



## Sakai Newsletter

February 5, 2009

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### 1. From the Executive Director

Releases, releases, releases

This was a big week for Sakai releases. First, the Sakai 2.5.4 maintenance release is finished and, once a little more testing is done on the release artifacts, we'll be making a formal announcement of its availability. When we started the process of formal maintenance releases we weren't sure how many in the community would appreciate this effort, but we've gotten a lot of positive feedback about the practice. Many organizations are using them and looking forward for the practice to continue.

Also, Sakai 2.6.0 Beta was released and has begun to appear on QA servers. If you remember, 2.5 was also the first time we introduced the formal stages of "beta" and "release candidate" before creating the general availability 2.6.0 release. In concert with

the maintenance release process, we believe the quality and reliability of official Sakai releases has never been higher -- an important goal for the Sakai Foundation over the last year. Of course there is no use for a beta version if you don't have someone willing to run the software and, again this year, we all need to thank University of Cape Town for playing this role.

Finally, we've made a release of an early (very early!) prototype of Sakai 3 available. This release does not reflect the final intentions of Sakai 3 but we thought the community might like to start playing with what has been built so far. We hope that more people will take a close look at what we have throughout the process and begin to get involved in building Sakai 3. A few important caveats about this release: First it is built on the current Sakai kernel rather than K2, although the plan is to build on K2. Second, there has not been formal QA on the code and so you can expect many bugs and incomplete features. For more information see <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/DOC/Sakai+3.0>

These three releases underscore the increasing maturity of community practices around software development. It is great to see something as visionary as Sakai 3 making progress happening at the same time as the prosaic and important work of maintenance releases, not to mention the important progress on making new features available in Sakai 2.6. We have lots of room for improvement, of course, but I'm very pleased to see these things come together this week. My thanks to everyone who has been working on these projects.

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## 2. 10th Sakai Conference Registration to Open February 15 (General Information)

The 10th Annual Sakai Conference will take place in beautiful Boston Massachusetts. Registration information will be available on February 15 at <http://www.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/sakai-news/page/04ed2fa2-77e2-40da-8100-e0a08b9fea15>

Here are some important dates so you can plan your calendar:

Main Conference Dates: Wednesday, July 8 – Friday, July 10  
Pre-conference sessions: Tuesday, July 7  
Project Coordination Meetings: Monday, July 6 and Saturday, July 11

In the past, most Sakai Conferences have run from Tuesday through Thursday. We've moved the conference to later in the week to allow for U.S. Independence Day celebrations, although Boston is a great place to spend the 4th of July.

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### 3. Announcing the Availability of Sakai 3.0.0 Milestone 1 -- Demo Release (Building Sakai)

Sakai 3.0.0 Milestone 1 has been released for demonstration and evaluation purposes only.

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/DOC/Sakai+3.0>

This release has not been subjected to any formal Quality Assurance (QA) testing, and should not be used in production. It offers an opportunity to experience some of the initial and exciting User Experience (UX) work targeted at Sakai 3. It does not yet fully illustrate the reorganization of content and tool functionality that realizes the "everything is content" vision for Sakai 3. Those capabilities will be furthered with the switch to using Sakai Kernel 2 in the coming weeks. (This milestone release is still based on Sakai Kernel 1, which is the same as used in the current Sakai 2 series of releases.)

What you see in this milestone release will continue to evolve significantly as work progresses and feedback is provided. In its final form Sakai 3 will end up significantly different from Sakai 2.

The main goals of this milestone release are to:

- catalyze community discussion and interest in helping further the design and development of Sakai 3 capabilities, and
- support user-testing of some of the initial Sakai 3 designs and conceptual approaches

For more information on Sakai 3 in general, a good starting place is the 3akai page (<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SAKDEV/3akai>). If you don't wish to build and run this milestone release yourself, then you can give it a try on the 3akai demo server (<http://3akai.sakaiproject.org/dev/>), though this server is rebuilt from time-to-time so your content may not persist.

Peter Knoop  
Sakai Project Coordinator  
[knoop@umich.edu](mailto:knoop@umich.edu)

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## 4. Melete 2.6 Now Available!

Melete 2.6 is now available for Sakai 2.3.x, Sakai 2.4.x, or Sakai 2.5 and above.

### WHAT'S NEW IN MELETE 2.6

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Highlights include the following:

#### 1) IMS Simple LTI Support

Contributed by Charles Severance, Melete 2.6 includes support for IMS Simple Learning Tools Interoperability ([simplelti.appspot.com](http://simplelti.appspot.com)). Simple LTI is a specification which allows for a single-sign-on and roster provisioning using REST web services between Melete and external tools or externally hosted content. Simple LTI tool or content resources can be placed anywhere in a Melete hierarchy and the LTI resources are included in the Melete import and export process. Adding Simple LTI to Melete makes it possible for a publisher to produce a Melete cartridge with secure, embedded links back to high-value publisher content.

If you have any questions about Simple LTI support or how to build content or tools that support Simple LTI see [simplelti.appspot.com](http://simplelti.appspot.com) or contact Chuck Severance at [cseverance@imglobal.org](mailto:cseverance@imglobal.org).

#### 2) Log user events

The following events were added in Melete and are used by Site Stats.

- melete.section.new: it is launched each time a section is created.
- melete.section.edit: it is launched each time a section is edited.
- melete.section.delete: it is launched each time a section is deleted both directly or indirectly (that is, deleting the module the section belongs to).
- melete.section.read: it is launched each time a section is read.
- melete.module.new: it is launched each time a module is created.
- melete.module.delete: it is launched each time a module is deleted. When this happens, a melete.section.delete event is launched of each of the sections the to-delete module contains.

Contributed by David Roldan Martinez, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia.

3) Japanese translation of Melete. Contributed by Shoji Kajita, Associate Professor, ITC, Nagoya University, Japan.

#### 4) Melete Admin tool

If you have used previous Melete versions, you might consider running this admin tool. Melete Admin is a tool which lets admin users to clean up old deleted modules and sections and clean up their resources from the Sakai database and the file System. Prior to version 2.5, Melete left behind deleted data (deleted modules and sections and their associated resources).

This development work was led by Rashmi Maheshwari.

#### 5) Editing of Content - Ease of Navigation

Authors can now navigate through all the sections of a module to edit them in author view, without having to return to the Table of Contents.

For a complete list of issues addressed in this release, see:  
[http://etudes.org/release/melete/melete\\_past.htm](http://etudes.org/release/melete/melete_past.htm)

#### DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL MELETE 2.6

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<http://etudes.org/release/melete/install-guide.htm>

User Tutorials & Documentation:  
<http://etudes.org/release/melete/index.htm>

#### BUGS & KNOWN ISSUES, AND FEATURE REQUESTS:

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For bugs & known issues, future features, etc, see:  
[http://etudes.org/melete\\_features.htm](http://etudes.org/melete_features.htm)

#### QUESTIONS:

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

## ABOUT:

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Melete, a lesson builder tool (a.k.a. Modules), is integrated with Etudes and Sakai. Melete allows instructors to publish learning sequences that can be created by uploading learning objects, pointing to URL resources, and composing online.

## CREDITS:

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Many thanks to the following individuals for their contributions:

- Rashmi Maheshwari, Melete developer, Etudes, Inc.
- Mallika Thoppay, Melete developer, Etudes, Inc.
- Charles Severance, University of Michigan.
- David Roldan Martinez, Universidad Politécnic de Valencia.
- Shoji Kajita, Associate Professor, ITC, Nagoya University, Japan.
- QA testers: Vivie Sinou, Kathy Fransham, Sarah Phinney, Norah Glover, and Margie White.
- Nuno Fernandes, Universidade Fernando Pessoa (UFP). QA and fix of an issue with Site Stats.

Many thanks also go to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for generous funding support for new Melete development.

## LICENSE:

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Melete is licensed under the Apache License, Version 2.0

Vivie Sinou  
Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.  
<http://etudes.org/>

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## 5. First Annual Etudes Users Summit! April 23 and 24 in Los Angeles

You are invited to the first Annual Etudes Users Summit!

The Summit will be held in Los Angeles, California, on Thursday April 23 and Friday, 24, 2009, at the Radisson Hotel at the Los Angeles Airport.

The Summit is designed to bring our users together, many of whom have only "met" online -- faculty, distance education directors, trainers, instructional designers,

administrators, and practitioners from IT and other fields. We invite anyone interested in e-learning with Etudes tools or Sakai to join us and experience the vibrant Etudes community. The attendees, Etudes members and non-members alike, will appreciate and benefit from the interaction and exchanges!

Dr. Charles Severance, will kick off the event on Thursday, April 23, 2009, with the Summit's theme: "Celebrating the Magic of Teachers."

Topics on the Summit Agenda include, but are not limited to, show and tell sessions, presentations on best practices, as well as roundtable discussions where participants will exchange ideas on successes and challenges of the online classroom environment. Attendees will also have opportunities to learn about the Etudes organization, product and services.

Early registration is now open!

If you register prior to February 28, the early registration discounted price is \$125 for members and \$175 for non-members. After February 28, the registration fee is \$150 for members and \$200 for non-members.

For more information and to register, go to the Summit website:  
<http://etudes.org/summit.htm>

We hope that you'll be able to join us!

Vivie Sinou  
Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.  
<http://etudes.org/>

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## 6. New Categories for Sakai Activities

In order to make it easier to find relevant information about Sakai, particularly for newcomers, we are in the process of re-organizing many of the ongoing Sakai activities into four broad categories: General Information, Building Sakai, Deploying Sakai, and Using Sakai. These categories are based on the Sakai Conference session tracks, which have worked well in grouping related topics into categories of broad interest and collaboration. Below are general descriptions of these four groups, and you will see them used as tags throughout the newsletter. Soon you will see this grouping reflected on Confluence and Collab as well.

General Information -- General information covers conferences and meetings, partners program, commercial affiliates problem, demos, and more. Topics in General Information are of interest to all members of the Sakai Community.

Building Sakai (*The sakai-dev email group.*) -- This category is for information and discussions relating to designing, developing, testing and documenting. Sakai members can learn about the technical details of building tools or integrating services; find guidelines for design and development of tools and services; locate technical specifications; learn about plans for future releases, and more. Designers, programmers, developers, and quality assurance staff will find relevant information in the Building Sakai category.

Deploying Sakai (*sakai-prod*) -- Deploying Sakai includes information about installing, implementing, configuring, and supporting. Those interested will find release documentation; learn about performance tuning; browse suggested hardware and software configurations; and share examples of training, tutorial and support documentation. The Deploying Sakai category will be of special interest to sysadmins, DBAs, and technical support staff.

Using Sakai (*sakai-user*) -- Using Sakai is about collaborating, teaching and learning, and more. Users can learn about best practices; share experiences; connect with user communities with similar interests, K-12, Higher-Ed, Portfolios and more. Using Sakai provides important information for teachers, researchers, instructional designers, and end-user support staff.

Peter Knoop  
Sakai Project Coordinator  
knoop@umich.edu

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## 7. rSmart's February Webinar Schedule (Using Sakai)

The rSmart Sakai CLE -- More than a learning management system at half the cost  
February 12, 2009 at 11:00 AM PST

Join us for our next webinar as we explore the software application and discuss how Sakai, along with rSmart's support and service packages, are saving campuses thousands of dollars each year.

Topics to be discussed:

- Brief introduction to the Sakai community and software
- Short demonstration of the software
- Reasons why Sakai saves campuses thousands of dollars
- Best practices for a successful implementation of Sakai

To register: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/322204425>



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mySakai 101: Take a guided tour with an rSmart expert  
February 17, 2009 at 11:00 AM PST

Try Sakai for real (for free) at <http://mysakai.rsmart.com>

mySakai is a free, hosted instance of the rSmart Sakai CLE where you can pilot Sakai tools in real-life situations and experience many of the benefits rSmart provides to its clients. During the mySakai 101 webinar, you will learn how to login and navigate mySakai, create a course site, add students, use tools within your course and learn how other schools are using Sakai. You will have an opportunity at the end of the hour to ask questions.

To register: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/769818874>

Megan Perrone  
Marketing Representative rSmart  
[megan.perrone@rsmart.com](mailto:megan.perrone@rsmart.com)

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## 8. Sakai Use Case: Stanford English for Foreign Students Listening Comprehension Placement Test (Using Sakai)

For many years EFS used a version of the Plaisir Aural Comprehension Test (PACT), produced in the 1970's at the University of Hawaii. However, the items were somewhat dated and the materials included paper booklets of pictures, separate answer sheets and a script for a live reading of the items. After the first logical step of rewriting most of the items and putting the audio on CD, the next task was to facilitate auto-scoring, and thus faster placement, by re-creating the test in some sort of online environment. However, we quickly realized that most tools on the Internet are designed to give users control, which is exactly what a test giver does not want. Specifically, it seemed that without investing a substantial amount of money in a custom test application, there was no way to restrict users to listening to the prompts once and once only and then move on to the next item after ten seconds. What we did have available was the university's learning management system, based on software from the Sakai Project. The assignments tool allowed for simple multiple choice questions, where images and sound files could be embedded, but there was no way to control either the length of one item or the number of times a student listened to the audio. However, we found that if we used Adobe Flash, we could easily construct a player without any controls, thus preventing more than one attempt at listening. We broke the test up into five pages of ten items each, embedding the audio for each set in each page, and then set an informal (verbal) time limit on the test session in order to force the students to move with the pace of the audio.

The test was first implemented in the summer of 2007 and ran very smoothly, so another version was used as the exit assessment for the same program. In 2008 we ran versions of the test for both the placement and exit assessment in the summer intensive program, as well as for the placement in the main academic year program this fall, with a total of roughly 200 tests administered. The limitation was, of course, the number of computers available for taking the test in a secure area, so we broke the students up into groups of 40 and ran the test in shifts in the language lab.

A screenshot can be found at:

<http://www.stanford.edu/~kenro/projects/SakaiUseCaseEFSPlacement.html>

Ken Romeo

<http://www.stanford.edu/people/kenro>

Academic Technology Specialist <http://ats.stanford.edu>

Stanford Language Center <http://language.stanford.edu>

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## 9. Adding Contributors Notice on Collab/Confluence/Jira (General Information)

Greetings,

This announcement is to let you know that the text below has been added to the home pages for Sakai community systems: Collab, Confluence, and Jira. The intention is to make everyone aware of and simplify the process of making small contributions that get used in Sakai releases (e.g., patches, bug fixes, documentation corrections).

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This forum has been created for communication about the Sakai online collaboration and learning environment and other projects of the Sakai Foundation, a non-profit organization. By participating in this forum, (1) you agree that unless otherwise clearly indicated, all of your communications are intended as contributions to the Foundation on behalf of yourself or your institution under the terms of a Contributor License Agreement or a Corporate Contributor License Agreement between your institution and the Sakai Foundation, as applicable. If no such agreement is on file, you agree your contribution may be used under the terms of the Educational Community License Version 2.0 or future versions of the Educational Community License promulgated by the Sakai Foundation; and (2) you represent that to the best of your knowledge, either you have all rights required to make such contribution, or you are proposing the use of third party open source software and have identified the software and the relevant license.

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If you have any questions, please let me know.

Peter Knoop  
Sakai Project Coordinator  
[knoop@umich.edu](mailto:knoop@umich.edu)

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## 10. Recent Email Group Discussions

Recent discussions:

Everything is content Dev, UX (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Everything-is-content-tt2275300.html#a2275300>

Meaningful URLs Dev (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Meaningful-URLs-tt2225582.html#none>

Difficulties in entifying Sakai 2.x tools and services Dev (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Difficulties-in-entifying-Sakai-2.x-tools-and-services-tt2222599.html#a2222599>

What's wrong with "tools"? UX (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/What%27s-wrong-with-%22tools%22--tt2275261.html#a2278571>

Scenarios and tasks for users when sharing files linked to a page--feedback by next Wednesday UX (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/RE%3A-Scenarios-and-tasks-for-users-when-sharing-files-linked-to-a-page--feedback-by-next-Wednesday-tt2272899.html#a2272899>

Preview of blog vignette UX (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Preview-of-blog-vignette-tt2264840.html#a2265878>

Input Needed for Sakai 3 UX (Building Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Input-Needed-for-Sakai-3-tt2220472.html#a2220472>

miniHOWTO Write a component in K2 K2 (Building Sakai)  
<http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/web/minihowto-write-a-component-in-k2>

"miniHowTo - Write a Webapp with K2" K2 (Building Sakai)  
<http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/web/howto---write-a-webapp-with-k2?version=7>

K1 compatibility layer K2 (Building Sakai)

[http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/browse\\_thread/thread/7204f61426db2f02/fffe31fd4a655462?lnk=gst&q=K1+compatibility+layer#fffe31fd4a655462](http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/browse_thread/thread/7204f61426db2f02/fffe31fd4a655462?lnk=gst&q=K1+compatibility+layer#fffe31fd4a655462)

View this page "AAA Index" K2 (Building Sakai)

[http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/browse\\_thread/thread/865f9f65abdd337](http://groups.google.com/group/sakai-kernel/browse_thread/thread/865f9f65abdd337)

Matrix Group/Section Awareness Port (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Matrix-Group-Section-Awareness-tt2273034.html#a2273034>

Confidential peer review with OSP? Restriction at document level? Port (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Confidential-peer-review-with-OSP--Restriction-at-document-level-tt2233253.html#a2233253>

Playing with Page Composer - form types Port (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Playing-with-Page-Composer---form-types-tt2211571.html#a2211571>

2 courses for TWSIA Ped (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/2-courses-for-TWSIA-tt2260059.html#a2260111>

Applying "Just-in-time" teaching principles in Sakai Ped (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Applying-%22Just-in-time%22-teaching-principles-in-Sakai-tt2242525.html#a2244689>

Input Needed for Sakai 3 Ped (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Input-Needed-for-Sakai-3-tt2220472.html#a2220472>

Scenarios and tasks for users when sharing files linked to a page--feedback by next Wednesday User (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/RE%3A-Scenarios-and-tasks-for-users-when-sharing-files-linked-to-a-page--feedback-by-next-Wednesday-tt2272899.html#a2272899>

Profile2: Official release User (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Profile2%3A-Official-release-tt2269988.html#a2269988>

Duplicating Wiki content User (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Duplicating-Wiki-content-tt2264322.html#a2264373>

Clariying what a "vignette" is... User (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Clariying-what-a-%22vignette%22-is...-tt2259693.html#a2259890>

recovering deleted resources User (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/recovering-deleted-resources-tt2258721.html#a2258721>

Samigo anonymous grading question User (Using Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/Samigo-anonymous-grading-question-tt2254360.html#a2254360>

UPMC upgraded to recent 2.5.x) Prod (Deploying Sakai)  
<http://n2.nabble.com/UPMC-upgraded-to-recent-2.5.x-tt2245262.html#a2245326>

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## 11. 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).

### First Annual Etudes Users Summit!

April 23-24, 2009

Los Angeles, California

Radisson Hotel, Los Angeles Airport

<http://etudes.org/summit.htm>

### 2009 MoodleMoot San Francisco and

2nd Sloan-C Symposium on Emerging Technology in Online Learning

June 17-19, 2009

Hyatt Regency San Francisco

San Francisco, California

<http://moodlemoot.org/course/view.php?id=9>

<http://www.emergingonlinelearningtechnology.org/>

### 10th Sakai Conference: Boston

July 8-10, 2009

Cambridge Hyatt

Cambridge, Massachusetts

<http://www.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/sakai-news/page/04ed2fa2-77e2-40da-8100-e0a08b9fea15>

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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)