



Sakai Newsletter

March 5, 2009

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1. From the Executive Director

I'm happy to report that registration is now open for both the 10th International Sakai Conference in Boston in July and the European Regional Sakai Conference in Stockholm in May.

I excited about the Boston conference (July 7-10), in part because I love the Boston area. The location will actually be Cambridge, where I used to live. The Hyatt hotel there is right on the Charles River and the conference receptions will benefit from truly excellent settings. The room rate is \$199/night and includes internet access.

For the Boston conference there will be a food and beverage fee of \$195 for Sakai Foundation members. The total fee for non-members is \$495. These prices are good for registrations that are paid for before June 5. After that date prices go up by \$50 so please don't wait until the last minute. We're also working on a nice incentive for the first 100 registrants, so you might want to register right now.

The 2nd European Sakai Conference promises to be another great event. It will be a half-day on May 5 and a full day on May 6 at Stockholm University in Sweden. There is no registration fee for this conference, so sign up now if you're planning to go. It will help the organizers if they know in advance how many people to expect.

Here are the relevant links:

Boston Conference Home Page: <https://educonference.com/sakai/boston/index.php>

Boston Hotel Home Page: <http://cambridge.hyatt.com/>

European Conference Home Page:
<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/eAN1Ag>

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2. The Second Rhode Island Sakai Conference

It is with great pleasure that we formally announce the Second RI Sakai Conference on March 31st and April 1st at the Providence Biltmore in Providence, RI. This year's conference with two full days of sessions shapes up to be even better than last year.

Our keynotes will be:

Sakai 3 – Michael Korcuska (<http://sakaiblog.korcuska.net>) , Executive Director, Sakai Project.

Michael will be demonstrating Sakai 3, a worldwide project to update Sakai with the latest Web 2.0 technologies. Sakai 3 will be piloted at Cambridge University and Georgia Tech this fall, and be ready for general release the following year. I think you will agree that the work completed to date is already amazing.

Creating Environments that Engage Students – Heidi Hayes Jacobs
(<http://www.curriculumdesigners.com>), President, Curriculum Designers, Inc.

Heidi's work in the area of curriculum integration and rigorous discipline-based and interdisciplinary studies was the basis for Curriculum Designers first wave work. When Heidi introduced modern Curriculum Mapping with the publication of her second book, Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K-12, (ASCD, 1997), the field expanded.

Balancing The Two Faces of Portfolio – Dr. Helen Barrett
(<http://electronicportfolios.org>).

Helen is sometimes referred to as the Grandmother of Portfolio. Her work with portfolios in education is world renown. Helen's presentation will help us understand the tension between portfolios for assessment and those for personal expression, both exceedingly important and neither to be ignored.

At the RI Sakai Conference you will:

- Learn how Sakai's Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE), including shared resources and calendars, chat rooms, discussion forums, glossaries, wikis, assignment and portfolio tools, drop boxes and more can be used to support classroom activities and engage students.
- Meet Rhode Island teachers and students and learn how they use Sakai to provide evidence of proficiency through portfolios and senior projects to meet Rhode Island's Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements.
- Learn how to set up and use Sakai's tools for your classroom.
- Learn how the Sakai CLE is used to provide extended learning opportunities including hybrid classes, distance learning, and credit recovery classes.
- Learn how Sakai's tools are used to support Professional Development, Curriculum Development, and engage teachers.
- Learn about Sakai, the future of K-20 Collaborations, and new tools that will soon be available in Sakai to support classroom instruction.

Please visit http://www.ri.net/RINET/events/09sakai_conf/09sakaiconference.html for more information and to register for the Second RI Sakai Conference.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Steve Foehr
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3. rSmart Welcomes Radford University to the Sakai Community

rSmart would like to welcome Radford University to the Sakai community as one of the most recent rSmart Sakai CLE support customers. Radford University, located in Virginia, is a public, 4-year institution with nearly 9,200 students. Radford is rated a Top 20 Public Master's University in the South by the U.S. News & World Report and is identified as a 2009 "Best College in the Southeast" by Princeton Review.

Initially Radford plans on using Sakai to power eportfolios. The portfolio project is coupled with a re-design of their general education program to include a "core curriculum". The first part of Radford's new core curriculum (aptly titled Core A) is comprised of four classes that emphasize development in written communications, oral communication, critical thinking, and technology/information literacy. The school decided to require all students completing Core A to create a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate success in these four classes. As conversations around the new core continued, it was further decided that the portfolio would be electronically maintained and should dovetail with the learning management system. After better understanding Sakai through rSmart's configuration and implementation process, the school may also consider Sakai for broader usage on campus. "The rSmart Sakai/OSP bundle fit nicely with our needs and was the choice of the Core A steering committee," says Charley Cosmato, Assistant Director, Technology in Learning Center. "The Sakai community has produced a great product and the one week 'coffee & donut' session with rSmart here on campus to get Sakai running was heaven." rSmart would also like to acknowledge Serensoft's important role in this exciting new project.

Mike Zackrison
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4. Johns Hopkins University Expands Sakai Pilot

JHU's Sakai pilot is significantly expanded for the spring 2009 semester, hosting 113 sites (some for fully online courses, others as course supplements) and serving nearly 1500 students. We recently completed integration with our SIS, including custom work in Sakai to require certain students to pass an orientation course before they can access other course sites. We are running version 2.5.2 in a clustered environment.

Steve Hellen
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5. Sakai Now in Production at Umeå University

Umeå University in the north of Sweden now has Sakai in production. Umeå has more than 29 000 student and 2000 courses. Even though we have had a central LMS -- PingPong -- the departments here have been using several different collaboration and course management systems over the years. Since December 2008, the centrally-supported system at the university is Sakai. We now call the system Cambro, which stands for “room” in Esperanto, and it is an adoption of Sakai version 2.5.3. With great help – and code – from Stockholm University we managed to implement a Swedish translation and integrate the federated Single Sign-On based on SAML2 in just a couple of months. As many of our lecturers are familiar with learning management systems, the utilization of Cambro will probably grow quite rapidly. Within the first year in production, the number of courses to be held with the help of Cambro may be as high as 1000.

My colleagues and I will of course be represented at the 2nd European Sakai Conference in Stockholm, May 5-6, and hope to see you there.

Cambro can be found at <http://www.cambro.umu.se>.

Kind regards,

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6. Marist College Has Made 3 New QA Servers Available to the Sakai Community

Marist College is pleased to announce the availability of three new QA servers: QA7-US, QA8-US, and QA9-US. As part of Marist College's joint activities with IBM, rSmart, and the Sakai community to enable Sakai on Websphere and DB2, they have established these three servers for use by the community. QA7 provides a Tomcat/DB2 environment, QA8 a Websphere/mySQL environment, and QA9 a Websphere/DB2 environment. For any question concerning these test instances please contact Adam Hocek at Marist College (Adam.Hocek@marist.edu).

Howard Baker,
Marist College Joint Studies
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7. Assignments 2 and Gradebook Updates

Colleagues,

As you probably know from the commit activity, a lot of development work has been occurring here at Indiana University and we'd like to take a moment to share an update on our progress with the community.

Assignments2

Assignments2, a second generation of the assignments tool, continues to be a top priority locally. The initial phases involved conversion to RSF, better gradebook integration, and a redesign for an improved user experience. Iteration 3, the first 'user-ready' version, was completed at the end of December and is now available to a small pilot group at Indiana University. For your demoing convenience, Assignments2 has been added to the nightly contrib build: <http://nightly2.sakaiproject.org:8085/portal>

In addition, the Assignments2 Confluence space has a lot of additional information including design, links to the source code, roadmap, etc. A screen cast will also be posted! The link to the space is:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/ASNN/Home>

Gradebook

Work is ongoing to support non-calculating gradebook items as well as support for an entire non-calculating gradebook type. The source code and design can be found at Design: Attached to <http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SAK-14551> (a revised version will be forthcoming)

Source: <https://source.sakaiproject.org/svn/gradebook/branches/non-cal>

In addition, work allowing entry of institution-specific grades in course grade override field has been completed (SAK-13934) and is something for inclusion this in the next major release of Sakai (2.7). This work is compatible with the Gradebook2 work being done at University of California-Davis. Lastly, support for extra credit, drop high and low, and functionality to add items in bulk is in the planning stages in the original version of the Gradebook. Once more when information on those is available, we will share it.

Prior to merging any of this work into trunk, we'll follow the standard process of posting to the dev list for comment and review by the community.

Thanks!

May, Megan Marie
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8. Sakai Activities Organized into Four Categories

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. Soon you will see this grouping reflected elsewhere 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. <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/Si4>

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

Peter Knoop
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9. Sakai and Google Summer of Code

Last year Chuck Severance mentored a couple of students in Google Summer of Code (SoC). He won't be able to do that this year. Is anyone interested in putting together a proposal and mentoring students for the summer? It does take some work and won't necessarily produce work that ends up in a Sakai release, but can be a rewarding experience and a way to get students on campus involved in Sakai. The fact that Chuck did it last year and the students had some success means it is highly likely we would get approved for 1 or 2 students this year.

Anyone interested?

Michael Korcuska
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10. New Portlet Development Services Available from Unicon

Unicon, Inc. has announced its new portlet development services. These services are designed to help academic institutions improve online accessibility and increase user adoption of their campus portals. Utilizing standards-compliant portlets or platform-specific portlets, Unicon's experienced team offers full life-cycle portlet development services to help institutions quickly achieve goals while minimizing risk. Portlets effectively integrate and display diverse content, applications, and services throughout the enterprise campus portal.

Comprehensive Portlet Development Approach

Unicon has years of proven experience and skills developing standards-compliant portlets or platform-specific portlets. Utilizing Unicon's full life-cycle portlet development services, clients can quickly achieve goals through a wide array of methodologies, tools, and web development frameworks. Unicon offers institutions the following portlet development services: analysis, requirements definition, usability, design, portlet

development, systems integration, mentoring, training and knowledge transfer.

Since 1999, Unicon's consulting group has provided over 175 colleges and universities with software consulting, support, and related services for their online campus deployments. Unicon has also made significant development, technology, and feature contributions to open source platforms and communities.

Portlets created by Unicon include:

- Announcements Portlet
- Budget Portlet
- Calendar Portlet
- Campus Map Portlet
- Facebook Portlet
- Featured Story Portlet
- Learning Management System Integration
- Mail Portlet
- RSS Portlet
- Student Information System Integration
- Tabbed Search Portlet
- Weather Portlet

Joe Waldygo
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11. Unicon Announces New Open Source Cooperative Support Program for Jasig's CAS (Central Authentication Service)

Unicon, Inc. has announced a new Open Source Cooperative Support Program for the Jasig Central Authentication Service (CAS). CAS is a secure authentication system and single sign-on service for enterprise applications and platforms and provides a trusted way for an application to authenticate a user. Unicon's Cooperative Support Program provides member institutions with a predictable cost support solution for their open source solutions for uPortal, Sakai, and now CAS. The company provides a dedicated team of expert development and technical support specialists for direct technical support and assistance. All development work and fixes performed by the team are contributed back to the CAS community.

Unicon offers a full range of service offerings for institutions wishing to deploy Jasig's CAS including: planning, installation, configuration, implementation, custom development, application and system integration, branding, and training. Unicon can implement and customize CAS for uPortal, Sakai, and other enterprise applications. For

more information on Unicon's complete service for CAS, visit:
<http://www.unicon.net/services/cas>.

"Jasig is very pleased to see a Unicon service offering for CAS," said Jonathan Markow, Executive Director of Jasig. "Unicon has been a contributor to the CAS project for a number of years, and they have broad experience implementing CAS at higher education institutions. The Unicon Cooperative Support Program has been important to many uPortal institutions. The availability of a similar, high quality, commercial service for CAS should be just as well received."

"We added CAS to our cooperative support program as a response to the increased demand for CAS at higher ed institutions and strong acceptance of our innovative support model for open source projects, " said John C. Blakley, CEO of Unicon, Inc. "Unicon's professional services team has successfully deployed and integrated CAS with numerous enterprise applications over the past few years and we're excited to begin offering it as part of our support program. "

Partial List of Unicon's Cooperative Support Program Members

uPortal: Brooklyn College- City University of New York, South Dakota State University, and University of Georgia

Sakai: New Teacher Center, University of Virginia, and University of the Arts

About CAS

The Jasig Central Authentication Service, originally developed by Yale University, provides secure user authentication and single sign-on for many client programs that have been "CASified" since CAS became available. Single sign-on is a session/user authentication process that allows a user to provide his or her credentials once in order to access multiple applications. The single sign-on authenticates the user to access all the applications he or she has been authorized to access. It eliminates future authentication requests when the user switches applications during that particular session. Web Single sign-on works strictly with applications accessed with a web browser. The request to access a web resource is intercepted either by a component in the web server, or by the application itself. Unauthenticated users are diverted to an authentication service and returned only after a successful authentication. More information about CAS is available at: <http://www.jasig.org/cas>.

Joe Waldygo
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12. rSmart Webinar: Sakai -- More Than a Learning Management System at Half the Cost

Join us March 26 at 11:00 AM PST for our next webinar as we explore the rSmart Sakai CLE 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

Date: March 26, 2009

Time: 11:00 AM PST

To register:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/165216289>

Megan Perrone

megan.perrone@rsmart.com

13. Recent Email Group Discussions

Melete for Sakai 2.6.x (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai---Melete-for-Sakai-2.6.x-tt2437668.html#a2437668>

Oracle + 2.4.x? (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Oracle-%2B-2.4.x--tt2437983.html#a2437983>

sakai registry / unicon (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--sakai-registry---unicon-tt2436637.html#a2436637>

Work flow of Announcement (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Work-flow-of-Announcement-tt2435537.html#a2435537>

"images don't show" (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--%22images-don%27t-show%22-tt2435350.html#a2435350>

manifest xml file? (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--manifest-xml-file--tt2435136.html#a2435136>

Resources root folder's name (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Resources-root-folder%27s-name-tt2422704.html#a2422704>

QA issues (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Portfolio--QA-issues-tt2440080.html#a2440080>

Custom renderer (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/-Portfolio--Custom-renderer-tt2430932.html#a2430932>

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/jira/browse/SAK-15540> (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/http%3A--bugs.sakaiproject.org-jira-browse-SAK-15540-tt2425407.html#a2425407>

view as student link in xsl portal (Using Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/view-as-student-link-in-xsl-portal-tt2418281.html#a2418281>

question about "My sites" (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Re%3A-question-about-%22My-sites%22-tt2390755.html#a2391018>

Community Feedback RE: Status column on Total Scores page (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Community-Feedback-RE%3A-Status-column-on-Total-Scores-page-tt2376441.html#a2376441>

My Profile, draft 3 (Building Sakai)

<http://n2.nabble.com/Re%3A-My-Profile%2C-draft-3-tt2360630.html#a2360630>

14. Events

Second Rhode Island Sakai Conference

March 31-April 1, 2009

Providence Biltmore Hotel

Providence, Rhode Island

www.ri.net

2nd European Sakai Conference

May (4)-5-, 2009

Stockholm University
Stockholm, Sweden

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/CNF/European+Regional+Conference+in+Stockholm+2009>

eLearning Africa 09

May 27- 29, 2009

Le Meridien President

Dakar, Senegal

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>

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