Sakai Newsletter

October 15, 2009

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1. From the Executive Director

I'm writing to let you know that as of December 18, Pete Peterson, currently Sakai QA Director, will be returning to his duties at UC Davis.

This will leave a vacancy on the Sakai staff. I'm using this moment to rethink the role to some degree at least. The QA process has typically benefitted from an individual paying close attention to the details of the many Jira issues and svn commits that make up the release. The volume of issues and attention to detail required are both relatively high. At

the same time I also believe that we are ripe for a strategic rethinking of how we manage QA in Sakai and to help the community institute new processes and, especially, to implement a variety of test automation tools and techniques. I'm not optimistic I can fill both of these needs with one person, which, as you might expect, is all I currently have in the budget. I'm open to feedback and advice on this matter so please get in touch if you have something you'd like to share.

I want to thank Pete for his contributions to the Sakai QA efforts over the past year. We wish him well at UC Davis and we're sure we will continue to hear from him in the community. At least I hope we will!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
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phone: +1 510-859-4247 (google voice)
skype: mkorcuska

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2. Sakai 2.6.1 Released

Release Date: 15 October 2009

The **Sakai 2.6.1 maintenance release** provides a set of bug fixes, language/locale updates and performance enhancements that improve upon the Sakai 2.6.0 release. Over 200 issues have been addressed by 2.6.1. Roughly half involve bug fixes while the remainder involve textual updates to language translation property bundles. In particular, important fixes have been applied to the assignment, chat, portfolio, Tests & Quizzes and site-manage modules while updates for Catalan, French, Russian, Spanish and Swedish translations have also been provided.

Sakai 2.6.1 utilizes core service updates provided in the recent Sakai kernel (K1) 1.0.12 maintenance release. Portfolio users will appreciate a performance enhancement made to the kernel's ContentHostingService that reduces portfolio assembly times (see http://jira.sakaiproject.org/browse/SAK-14165).

For all the changes in (K1) 1.0.12 see:
http://jira.sakaiproject.org/browse/KNL/fixforversion/11551

Documentation and Overview:
Sakai 2.6.1 Documentation (Overview, Installation, Configuration, etc.) is available at:
http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/DOC/Sakai+2.6

Source:
The source Tag for 2.6.1 is available from Subversion at:
https://source.sakaiproject.org/svn/sakai/tags/sakai-2.6.1/

Demo, binary, source artifacts:
Links for these are available in the Downloads section at:
http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/2.6.1/

Older versions of Sakai:
Users of **pre-2.5 versions** of Sakai are strongly encouraged to update to the Sakai Community-supported Sakai 2.6.1 or Sakai 2.5.5 releases* in order to take advantage of the feature, performance and security enhancements provided by the Sakai 2.5 and Sakai 2.6 series.

The Sakai open source community develops, tests, and maintains the code for all Sakai releases. For the most current release and the immediate prior release, the Sakai Foundation uses its resources to oversee and manage the development, QA testing, patching, and releasing of incremental numbered versions.

For earlier versions, the Foundation no longer provides this oversight and coordination of the community contribution to the codebase. This does not mean that these earlier versions are not used and maintained by some institutions in the community, they are. Institutions running an older version may of course continue to do so, applying patches, bug fixes, and enhancements as they wish. These modifications are committed to the Sakai SVN code repository and are available for others to use if they wish. But the Foundation does not coordinate testing or validation of the code changes, and does not create a concomitant roll-up into an incremental release.

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*See the previous announcements about the 2.6.0 and 2.5.5 releases in the July 23, 2009 Sakai Newsletter: http://www.sakaiproject.org/portal/site/sakai-news/page/ff27f160-ca13-43dc-b778-84791fb67cb2

3. The Fluid Project is Pleased to Announce the Release of Fluid Infusion 1.1.2

This release is a combination of bug fixes to existing code plus new features aimed at giving Infusion users a better experience. Infusion 1.1.2 is an incremental upgrade and preserves backwards compatibility for all production-grade components.

This release addresses some pesky bugs in Uploader, provides a sneak peak at the Mobile Fluid Skinning System, and showcases a new demo portal for easier interaction.

Infusion 1.1.2 is available for download at:
http://fluidproject.org/index.php/download-infusion

What's new in this release?
- New Demo Portal with improved component demos
- Sneak Peak for Mobile FSS iPhone theme
- Improved and simplified Image Reorderer examples and documentation
- Uploader support for Firefox 3.5 and improved experience for Internet Explorer users
- Other bug fixes, such as more class name normalization and InlineEdit fixes

For the complete bug list go to:
http://issues.fluidproject.org/secure/IssueNavigator.jspa?requestId=10272&tempMax=10
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If you're upgrading from Infusion 1.0, please see:
http://wiki.fluidproject.org/display/fluid/Upgrading+to+Infusion+1.1

If upgrading from an earlier version of Infusion you may want to refer to the following Upgrade guides:
http://wiki.fluidproject.org/display/fluid/Upgrading+to+Infusion+1.0

What is Fluid Infusion?

Fluid Infusion is a JavaScript application framework for building rich, reusable, and accessible user interfaces on the Web. It includes all the tools you need for building complex interactions, including support for models and views, data binding, and unobtrusive markup rendering. Infusion also includes a growing collection of components that have been designed by a cross-disciplinary team and thoroughly tested for usability and accessibility. By incorporating the Infusion framework and components into your web application's user interface, you will make your application easier to use by more people. Easier to use means happier users.

Known Issues

An up-to-date listing of known issues with this release is available at:
http://issues.fluidproject.org/secure/IssueNavigator.jspa?requestId=10272&tempMax=10
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Help us Build a Usable Web For Everyone

The Fluid Project is an open, collaborative community. Our goal is to improve the user experience of open source web applications, so if you are a designer or developer and want to help change the world, consider getting involved! Fluid Infusion includes not only full source code but also a design handbook that offers useful design, accessibility, and usability strategies and documentation, all backed by a growing community of interaction designers, user interface experts, and software developers contributing a wealth of expertise in usability and accessibility.

Many thanks to everyone in the community for their hard work and support for this release!

Jess Mitchell
Project Manager / Fluid Project
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http://www.fluidproject.org

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4. Josh Baron's Article "Innovating Teaching and Learning with Sakai" Now Online

Here is an excerpt published in Campus Technology Magazine from "Courseware Management: The Official Guide," by Josh Baron.

"...It was from a desire among the Sakai Teaching and Learning interest group to highlight and share these more inventive applications that the Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award Program, initially sponsored by IBM and the Sakai Foundation, was born. The program is not aimed at identifying technically complex uses of Sakai but rather to find those uses of the technology, even very simple ones, which are driving true innovation in how instructors are teaching and students are learning. The following is a discussion of the award process itself and highlights the winners of the 2008 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award as a means to provide concrete examples of how Sakai is facilitating truly inventive instruction..."

You can read the full article at: http://bit.ly/2mdoL2

5. Thanks to the TWSIA Committee!

I would like to thank everyone from within the community who has worked so hard over the past two years on the Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award program (whose 2008 winners are the focus of the book chapter and article noted in the newsletter item above). I would especially like to highlight those who served on the past Award Committees:

- Sue Roig, Director Academic Computing, Claremont Colleges (Claremont Graduate University) (Committee Chair)

- Janet de Vry, Manager, Instructional Services, IT-User Services University of Delaware (Committee chair)

- Maggie McVay Lynch, Dean, Distance Learning College of the Redwoods

- Mathieu Plourde, Instructional Designer, IT-User Services, University of Delaware

- Kate Ellis, Instructional Technology Consultant & Designer, Indiana University

- Nate Angell, Director of Special Projects, rSmart

- Salwa Khan, Media Consultant, Instructional Technologies Support, Texas State University

- Eddie Watson, Assistant Director, Strategy & Planning, Learning Technologies Virginia Tech

(My apologies if I have outdated titles or institutions listed for folks.)

P.S. My thanks to Mary Miles as well for all of her logistical support on the conference-related award activities.

Joshua Baron
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6. eLearning Africa 2010 -- The Call for Papers is Now Open!

eLearning Africa is delighted to announce that next year's conference, the fifth in the highly successful series of pan-African gatherings, will take place from May 26th - 28th, 2010 in Lusaka, Zambia.

For further information, please visit the eLearning Africa website, which will keep you up-to-date with the latest developments and details about the conference venue, conference highlights, registration and other components of the event.

http://www.elearning-africa.com/

7. Moving Along -- Antranig Basman

Hello there fellows all,

As some of you may know, I am moving on from CARET and so my current email address will not be working much longer. I will, however, still be in existence, and doing much the same sort of thing -- as part of the Fluid Project, I have relocated from one partner to another, and as of yesterday am working at the University of Colorado, Boulder, together with the illustrious Clayton Lewis. I am excited at the opportunity to be troublesome in an entirely new community. As you know, although the formal partners on the Fluid Engage project are cultural institutions rather than higher education, Fluid Infusion, our base framework, is still an extremely active project and we are excited to continue working with the partners we built up with it, including uPortal, Sakai and others. So you haven't quite got rid of me yet. I will of course continue to support users of the RSF framework, which will probably be moving to have its infrastructure to be consolidated with Fluid over the next few months. For those of you hanging round Denver next summer, we stand to buy each other a beer, or something harder, depending on the sign and magnitude of accumulated obligation :P My new email for work purposes will be Antranig.Basman@colorado.edu -- I will try to gradually phase out refs to the old one though this may take some time. Look forward to working with you in another life, brother :P (Just to clear the decks from any charges of sexism, I do want to make it clear that women are just fine to be fellows and brothers, just in the same way that they can be gentlemen :P) (except for an aunt, that is -- http://www.amazon.com/Aunts-arent-Gentlemen-P-G-Wodehouse/dp/0140041923)

Cheers, Antranig

New email address: Antranig.Basman@colorado.edu

8. Three Students Who Worked to Enabled Sakai 2.6.1 on IBM's Websphere and DB2 Recently Participated in an IBM Poster Competition

Three student members of the Marist/IBM Joint Study team that recently completed the work to enable Sakai 2.6.1 on IBM's Websphere and DB2 products participated in an IBM sponsored poster competition event called TechConnect 2009. The event was held at IBM's Development Lab in Poughkeepise, New York and 24 posters were entered in the contest. Their poster submission was entitled "Project Cloud9". Project Cloud9 is the culmination of our work to port Sakai to IBM's Websphere/DB2/z platform -- tune it on the mainframe, and create a production environment at Marist College that provides access to this version of Sakai to local school districts. It went into production at the beginning of this fall semester.

The students won a first prize in the "early tenure/ solutions" category from the IBM judging team, and a first prize from "the people" (IBMers and IBM execs from the lab who visited the session after the official judging was over). Judging was based on:

Clarity of Communication

Focus on communicating the key concepts of the project/work

1. Technical Achievement, Breakthrough thinking -- describe it along the following scale

Following current trends -------------> redefines the paradigm

2. Your contribution to solution

General team member, performing tasks expected -------------> strong leadership role

3. Business Value of the overall project

Solving daily requirements -------------> new customer offerings with competitive advantage

The students who participated in the contest were Sean Goldsmith, Deyaa Abuelsaad, and Michael Lavacca. Sean and Deyaa are senior CS majors, and Michael is a junior in the Marist CS program. They are also currently employed as IBM interns -- which enabled them to compete in the IBM event. Other members of the team who made significant contributions to this project were: John Bush from rSmart, John Digilio, Martha McConaghy, Adam Hocek, Earle Nietzel and David Brangaitis from Marist College's IT department, Kashife Smith -- Marist College sophomore/CS major, and Marty Banting and Austin Schilling from IBM.

Howard Baker PMP®
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9. Do you have a LinkedIn Account? -- Join the Sakai Community Group There

If you are active on LinkedIn you can join the Sakai Community group
(http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3122). I have started posting references to Sakai in
the news and job postings there in addition to the mail lists.

The LinkedIn group is NOT a replacement for the Sakai-hosted mail lists, wiki, or blogs
as collaboration and communication tools, but rather it's an additional communications
channel for those of you who are active on LinkedIn.

Pieter Hartsook
Sakai Foundation Communications Manager
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10. Information Regarding Deprecating Foundation Support for Older Sakai Versions

The following is a summary of the Sakai Foundation policy and practice regarding
support for older versions:

The Sakai open source community develops, tests, and maintains the code for all Sakai
releases. For the most current release and the immediate prior release, the Sakai
Foundation uses its resources to oversee and manage the development, QA testing,
patching, and release of incremental numbered versions.

For earlier versions, the Foundation no longer provides this oversight and coordination of
the community contribution to the codebase. This does not mean that these earlier
versions are not used and maintained by some institutions in the community, they are.
Institutions running an older version may of course continue to do so, applying patches,
bug fixes, and enhancements as they wish. These modifications are committed to the
Sakai SVN code repository and are available for others to use if they wish. But the
Foundation does not coordinate testing or validation of the code changes, and does not
create a concomitant roll-up into an incremental release.

The Foundation and most of the community are focused on maintaining the current versions and development toward future versions since this provides maximum benefit to the community at large and is the best use of our aggregate resources. When possible we recommend upgrading your deployment to currently supported versions.

In July 2009, Sakai version 2.6.0 was released. Thus, any subsequent changes to Sakai 2.4.x code are no longer managed by the Foundation and became the sole responsibility of the individual institutions. No new versions of 2.4 will be released. When version Sakai 2.7.0 is released, the same change will happen to the currently supported version 2.5.x.

A wiki page describing the development life cycle process is located at: http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/SAKDEV/Sakai+Developer+Practices

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11. Unicon to Address Technology Challenges of Exploding Enrollments Within Community Colleges

Unicon, Inc. has announced that its Senior Sales Consultant Keegan Cherry will be delivering a presentation that examines how learning management systems can be a viable solution to the intersection of exploding enrollments, increasing needs for scalable technology, and reduced budget challenges at community colleges. The Conference on Information Technology 2009 is being held October 11-14, 2009 at the Cobo Center in Detroit, Michigan.

Unicon will be exhibiting in booth #503 at the conference, and available for meetings and demonstrations regarding its open source solutions for enterprise portals, learning management systems, identity management, calendaring, email, and collaboration platforms.

Unicon Presentation

Title -- "Reducing TCO with Hosted, Open Source Learning Management Systems"
When -- Monday, October 12, 2009, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Where -- Cobo Center D2-13, Level 2
Presenter -- Keegan Cherry, Senior Sales Consultant, Unicon, Inc.
Abstract -- Learn how to maintain high service levels for online campuses, improve productivity of IT staffs, and reduce TCO through the implementation of hosted open source learning management systems. Hosted learning management systems offer

scalability, flexibility, and strong functionality to budget conscious institutions in this tough economy. Open source learning management systems include Sakai, Moodle, and others. Attendees will also learn what technology and hosting platforms were selected by the Workforce Retraining Initiative created by Cisco Networking Academy, in collaboration with colleges and universities across the state of Michigan. Workforce Retraining brings workers from Michigan new educational opportunities for job retraining in high-demand, high-paying IT careers.

12. Recent Email Group Discussions

[Building Sakai] **Search 1.2 beta01 released**
http://n2.nabble.com/Search-1-2-beta01-released-td3844735.html#a3844735

[Building Sakai] **Sakai as a large file dropbox**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Sakai-as-a-large-file-dropbox-td3783433.html#a3783612

[Building Sakai] **Cafe trunk status**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Cafe-trunk-status-td3840269.html#a3840269

[Building Sakai] **Web DAV under Snowleopard does not work**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Web-DAV-under-Snowleopard-does-not-work-td3835886.html#a3835886

[Building Sakai] **ResourcesToolActionPipe: When does it "stream" ?**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-ResourcesToolActionPipe-When-does-it-stream-td3818263.html#a3818263

[Building Sakai] **java support**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-java-support-td3837415.html#a3837415

[Building Sakai] **Sakai Out of memory perm gen error**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Sakai-Out-of-memory-perm-gen-error-td3836171.html#a3836171

[Building Sakai] **scorm player problem**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-scorm-player-problem-td3835918.html#a3835918

[Building Sakai] **scorm player modules**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-scorm-player-modules-td3833754.html#a3833754

[Building Sakai] **why i can't use sakai service in my app :(?**

http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-why-i-can-t-use-sakai-service-in-my-app-td3833650.html#a3833729

[Building Sakai] **ResourcesToolActionPipe: When does it "stream" ?**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-ResourcesToolActionPipe-When-does-it-stream-td3818263.html#a3818263

[Building Sakai] **Writing an EntityProvider**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Writing-an-EntityProvider-td3830562.html#a3830562

[Building Sakai] **trunk/trunk-experimental update: contrib IMS basiclti available via -Pexperimental profile**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-trunk-trunk-experimental-update-contrib-IMS-basiclti-available-via-Pexperimental-profe-td3831355.html#a3831355

[Building Sakai] **Tests and Quizzes Copy Shared Pool**
http://n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Tests-and-Quizzes-Copy-Shared-Pool-td3830255.html#a3830255

[DG: Teaching & Learning] [Management] [Portfolio] **A manifesto for Grading and Rating in Sakai**
http://n2.nabble.com/Portfolio-A-manifesto-for-Grading-and-Rating-in-Sakai-td3834665.html#a3834665

[Portfolio] **Documentation**
http://n2.nabble.com/Portfolio-Documentation-td3824831.html#a3824831

[Portfolio] [Management] **A manifesto for Grading and Rating in Sakai**
http://n2.nabble.com/Portfolio-A-manifesto-for-Grading-and-Rating-in-Sakai-td3834665.html#a3834665

[Portfolio] **Collaborative Portfolio Contributions**
http://n2.nabble.com/Portfolio-Collaborative-Portfolio-Contributions-td3810095.html#a3810095

[Portfolio] **How to get data form gradebook to my portfolios ?**
[DG: User Experience] Fluid announces Infusion 1.1.2 Release

[DG: User Experience] **Discussions Widget Patch**
http://n2.nabble.com/DG-User-Experience-Discussions-Widget-Patch-td3807942.html#a3808615

13. Events

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