

Apereo Newsletter  
March 11, 2016

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### **From the Editor:**

There's a lot going on across the Apereo community as new semesters gets into full swing. Many thanks to everyone who contributed this month!

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](mailto:newsletter@apereo.org) .

**Deadline for items for the next newsletter is Monday, April 25.**

-- Lucy Appert, Newsletter Editor

### **Upcoming Events**

- 1) DUE by March 15: Apereo Teaching and Learning Awards (ATLAS) 2016**

The Apereo Teaching and Learning community is seeking submissions for the annual Apereo Teaching and Learning Awards (formerly TWSIA) competition. The award

recognizes innovation and excellence in technology-supported teaching, academic collaboration, and student engagement and learning.

With our new name, ATLAS, the awards committee welcomes a broader audience in the Apereo open source education community. We invite submissions that demonstrate innovative teaching and learning using not only Sakai, OAE, and Karuta, but also Xerte and Opencast. Based on merit, we hope to select up to six winners.

This year, the selection process will consist of two steps:

Step 1: Filter Questionnaire

Opening Date: Dec 28, 2015

Deadline: March 15, 2016

In order to provide the awards committee with a bit of background about your course/project or portfolio as well as to enable you to select the application rubric that best applies to you, please complete a brief filter questionnaire and then download the appropriate application form.

Click here to start the brief filter questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RhmpE2WHipMgXOWYAAdd-6ptYwuPGwYuC1nQixcaugA/viewform>

Step 2: Application Submission

Opening Date: Jan. 20, 2016

**Deadline: March 15, 2016**

Each applicant will submit an in-depth description of the innovative teaching method, practice or strategy submitted and how it addresses the award criteria.

Please submit your application form at <https://www.apereo.org/communities/atlas>.

Additional information on the award mission statement, a definition of innovation, criteria, rubrics, and previous winners are also available on the site.

Winners will be announced in early April 2016 and recognized at the Open Apereo Conference in May 22-25, 2016, hosted by New York University in New York City.

***Registration and travel expenses will be covered for award winners.***

For further inquiries, please email [luisa.li@apereo.org](mailto:luisa.li@apereo.org) or [cheryl.brown@apereo.org](mailto:cheryl.brown@apereo.org).

## **2) Xerte Project Conference: April 14, 2016 at the University of Nottingham**

The Xerte Project is pleased to announce that its 2016 conference is returning to the UK this year and to be held at the University of Nottingham on 14th April 2016. The last twelve months have been the most exciting in the history of the project, with our transition to the Apereo Foundation, the release of v3.0 and then v3.1 of Xerte Online Toolkits, and the continued growth of our fantastic global community of users and developers. This event will provide an opportunity to hear about the very latest developments and future plans from the project team and to learn more about the

Apereo Foundation and the exciting opportunities it brings.

We'd also like to showcase the fantastic work that we see going on in our user community and are inviting proposals for inclusion in a really exciting programme for the day. Submit your proposal here: <http://goo.gl/forms/A4o3rNglqP>

### **Strands:**

We're going to provide three strands of presentations to suit everyone from the newest users to the technical wizards, and we already have some fantastic speakers lined up. The programme will evolve between now and the actual event but topics will include Accessibility, Learning Design, Workflows, Collaboration, Student generated content, Digital Storytelling, Complementary tools & techniques, Templates and Customisation and of course news of all the latest features and developments! Full programme details will be continually updated and available here:

[http://xot.xerte.org.uk/play.php?template\\_id=1](http://xot.xerte.org.uk/play.php?template_id=1)

### **Fees & Booking:**

There is a fee to attend this year, but after conference fees any remaining funds will contribute towards further Xerte developments and community support.

Early-bird prices for the first 50 tickets sold are now on sale but will disappear fast.

Numbers for the event are also limited, so book your place now!

<http://xerteconference2016.eventbrite.com/?aff=xertelist>

### **Developer day 15th April:**

If you'd like to get actively involved in helping to develop and improve one of the most innovative and exciting open-source projects, the main conference will be followed by a day-long meeting of the existing development team and anyone new who wishes to contribute. This second day on the 15th will be free to attend. Contact us or indicate on the booking form if you are interested in attending on the 15th and joining our developer and contributor community.

We look forward to seeing you on the 14th April!

-- The Xerte Project.

### **3) Opencast Summit 2016 March 14-16, Cologne, Germany**

Registration for the annual Opencast summit is still open. A first draft of the Agenda is published. The conference will take place March 14-16, 2016 in Cologne, Germany.

More information:

<http://opencast.org/events/2016-opencast-conference>

### **4) Registration Now Open for OER16, April 19-20 at U of Edinburgh**

OER16 will take place on 19th & 20th April 2016 at the University of Edinburgh. The conference will be chaired by Melissa Highton, Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services at the University of Edinburgh, and Lorna Campbell, OER Liaison at the University of Edinburgh and EDINA Digital Education Manager.

OER16 will focus on:

- The strategic advantage of open and creating a culture of openness.

- Converging and competing cultures of open knowledge, open source, open content, open practice, open data and open access.
- Hacking, making and sharing.
- The reputational challenges of openwashing.
- Openness and public engagement.
- Innovative approaches to opening up cultural heritage collections for education.

To book please visit: <http://go.alt.ac.uk/OER16-Registration>.

Follow #oer16 to keep up to date with all conference news or visit <https://oer16.oerconf.org>.

If you use Twitter, you may wish to tweet the following suggested text: “#oer16 registration is now open <http://go.alt.ac.uk/OER16-Registration>”.

## **Announcements**

### **5) Executive Director Position at the University of South Alabama**

The University of South Alabama seeks an experienced individual to administer its Innovation in Learning Center (ILC) and USAonline units.

The Innovation in Learning Center, a university-wide initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes, has a highly active program of faculty development, course development, and pedagogy support. USAonline is the University’s virtual campus and provides the technology infrastructure necessary for effective teaching, learning, and research at a progressive and growing university with over 16,000 students. This position oversees eight full-time staff, eleven graduate assistants, and three undergraduate students housed in a newly-renovated, state-of-the-art, 10,000 sq. ft. facility.

Further details are available at:

[www.tinyurl.com/usailcexecdir](http://www.tinyurl.com/usailcexecdir)

The University of South Alabama is an Equal Opportunity Employer -- Minorities/Females/Veterans/Disabled.

### **6) ESUP-Days #21/Aperero Europe 2016: Videos now available!**

As announced in the last issue of this newsletter, the Aperero Foundation and the ESUP-Portail Consortium organized a joint conference last month in Paris.

This two-day event was an opportunity for attendees to discover new projects, keep track of the progress of the ongoing work, enjoy the feedback from members of each community, take a glimpse of upcoming challenges, exchange with colleagues from France and beyond, etc.

In order for everyone to enjoy these great presentations, we are pleased to inform you that videos of all sessions given at this conference have been made available in English (<https://mediasd.parisdescartes.fr/#/collection?id=sLpHg9nirjb1L> ) and in French ([https://mediasd.parisdescartes.fr/#/collection?id=4D\\_bXE-J-Faou](https://mediasd.parisdescartes.fr/#/collection?id=4D_bXE-J-Faou) ). For those interested in downloading the original slides (in full resolution), just visit this page on our wiki: <https://www.esup-portail.org/wiki/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=498139139>.

The Conference Committee would like to once again thank all the conference speakers for the quality of their contributions and all attendees for their precious -and active!- participation.

-- The ESUP-Days/Aperreo Europe Conference Committee

## **Project News & Releases**

### **7) eFundi Move - taking the LMS offline**

The North-West University in South Africa has successfully implemented and rolled out OPENCOLLAB's Synthesis product (branded eFundi Move), allowing students continued access to resources on mobile devices wherever they are.

Since 2007, the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa has worked towards a solution to address the hindrances of using an online Learning Management System in an environment where power outages, the lack of internet availability, and expensive data costs remain insurmountable challenges.

Sakai SOLO, an off-line learning product dependent on a flash disk, was introduced to the Sakai community at the Sakai conference in Paris, France in 2008, and in 2009 feedback was given after the successful launch of the product to a small target group of students at the NWU. OPENCOLLAB, the Aperreo commercial partner in Africa, developed SOLO to meet the requirements of the NWU; however this project had to be discontinued in 2011 when all support for Google Gears was suspended by Google.

Since the idiom of the day was mobile apps and the flash disk was slowly becoming old technology, the decision was taken in 2014 to develop a hybrid e-learning solution for the online / offline availability of resources to allow students, even in offline mode, to utilise resources effectively using multiple devices, including mobile.

The first step was to develop an export function for the NWU's Sakai instance (eFundi), whereby Lessons could be exported in EPUB 3 format.

Secondly, the eFundi Move app was developed to allow a student access to content online when he / she has access to the Internet. The synchronisation of content is streamlined to enable offline access to the same content later on. The current Sakai functionalities that are available offline are Resources, Scheduling and Announcements. When an announcement is posted on the parent online LMS, a notification similar to a WhatsApp notification is sent to the mobile device. The app is currently available in the Google and Apple app stores and a desktop version for Mac and Windows is already in

production. The Windows mobile version will be available soon.

According to Martilene Orffer, Managing Director of OPENCOLLAB, Synthesis contributes to OPENCOLLAB's vision of affording students a much richer and seamless teaching and learning experience in an environment where access to the Internet remains challenging.

eFundi Move has been in production at the North-West University since January 2016. Demonstrations to lecturers have been held and the spontaneous take-up amongst students have been exceptional - more than 1000 downloads from the Google Play Store until the middle of February. Active marketing only commenced on the 22nd of February and a marketing campaign is underway to make this available to additional groups of students and lecturers in the second semester of 2016.

eFundi Move does not solve all the challenges with regards to pervasive online learning, but provides a solution for the next group of students who have intermittent access to the Internet.

*Acknowledgements:* ITC and Academic Support departments: North-West University

*Contact OPENCOLLAB at [info@opencollab.co.za](mailto:info@opencollab.co.za) for more information about the Synthesis synchronisation engine and offline learning with Moodle and Sakai.*

-- Elsabe Botha, Business Development Manager, OPENCOLLAB

## **8) AngularJS Relaunches Search**

AngularJS-portal recently re-launched its search features, now with a simpler presentation, and with the option to plug in Web and person directory search. Up next: using AngularJS-portal for the not-logged-in experience.

uPortal adopters (and others) are encouraged -- exhorted, really -- to jump right in and join UW-Madison in delivering faster, simpler, more consistent, and more designed portal experiences. One way to dive in: join the MyUW for You hands-on pre-conference workshop at Open Apero 2016.

AngularJS-portal is a free and open source responsive HTML/CSS/JavaScript front end that complements and leverages a uPortal implementation, adding an alternative (and snappy!) landing page, dashboard widgets with a strong design aesthetic, app directory browsing, search over the app directory and beyond, simple notifications, and an alternative to Portlets for custom application development. AngularJS-portal implements the redesigned MyUW.

-- Andrew Petro

## **9) Release of UniTime 4.1 in March 2016**

UniTime 4.1, a new version of the comprehensive educational scheduling system is going to be released later in March. It features the new RESTful APIs, a brand new room management, and many improvements across all the functionality. For more

details, see the UniTime 4.1, Release Candidate 3 (available here: <https://github.com/UniTime/unitime/releases/tag/v4.1.157> ) or the release notes (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1egSCR-2JgYSJEDnXiEpp-IYtW1jpT0P0u0y2p7Qfhnc/edit?usp=sharing> ). Visit [www.unitime.org](http://www.unitime.org) for more information about UniTime.

-- Tomas Muller

## 10) Opencast Quality Booster Crowd-funding Campaign

The Opencast community has launched a crowd-funding campaign to ensure and significantly enhance the quality of the upcoming Opencast 2.2 release. The aim is to fix not only critical issues but get as much “small, annoying things” done as possible during the 2.2 release phase.

-- Lars Kiesow

More information: <http://bit.ly/1oS4Qjr>

## 11) QA Testing for Sakai 11 Is Underway

QA Testing for Sakai 11 is well underway! For the past month, the QA team has been conducting weekly QA “Test Fests” on Thursdays, 10am to noon Eastern time. These communal testing sessions provide an opportunity to troubleshoot and document issues with the support of the QA Team and other community members. We have had a great turnout to this point--there are a total of 81 people currently enrolled in the Sakai QA channel in Apereo’s Slack instance. However, we need your help in this sizable effort of testing Sakai 11.

Thus far, the QA Team has been working on the following:

Focused testing of the new Morpheus interface, to identify UI issues;  
Consolidating/updating of Sakai tool regression test scripts, to provide a clear and consistent set of testing materials; Streamlining of the QA process, to allow members of the community to more easily contribute to the QA effort.

With this in mind, we have provided a simplified **Sakai 11 QA Hub in confluence** (<https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/QA/Sakai+11+QA+hub> )with useful information for those interested in testing. This Hub provides information for joining the **Sakai QA list** (<https://groups.google.com/a/apereo.org/forum/#!forum/sakai-qa> )as well as our **Sakai QA Slack channel** (<https://apereo.slack.com/signup> ).

There is still a lot of work to do for Sakai 11, and we would greatly appreciate your involvement! If you have any questions, please contact the QA Team on Slack or sakai-qa list.

-- Dede Hourican