

Sakai Educational Partnership Program Update

June 30, 2004

SEPP Conference in Denver

The Sakai Educational Partnership Program members met in Denver, Colorado last week for the first SEPP conference. Over 175 people from 45 institutions attended tutorials, presentations, meetings, and BOF sessions. The enthusiasm for the Sakai project was leavened with some hard hitting technical questions and concerns for the future. The Sakai Board of Directors, led by Joseph Hardin, emphasized that SEPP has a vital role to play as we move into Sakai 2.0 development and beyond. A new development process based on incubation in the SEPP Discussion Groups that spin out new projects was presented.

Most of the presentations shown are available on the SEPP Community Site. A Syllabus article covering the conference is also available at:

<http://www.syllabus.com/article.asp?id=9635>

Sakai Beta Release

Sakai 1.0 beta was released to SEPP on June 23. You can download it at:

<http://cvs.sakaiproject.org/release/1.0.b1>

Please read and follow the release page carefully, as much has changed since prior versions. The beta release contains support for the CHEF course management system, integration using uPortal, and a limited (draft) set of Sakai APIs.

Instructions for hooking up with our new CVS server (cvs.sakaiproject.org) are included.

Tools Team Update

The Sakai Tools Team has released three documents related to Sakai functionality. The first document covers Samigo (SAAM, Navigo) and its feature set:

http://chefproject.org/access/content/group/1075771392979-922/SEPP_Conf_June_2004/Samigo%20Marketing.doc

A second document covers general Sakai functionality:

http://chefproject.org/access/content/group/1075771392979-922/SEPP_Conf_June_2004/Sakai%20Fall04%20mktg.doc

In addition, here is a link to the 15MB PPT that explains each gap in great detail and was promised at the SEPP Conference:

http://chefproject.org/access/content/group/1075771392979-922/SEPP_Conf_June_2004/Gap_Prioritization_Revised2.ppt

After discussions with the board, the tools team and Chuck Severance, Sakai Chief Architect, will do the following:

- Continue to complete the Sakai 1.0 gap items (42 total gaps).
- Identify which gaps are ideal candidates for complete rewrites in the new tool set defined by the TPP and which items should be retrofitted to expedite implementation.
- Identify those items that may be of interest for SEPP partners to completely rewrite.
- Identify available resources for completion of gaps and determine overall delivery date.

Rob, Lance, John, Caitlin, Daphne, will meet in Ft. Wayne this week if possible to determine this as quickly as possible. Chuck is available via phone and is tentatively working on Thursday of this week. The Sakai Tools and Development Teams are still on schedule for a June 15th release of Sakai 1.0, Glossary 1.0, and Style guide 1.0.

SEPP Discussion Groups

At the request of the SEPP membership, the SEPP Discussion Groups access methods have been changed. New members will continue to create a logon id and request access from jkoich@umich.edu. At that point access will be granted to all active workgroups. When you log into the SEPP site you can click on the "Membership" tab on the left. This will display all groups you are a member of. If you wish to be removed from any groups, press 'unjoin'. The "Preferences" tab on the left is also a useful tool that allows you to set your notification preferences. Once inside the "Preferences" tab, click on edit to access the notification choices for Announcements, Email Archive, and Resource priority levels.

For those that have a current logon, updates will be completed to provide access to all groups.

If you are interested in leading a discussion topic, please send mail to Mark Norton at markjnorton@earthlink.net with a brief description of the topic and areas of concentration

SEPP Requirements Group - Mara Hancock

There was a big push at the conference for schools to contribute to the SEPP build matrix. The matrix can be downloaded from the SEPP requirements resources area, completed, and sent to Mara Hancock (mara@media.berkeley.edu) for compilation into the master list.

This matrix is the first effort toward helping to identify trends in SEPP requirements and organize resources around these areas. We are trying to capture what schools are interested in contributing to specific tool and development projects (match-making) and create broader categories of functional areas and discussion group in which tools should reside. All schools are encouraged to contribute to the matrix and discussion around these categories.

The requirements group met at the SEPP conference with the BOF content and authoring group and later on its own. Some of the key areas that it identified for focus:

- Get more institutional input into the high-level build list (match institutions to tools) to contribute to the 3.0 product
- Matchmaking tool to encourage ad-hoc alliances to form around tool development and common areas of interest
- Promote a common specification and development process
- Provide links to the core teams and ease communication efforts
- Provide a common repository for discussion group requirements and specification documents
- Provide a gap analysis between what is currently in 1.0 and 2.0 and the partner requirements
- Encourage partners to become more forthcoming with what they are doing via a "natural English" suggestion area
- Provide a process for requirements feedback for projects to encourage a broader understanding of needs across institutions
- Keep a running list of current projects, participants, and project info

Some thoughts shared during the conference regarding project management within ad-hoc alliances:

- Mutual interest and timing (alignment) is critical
- Create mini-projects using the SEPP process template
- A project leader should be assigned from one of the schools who will be responsible for staff resources across institutions and management of project

- Projects need to have visibility via Sakai forums

Challenges identified:

- Maintaining openness and communication while staying on task
- Ensuring visibility of projects
- Maintaining a process where people understand where & how they can participate (especially if the project is underway)

The requirements group needs volunteers willing to put in some time and effort to creating the necessary matchmaking tools, compiling the build list, and performing a gap analysis. Please contact Mara Hancock, or send an email to the requirements group (sepp-req@chefproject.org) if you are interested.

SEPP Development Group - Mark Norton

Last Wednesday, Mark Norton gave an overview of the Sakai architecture and how to write tools using the Sakai framework and TPP document. This presentation can be downloaded from:

<http://chefproject.org/access/content/group/sakai-educ/Denver%20Conference%20Presentations/SEPP%20Conf%20-%20Development2.ppt>

Since the conference, he has taken the section on cloning a tool and written it up into a tutorial document that can be found at:

<http://chefproject.org/access/content/group/1085757908747-8684/Tutorials/writing-sakai-tools.pdf>

This tutorial contains step-by-step instructions on cloning an existing Sakai beta tool (sakai-module) and modifying it to be a new, standalone tool. While this is a very simple "hello world" type application, it can serve as the basis for creating new Sakai tools.

SEPP Content and Authoring Group - Dirk Herr-Hoyman

The group met 2 times in a BOF session at last week's SEPP Conference. Notes from these sessions will be posted on the Sakai group area. I would characterize these as "getting to know you" meetings. Universities involved include: U of Toronto, U of Wisconsin, Northwestern, UC Davis, Ohio State, as well as U of Mich and Stanford from the core. The main outcome is that we have agreed to work some more on where we think authoring tools should go within Sakai.

We've decided to have some teleconferences and a face-to-face meeting at Toronto during the next 2 months. This will give us a chance to formulate better what projects to work on and how they fit within the larger Sakai efforts.

SEPP Cross Language Support Group - Tom Lewis

The group met twice during the SEPP conference. During the first meeting, we explored the issues surrounding non-Java tools in the Sakai environment and what might be done to integrate them. Jeff Merriman gave an overview of OKI and the OSIDs. Several integration strategies were identified: uPortal, embedded virtual machines, ITL, and JSR-233. The second meeting was focused on use cases. Six primary use cases were identified:

- A simple tool that needs no identity (Map Quest)
- A simple tool that only needs identity
- A tool that needs identity, group and group scope
- A tool that needs identity and authorization but no other services
- A tool that needs full access to any Sakai service
- A tool that needs access to resources managed by Sakai

Open Source Portfolio Initiative User Conference

You are encouraged to attend the Open Source Portfolio User Conference on 16-17 July in San Francisco. Participation is limited to 100 attendees and discount conference/hotel rates are available until 17 June. Conference program and registration details are at www.theospi.org/conf/. The conference precedes the Syllabus and Alt-i-Lab Conferences in San Francisco.