Sakai Newsletter

May 12, 2011

1. From the Executive Director

Sakai relies on the contributions of both institutions and individuals. Every year we celebrate those individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to the community by recognizing them as Sakai Fellows. The contribution made by Fellows might be in a number of areas; sharing best practice in learning, teaching or research, technical development and design, or community coordination. The Fellows Programme provides a modest financial allowance to Fellows to help offset the cost of their Sakai-related activity. It's our way of recognizing, encouraging, and spreading good practice.

I'm very pleased to announce the Sakai Fellows for 2011. They are:

- Rob Coyle, Johns Hopkins University
- Carl Hall, Hallway Technologies
- David Roldán Martínez, Universidas Politécnica Valencia - Megan May, Indiana University
- Zhen Qian, University of Michigan
- Brian Richwine, Indiana University

Brief bios of the 2011 Fellows can be found at: http://www.sakaiproject.org/sakai-fellows

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the 2011 Fellows Selection Committee -

- Alan Berg
- Clay Fenlason
- David Goodrum
- Beth Kirschner
- Maggie Lynch
- Stephen Marquard
- Nico Matthijs
- Mathieu Plourde
- Anthony Whyte

Given the wealth of talent and commitment in the Sakai Community, it's my belief that this group has one of the harder jobs around! Many thanks for your time, efforts and deliberations.

Regards,

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

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2. 2011 Sakai Los Angeles Conference Program

I'm pleased to announce that the core conference program for the 2011 Sakai Los Angeles Conference is now available at:

https://www.concentra-cms.com/program/Sakai/2011-sakai-conference/

We received significantly more presentation proposals for the conference than the programme could accommodate. The Conference Committee has been working diligently

to ensure that the conference programme is as representative of the Sakai Community as possible, and has therefore suggested that a number of conference presentations be merged. We're still negotiating some of these mergers, so don't be concerned if you don't see your presentation in the current programme -- you should receive an email regarding this. And remember to check back as the programme fills out over the next week.

As a consequence, we're keeping early bird registrations open until 20th May -- make sure you sign up as soon as possible to take advantage of the reduced rate.

More details about the conference, including registration information, can be found at:

http://www.sakaiproject.org/sakai-conference-2011

If you're looking for maps, information on getting around Los Angeles, dining and things to do, try the conference confluence pages at:

http://bit.ly/sakai11

You'll also find details there of our conference Citizen Journalism initiative, sharing presentations with Slideshare, Twitter, and much more.

See you in Los Angeles!

Regards,

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

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3. Hold the date: EuroSakai 26th, 27th and 28th September 2011, Amsterdam

I am pleased to announce that the European Sakai Conference will be held in Amsterdam on the 26th, 27th and 28th September. The Universiteit van Amsterdam and Edia Educatie Technologie have generously agreed to lead the organisation of the conference. Expect further announcements shortly.

Best,

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

4. AuSakai 2011 -- Call for papers (Reminder)

Dear All,

The Australian National University is pleased to announce AuSakai 2011 "Towards an Open Academic and Collaborative Environment." The conference will be held on the 13th and 14th of September in Canberra and will be open to all universities and organisations that are using or considering using Sakai.

Call for presentations is now open, and will close on the 27th of May 2011. This conference arrives as the community is experiencing significant growth and innovation. Exciting new development projects are underway with collaboration from designers, developers, and faculty members. Our community is expanding rapidly with new adoption of Sakai, new investment in Sakai, and emerging partnerships with other higher education communities. Our collective knowledge of the practices and pedagogies that enable us to improve learning and collaboration through the use of technology has never been greater.

We are also very excited to announce our international keynote speakers for this conference: Ian Dolphin, Lance Speelmon, Josh Baron and David Goodrum.

We encourage you to submit a presentation and be a part of this growing community.

When and Where: Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 September 2011
Location: The Australian National University, Canberra Networking
Dinner: 13 September 2011

For further details, and presentation template, please visit: http://ausakai.anu.edu.au

Regards,

Steve Swinsburg, on behalf of the AuSakai 2011 Planning Committee

steve.swinsburg@gmail.com

5. San Luis Extends Sakai Platform to All Students

A project in the Argentine province of San Luis will make the Sakai environment available to more than 58,000 elementary students, and a considerable number of high school students. The initiative builds on the experience of the "All the Kids Online" plan.

"The extension of the plan enables broader access to the digital Sakai collaboration platform. This will allow the use of educational content developed by the Digital Educational Resources Group of the University of La Punta (ULP). Thus, all students in primary and secondary education in the province will have access to the use of high-quality digital tools and content. They will be able to interact not only with their teachers, but also with one another, creating the largest online educational network in Argentina," said Maria Clelia Odicino, Academic Secretary of the ULP.

The ULP explained that the government's decision to extend the use of the platform to all provincial schools was based on improvements in the performance of students involved in the "All the Kids Online" Project during 2009 and 2010. Forty-one schools have been involved in the project to date, with University staff measuring the progress of students who used the environment. "Measurements in Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences demonstrated significant improvements in student performance, which served to highlight the positive impact of these technologies in education," said Odicino.

The Sakai platform integrates software for educational management together with the administration of digital resources for learning and teaching. It also enables the management of academic and administrative educational quality. This is necessary for monitoring purposes. The project uses a management model based around continuous improvement, under the international standards ISO 9001-2008. Earlier this year the University issued a call for bids to implement the platform, certify quality, provide technical support and helpdesk assistance to over 400 schools.

"This platform allows all members of the education system to access a fundamental tool to further its mission, maximizing the educational management through monitoring key indicators. It also promotes collaborative learning, making it easy for students, teachers and parents, through on-line access to educational content, news and academic progress and school performance observations. This will allow the educational system to reach beyond the physical boundaries of traditional classroom constraints to create virtual learning environments," said Alicia Bañuelos, rector of the ULP.

She said that with the extension of the Sakai platform to the 58,000 primary school children in the province, "San Luis, again, is put at the forefront of educational projects in Latin America." In that regard, she added that "the Province began to massively invest, not only in the delivery of netbooks and learning support software, in which it was a pioneer, but also the massive use of digital educational platforms supported by the world's most prestigious scholarly institutions."

Regarding quality management, the Chancellor announced that the system is being implemented first in 100 schools, then generalized to all educational institutions in San Luis." This will allow the education system to be available to children and young people, promoting the excellence that is required in the world today. This plan is unique, and we are proud to meet the challenge, which we share with the Ministries of Education, Finance and Progress. The CIPE (electronic document ID), moreover, will allow parents

to receive school information involving their children in www.puntano.net portal, currently under development. The Province of San Luis is accelerating digital inclusion for digital prosperity with the participation of all involved," said Bañuelos.

Unitech, as a Sakai Commercial Affiliate, will be in charge of implementation's support of Sakai.

Aníbal H Carmona
Presidente, Unitech
anibalc@unitech.com.ar

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6. Edia Sakai Tools have been Migrated to Sakai 2.7.x

Description
Edia has migrated all their Sakai Tools available in the Sakai contrib directory to version 2.7.x. Included are the following tools:

- Edia Sakai Community
- Edia Sakai Create Site
- Edia Sakai Invite
- Edia Sakai Knowledgebase
- Sakai Maps
- Sakai Scorm Project
- Edia Sakai Site Select
- Edia Sakai Skin Manager

The Sakai community of the University of Amsterdam UvAcommunities has made this migration possible.

Availability
https://source.sakaiproject.org/contrib/edia/

Credits
Many thanks to UvAcommunities, Luis Fernandez, Roland Groen, Maarten van Hoof, and Jan Vesely.

Melvin Wevers
Edia -- Educatie Technologie
www.edia.nl
melvin@edia.nl

7. Announcing a Tool and Docs to Help with Alternate Form Renderers

The University of Michigan (U-M) has done some work to try to make the creation of alternate form renderers (custom renderers) easier. First, Noah Botimer created a utility called xslt-façade that makes it much easier to run transformations locally in an application such as Oxygen. The following is from Noah's introduction to the tool:

The process of working with XSLT files for Portfolio Templates and Forms can be laborious to implement when needing to continually upload materials and preview them in a running Sakai installation. U-M has developed a utility to help make this process more manageable. It is called xslt-facade since it provides a façade for the runtime support of Sakai/OSP (by way of the XsltFunctions extension). It allows the XSL files to be created and run offline without any changes, to accelerate the process and afford the use of tools like a debugger.

I then created a document that gives necessary conceptual information about "metaobj" and custom renderers, explains how to set up your environment, and provides a few tutorials on creating custom renderers. The document is aimed at people starting out, preferably who have some familiarity with creating XSD schemas, though that is not necessary.

The xslt-façade utility can be found at:
https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/OSP/Custom+XSLT+offline+with+xslt-facade

The documentation and supporting files for working through the tutorials are at:
https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/OSP/Creating+Custom+Renderers

On that page I also included a zip file of XSDs that Gonzalo Silverio created when he was first figuring metaobj out. I found them indispensable when I was just learning about XSDs and custom renderers. They help with custom renderers because they help you understand the way that XSD elements get translated into HTML, which is what you will be doing in your custom renderer.

And while we're on documentation, don't forget about Sean Keesler's related work on creating Portfolio Templates at:
https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/OSPDOC/Portfolio+Templates

If you have any comments or suggestions, please let me know.

Erica Ackerman
ericaack@umich.edu

8. We are Proud to Present New Tools for Sakai: Adobe Connect and OpenMeetings

Hi to all,

We at Samoo with the sponsorship of five Spanish universities (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Universidad de Lleida, Universidad de Murcia, Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia and Universidad Pública de Navarra) have developed two tools for integrating Sakai with Adobe Connect and with OpenMeetings.

You can read more about these and download the source at:

https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/ADBCNT/Home
https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/OPENMTG/Home

They are fully functional, but we'd like to improve the integration with new features. Of course you are welcome to test and help, and to give ideas.

¡Un saludo!

Diego del Blanco Orobitg
Director de Operaciones
diego.delblanco@samoo.es

9. Pepperdine University Joins Sakai Foundation Partner Program

Dear Sakai Community,

I just wanted to share the good news that Pepperdine University has joined the Sakai Foundation. In the fall of 2010 we decided to adopt Sakai as our official learning management system. We fully transitioned to Sakai on January 1, 2011. To support the great work of the Sakai community, we recently decided to join the Sakai Foundation. We're very grateful for everyone's efforts making Sakai a great platform for teaching, learning, and research.

You can read our press release here:
http://services.pepperdine.edu/it/newsevents/news/2011/pepperdinesakaipartner.htm

In addition, we're excited that the North American 2011 Sakai Conference will be in our backyard, Los Angeles, California! Don't be surprised if you see several people from Pepperdine at the event. We invited over 50 of our university faculty and staff members to participate in this year's Sakai conference. So that you have a great visit to Los

Angeles, we've also contributed to the "Dining and Things to Do" page of the conference gateway wiki.

Video: The Value of Attending the Annual Sakai Conference
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Mvs39nAYUI

2011 Sakai Conference Gateway: Dining and Things to Do
https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/CONF2011/Dining+and+Things+To+Do

So, thank you, all, for creating a powerful and flexible platform to promote teaching, learning, and research. We're proud to become a partner, and we hope to see many of you at the conference in June!

Sincerely,

Alan Regan,
MFA Manager, Technology and Learning In
Alan.Regan@pepperdine.edu

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10. Mobile Sakai Management Announcement

In the recent past, Internet-capable handheld devices have become widely available. Institutions in many parts of the world are beginning to enable mobile device access to campus services. The Sakai community as a whole is already aware of the importance of mobile devices and mobile education. However, at present, mobile development efforts have been scattered across individual institutions with little coordination and collaboration.

In response to this, the Universities of Cambridge, Florida, Indiana, and Oxford, with the support of the Sakai Foundation, are now a launching a "Mobile Sakai " collaborative project to expand upon current, limited mobile functionality and to develop frameworks usable by local institutions to integrate Sakai into their own mobile initiatives. It is the intent of this announcement to invite additional participants and institutions to join with us in this project.

The proposal outlining the Mobile Sakai project can be found at:

https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/MOBILE/Home

and additional information and opportunities for questions, comments, discussion, and networking will be available at next month's North American Sakai Conference in Los Angeles. As additional information about conference sessions and meetings related to this project becomes available, it will be posted at the project site listed above.

Douglas F. Johnson, Ph.D.
Assistant Director for Learning Services
Office of Academic Technology University of Florida
wanderer@ufl.edu

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11. Job Opening: Indiana University

Indiana University (IU) is in search of an Instructional Consultant and Distance Learning Specialist to work in the newly formed Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning.

For more information about working at IU, see: http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/

For a complete job description and to apply, go to:
https://jobs.iu.edu/joblisting/index.cfm?jlnum=3668&search=2

Thanks,

Kate Ellis
Principal Instructional Technology Specialist
University Information Technology Services
kdellis@indiana.edu

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12. Recent Email Group Discussions

[Building Sakai] Building a custom master pom
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Building-a-custom-master-pom-
to31648471.html#a31651765

[Building Sakai] Conditional Release on Sakai 2.8
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Conditional-Release-on-sakai-2.8-
to31636242.html#a31636242

[Building Sakai] Error when add participants.
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Error-when-add-participants.-
to31645098.html#a31645098

[Building Sakai] Gradebook import of MS-Excel 2011
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Gradebook-import-of-MS-Excel-2011-
to31645968.html#a31645968

[Building Sakai] How to find undocumented properties in code
http://old.nabble.com/Re%3A--Building-Sakai--How-to-find-undocumented-properties-
in-code-to31651656.html#a31651656

[Building Sakai] Lots of NameNotFoundExceptions following 2.7 upgrade - related to
SAK-6239
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Lots-of-NameNotFoundExceptions-following-
2.7-upgrade---related-to-SAK-6239-to31631594.html#a31631594

[Building Sakai] melete 2.8.2 and sakai 2.8
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--melete-2.8.2-and-sakai-2.8-
to31636792.html#a31636792

[Building Sakai] Opensylabus tool
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Opensylabus-tool-to31636284.html#a31636284

[Building Sakai] Possible Bug in Message Center/Forums
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Possible-Bug-in-Message-Center-Forums-
to31650079.html#a31650079

[Building Sakai] Site Information Display
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Site-Information-Display-
to31631563.html#a31631563

[Building Sakai] WebDav on Sakai
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--WebDav-on-Sakai-to31637960.html#a31637960

[Portfolio] getting current user's userId
http://old.nabble.com/-Portfolio--getting-current-user%27s-userId-
to31603921.html#a31603921

[Building Sakai] Feedback about some feature we are willing to contribute
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Feedback-about-some-feature-we-are-willing-to-
contribute-to31549552.html#a31549552

[DG: User Experience] Anyone going to CHI in May?
http://old.nabble.com/-DG%3A-User-Experience--Anyone-going-to-CHI-in-May--
to31317161.html#a31317161

[DG: User Experience] Feedback about some feature we are willing to contribute
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Feedback-about-some-feature-we-are-willing-to-
contribute-to31549552.html#a31549552

[DG: User Experience] Fwd: [WG: Accessibility] Fwd: [Building Sakai] Sakai & MathJax
http://old.nabble.com/-Building-Sakai--Sakai---MathJax-to31387087.html#a31387087

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13. Events

Jasig's Spotlight on Open Source Conference
May 23 - 25, 2011
Supplementary Seminars May 22nd and 25th
Developer Days, May 26 - 27
Westin Westminster
Westminster, Colorado 80020 USA
http://www.jasig.org/jasigs-spotlight-open-source

Sakai North American Conference
June 14 -16, 2011
Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles.
June 13 and 16 -- pre-conference workshops and project coordination meetings
www.sakaiproject.org/sakai-conference-2011

AuSakai 2011 "Towards an Open Academic and Collaborative Environment"
Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 September 2011
Location: The Australian National University, Canberra
Networking Dinner: 13 September 2011
http://ausakai.anu.edu.au

EuroSaka Conference
September 26, 27, and 28, 2011
Amsterdam

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