

- A. Institutions indicate their willingness to participate in December 2008.
- B. Participants agree to a core set of survey questions in January 2009 via conference calls and email. The core questions will be designed using the Michigan 2008 surveys as a beginning template.
- C. Institutions build their own surveys, incorporating the core question set to fit their implementation.
- D. Participating institutions conduct their online surveys in March-April 2009.
- E. Institutions share the results to the core set of questions back to the group -- researchers at Michigan and others who want to participate will work on analyzing and comparing the results across institutions.
- F. Results will be disseminated in July at the 2009 Sakai Conference in Boston and online.

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#### 14. The Second Rhode Island Sakai Conference

Save the date: The Rhode Island Network for Educational Technology (RINET), in association with the Sakai Foundation, The rSmart Group and IBM is hosting the Second Rhode Island Sakai Conference from March 31 - April 1, 2009 at the Providence Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island.



RINET ([www.ri.net](http://www.ri.net)) is a non-profit organization that provides technology solutions to schools and libraries in Rhode Island. RINET currently provides Sakai (branded RIEPS, the Rhode Island Electronic Portfolio System) to ten Rhode Island school districts to facilitate their work toward meeting Rhode Island's Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements, including Portfolio and Senior Exhibitions. During early implementations of RIEPS, Rhode Island teachers primarily used RIEPS' Assignment, Goal Management, and Portfolio tools.

Today Rhode Island teachers are exploring other RIEPS tools to enhance regular classroom activities and engage students. In addition, districts and the Rhode Island Department of Education are beginning to use RIEPS tools to support professional development activities, hybrid courses, curriculum mapping, inter-district curriculum discussions and more. At least one project is connecting with high school students in Europe. Collaborative activities and curriculum development and delivery for a recently awarded National Science Foundation grant will also be facilitated within our RIEPS environment.

Themes of this year's conference will include:

- Using collaboration tools to support classroom activities and engage students
- Sharing lessons learned and best practices by local classroom teachers and students
- Using proficiency-based measures to support assessment
- Sharing portfolio Best Practices
- Using Sakai to support Professional Development and engage teachers
- K-20 Collaborations

Additional conference details will follow in the coming weeks. Last year's conference was a great success and we look forward to seeing many familiar as well as new faces at this year's event.

Please send any questions you have to [events@ri.net](mailto:events@ri.net).

Steven Foehr  
RINET, Director of Application and User Services  
[steve@staff.ri.net](mailto:steve@staff.ri.net)

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## 15. Unicon Training: uPortal 3 Platform and Portlet Development

Unicon, Inc. has announced it will be offering uPortal 3 training courses to enterprise IT staff and web portal developers interested in attending a 3-day, hands-on session covering everything from introductory basics to authentication and portlet development. The first training course, titled "uPortal 3.0 Platform Training", will take place January 20-22, 2009 at Unicon's corporate offices in Chandler, Arizona. The second course, titled

"Portlet Development Training" will take place March 5-7, 2009 at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel in Dallas, Texas and coincides with the JA-SIG Spring Conference. For more information or to register for the training courses, visit:

<http://www.unicon.net/company/news/events>

Since 1999, Unicon's consulting group has provided colleges and universities with uPortal as well as related services and support for their online campus deployments. Unicon has also made significant development, technology, and feature contributions to the uPortal platform and community.

#### uPortal 3.0 Platform Training Overview

This course serves as an introduction and guide to portals, portlets, and uPortal and encompasses best practices for leveraging the open-source uPortal software and its community. Topics include: uPortal Overview, Authentication and Authorization, Groups and Permissions Framework, Aggregated and Template Layouts, Administrative Channels, Permissions Manager, Accessing User Attributes and Information and more.

#### Portlet Development Training Overview

This course serves as an introduction and guide to developing standards-compliant portlets and covers items from the Portlet API and the building and deployment of portlets to techniques for organizing code in a clean architecturally-sound way. uPortal is used as the portal platform during the course, but the portlet development skills apply to any JSR 168 compliant platform. Topics include: Portlet Specification Overview, Apache Pluto Overview, Portlet API, Obtaining 3rd-party Portlets, Portlet Installation, Development Environment, Use of Eclipse IDE, Hello World Portlet, Advanced Portlet Applications, Portlet Security, Debugging Portlets, Using WSRP, and uPortal Roadmap.

Joe Waldygo  
[joe@topspincommunications.com](mailto:joe@topspincommunications.com)

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### 16. Job Opening: Web Services Developer at University of Maryland

The University of Maryland at College Park  
Office of Information Technology  
Software Development Services

Position Title: Web Services Developer

Category: Permanent, 12 months, full time

Responsibilities: The University of Maryland, College Park seeks a Web Services Developer who will work within both an internal OIT group and inter-institutional Sakai working group designing and implementing the online course evaluation tool, CourseEvalUM, which is based on the Sakai-based Evaluation System project. The Web Services Developer will also work on in-house developed, JAVA-based extensions to the Sakai Evaluation Tool including the Evaluation Reporting module. The focus for this position is as a hands-on development team member working under the direction of the team lead. The Web Services Developer is responsible for: working within a development team in the implementation (coding) of the Evaluation System tool to meet Maryland requirements; for writing code according to specifications; for following a formal development methodology and working within scheduled timelines; for deliverables as required, peer code reviews, documentation, and formal testing. The Web Services Developer will work closely with the team lead in keeping to the development schedule and for proactively addressing issues.

Qualifications: To be eligible, the candidate must hold a bachelor's degree preferably in computer science or related field and have a minimum of two (2) years full-time experience as a Java developer (language and platform), including experience in object oriented principles, software design, and use of design patterns. Must have experience with at least one of each of the following technologies: ORM (hibernate, EJB, tophlink, etc), MVC frameworks (Spring, Struts, JSF, etc.), SQL database (Oracle, MySQL, etc.), and view technologies (JSP, XSL, Velocity). Must have understanding of relational databases and experience working with databases in web-based applications. Must have understanding of established software engineering standards and methodologies including some or all of the following: creation and use of Use Cases, UML modeling, naming conventions, source control facilities, documentation; unit testing. Experience working productively within a software engineering team in the design, development, and implementation of software is required. Experience with Sakai community/open source projects or other community source project is highly desirable. Experience with Integrated Development Environments and tools such as Eclipse, Maven, and JUnit and source code management systems such as Subversion or CVS is preferred. The successful candidate will possess excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, be a self-starter who is highly organized, learns quickly and has the ability to work independently and in teams.

Salary: Commensurate with qualifications. Excellent leave, medical coverage, retirement, and tuition-remission benefits.

Applications: Screening of applicants will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Please send resume and/or experience profile by email to:

[oit-resume@umd.edu](mailto:oit-resume@umd.edu) or to:

Web Services Developer Search  
Office of Information Technology

University of Maryland  
3317 Computer and Space Sciences Bldg. (224)  
College Park, MD 20742-2411

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## 17. 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:

2.6.x update request - RE: beta-01    DEV  
ActiveToolComponent warning message    DEV  
Announcing a New Sakai/OSP Consulting Service    PED  
Article on the impact of OSP on learning and assessment published Entifying Sakai Tools or RESTful Access to Tool Content    USER, UX  
git : show branch in command line    DEV  
git and msub    DEV  
Grails on Sakai lives!!    DEV  
GroupProvider without CourseManagementService    UI  
How to display the contents of new site created in sakai-2.0.0?    DEV  
http 303 error on serving sakai. only seen in safari.    DEV  
Import big xls file    UI  
Indicating hidden tools (was: Tool icons)    UX  
iTunesU Integration via Sakai?    PED  
JForum 2.6.0 for Sakai Now Released!    USER  
link from melete to samigo    DEV

melete in sakai 2.6   DEV  
missing openldap jar files for sakai 2.5.3 maven build   UI  
Mneme 1.2, Milestone 1 Now Released!   USER  
Next OSP Teleconference January 4th, 2009   PORT  
question concerning Oracle database   PORT  
Sakai 3: A proposal and request for input   PED, PORT, UI  
sakai portfolio use in Australia   PORT  
Showing multiple assesments in overview   DEV  
Simle example of alternate form creatoin/redering   PORT, UI  
Stylesheets for OSP Presentation   PED  
Stylesheets in the OSP Portfolio tool   PORT  
Teaching with Sakai Awards and the Open Forum   PED  
Test cases for Portfolio template and Portfolio   DEV  
Tool icons   UX  
tracking in melete   DEV  
uploading a file to a resources folder via a web service   DEV  
UX Design Update - Hello Sakai!   UX, DEV  
Wat's JforumDefault   DEV  
Which sakai version is used with tomcat 5.5.9?   DEV

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## 18. Events

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

Second Rhode Island Sakai Conference  
March 31-April 1, 2009  
Providence Biltmore Hotel  
Providence, Rhode Island  
[www.ri.net](http://www.ri.net)

eLearning Africa 09  
May 27- 29, 2009  
Le Meridien President  
Dakar, Senegal  
[www.elearning-africa.com](http://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](mailto:collab-admins@umich.edu)  
Confluence -- [confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org)  
Jira -- [jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org](mailto:jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org)