Sakai Newsletter

August 19, 2010

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1. From the Executive Director

I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Ian Dolphin, the new Executive Director of the Sakai Foundation. Many of you know me from my time on the Board of the Sakai Project, during the period of Mellon grant funding and early years of the Foundation. For those who don't know me, I'll tell you a little about my background. I began my career as a teacher, but have worked in educational and administrative software for the last twenty years, first facilitating content creation with groups of teachers, and latterly as Head of eStrategy at the University of Hull. During that time I managed a considerable range of grant-funded projects, from either UK or European Union funding sources. For the last three years I've been seconded from that post to the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), a part of the UK education funding council structure which provides a series of ICT related services for UK Higher and Further Education. At the JISC my roles included a period as a Programme Director, and, for the last two years, International Director of an initiative involving the JISC and several agencies in New Zealand and Australia. In addition to my time on the Sakai Board, I have also served on the Board of JASIG, the parent organisation for uPortal, and the Curriki content initiative.

Returning to the Sakai Community after two years, it's difficult to miss the changes. The Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment is both a more mature, and more widely adopted platform than ever before. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those -- software developers and others -- who have improved the environment so much, and who have helped broaden the adoption base. The growth of the teaching and learning community around Sakai is tremendous. Listening to the Teaching and Learning Award winners at the recent Denver conference was a powerful reminder of why this community does what it does; innovate for the benefit of learners and educators.

It's also very noticeable, whether one attends Sakai Conferences, or participates on mailing lists and other community endeavours, how much of a global community Sakai has become. I was pleased to participate in the Sakai 3 Project meetings in Denver. Around the table were participants from the US, UK, Australia and South Africa. Sakai 3 is international from the outset.

My priorities in my first weeks and months with the Foundation are to understand and review the processes which ensure the health and sustainability of Sakai. I'll be working closely with Alan Marks, the newly appointed Director of the Sakai 3 Project, to ensure that project gets off to flying start. More critically still, I'll be finding ways to reach out to the institutions and individuals which make up the Sakai Community, and understand **your** strategic priorities and goals, so that the Foundation can serve you better. Those conversations are an essential -- if not **the** essential -- component of renewing and refreshing Foundation strategy.

It would be wrong to let the opportunity pass to thank the individuals who have occupied this position before me. Chuck Severance, the first Executive Director of the Foundation, who faced the difficult task of transitioning from funded project to community. Michael Korcuska, who shepherded the Foundation through its early years, and Lois Brooks, a Sakai Founder who stepped at short notice in the period following Michael's departure. I owe a particular debt to Lois for her help in transitioning to my tenure. It is an honour to succeed them.

My intention as Executive Director is to be as transparent and open as possible. I'm iandolphin@sakaifoundation.org -- please feel free to drop me a line. Over the next few months I'll be visiting as many Sakai schools as I can -- and some which aren't users of our software, I hope. You can follow my progress on Twitter (I'm iandolphin24), or my soon-to-be-established blog. I look forward to working with you all.

Ian Dolphin
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
iandolphin@sakaifoundation.org

2. The Sir Louie Project

Sir Louie -- System for Integrating Reading Lists within the Oxford University Information Environment

This project will enhance two academic and administrative systems, the WebLearn (VLE), (based on the Sakai open source platform,) and the University's library search interface SOLO, (based on Ex-libris Primo,) in order to provide much improved experience for both students and lecturers in the area of reading lists.

The planned improvements target the searching of library catalogues and the displaying of availability information with a reading list.

Development work on both systems will enable the SOLO search interface to be invoked from within WebLearn's reading list tool, (also known as the Citations Helper,) and be used to find items to be sent back to the VLE for automatic inclusion in the reading list. The data will be transferred using the standard OpenURL encoding.

In addition, the project will develop a method of augmenting all reading lists with availability information when they are displayed in WebLearn.

This is achieved by "hiding" OpenURL COinS meta data for each item within a reading list. This in-page data can then be used to determine current availability once the page has loaded (using DLF ILS-DI and / or DAIA).

The result is that the reading list will automatically contain links to "full text" versions of journal articles, a list of (Oxford University) libraries where the item can be found, and links to online stores where the item can be purchased.

The COiNS meta data can also be used to enable existing Open Source software such as Zotero and LibX (a browser plug-in) to interact with Citation Helper reading lists.

This kind of integration between Oxford's VLE and Library systems was formally requested of the University by the Oxford University Student's Union (OUSU) in order that students can save valuable time when dealing with their reading lists.

The project has been funded by JISC within their Flexible Services Delivery programme and runs until the end of 2010.

For more information, see: https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/asuc/oucs/sirlouie

Adam Marshall
adam.marshall@oucs.ox.ac.uk

3. Google Summer of Code 2010

Google Summer of Code 2010 (GSoC) is drawing to a close and Sakai's three students all have exciting contributions to share. It's particularly great to see that all three are planning to keep up their involvement with Sakai. Many thanks to Google for running another great GSoC, to our volunteer mentors, and to everyone in the community who has helped out.

Manoj Inukolunu, now final-year CS student at BITS-Pilani in Goa, has built a citation manager widget [1] [2] [3], helped by some joint mentoring from Cambridge. He writes "It has been a wonderful experience to work the Sakai Foundation [...] GSoC has been the single greatest experience in my life so far and the most productive summer so far. The interaction with the community (thanks very much for all the guys who helped me) was the best part."

[1] http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/3AK/Citation+Manager+widget+specification+proposal
[2] http://github.com/zerocool1989/citation-manager-widget
[3] http://github.com/zerocool1989/exportRIS

Maria Teresa Gimenez Fayos, final-year CS student, has been developing an Android app [4] [5] for interacting with Sakai 2.x instances, working with mentor David Roldan Martinez at the Polytechnic University of Valencia. She writes of her project "Of course I am planning to continue working on it! In fact this is going to be my final career project. I am going to use all what I learned about Android and Sakai in this project."

[4] Code: http://bitbucket.org/mrs.hopper/nellodee
[5] Maria's blog (in Spanish) about "Sakai, Android, technology and so on":
 http://www.colorines.org/

Ashish Mittal, now a 3rd-year CS student at Sardar Patel Institute Of Technology, has developed an 'event explorer tool' [6] for help desk users with mentor Ian Boston at Cambridge. Ashish writes, "It has been a great experience to work under Sakai for GSOC 2010. It is mainly because of the opportunity of working with great experienced people, having a great mentor, working with the most cutting edge technologies for the project and developing a great and successful project at the end. I am very happy I got selected under Sakai Foundation for GSOC and will cherish this period of my introduction to Sakai Community. People at Sakai are great and very helpful and have been available through IRC or mailing lists whenever any help was needed. This has been the greatest event for me till now and I thank Sakai community for this."

[6] - http://github.com/ashishmittal/eventexplorer (accessible in the sandbox area under the name eventexplorer)

You can read the full updates from all three students on the Sakai GSoC blog: http://sakaigsoc2010.blogspot.com/

Amyas Phillips
amyas@caret.cam.ac.uk

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4. Sakai Teaching and Learning Community Initiatives

Following work at the 2010 Sakai Conference in Denver, the Sakai Teaching and Learning (T&L) group has identified priority initiatives for the upcoming year. During the year leading up to the 2011 Sakai Conference in Berlin, the T&L group will focus on the following four areas:

- Continuing leadership of the Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award
- Continuing advancement of the learning capabilities design lenses
- Sharing best practices and resources for the use of Sakai for distance learning
- Increasing student engagement in the Sakai community
- Structurally, the T&L group has formed an initiative group for each of these categories that will meet on a regular basis. The full T&L group will hold a call together each month to share progress across the initiatives. (Please see minutes from the August 2010 call.)

Each quarter, the T&L group will also host a virtual community gathering to share the work that has been accomplished on these initiatives and to create opportunities for discussion, feedback and additional input.

Please mark Thursday, September 9 at 5:00pm EST on your calendar for the first T&L community gathering.

The T&L group page in Confluence has been updated with information about the initiatives.

The T&L group has created a calendar in Confluence that includes all group meeting dates.

All initiative groups are seeking broader engagement from across the Sakai community.

If you would like to participate in or monitor the work of an initiative group, there is a Confluence page, a mail list, and a regular tele-conference for each group. The Confluence page for the T&L group includes links to all of the initiatives, and is a great place start in gaining information about all T&L group activities.

Please consider identifying at least one individual on your campus to participate in the T&L group. It is a very welcoming group that is doing important work not only sharing best practices in teaching and learning, but also in helping to define the future direction of Sakai.

Kim Thanos
kthanos@sakaifoundation.org

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5. Longsight Announces Partnership with BigBlueButton

The Longsight Group announced a new partnership with Blindside Networks, developers of BigBlueButton (http://bigbluebutton.org), the open source web conferencing system expressly designed for education. Through this partnership, Longsight is providing to their Sakai clients full support for BigBlueButton's integrated synchronous collaboration that includes live presentations with a whiteboard, desktop sharing, web-cam displays and audio using either voice over IP (VoIP) or telephone-based services.

Longsight hosts and supports BigBlueButton with Blindside Networks (http://blindsidenetworks.com), providing monitoring and expert support services to ensure reliability.

"We're currently hosting BigBlueButton for fourteen colleges in the U.S. who are discovering how productive this suite of synchronous tools can be in support of teaching and learning," reports Scott Siddall, Partner at The Longsight Group. "BigBlueButton has exploded onto the scene following the Sakai Conference in mid-June and Blackboard's recent announcement of their move into this market. We are thrilled to be providing our clients with truly open source web conferencing services," added Siddall. BigBlueButton is fully integrated into Sakai thanks to the Sakai community members Adrian Fish and Nuno Fernandes -- another example of the power of community source applications.

Blindside Network's CEO, Fred Dixon said, "Working with a global community of developers, we developed BigBlueButton to enable universities and colleges to offer a high-quality learning experience to remote students." Dixon added, "Longsight has a track-record of providing first-class support to their customers. We are pleased to partner closely with Longsight to ensure their customers can fully leverage BigBlueButton."

About Longsight

Longsight is a leading provider of hosting and support services for open source software. The company delivers exceptionally reliable hosting services and high quality, comprehensive support for Sakai (learning management), Drupal (portals and content management) and DSpace (institutional repositories). Longsight enjoys a national reputation for understanding the business of education based on decades of experience in

higher education IT management. For more information, please visit
http://www.longsight.com.

About Blindside Networks

Blindside Networks, located in Ottawa, Canada, is dedicated to helping universities, colleges, and private sector educational institutions offer a high-quality learning experience to remote students. We created and provide commercial support for BigBlueButton, an open source web conferencing system for distance education. For more information, please visit http://blindsidenetworks.com/.

About BigBlueButton

BigBlueButton is an open source system for synchronous education. It provides teachers and students integrated sharing of slides, video, audio, chat, whiteboard and desktops. It's built using over fifteen open source components, runs on Macintosh, Unix, and PC computers, and is backed by a commercial and open source community that cares about good design and a streamlined user experience. For more information, please visit http://bigbluebutton.org/.

Scott Siddall
siddall@longsight.com

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6. Update from Sakai 2 Technical Coordination Committee

Hello,

This is an update for the community on the activities of the Sakai 2 Technical Coordination Committee.

As a reminder, the TCC conducts its business via a public mailing list, sakai2-tcc@collab.sakaiproject.org.

Confluence space --

The TCC now has a space in Confluence:

http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/TCC/Home

You can find a list of TCC members, a copy of the formation announcement, and our newly approved governance document.

TCC Governance and Leadership --

On 4 August 2010, the TCC adopted its governance structure.

The group will use a rotating chair/vice-chair model -- patterned after the Maintenance Team -- for leadership, and will consist of active and emeritus (inactive) members.

Elections for chair and vice-chair were held on 6-7 August 2010. Seth Theriault was elected chair and Megan May was elected vice-chair.

2.6.3/2.7.1 releases --

These releases are imminent and testing is ongoing. If you can help test, please send mail to sakai-qa@collab.sakaiproject.org.

In addition, a new version of search (post-2.6) is under review and testing for inclusion in 2.6.3.

The final decisions to release 2.6.3 and 2.7.1 will be subject to a positive TCC vote.

2.8 --

The TCC looking at a mid-September 2010 code freeze for this release. A strawman proposal for the 2.8 release is under review and discussion:

http://confluence.sakaiproject.org/x/8RkhB

This document also has been circulated to the QA/RM lists. Please add any feedback as a comment on the Confluence page. Additional technical work is ongoing.

Seth Theriault
slt@columbia.edu

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7. Indiana University Job Opening: Chief Process Experience Architect

Chief Process Experience Architect - PA5IT

Description and Responsibilities:
Serves as the chief process architect to enhance the user experience and process efficiency of IT for Indiana University campuses. The position will lead a team that uses empirical, anthropological, and other evidence-based approaches to understand the human elements of system use and potential for improving process effectiveness.

Initially, work will be targeted towards student systems to ensure that development adequately addresses students' needs; future efforts will focus on additional information systems and will use research and analysis to enhance human/computer interaction through the design and development of subsequent systems. In order to accomplish these goals successfully, individual must be able to assess the objectives of a high-level, diverse audience and use various forms of communication at both an executive and technical level to advise accordingly. Must be able to effectively document and communicate insights to an experienced development team. Ultimately, this position will be responsible for the successful creation, modification, and implementation of the interface to Indiana University's most utilized information systems.

Qualifications:
Bachelor's degree and five years demonstrated leadership in human/computer interaction initiatives and projects with emphasis on process re-engineering required. Excellent interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills essential. Track record in successfully leading high-level process redesign on large-scale projects required. Demonstrated ability to successfully interact with and guide high-level executives from different organizations towards desired outcomes required. Master's in Information Systems or Human/Computer Interaction preferred. Experience within higher education highly desirable.

If interested, you must apply online at https://jobs.iu.edu/ Refer to job number #2073.

Indiana University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment institution.

Lynda Johnson
Senior Human Resources Associate
ljohnso6@iupui.edu
http://www.indiana.edu/~uitshr/

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8. Recent Email Group Discussions

[Building Sakai] [sakai2-tcc] **Remove axis2 for 2.8**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/sakai2-tcc-Remove-axis2-for-2-8-td5434381.html#a5434381

[Building Sakai] **Problem with deleting old assignment after conversion to 2.7.x**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Problem-with-deleting-old-assignment-after-conversion-to-2-7-x-td5436988.html#a5437272

[Building Sakai] **Site Alias - multiples**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Site-Alias-multiples-td5436478.html#a5436478

[Building Sakai] **Sakai CAS password change authentication issue**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Sakai-CAS-password-change-authentication-issue-td5436481.html#a5436481

[Building Sakai] **Changing Site Alias**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Changing-Site-Alias-td5436440.html#a5436440

[Building Sakai] **gradebook2 build**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-gradebook2-build-td5423964.html#a5423964

[Building Sakai] **Profile2 SQL problem**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Profile2-SQL-problem-td5436367.html#a5436367

[Building Sakai] **assignments 2 question**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-assignments-2-question-td5435719.html#a5435719

[Building Sakai] **SQL Duplicate entry with Melete and Profile2**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-SQL-Duplicate-entry-with-Melete-and-Profile2-td5435433.html#a5443489

[Building Sakai] **MathJax to replace jsMath in rWiki?**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-MathJax-to-replace-jsMath-in-rWiki-td5433780.html#a5433780

[Building Sakai] **Message service cache?**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Message-service-cache-td5432455.html#a5432455

[Building Sakai] **Adding students from previous semesters**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Adding-students-from-previous-semesters-td5430972.html#a5430972

[Building Sakai] **Full Source Check out of Sakai 2.x**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Full-Source-Check-out-of-Sakai-2-x-td5428233.html#a5430879

[DG: User Experience] **PD Blog: Sakai 3 Project Plan**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Fwd-PD-Blog-Sakai-3-
Project-Plan-td5438839.html#a5438839

[Building Sakai] **Full Source Check out of Sakai 2.x**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-Full-
Source-Check-out-of-Sakai-2-x-td5428233.html#a5430879

[Building Sakai] **Opensocial integration with Sakai**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Building-Sakai-
Opensocial-integration-with-Sakai-td5426996.html#a5426996

[Portfolio] **portfolio Digest, Vol 18, Issue 6**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Re-Portfolio-portfolio-
Digest-Vol-18-Issue-6-td5425782.html#a5425782

[Portfolio] **portfolio Digest, Vol 18, Issue 5**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Re-Portfolio-portfolio-
Digest-Vol-18-Issue-5-td5423895.html#a5423895

[Portfolio] **Decorated URL's for attached portfolio files (SAK-16203)**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Portfolio-Decorated-URL-
s-for-attached-portfolio-files-SAK-16203-td5349028.html#a5349251

[DG: User Experience] **How to tell which version of the UI is packaged with
Nakamura**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/DG-User-Experience-
How-to-tell-which-version-of-the-UI-is-packaged-with-Nakamura-
td5429540.html#a5429540

[DG: User Experience] **Personal vision statement for Content and Resources**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/DG-User-Experience-
Personal-vision-statement-for-Content-and-Resources-td5361189.html#a5361189

[Using Sakai] **Bug Report: back button on browser**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Using-Sakai-Bug-Report-
back-button-on-browser-td5433650.html#a5433650

[Using Sakai] **Tomcat can't start after svn update for 2.6.x: SearchService problem?**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Using-Sakai-Tomcat-can-
t-start-after-svn-update-for-2-6-x-SearchService-problem-td5432022.html#a5432117

[Using Sakai] **Update from Sakai 2 Technical Coordination Committee**
http://sakai-project-mail-list-archives.1343168.n2.nabble.com/Update-from-Sakai-2-
Technical-Coordination-Committee-td5390123.html#a5390123

9. Events

2010 AuSakai Conference
Wednesday - Friday, September 15 - 17, 2011
Pre-conference session Wednesday, September 15
North Sydney College, Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE
www.nsi.tafensw.edu.au/AuSakai2010

Sakai 2011 Conference
June 14 - 16, 2011
Ramada Hotel Berlin -- Alexanderplatz
Berlin, Germany