Apereo Newsletter
May 12, 2016

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From the Editor:
As the semester winds down and we head into the final weeks before the 2016 Open Apereo conference and Open Summit, there is a lot going on in our community!

Remember that the Apereo newsletter provides an important opportunity to share what you're doing and invite others to join. We are looking for contributions of all kinds -- examples might include (but are not limited to) articles, video clips, screencasts, graphics, or short announcements on:
-- How you're using software produced by an Apereo community at your institution
-- Major releases or minor tweaks
-- Ideas for new projects you'd like to get feedback on or gauge interest in
-- Important discussions of general educational technology issues that emerge on community email lists

Contributions of all lengths, from snippet to think pieces, are welcome. Send your submissions (and any questions!) to newsletter@apereo.org .

-- Lucy Appert, Newsletter Editor

Opinion
1) Apereo and the Next Generation of Digital Learning
Every few years educational technologists have a conversation about the limits of the Virtual Learning Environment / Leaning Management System. The conversation usually ends with the conclusion that a more flexible and configurable set of tools is essential to advance teaching and learning online.

There's a Groundhog Day aspect to this conversation, but the recent extended work by the Educause Learning Initiative to flesh out what the "Next Generation Digital Learning Environment" might look like, together with other developments across the landscape, may mean the conversation is a little different this time around.

Firstly, the breadth of the conversation is significant. The Educause Learning Initiative engaged many IT and learning technology practitioners in many institutions. These were not isolated voices in the blogosphere, but significant numbers of those strongly informing institutional choices.

Secondly, years of work around common specifications such as IMSGlobal's Learning Tools Interoperability specification are bearing fruit. The nirvana of rich, pluggable tools might not quite be here, but it appears, palpably, to be within reach. It's significant, perhaps, that LTI has its roots in the Sakai Tool Portability Profile, and has been shepherded and led by former Sakai Chief Architect (and current Chair of the Sakai Project Management Committee), Charles Severance – shepherded in such a way as to engage multiple platforms and communities.

Thirdly, the significant interest in learner analytics, and the rapid development of tools and platforms to gather and analyze learner activity data offers significant promise for the personalization of future environments. At an institutional level, this activity is currently focused largely around intervention to retain students who may be at risk of failure or dropping out. In the future the focus is likely to shift in the direction of content sequencing and adaptive learning pathways. This, incidentally, is the one reason for the Apereo Learning Analytics Initiative's choice of developing a platform to support analytics work, rather than simply bundling functionality into an application or application module. If the data collected is eventually to be used to support personalization across a range of tools and platforms, the last thing required is tying that data tightly to a single application.

How will this impact the LMS/VLE? The LMS is already evolving in the direction of what might be termed pluggability. One possible future shifts the focus of the LMS from providing services and tools, to effectively orchestrating or choreographing services and tools. There is a tension, though, between this direction and the dynamics of commercial-proprietary software – where the motivation is principally to bundle additional tools and

services, rather than enabling a competitor's tool or service to be used. This speaks to the need for the active engagement of open source software communities in the dialogue and development required to realize the future flexible and personalized learning. Open Source helps keep the market honest.

Why is this important for Apereo? In the two and a half years since Apereo was formed, our incubation process has grown the range of software Apereo makes available and Apereo community's support. Without working through the Apereo portfolio in detail, it's obvious that an open source LMS, content authoring tool, next generation portfolio, media capture, management and distribution system, single sign on solution, academic collaboration environment – and others – might form a significant contribution of services and tools to a future environment. The collective experience of Apereo software communities, in integrating tools with campus systems, developing against accessibility requirements, internationalizing software, developing personalized systems, and above all using software and hardware to support learning, teaching and research is just as important a contribution – at least.

Let's keep a view of the Next Generation Digital Learning Environment as (hopefully) a provisional or working title and concept, and continue to enrich it. It's worth noting that the conversation so far has focused around learning and teaching. We might legitimately pose further questions. Are the needs of researchers significantly different? How does the research informed teaching agenda help inform potential directions? Where are library systems in this new landscape?

Apereo is seeking to stimulate two conversations – or perhaps the same conversation with two different constituencies – to facilitate further developments. The first is between the software communities within the broad Apereo community, and focuses on how those communities might collaborate further. That conversation is a major feature of Open Apereo 2016, at NYU in Manhattan 22nd – 25th May. The second is with open and other initiatives outside Apereo, and also focuses on potential collaboration. We won't make the significant changes under discussion alone, but rather need to enrich and extend our network of partnerships. This conversation will be a significant feature of the Open Summit, also at NYU on May 23rd.

The Open Summit May 23rd 2016 NYU, Washington Square, New York
http://opensummits.org/
Includes - "Open Learning: Shaping the Future" with Martin Dougiamfas, Founder Moodle & CEO, Moodle Pty Ltd; Alex Cartwright, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, State University of New York; Chuck Severance, Chair, Sakai Project Management Committee; and George Siemens, Professor & Executive Director LINK Research Lab.

Open Apereo 2016 22-25 May 2016, NYU, Washington Square, New York
http://conference.apereo.org
Includes - Day 3: "The Next Generation of Digital Learning: We Keep Solving the Wrong Problems: Presenter – Michael Feldstein

Day 4: "New Frontiers of Learning" – Chair, Michael Feldstein, with Chuck Severance, Chair, Sakai Project Management Committee; John Katzman, Chief Executive Officer | The Noodle Companies, LLC; and Lucy Appert, Associate Director for Instructional Design, Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning.

Open Apereo 2016 has many conference sessions that connect to this topic. See the full programme for details

--Ian Dolphin, Executive Director

Upcoming Events
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2) Maximizing uPortal at Open Apereo 2016

Suppose you, like me, most want to dig into uPortal at Open Apereo 2016. Opportunities abound!

Before the conference, engage on the uportal-user@ and uportal-dev@ email lists to tee up conversations and collaborations.

At the conference, get hands on with uPortal 4.3 and MyUW's open source add-ons for it in pre-conference seminars. (It's not too late to register for these bargains.)

Then, on the Monday between the seminars and the conference proper, join sessions in the uPortal room (or attend the Open Summit, as you like). (What sessions, you ask? Why, the sessions that will be teed up on the uPortal email lists beforehand.) Either way, reception afterwards.

During the conference proper, use the uPortal Roadmap BoF to nudge uPortal's vision and roadmap to better align with your institution's needs. (Also: start the conference itself right with the traditional State of the uPortal presentation, and also join sessions on uPortal community, MyUW's architecture, using AngularJS in uPortal, containerizing your portal, realizing the good parts of Portlets, and multi-tenancy).

Finally, consider not leaving New York prematurely -- there's uPortal project collaboration to be had on Thursday, at least through the early afternoon.

There's more to the Apereo conference, of course, but you could spend the whole conference on uPortal - let's!
--Andrew Petro

Announcements
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3) ATLAS 2016 Teaching and Learning Award Winners
The Apereo Foundation is pleased to announce the winners of the Apereo Teaching and Learning Awards (ATLAS) for 2016.

The intent of the award is to highlight examples of educational applications of Apereo tools which fall into an innovative or transformative category.

Each of the winners will be recognized for their use of the Sakai CLE, Xerte, OAE, and/or Opencast, for teaching and learning, at the Open Apereo Conference in May 22-25, 2016, hosted by New York University in New York City. Details of their winning projects will be shared at the conference. For information about the conference, go to http://conference.apereo.org/

The Apereo Teaching and Learning Awards (ATLAS) is a project of the Sakai Teaching and Learning Community. We thank our sponsor Apereo Foundation for their support of the Apereo Teaching and Learning Awards.

Winners:

Entry: Post-A Level Italian Language

Marcella Oliviero, University of Bristol

Andrea Zhok, University of Bristol

Post-A level Italian Language is a first year undergraduate course that uses Xerte as a platform for student groups to create and deliver a grammar lesson on an assigned topic.

The committee felt this was a wonderful use of project-based learning to increase student engagement and learning outcomes. It demonstrated creative and innovative use of Xerte features which enabled students to create multimedia resources to teach other students. The course used video, f2f presentation as well as text and online activities to take full advantage of Xerte and drew on Facebook and Google docs for additional social aspects and collaboration. This course exemplified great use of group work, collaboration, peer and self evaluation, and formative and summative assessment.

Entry: Teaching Introductory Statistics using a Blended Mode of Instruction at the University of Cape Town

Leanne Scott, University of Cape Town

Stefan Britz, University of Cape Town

This is a well-designed blended course that promotes active learning and problem-solving skills for a large introductory statistics class of 1400 students.

The committee felt this was an excellent example of a blended course making full use of Sakai along with other resources and activities. This course is very innovative in its approach to student learning on a difficult topic and used many different ways for communication and tracking student learning.

Carefully scripted combinations of online and face to face resources have clearly energized student engagement in ways that previous versions of this course failed in bringing about. Students were provided with multiple sources of support and results clearly show that learning improved dramatically over past versions of the course.

Entry: PSY 322 – Social Psychology

Alexander Nagurney, University of Hawaii at Hilo

Patrick Smith, Texas State University

Social Psychology is an undergraduate course offered online through the University of Hawai'i that is based predominantly on Sakai's Lessons tool, but draws on other features.

The committee felt this was a strong application that combines game-based learning activities, to deliver a course in which the students communicated more frequently, thoughtfully, and collaboratively. The innovative use of a real world problem (hidden within the guise of a 'fictitious client) engages the students in team based problem solving and individual reflection. In addition, the use of Lessons for student-created content allows flexibility and variability in the final project.

Honorable Mentions:
 Entry: Innovative teaching: Using multimodal strategies to engage students in the online learning environment
Jennie de Gagne, Duke University
Haiyan Zhou, Duke University
Population Health is a core course in the master's graduate curriculum of the Duke University School of Nursing, which addresses how evidence-driven decision-making serves to improve health outcomes of populations. This online course, uses Sakai as a "flip the classroom" approach for students to gain first exposure to learning materials from the lessons site prior to engaging in weekly activities such as problem solving, discussions, quizzes, peer-assessments, and multi-media projects

The Committee thought this was a well thought out and designed course. Student engagement was clearly evident and encouraged with excellent integration of technology and learning materials using Sakai tools (including lessons, forum, syllabus, tests and quizzes) to deliver an active learning experience that engages students in real-world data activities that brings theoretical concepts to life.

Entry: Massive Flipped Classroom experience using Sakai and Opencast
Carlos Turro, Universitat Politècnica de València
Raul Mangod, Universitat Politècnica de València
The Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) is a higher education institution that has undertaken a campus-wide "Flip Teaching" deployment of more than 100 courses with around 200 teachers. Sakai Lessons, Opencast as well as studio production videos play a major role in this deployment. Here technology is used to deliver the content and students come to class to discuss the content, and "apply the knowledge previously acquired with the teacher acting as a facilitator and guide."

The committee felt this was a very interesting institutional innovation and was impressed by what UPV had accomplished. The application showed excellent student engagement with well-documented feedback and analysis and clear strategy building on previous pilots. It's clear from the students involved that they are benefitting from this rollout of flipped learning.

Project News & Releases
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4) Using Xerte at the University of Cape Town (UCT)
About the project:

The decision to pilot XERTE (XML Editor Run Time Engine) was taken in response to a need for curation of the materials produced as part of the MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) being run at the University of Cape Town. As a student of UCT's first MPhil in Digital Curation programme, one of my modules entailed finding a project or initiative that was either in need of digital curation services or already engaged in them, for which I could either devise a curation strategy in response to expressed need, or be immersed in a project for a month and evaluate it, for assessment purposes. The MOOCs Project Team had partnered with a MOOC provider platform called FutureLearn (www.futurelearn.com) to deliver course content to participants from all over the world, and launched their first MOOC, Medicine and the Arts, in early 2015. As the FutureLearn platform already curates content, the challenge lay in how to curate the same information according to the requirements expressed by the MOOCs Project Team. This took the form of a controlled-access curation solution that would provide a way for Team to be able to retain the materials used in the various courses as a record of what had been done, and also enable them to reuse these materials for reruns of courses while keeping the structure of the materials in a way that reflected and included the learning design and MOOC content as whole, contextualised units. Xerte was found to be able to meet this need.

As a content curation solution, MOOC project units created in Xerte can be shared and collaborated on jointly by members of the MOOCs Team, repackaged as required for making available on any institutional repository, and exported for offline access in distance learning courses where students face connectivity challenges. I was given an account on the FutureLearn website, as a course creator, to be able to download or copy course resources from there, and also access to the MOOC Team's Google Drive learning design documents, which needed to be included in the Xerte learning object for each MOOC. UCT is using version 2.1 of Xerte, and I used the default Xerte Online Toolkit project template to create the following types of pages within the project:
·   Media > Video (for creating pages with embedded video – MP4 format optimal)
·   Text > Title Page (transitioning pages from week to week of the course)
·   Text > Summary (part of learning design - for scaffolding the week's activities/steps)
·   Text > Orientation (part of learning design - for introducing an activity and providing context – this text would be very similar to that presented for student consumption on the FutureLearn website)
·   Media > Advanced Image (for creating pages with embedded text - MP3 format optimal)
·   Interactivity > Quiz

Each of the pages in the learning object combines text, images, videos, learning design, links between Xerte pages and hyperlinks to external web sites in one of the types of pages listed above according to the type of page template used.

Some comments on the Xerte functionality at UCT version:
1. The learning object created in this instance did not do justice to the wide variety of page types available, or tap into the affordances of the other project template types, i.e. the Bootstrap and Decision Tree templates. It is hoped that marketing of this product and its

potential uses would inspire the UCT Community to create learning objects that experiment with some of this unexplored functionality.

 2. It is possible to link between pages in a Xerte learning object. This contributes to its potential as a self-contained resource for offline use.

 3. It is possible to make a learning object navigable via a table of contents, so that the user is not restricted to a linear page progression that starts at the beginning each time the learning object is accessed.

 4. It is possible to link the Xerte-authored learning object to a Sakai site via the Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) facility. This makes the content-rich learning object accessible to members of that site without their needing the URL. The object can still be edited in Xerte and updated in the LTI tool on an ongoing basis, and changes reflect almost immediately. Integrating the learning object in this way does mean that the object needs to be made public in the author's Xerte account. This integration potential makes it an attractive option for instructors wanting to make the content available as part of their courses. LTI integration does require making the learning object public in one's Xerte account, then using the URL generated to set up the LTI tool. It is also possible to generate an embed code for enabling access to the learning object in other web sites.

5. Sets of properties can be applied to individual Xerte projects to enable author collaboration, sharing, giving of projects or making them available for peer-review, as well as RSS feed syndication and open content sharing in OpenCourseWare (see: www.oeconsortium.org/faq/what-is-open-courseware).

 6. It is possible to export a zip file of Xerte learning object for offline access. This may work well in the provision of content to students in countries in which Internet connectivity is problematic.

 7. Xerte learning objects can be created in Flash or HTML5. The default output setting is HTML5, but this can be changed in a project's properties, depending on author preference.

The way forward
We are eager to explore more of Xerte's affordances through encouraging and working with instructors to pilot it and use more of its page types to create content for use in their courses. I recently conducted a demo session with the Faculty of Health Sciences Education Development Unit, which has expressed eagerness to start creating resources in Xerte, and so look forward to what they produce!

Overall, my experience with authoring in Xerte has been relatively uncomplicated. It is easy to use and does not really require the use of help documentation, and although the UCT installation does have technical issues that need attention, my hope is to be able to generate enough interest in and use of the product to make a case for the application to be hosted on a more permanent basis, as opposed to the pilot that is due to run from now until the end of 2017.

 ---Seta Jackson
Learning Technologies Consultant
University of Cape Town
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5) uPortal Updates

A) New uPortal Steering Committee Members
I am pleased to announce the following have been elected members of the uPortal Steering Committee:
Developer representatives, elected by active committers:
Andrew Petro
James Wennmacher
Community representatives, nominated at large and elected by the uPSC:
Aaron Grant
Mark Mace
Christian Cousquer
They join the existing members, Drew Wills, Anthony Colebourne, Tim Raymond, and Jim Helwig. You can reach the uPSC at uportal-steering-committee@apereo.org.
I look forward to working with this newly energized group to foster greater collaboration and help advance uPortal.

B) May uPortal Community Call

The uPortal Steering Committee hosted a community call on Wednesday May 11th. We shared highlights of the recent uPortal 4.3 release as well as a demo of this latest version being deployed at the University of Manchester. A recording of the webinar will be posted to the Apereo YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/_GNYT4bBJoE.
-- Jim Helwig , uPSC Chair

C) uPortal Version 4.3.0 Release
It's finally here…

Version 4.3.0 is the newest minor release of uPortal, and it is the product of a significant amount of brand new work. A total of 122 JIRA issues resolved or closed for this release, including 96 that are not a part of the 4.2.2 (or any other) release. If I had to sum up this release in one word, it would be this one: "Polish." uPortal 4.3.0 brings a large number of performance enhancements, improvements to user experience, and bug fixes. uPortal 4.3 also includes support for Java 8 & Tomcat 8.

Highlights:
• Support for Java 8
• Support for Tomcat 8
• Addresses a potential security vulnerability (https://issues.jasig.org/browse/UP-4643)
• Ability to manage BROWSE permission in the Portlet Manager
• Performance fixes & improvements for permissions evaluation & JPA PAGS
• Numerous improvements to the Tenant Manager
• Portlet Marketplace improvements
• New & updated REST APIs
• Ad hoc PAGS groups (based on membership/non-membership in other groups)
• Fixes & improvements to Respondr
• Updates to "Hover" Chrome (options for no-chrome portlets)
• New menu for small displays, plus optional "flyout" menues (like Universality offered)

• Allow fragment owners to manage fragment layouts regardless of restrictions
• Update Bootstrap to version 3.3.5
• Version updates to the bundled CAS and several bundled portlets

I'd like to say a tremendous "thanks" to all who contributed — in big ways and small.
-- Drew Wills, Unicon

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6) VeriCite and Turnitin are now pre-packaged in Sakai!
Sakai's content review (or plagiarism detection) service has been completely revamped for the upcoming release. In Sakai 11.1, content review is no longer an add-on and does not require any additional configuration. This means that you only need to set a few properties in the sakai.properties file to enable your preferred content review service. This work was done in collaboration with Longsight, Oxford, the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, and VeriCite.

You can learn more about the changes to content review at the Open Apereo conference session "The new state of plagiarism in Sakai" - https://www.eventsforce.net/concentra/frontend/reg/titem.csp?pageID=4595&&eventID =9
-- Wilma Hodges, Long sight

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7) Announcing the Release of the Karuta Open Source Portfolio Version 2.0
The Karuta project, under the umbrella of the Apereo Foundation, is pleased to announce the release of version 2.0 of the Karuta Open Source Portfolio. Karuta offers a simple and flexible way for portfolio designers to customize portfolio workflows for learning, assessment, reporting, and showcasing. This fourth release of Karuta includes a completely new, aesthetically designed, and flexible user interface. The new UI will allow for easy customization of Karuta with institutional, programmatic, or individual portfolio banners, colors, and welcome pages. Karuta 2.0 has new sharing and reporting functionalities and a device-friendly showcase portfolio solution based on building blocks of different types and sizes. Portfolio organization and vocabulary are simplified and more accessible. Karuta 2.0 can be set up with the inclusion of the open source social network ELGG. New templates and improved designer documentation will also be made available for quick starts using Karuta.
Karuta 2.0 is a beta version with a host of new features that has undergone extensive testing. We invite current and new partners to further test this substantially enhanced version with real users. A point release later in 2016 will address any resulting issues. Upgrading to subsequent versions of Karuta is a simple procedure.
User Interface
·   The UI for Karuta 2.0 has been completely revamped. The content and user prompts are presented in a much more intuitive manner in keeping with its responsive design display. All colors are completely customizable.
·   A special Welcome page with images and tips for users is now standard for all portfolios.
Assessment

· As in previous versions, Karuta 2.0 can accommodate any type of rubric. In addition, a new multidimensional table-like display can now be used to accommodate AAC&U-type rubrics for speedier grading.

Portfolio Design

· Sharing possibilities have been greatly enhanced. As before, users can share any part of their portfolio with colleagues. Requests for feedback are handled using the same functionality. Outside evaluators can now add evaluation ratings and comments without being logged into the system.

· The designer can now create a project directory and regroup relevant portfolios files into separate projects. The entire content of a project can now be easily exported.

Presentation Portfolios

· Users can now create attractive showcase portfolios by adding 1-column, 2-column, and 3-column sections. Within each section, blocks of images, text, documents, and URLs can be added and moved. This approach displays very well on any device.

Reports

· Report capabilities have been greatly expanded. Report functionality can be used to create tables within a portfolio page, in a student portfolio (dashboard), or across student portfolios within in a particular program. Reports can be used to count artifacts, calculate sums and averages, and can be displayed in different colors or formats. Reports can also be exported in CSV or PDF format.

Social Networking

· If desired, the open source social network ELGG can be integrated to Karuta 2.0.

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Karuta Benefits

Simple. Teaching and learning (T&L) designers can quickly build portfolio workflows by creating pages, adding different resources (text, document, comments, rubrics, oEmbed resources, email notification, etc.) and assigning their use to various roles (student, evaluator, etc.).

Flexible. Karuta has no a priori structure. The T&L designer has full control and can build sophisticated portfolio workflows and reports with a minimum of training. No code development is required. All types of portfolios are supported (learning, assessment, showcase, etc.).

Iterative. Karuta is built for quick review and revision. Design a portfolio, test it in faculty meetings, make changes, run a small pilot, check the data produced.

Powerful. Karuta has advanced features for creating rubrics, user menus, summary pages, forms, help, reports, sharing, and peer evaluation.

Mobile device ready Karuta is responsive design-ready and can be displayed on computers, tablets or smartphones.

Multilingual. Karuta can support many languages and has already been set up for English, French, and Japanese. Language customization can be accomplished quickly. A special version of Karuta supports portfolios with multilingual interface commands and forms, images, or documents made available in a chosen language.

Technology. jQuery javascript front end, Twitter Bootstrap, MySQL, ORACLE, REST API.

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Learn to Use Karuta:

· Come to Open Apereo in NYC (http://conference.apereo.org/home) for our full day workshop on Sunday, May 22, 2016, and our conference session on Tuesday, May 24, 2016, 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM.
· Access Karuta YouTube videos at https://goo.gl/QWKI3q
· Download Workbook #1: Getting Started with Karuta at https://github.com/karutaproject/Karuta-Project-Wiki/wiki
Try Karuta: http://eportfolium.com/karuta
· Use the first Karuta workbook (see above) to create a sample portfolio workflow and then design your own portfolio process.
Get the code: https://github.com/karutaproject
Get documentation for installation: https://github.com/karutaproject/Karuta-Project-Wiki/wiki
Follow us:
· Google+: KARUTA ePortfolio
· Twitter: KarutaOSP
Schedule a Karuta demo: info@karutaproject.org
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Subscribe by sending an empty email to karuta-news+subscribe@apereo.org
karuta-dev@apereo.org
Subscribe by sending an empty email to karuta-dev+subscribe@apereo.org
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Thanks!
We would like to acknowledge the financial support of our current partners: Kyoto University, IUT-2 Grenoble, and HEC Montréal, and the work of individuals who are responsible for this fourth release:
Jacques Raynauld, Olivier Gerbé, Nobry Ouk, and Isabelle Roy - HEC Montréal
Janice Smith and Sean Keesler - Three Canoes LLC
Thi Lan Anh - ePortfolium
Eric Giraudin and Marc Vassoille - Institut universitaire de technologie IUT-2 Grenoble.
Features Planned for the Next Version of Karuta
· Conditional branching depending on the results of simple questions.
· Improved LTI 2.0 integration.
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8) Progress in MyUW
Recent AngularJS-portal progress includes
Improved documentation
Support for not-logged-in user experiences
Better uPortal integration to present portlet content via the new experience when feasible (falling back on traditional uPortal maximized portlet rendering when not)
Improved RSS widget

AngularJS-portal is an open source responsive HTML/CSS/JavaScript front end that enhances a uPortal implementation, adding an alternative landing page, dashboard widgets with a strong design aesthetic, an alternative to Portlets for custom application

development, and implementing search, browse, and notification user experiences. AngularJS-portal implements the redesigned MyUW.

Consider attending the MyUW for You pre-conference seminar at Open Apereo 2016 to explore hands-on how AngularJS-portal could implement your redesigned uPortal as well. -Andrew Petro
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9) Sakai Project Updates

A) Sakai 10.7 is released
The Sakai Core Team is happy to announce the Sakai 10.7 maintenance release for general availability! Congratulations, worldwide team! There were 47 fixes [1] in this release across the core tools. 2 new security fixes.

if you're running 10.6, then this upgrade is of critical importance. Several of the fixes in 10.7 were regressions from 10.6, especially against Assignment and Samigo.

(Assignment) - Additional fixes for assignment submissions - introduced from 10.6 (SAK-30233, SAK-30644) - I'd say these two are really important to pick up.
(Samigo) - Fixes for saving matrix question, (SAM-2679), Downloading responses (SAM-2622) and printing a published assessment (SAM-2690) - These 3 are nice to have
(Portal) - Errors when running with newer versions of Tomcat (SAK-30173) - You could work around this by just running an older version of tomcat (prior to 7.0.66)

10.7 also by default turns off the forums ranking feature which can cause significant performance issues in forums

(New default) msgcntr.forums.ranks.enable=false

Detailed release notes are available [3] , as well as technical details and artifacts for download [4].

[1] List of all 10.7 fixes - https://jira.sakaiproject.org/issues/?filter=15628
[2] Mail from yahoo mail will be rejected by Yahoo - https://jira.sakaiproject.org/browse/KNL-1400
[3] Sakai 10.7 release notes - https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/DOC/Sakai+10.7+changes
[4] Artifacts for download - http://source.sakaiproject.org/release/10.7/

B) JA Sakai 2016 - from Sakai coordinator notes
Japanese Sakai schools meet three times a year, at JA Sakai, at Open Apereo, and a JA Sakai unconference.

This year, JA Sakai had 60 participants representing 7 universities. It was held at Tokyo Metropolitan University (TMU), which is the largest public university in Japan, and an influential institution. TMU presented first on their first year using Sakai. TMU has created

7700 sites but only about 20-30% of them are active. From what I can tell, generally they seem happy with the first year, and it sounds like a big part of their success is their partnership with Apereo commercial affiliate KEL. NS Solutions is the other Apereo commercial affiliate in Japan, also well respected and an important part of the Japanese Sakai community. Japanese schools have an interest in learning more about other Apereo projects, expanding and developing LTI connections, and exploring Learning Analytics.

Many of the JA Sakai schools are on Sakai 2.7 and considering how to update to Sakai 11, while taking into account the full range of change management issues (training, help documentation, integrations, etc.). Kyoto University is on Sakai 10 and has realized the value of keeping up to date with community releases for easier integration of patches and incorporation of security fixes.

The Japanese Sakai community represents an interesting model of close collaboration between Sakai institutions and Apereo commercial affiliates to reach out to higher ed institutions and show the value of Sakai in the LMS marketplace.

C) Sakai 11 timeline
The Sakai core team is planning a Beta release the week of May 9, 2016. A Beta release is feature complete and within striking distance of an RC01, our first release candidate. We are anticipating having an RC01 shortly after Open Apereo 2016 and an expected release date in late June.

We are exploring ways to measure our QA effort. We have a spreadsheet that shows the status of testing [1] ; we have a self reporting Badge process with a leaderboard [2]; and we are asking for an estimate on hours expended on QA testing (please send to the Sakai community coordinator [3]).

[1] Sakai 11 test spreadsheet - http://bit.ly/1Twv71n
[2] Sakai QA Badge Leaderboard (based on self reporting qa effort) - https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/QA/Sakai+QA+Leader+Board
[3] Please report your institution's approximate number of hours put into QA testing to sakaicoordinator@apereo.org , or to the Sakai qa planning team - sakai-qa-planners@apereo.org

D) Sakai Video Help Repository
We have a relatively new and easy way for the community to share help videos with each other. Please see our Sakai Video repository page .
https://www.sakaiproject.org/sakai-video-help-repository

E) Sakai 11 Marketing group and User Stories
The Sakai 11 marketing group is doing amazing work! It is updating the www.sakaiproject.org website to reflect the changes coming in 11 (not published yet), working on a Sakai brochure, and a Sakai 11 press release! Stay tuned for more information.

How can you help? Glad you asked. We are gathering institution-specific Sakai stories for the website. This could be a couple of paragraphs on why your institution likes Sakai, why you are excited by Sakai 11, specific inspiring teaching and learning examples, how Sakai fits into your NGDLE strategy (Next Generation Digital Learning Environment), how you have collaborated or learned from other Sakai or Apereo institutions, etc. You decide!

Timeline? We would love to get another 2 or 3 stories before we launch the updated website in several weeks, but the beauty of the Sakai 11 website strategy is that we can add your story AT ANY TIME. So no more excuses. Start working on those stories. Feel free to send to the Sakai Community Coordinator. And Thanks!

F) Apereo FARM - The Apereo FARM (Funding and Resource Management) is working on a website launch. FARM is an Apereo version of the "crowdsourcing" concept, to generate ideas, interactions in the community, and the launch of efforts to improve existing Apereo projects. We're getting close! Please look for us at the Open Apereo Conference where we will share our progress and encourage the launch of new ideas and projects!
--Neal Caidin
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10) Unicon Completes CAS and Shibboleth Services for Vecna
Vecna enlisted Unicon to complete custom consulting services for Central Authentication Service (CAS) and Shibboleth. Each of Vecna's clients uses a different, customized deployment of CAS. Vecna enlisted Unicon to help integrate SAML (Security Assertion Markup Language) with these custom deployments of CAS. Read more at: https://www.unicon.net/about/news/unicon-completes-cas-and-shibboleth-services-vecna.
--Lisa Di Pietro, Unicon