



Sakai Newsletter

June 11, 2009

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1. From the Executive Director

The document attached at the end of this newsletter is the first installment of a Sakai Executive Brief that the Sakai Foundation plans to publish every six months. (You can also see the brief at <http://tinyurl.com/sakaibrief0906> .) It is focused on providing organizational managers and executives with a brief overview of what has been and what will be happening in Sakai. I hope you find the information useful to understanding the current state of Sakai development, what is taking place in the Sakai community, and

how your institution can further engage in our efforts to make Sakai the premier academic collaboration and learning environment.

These executive briefs are an important component of an increased focus on communication at the foundation. Formal communication channels have become increasingly important as we now hold conferences approximately every 12 months. Early efforts to develop Sakai 3 – a completely new version of Sakai – increase the importance of understanding what is happening in Sakai and how you can participate and benefit.

You'll be seeing a variety of new ways to get information and provide feedback to the Sakai Foundation in the coming weeks and months. In particular, I'd love to hear what you'd like to see addressed in these executive briefs and in other forms of communication. You can always reach me at mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org, and I'd be happy to schedule a phone call at a mutually convenient time.

One quick note -- There was a small delay between finalizing the attached brief and my sending this email. We have announced the initial membership of the Product Council mentioned on page 5. The list of members and more information can be found in the next item in this newsletter or on our wiki at:

<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/m4RDAw>

Best regards,

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

2. Sakai Product Council

The Sakai Foundation is pleased to announce the formation and membership of a Product Council to ensure exceptional quality and cohesiveness of Sakai product releases in support of varied teaching, research and collaboration needs. The formation of the Product Council is the result of over five years of success and learning of the Sakai community in effectively developing community source software that enhances learning, research and institutional effectiveness.

The Product Council has two important roles: determining which components will be included as part of each product release, and informally advising projects as they progress

from R&D to production-ready maturity. As a community-developed open source project, components of each product release are contributed from many different institutions, companies and individuals. The Product Council is the coordinating body for each release, and will work to assure the product's evolution continues to meet the needs of the educational community in terms of functionality, production worthiness, and usability.

More information about the Council structure may be found on the Sakai wiki at <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/m4RDAw>

The members of the Product Council are:

Nate Angell -- Nate works with clients in education and open source communities for rSmart (<http://www.rsmart.com>), a Sakai Commercial Affiliate. Nate previously led web communications at Portland State (<http://www.pdx.edu>) and at the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (<http://www.oms.edu>). Nate holds an MA in film, television, and digital media studies from Brown University.

Noah Botimer -- Noah is the ePortfolio Technical Lead for the University of Michigan. He is an open source and open education advocate. Before joining Michigan, Noah helped establish a campus-wide Sakai course and ePortfolio environment at Saginaw Valley State University.

Eli Cochran -- Eli joined UC Berkeley and the Sakai community two years ago as a user experience designer and Javascript programmer on the Fluid project. After more than twenty years experience in interface design and development, Eli feels that successful systems must be more than understandable and usable, they must also be beautiful and fun.

Michael Feldstein -- Michael is Principal Product Manager of Academic Enterprise Solutions at Oracle and the author of the e-Literate weblog. He is a frequent invited speaker on instructional technology and has been interviewed about e-learning by media outlets including The Chronicle of Higher Education, the Associated Press, and U.S. News and World Report.

David Goodrum -- David is Director of Academic and Faculty Services for University Information Technology Services at Indiana University. In addition, he chairs the functional requirements committee as well as the support and implementation team for IU's implementation of Sakai.

John Lewis -- John is the Chief Software Architect for Unicon and a 17-year veteran of the software engineering industry. His passions include open source and agile methods. John is active in several higher education open source communities, including uPortal and Sakai, and serves on the Board of Directors of Jasig.

Stephen Marquard -- Stephen is Learning Technologies Coordinator in the Centre for Educational Technology at the University of Cape Town, where he leads the team responsible for the University's popular and widely-used Sakai deployment known as Vula. Stephen is a Sakai Fellow and serves on the Sakai Board of Directors.

John Norman -- John is the Director of the Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies (CARET) and "Head of e-Learning" at the University of Cambridge. CARET provides infrastructure and support to the campus for the use of technology in teaching, learning and research, including the deployment of Sakai campus-wide. Prior to this he had experience as an engineer and medical devices entrepreneur on three continents. John chairs the advisory board for OSS-Watch and is an advocate for open standards and open source software in higher education.

Max Whitney -- Max is the technical team lead for enterprise academic services in ITS at New York University and an active member in the DIY technology communities in New York. She has managed the Blackboard implementation at NYU since 2001, most recently acting as the technical lead for an enterprise upgrade impacting 45,000 users. She also led the Sakai pilot at NYU in 2007. She holds her M.S. in Computer Science from the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at NYU.

Additionally, the soon-to-be-hired Product Manager will sit on the Product Council.

We thank all of those involved in the nomination and selection process, and look forward to the contribution of this important council in continuing to enhance the academic and scholarly success of institutions across the Sakai community.

Best regards,

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org

3. 10th Sakai Conference approaches!

Things are shaping up very nicely for the 10th Sakai Conference in Boston. Over 400 people are currently registered! It's going to be a very well attended and very exciting event, which is especially gratifying when budgets are especially tight. The program looks fantastic, with keynote speaker Vijay Kumar, over 100 other sessions, and a full slate of pre-conference workshops on Tuesday. The venue looks fantastic and Boston is a great city.

You can register for the conference at <https://educonference.com/sakai/boston/index.php> and get yourself a room at the hotel at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/65705248>

Hope to see you there!

SAKAI CONFERENCE NEWCOMERS RECEPTION

If you're coming to the 10th Sakai Conference in Boston and are a newcomer to the Sakai community, I'd like to invite you to the Sakai Newcomers Reception on Tuesday evening. The reception will be held at the conference hotel, the Cambridge Hyatt.

As the name implies, this reception is intended for Sakai Newcomers. Who is a newcomer? Well, if you've never been to a Sakai conference before you're certainly a newcomer. But anyone who feels like they'd benefit from meeting other attendees in advance is welcome. We'll also explain how the conference is organized and provide a few tips for getting the most out of your time. Many conference committee members and Sakai Board members will also attend so you'll be able to meet some old hands as well.

You can RSVP by visiting: <http://sakai.pingg.com/newcomers09>

Space is limited, so sign up soon. Hope you can join us!

CAMBRIDGE HYATT RATE

As you may know, the Hyatt advertised a rate lower than the Sakai group rate. They are not supposed to do this (by contract and by common sense). We've spoken with the hotel and have come to a resolution.

I'm pleased to let you know that they will be reducing our group rate to \$184/night. This will apply to all existing reservations up to June 12. For those who have made existing reservations there is nothing you need to do -- the hotel will be manually adjusting your room rate. The only exception to this reduction is for those who have requested a specific type of room (e.g., "River View" or "Balcony"). In these cases the rate will remain \$199/night.

This is, in fact, slightly more than what community members were able to find on the internet. There are a few reasons why we thought the Hyatt's proposal was fair:

Our rate includes complimentary in-room internet (\$12.95/day). So our effective rate is \$171/night.

Not everyone would have been able to take advantage of the promotion as there were a limited number of rooms available at that rate. So some would have gotten a better deal while others would have been stuck with the original rate. We felt this was the fairest to everyone in the Sakai community.

The Hyatt may still lower the hotel rate if rooms remain unsold. If anyone does find a lower rate and wishes to change their reservation they should feel free to do so (I'm tracking this via yapta and will let folks know when/if it alerts me). We will manually reconcile hotel guests with conference attendees and Sakai will get credit for those room nights. If you decide to do this it would be helpful to let Mary Miles (mmiles@umich.edu) know.

So, a big thanks to Lydia from Stanford for finding the lower rate. She's helped save everyone a few dollars!

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Michael Korcuska
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org

4. JForum 2.6.4 Now Released

I am pleased to announce the release of JForum 2.6.4.

JForum 2.6.4 is a small release that introduces several nice enhancements to JForum's private messaging and email notification functionality. See highlights of features in this release: <http://etudes.org/release/discussion/2.6.4/>

DOWNLOAD JFORUM 2.6.4

JForum 2.6.4 is available to deploy with Sakai 2.3 or higher.

Instructions on how to download and build JForum 2.6.4 can be found at:
<http://etudes.org/release/discussion/>

Conversion is required when upgrading from earlier versions of JForum. Scripts are included.

FEATURES & FIXES in JFORUM 2.6.4

Summary of enhancements and fixes:

- Add ability to flag one or more private messages for follow-up.
- Add ability to clear the flags once messages have been handled.
- Add the ability to see if messages have been replied to (new "replied" icon).
- Change folder icon of Private Messages menu to orange if there is new activity.
- Include actual text of forum new topic or new reply in body of email notification.
- Include actual text of private message (PM) in new PM email notification.
- Include attachments in email of PM and topic email notification, if any were attached.
- Preserve the start/stop forum dates with import from site.

- Do not list topics from "Deny access" forums in the gradebook.
- Quotes in forum titles get stripped out along with title upon edit/save. Fixed.
- Data truncation error in private messages, if the message is too long. Fixed.
- Strip out offending MS Word comments prior when posting text with "W" icon. Fixed.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

For information on future development, feature requests, and known issues, see:
http://etudes.org/jforum_features.htm

CREDITS

Many thanks to Murthy Tanniru, Senior Java Developer, Etudes, for his on-going work on JForum.

Also, many thanks go to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for their funding support for this software development work.

QUESTIONS

To report issues or ask questions about JForum for Sakai 2.x, send a message to:
dev@etudes.org or sakai-dev@collab.sakaiproject.

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

5. Stockholm University to Introduce a New Version of Mondo

On 15 June, Stockholm University will introduce a new version of Mondo based on Sakai 2.6. In addition to all enhancements that come with Sakai 2.6, a number of localisations have been made to better support Sakai users at our institution. Also, the excellent Site Stats tool from Universidade Fernando Pessoa has been added as a new tool available for site owners.

Per Wising
per.wising@it.su.se
Stockholm University

6. rSmart Contributes Live Virtual Classroom Tool

rSmart is happy to announce the contribution of its Live Virtual Classroom tool (LVC) to the Sakai community. (For more information, follow this link and see the information below:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/LVC/Live+Virtual+Classroom+Tool>)

ABOUT THE TOOL

The Live Virtual Classroom tool was originally developed in 2006 as part of an engagement between Mesa Community College (MCC) and rSmart. At that time, the tool integrated Sakai 2.2 with on-premise deployments of Elluminate Live! MCC has since agreed to contribute the code to the community, and rSmart has ported it forward to 2.6.

In its current form, LVC works only with Elluminate Live! The front end is sufficiently separated from the back end, however, to permit integration with other webcasting tools by simply swapping out the service-level implementation. To extend the tool's functionality, developers need only extend `VirtualClassroomServiceImpl` and re-implement the communication layer with the desired external webcasting tool. rSmart plans to use this approach to provide support for Adobe Connect in the near future.

Live Virtual Classroom is the second tool of its type to be contributed to Sakai. Last year, Unicon contributed functionality that works with Elluminate's hosted offering (information available here:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/ELLUM/Home>). Because the rSmart tool supports on-premise deployments of Elluminate Live!, institutions using Sakai and Elluminate Live! can now choose the integration tool that is appropriate for their situation.

FEATURES AND SCREENSHOTS

The Live Virtual Classroom tool enables users to perform these activities:

- Schedule one-time or recurring meetings from within Sakai.
- Edit and delete scheduled meetings and recordings.
- Automatically create moderator users in Elluminate.
- Join active meetings from within the Sakai tool.
- Watch recordings of past meetings from within the Sakai tool.
- Filter and sort lists of meetings and recordings from within the Sakai tool.
- Ping the Elluminate server (allows users to check configuration and status between the servers).

Note: Sakai maintains a list of meetings associated with different Sakai sites, so users of different sites see only their site's meetings.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

A screencast demo of LVC is available here:

<http://www.screencast.com/users/johnbush/folders/Jing/media/0f7ede7d-eb14-4f4e-b2d7-b46b111f7eaa>

Jonny Brown
jonny.brown@rsmart.com

7. Sakai Local/Regional and Language Groups

A question I received recently about local Sakai user groups reminds me that as the number of Sakai deployments has continued to expand, there are probably more people now running Sakai near each other, or who share a common language (other than English) than ever before. There are already some local Sakai groups, such as the New York City Regional Sakai group, the Spanish Sakai group (which is mostly organizations in Spain, but also communicates in Spanish), and others:

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

You might want to take a look at this map and see who else around you is running Sakai:

<http://sakaiproject.org/portal/site/sakai-community/page/d89dabff-a033-412f-80c4-a38931056b26>

If there are enough of you in an area, or who share a common language, then you might think about starting your own regional or language Sakai group to get together and talk Sakai periodically, in addition to participating in the global Sakai community. (If your deployment is not shown on the map, please get in touch with Anthony Whyte, arwhyte@umich.edu, and let's get you on there!) If you're interested in setting up a local Sakai group, please let me know.

Peter Knoop
knoop@umich.edu
Sakai Project Coordinator

8. Library Sakai Integration Meeting Summary

Thank you to all who participated in the May 28 meeting to discuss library integration with Sakai 3. We discussed potential library vignettes to support incorporation of library-related information, data, or services into a Sakai 3 page. Vignettes are available at: <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/SLIB/Sakai+3+Potential+Library+Vignettes>

In discussing the vignettes, participants expressed the need for interoperability with other systems and concern that building functionality that only works in Sakai may be limiting.

There was some skepticism about the importance of a library search box in Sakai that needs to be discussed further. We also discussed how the e-reserves model differs across institutions. The vignettes identified as priority for further discussion were adding a citation to a page and adding a library database to a page. The group stated it would be

helpful to see mock-ups of potential vignettes as well as have a broader discussion about user needs of instructors, students, and librarians relative to library integration.

The next web meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23 at 11:00 a.m. EDT (GMT -4) using the Sakai001 bridge. At this meeting, we'll continue the discussion focusing on a broader look at user needs as well as looking at potential vignette mock-ups.

Please contact Jon Dunn (jwd@indiana.edu) or Susan Hollar (shollar@umich.edu) with any questions or comments.

9. OSP 2.6 Demo

Following up on last month's Sakai 2.6 Demo, there will be a demo of the OSP or portfolio-specific features and functionality in Sakai 2.6 on Tuesday, 23 June 2009, at 11:30am-12:30pm U.S. Eastern Daylight Time (GMT -4). We will be using Indiana's Adobe Connect system to host the demonstration. Janice Smith and Sean Kessler, of Three Canoes, who both have extensive experience with Sakai and its portfolio capabilities, will be giving the demonstration and answering questions afterwards.

Information on the demonstration can be found here, including connection details (when they become available):

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

If you are planning to attend, please RSVP by adding your name to the table of attendees on the above webpage.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks!

Peter Knoop
Sakai Project Coordinator
knoop@umich.edu

10. Sakai 3.0 Group Management Project -- Request for Volunteers

I'd like to draw your attention to the note from Oliver Heyer below about the Group Management effort for Sakai 3. Oliver is organizing a call for those who are interested. It will take place on Monday, June 15 at 8:00 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time GMT -4 (11:00 a.m. EDT, 4:00 p.m. BST).

You can find out more about the project below and at this site:
<http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/FIJDAw>

And you can indicate your interest in attending the conference call by adding your name to the list here: <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/LYhDAw>

Conference Call Details: Sakai002
Telephone: +1-812-856-7060
Internet: 156.56.240.9
Conference Code: 350#
PIN: 72524#

Best,

Michael Korcuska

UC Berkeley and UC Davis are embarking on a long-term project to expand the system and end user administrative functionality for group management in Sakai 3.0. A high level description of the project with linked use cases/requirements (see vignettes) is available here: <http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/confluence/x/FIJDAw>

The team currently consists of:
-- Daphne Ogle -- Interaction Designer
-- Eli Cochran -- UI Developer Ray
-- Davis -- Java developer

We are looking for additional community members who are able to contribute in various project roles and who can commit some significant percentage of their day-to-day time to this effort, preferably over the next 4-12 months. The team aims to work quickly, taking an agile, iterative and collaborative approach to the definition, design and development process. That goal, in turn, demands that communication and coordination among the team members happen very frequently, in a consistent and open fashion. The exact mechanisms and channels have not yet been formalized, but the expectation is that we may have to adapt to a highly distributed team environment. We anticipate that the project will start gathering a full head of steam shortly after the Boston Conference. Please let me know if you are interested in committing yourself or other resources to this project.

Thanks,

Oliver Heyer
oliver@media.berkeley.edu
Manager, Learning Applications Educational Technology Services
UC Berkeley

11. Upcoming rSmart Webinars

rSmart Webinar: ePortfolios -- The Impact on Learning and Assessment

How can your institution start using open source portfolio software? Come join rSmart and Serensoft, two experts in ePortfolios, to learn about using Sakai's open source portfolio capabilities for your ePortfolio project. The rSmart/Serensoft ePortfolio solution combines rSmart's expert Sakai support and maintenance program with Serensoft's leading ePortfolio expertise. Together, we can jump start any ePortfolio project quickly and efficiently, and cost-effectively support it for the long term.

Date: June 18, 2009 Time: 11:00 AM PDT (GMT -7)

To register: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/297525385>

rSmart Sakai Workshops: Join Us for Summer Sakai Institute

During this half-day workshop, attendees will create a pilot course in a live, hosted instance of Sakai. Participants will learn to build content, assessments, and encourage collaboration with Sakai tools. They will learn how to configure Sakai tools and course permissions and add students into the course. At the end of the workshop, each participant will have a course built that they can run for an entire semester.

Attendees need a computer with internet connection for the workshop. It is recommended that attendees have a syllabus on hand, as well.

Workshop Option One:

June 30, 2009 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. PDT, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. PDT (GMT -7)

To register: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/569317241>

Workshop Option Two:

August 31, 2009 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. PDT, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. PDT (BMT -7)

To register: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/580074513>

Megan Perrone
megan.perrone@rsmart.com

12. Call for Papers -- 1st Workshop Learning Management Systems meet Adaptive Learning Environments

The research and development of Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Adaptive Learning Environments (ALE) remained disconnected for a long time. The most popular LMSs, like Moodle, Sakai or Blackboard, still do not support personalization as found in existing adaptive educational hypermedia systems and applications. However, recently some initiatives were started to bridge the gap between the worlds of LMSs and ALEs. Researchers are extending user profiles of existing LMSs and introducing personalization functionality into different modules of LMSs. Likewise researchers of ALEs are finding ways to integrate their ALE within existing LMSs.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

The focus of the workshop will be on the design challenges to introduce personalization into an LMS by means of integration of or communication with an ALE. By bringing together designers of LMSs and researchers in adaptive hypermedia and adaptive learning systems this workshop aims to create a forum to share ideas about how to introduce personalization and adaptation into an LMS.

Topics likely to be discussed at this workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Personalization in the LMS: What kind of personalization do the existing LMSs support and how it can be improved? How can the functionality of existing LMS be extended by additional functionality of personalized systems?
- Sharing User Models: Both LMSs and ALEs maintain information about users. How can they exchange information and how can they understand each other's information?
- Adaptation based on shared User Models: How can, for instance, an LMS offer feedback to tests based on the ALE's user model, or how can an ALE use test results from the LMS in adaptation?
- Effectiveness of personalization in LMS: How to evaluate effectiveness of personalization in the LMS+ALE combination?

PAPER SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION

All submissions will be handled electronically. Please submit your contribution (up to 10 pages in LNCS format) before the submission deadline (July 1, 2009) to the workshop co-chairs by e-mail: e.vasilyeva@tue.nl, debra@win.tue.nl.

MORE INFORMATION

Read more about the conference and the paper submission requirements here:
<http://wwwis.win.tue.nl/lms-ale-09/#home>

Ekaterina Vasilyeva
ekaterina.vasilyeva@gmail.com

13. Recent Email Group Discussions

[Building Sakai] Regarding SAK-16463 - 2.6.x oracle database conversion needed
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Regarding-SAK-16463---2.6.x-oracle-database-conversion-needed-td3064043.html#a3064043>

[Building Sakai] Understanding Sakai tool source ?
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Understanding-Sakai-tool-source---td3068481.html#a3068481>

[Building Sakai] Provided groups question
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Provided-groups-question-td2994158.html#a2994158>

[Building Sakai] Committer Update: /rwiki
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Committer-Update%3A--rwiki-td3061801.html#a3061801>

[Building Sakai] About schedule tool - Calendar subscriptions problem in sakai 2.6
<http://n2.nabble.com/-WG%3A-Sakai-QA--Fwd%3A--Building-Sakai--About-schedule-tool---Calendar-subscriptions-problem-in-sakai-2.6-td3059524.html#a3059524>

[Building Sakai] Provided groups question
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Provided-groups-question-td2994158.html#a2994158>

[Building Sakai] Reaction: Sakai course on CD
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Reaction%3A-Sakai-course-on-CD-td3048651.html#a3049423>

[Building Sakai] Creating a new cache
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Creating-a-new-cache-td3044078.html#a3044078>

[Portfolio] Matrix deletion
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Portfolio--Matrix-deletion-td3062013.html#a3062013>

[Portfolio] View Guidance Permission in Matrix Cells
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Portfolio--View-Guidance-Permission-in-Matrix-Cells-td3051745.html#a3051745>

[Using Sakai] Random multi-part questions in Quizzes
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Using-Sakai--Random-multi-part-questions-in-Quizzes-td3065919.html#a3065919>

[Using Sakai] Tests&Quizzes vs. groups :(
<http://n2.nabble.com/-Using-Sakai--Tests-Quizzes-vs.-groups-%3A%28-td3064140.html#a3064140>

[Using Sakai] Import from Site
<http://n2.nabble.com/forum/Search.jtp?forum=1343168&local=y&query=Import+from+Site>

14. Events

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/>

Advanced CAMP: Identity Services Summit for Higher Ed Open/Community-Source Projects

June 18-19, 2009

Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel Philadelphia

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

http://net.educause.edu/content.asp?Section_ID=434&bhcp=1

10th Sakai Conference in Boston

July 8-10, 2009

Cambridge Hyatt

Cambridge, Massachusetts

<https://educonference.com/sakai/boston/index.php>

AuSakai '09

September 17-18, 2009

Charles Sturt University Bathurst Campus

Bathurst NSW, Australia

<http://www.csu.edu.au/division/landt/ausakai09/ausakai09.htm>

1st Workshop: Learning Management Systems meet Adaptive Learning Environments (LMS-ALE'09)

September 29 - October 2, 2009

EC-TEL

Nice, France

<http://www.wis.win.tue.nl/lms-ale-09>

Assessment Institute in Indianapolis
October 25-27, 2009
The Westin Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana
<http://www.planning.iupui.edu/institute>

Online Educa Berlin 2009
December 2-4, 2009
Hotel InterContinental Berlin
Berlin, Germany
<http://www.online-educa.com/the-conference>

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SAKAI CONFERENCE

THE 10th SAKAI CONFERENCE

The global Sakai community will be in Boston this year for the Sakai conference.

Pre-conference Sessions:
July 7th

Conference Sessions:
July 8th – July 10th



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 29, 2009 – This is the first installment of a Sakai Executive Brief that the Sakai Foundation plans to publish every 6 months. It is focused on providing organizational managers and executives with a brief overview of what has been and what will be happening in Sakai. I hope you find the information useful to understanding the current state of Sakai development, what is taking place in the Sakai community, and how your institution can further engage in our efforts to make Sakai the premier academic collaboration and learning environment.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Korcuska".

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director
Sakai Foundation

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SAKAI BY THE NUMBERS

Production Sites	160
Pilot Implementations	140
Continents	7



THE SAKAI COMMUNITY

Substantial, Global and Diverse

The Sakai community is growing in size, diversity and engagement. The Sakai Project began as a Mellon-funded collaboration in the fall of 2003. In the project's first year, 50 institutions committed to the project. Since then, institutional participation has continued to increase steadily and significantly.

Providing a Range of Support Models

The diversity of our community has created a broad range of implementation and support needs. The Sakai commercial affiliates contribute to addressing those needs. They bring new institutions into the community, create diverse support models and extend the implementation and impact of the Sakai CLE among community institutions. Our commercial affiliates provide a wide range of products, services and skills to support your institution.

Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Research

The breadth and depth of the Sakai community inspires enhanced teaching, learning and research in many ways. Our community efforts to share research, teaching and learning best practices continue to grow. We welcome participation in these groups from faculty members and leaders within your institutional community.

In an effort to highlight and share these enhancements, annual awards recognize those who demonstrate creativity and innovation using Sakai. Recently, the 2009 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award winners were announced. First place was awarded to Dr. Andrea Crampton at Charles Sturt University, second place was awarded to Dr. Edith Sheffer at Stanford University, and honorable mentions were made of Cherry Stewart at the University of New England and Dr. Mark Van Dyke at Marist College. Award winners will present their work at the upcoming Sakai Conference.

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RESOURCES

Community Sharing of Best Practices
in Teaching and Learning:

<http://www.OpenEdPractices.org>

Sakai Commercial Affiliate Descriptions:

<http://tinyurl.com/http-sakaiproject-org-comaff>

2009 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award
Winners: <http://openedpractices.org/twsia>



The 10th Sakai Conference

The global Sakai community will be in Boston this year for the Sakai conference. The 10th Sakai conference runs from Wednesday, July 8th to Friday, July 10th, with pre-conference sessions taking place on Tuesday, July 7th. Session track topics for this year's conference include building Sakai, deploying Sakai, and using Sakai. Additionally, one session track is devoted to showcasing new and re-factored Sakai tools and services through interactive media that provide a snapshot of community-source software development in action. This is a tremendous opportunity for your staff to share and learn from innovations and experiences across the community.

If you would like more information regarding the 10th Sakai conference, please visit <https://educonference.com/sakai/boston/index.php>.

New Sakai Resources

Community members are constantly creating resources that support the Sakai product. The following are some excellent examples:

- Indiana University has contributed training materials and over 60 flash tutorials: <http://oncourse.iu.edu/info>.
- rSmart has contributed a series of case studies that highlight successful and innovative uses of Sakai: <http://tinyurl.com/http-sakaiproject-org-cs>.
- OpenEd Practices contains a wide range of rubric and faculty resources being used across the community: <http://openedpractices.org/resources>.

Planning for 2010 and Beyond

The Sakai community faces an important opportunity in developing the next generation of Sakai, while continuing to enhance and improve the Sakai 2.x platform. Over the next several months, the Sakai Foundation will work with institutions in the Sakai community to fully staff both development and support needs. We'll be holding webinars and providing additional communication in advance of the Sakai Conference. Please watch the Sakai Announcements list for more information.

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RESOURCES

Product Development Cycle Whitepaper:
<http://tinyurl.com/DownloadProductDevelopmentWP>

Product Development Process Webinar:
<http://www.screencast.com/t/lsg6iM2WKqy>



THE SAKAI FOUNDATION

The Sakai Foundation board recently conducted a 2-day retreat that was focused on defining the strategic direction for the Sakai Foundation, especially with regard to how the foundation should use its resources to support the Sakai community development process. Over the last few months, we have been working on recommendations for improving the development process and making corresponding changes to several staff positions at the foundation.

THE SAKAI DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Sakai Foundation has been looking for ways to increase visibility and predictability into the product roadmap. To this end we will adopt a more structured development process. The new process seeks to support the breadth of innovation that characterizes a very organic process, while providing increased structure and predictability needed to support a reliable, high-quality release. The product development process is built around five distinct phases in the Sakai product life cycle. Significant new additions to Sakai functionality will progress through each of these stages.

Research & Development

The Research and Development Phase of the product development cycle is organic; development needs or desires are identified and projects are undertaken without approval or decision-making from a central authority. Thus, this stage fosters independent creativity and a breadth of new opportunities.

Incubation

Incubation is a new and important step in the development process and is required for projects that are ultimately intended for a Sakai release. The goals of the incubation stage are to improve our ability to meet user needs and reduce development risk. In this phase we prove desirability to the community, formalize project requirements, assemble a cross-institutional development team that includes functional expertise, and build a project and maintenance plan. The Sakai Foundation is adding a new full-time role, Sakai Product Manager, to shepherd projects through the incubation stage.

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Product Development

Through this phase, the Sakai Foundation will provide the infrastructure, communication and oversight necessary to ensure that operational decisions are driven by end-user priorities. One source of oversight is the Product Council, comprised of technical and function experts, that will actively oversee this process and validate that the criteria for a project to become a part of a release have been met.

Maintenance

Once a project has been incorporated in a Sakai release, the Sakai Foundation will support the tool through formation of a maintenance team that will provide bug fixes and feature enhancements to the released product. The formalization of a maintenance team is an improvement that will increase the community's success in effectively supporting all Sakai users.

End of Life

Eventually, a tool may become obsolete. The Product Council will decide if functionality should be removed from Sakai and this will generally happen when a suitable replacement is available or when a feature becomes obsolete.

Key to this new development process is the establishment of the Sakai Product Council, a group of community leaders who will help guide projects through the development process and, ultimately, determine what is incorporated into a Sakai release. The selection process for council members is well underway, and we will be announcing the members very soon.

The Foundation looks forward to working with all Sakai institutions to implement and continuously improve the new development process.

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SAKAI STAFF ROLES

To support the new development process and the foundation's increased focus on communications, two new positions are being created, one for a Product Manager and one for a Communications Manager. Between the two, the goal is for the Foundation to increase communication overall and to play a more proactive role in developing and executing the product roadmap.

The Sakai Product Manager will drive greater engagement, from users and contributors, and serve as the liaison between the community and the Sakai Product Council. The Product Manager will, in a very real sense, own the Sakai roadmap. The Sakai Communications Manager will be responsible for both internal and external communications for the Sakai Foundation.

In addition to myself as Executive Director, the permanent, full-time staff positions at the Sakai Foundation include:

- Product Manager: Open
- Communication Manager: Open
- Developer Support, Release Management & System Administration: Anthony Whyte
- Quality Assurance Manager: Pete Peterson
- Conference Coordinator & Administration: Mary Miles

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THE SAKAI PRODUCT

Goals and Achievements of 2008

In 2008, the Sakai Foundation focused on improving the stability and supportability of the Sakai collaborative learning environment. We instituted formal beta and release candidate stages to the release process and also have been doing formal maintenance releases (currently working on Sakai 2.5.5). While it is difficult to quantify this, we have heard repeatedly that more staff are available for new tool development or other projects, as much less time is being spent on production support of Sakai. This is clearly good news, and we hope this "extra" time will translate into new capabilities in future releases of Sakai.

Additionally, Sakai 2.6 is in the final stages of the release process. Many institutions have invested in developing Sakai 2.6, and we want to take this opportunity to thank them. While this communication cannot do justice to the breadth of enhancements and new functionality in the release, we would like to highlight a few key innovations that create powerful improvements for teaching, learning and research.

Technical Enhancements	Description/Examples
First formal Kernel release	Separates infrastructure from tools; all current components together in a single place
db2 and WebSphere	Support for using both with Sakai
Performance testing framework	Implementation of a working, proof-of-concept generic Sakai performance testing environment
Email archive performance improvements	Refactoring of email archive to support sites with large amounts of email.

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Functional Enhancements	Description/Examples
Important internationalization improvements	Support for localized tool names; localized date/time picker for Announcement, Assignment, Schedule and Resources; numerous languages supported
View as student	Allows faculty to view the site as if they were students
Session time out	Warns users when their session is about to time out
Assignments	Support for multiple submissions of an assignment; support of custom fields, with timing and role control over who can see them and when
iCal integration	External subscription support in Schedule Tool
Various Open Source Portfolio improvements	Ability to edit and delete feedback and evaluations; aggregation of Evaluations across site via My Workspace; better group awareness and filtering in Wizards tool
Tests & Quizzes	Group support; ability to edit a published assessment; improvements to statistics reporting; ability to share question pools with site members

Planning for Sakai 3

After a year of much progress in 2008, 2009 has already seen significant work and advancements, including the announcement of the Product Development Cycle outlined above. Our greatest opportunity and challenge lies in deliberately and effectively planning for the next generation of Sakai, while continuing to innovate on the Sakai 2.x platform.

Cambridge University is leading the efforts on R&D for Sakai 3, with significant contributions from Georgia Tech and the University of California Davis. In June we'll begin broad communications about the efforts to build Sakai 3 and we should see the first "incubation" projects emerge.

Over the next several months, The Sakai Foundation will work with the project teams and leaders at each institution in the Sakai community to fully staff these critical development and support needs. These efforts allow institutions across our community to gain greater benefit from resource investments and to achieve our vision to inspire enhanced teaching, learning and research throughout education.