Apereo Newsletter
May 28, 2015

Announcements

Announcements

1 **From the Editor**
With this edition of the newsletter, we mark a major refresh of Apereo communications that includes a new, monthly schedule for the newsletter and a new look for the Foundation's website.

The Apereo banner comprises a vibrant set of communities with much to offer one another and the broader global educational technology field. The goal of our communications efforts is to provide venues for sharing our members' news, experience, and insights, but we can only do this with your help.

Examples of newsletter contributions 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. The deadline for content will be on the 15th of each month, with expected publication on the 25th. Send your submissions (and any questions!) to newsletter@apereo.org .

-- Lucy Appert, Newsletter Editor

2. Open Apereo 2015 in Baltimore, MD May 31-June 4

Only three more days to Open Apereo 2015, the premier conference for open source in higher education. Come and hear more about open learning analytics, the next generation of academic collaboration, where the learning management system is headed, the future of the portal, single sign-on and much, much more.

Open Apereo 2015. May 31st - June 4th, Baltimore, Maryland.
Further details - http://conference.apereo.org/

3. 2015 Apereo Fellows Announced

I am pleased to announce the Apereo Fellows for 2015 - individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Apereo projects and their communities. The 2015 Fellows are -

Alexandre Ballesté, Universidad de Lleida, Sakai
Simon Gaeremynck, Fronteer, OAE
Gao Jun, Fudan University, Sakai
Lars Kiesow, ELAN e.V./University of Osnabrück, OpenCast
Tim Levett, Univ. of Wisconsin, uPortal
Earle Nietzel, AniSakai, Sakai

Sincere thanks to the Apereo Fellows Committee, who always face a tough set of selection choices!

-- Ian Dolphin, Executive Director

4. An Announcement Reinforcing International Cooperation between the ESUP-Portail Consortium and the APEREO Foundation by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research
See original version here: http://www.france-universite-numerique.fr/cooperation-internationale-renforcee-entre-le-consortium-esup-portail-et-la.html

In order to strengthen their collaboration in digital innovation supported by open-source solutions in both higher education and research, the French national Consortium, ESUP-Portail, and the International Foundation, Apereo, renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The ESUP-Portail Consortium has expanded its reach in the digital domain
The consortium, since its creation, has carried forth the vision of the creation of a national "Digital Work Space" ("Espace Numérique de Travail"- ENT), building an open-

source platform through community development. This project aims to make available a modular digital work space solution to the higher education community, allowing access to different services, information sources and digital sources. To promote its open-source approach and to gradually expand to all digital services for higher education and research, the ESUP-Portail Consortium has a diverse range of expertise, structured around nine knowledge areas :

- Portal solution,
- Mobile,
- Mail/Calendar solutions,
- Groups,
- OAE (*Open Academic Environment*),
- Authentication,
- Document Management (DMS),
- Analytics,
- Programming/Development.

Today, ESUP-Portail includes 70 member institutions and is a community involved in the development and sharing of open-source solutions for the many different activities of higher education and research. The Consortium is developing skill areas in new technologies, such as mobility, multi-tenant infrastructure (in the cloud) and new methods of authentication.

The strategy of the Apereo Foundation for higher education and research
The Apereo Foundation is the biggest international open-source organization in the higher education and research world. It has 180 members over six continents. It aims to develop, support and pool the most effective solutions in the digital domain for use in academic communities (portals, e-learning platforms, collaboration tools, etc.). The ESUP-Portail Consortium is represented on the board of this global network, which promotes the exchange of experience, reflections on the evolution of uses of digital technology in higher education, and research and development with regards to new shared projects.

Putting into practice a synergy of open-source organizations at the international level
The MOU between the ESUP-Portail Consortium and the Apereo Foundation was recently renewed. It follows the first MOU, signed in October 2012, and strengthens the cooperation. It includes the following goals:

- Collaborate in furthering the development of the incubation process to nurture and support innovation for higher education,
- Share information of common interest and exchange any information which would assist the development of software,
- Work jointly, promoting direct participation in communities of interest, promoting the participation of French representatives in communities and working groups,
- Contribute to the promotion of open source in the French-speaking world,
- Organize events together (ESUP-Days / Apereo Europe).

The consortium is also involved internationally with a innovative next-generation collaborative platform, OAE, which is presently being deployed through the French

community.
This partnership helps to open up to the international community the actions carried out by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research in the area of digital technologies.

-- Translation by Mathilde Guerin

5. New Communities of Interest formed around Internationalization, Accessibility

Apereo now acts as an umbrella for around a dozen projects and software communities. That's a testament both the inclusive vision the organization was formed around, and the hard work work of our volunteer incubation mentors. With exciting new communities such as Xerte, UniTime and Opencast joining Apereo graduating incubation and reaching hundreds of new constituents, and newer projects such as Karuta and EDExchange developing rapidly, it's an appropriate time to think about how our projects and communities might learn from each other.

Apereo was formed with two types of constituent communities in mind. The first is, of course the software project or community, focussed on developing and sustaining software to support the academic mission. The second, we termed a community of interest. A community of interest is a looser association that might organize around a specific theme. It might (or might not) span more than one software project or community. It could look like the existing Sakai Teaching and Learning Community, or our Learning Analytics Initiative.

Now that the dust has settled around the initial consolidation of Apereo, and the first wave of new projects are graduating incubation or progressing rapidly through the process, expect to see a renewed emphasis on communities of interest. We'll be publishing a draft process for Community of Interest formation - you will find it on www.apereo.org. We are also announcing the formation of two new Apereo-wide communities of interest, around internationalization and accessibility. Nico Matthijs of *Research and the OAE Project has agreed to lead the formation of the first, and Matt Clare, from Brock University, the second. A big thanks to Nico and Matt for volunteering - and watch this space for more details.

-- Ian Dolphin, Executive Director

Project News

6. 2015 Learning Analytics and Knowledge (LAK) Conference Held March 16-20

The 2015 international Learning Analytics and Knowledge (LAK) conference, organized by the Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR) took place at Marist College, in Poughkeepsie, New York the week of March 16th. In addition to being the largest LAK conference to date with the largest number of paper submissions, the event brought

together, for the first time, open-source software developers from the Apereo Foundation community with learning analytics researchers from SoLAR in a two day pre-conference hackathon. The session, organized by Alan Berg, Sandeep Jayaprakash and Kate Valenti and others from the Apereo Learning Analytics Initiative focused on exploring options for visualizing data and displaying results on an open-source dashboard tool. In addition to this pre-conference event, this year saw the introduction of a Practitioner Track which focused on how prior research in the learning analytics field is now being implemented and the impact it is having on issues such as student success. Over 80% of the attendees indicated that they found these sessions valuable and thus it will be included in future LAK conferences.

The conference drew 320 attendees from 34 countries including, among others, the United States, Canada, Ecuador, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia, United Kingdom and the Philippines. On average, 55 people viewed the remote live streaming of keynotes and select sessions. Overall feedback on the event was very positive with 85% reporting that the conference provided "very high" or "high" value 81% indicated that they were "very satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the Practitioner Track and 87% said they enjoyed the combined practitioner and research tracks. Video recordings of all presentations will be available on SoLAR YouTube channel within the next few weeks.

The 2016 Learning Analytics and Knowledge conference will be held at the University of Edinburgh April 25-29, 2016 (http://lak16.solaresearch.org/). Apereo community members who are interested in the field of learning analytics are encouraged to consider attending!

7. OpenCast at the University of Manchester: Video Presentation

Opencast supports a significantly scaled lecture capture and media management programme at the University of Manchester in the UK. Lecture capture at Manchester is distinctive; it's automated, driven by the timetable, and organized on an "opt-out" basis. The programme is also strongly supported by senior staff. Hear Professor Richard J. Reece, Associate Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Students speak about the programme at the March 2015 Opencast conference - https://tinyurl.com/qjvr55t

8. Xerte Project Graduates Incubation

Xerte provides a browser-based environment for authoring highly interactive and accessible learning materials. Xerte originated at the University of Nottingham in 2004, and is widely used in UK and European higher and further education and beyond. From the last year, Xerte has been working to meet the requirements of the Apereo Foundation Incubation Process. With the release of Xerte Toolkits v3.0, on Friday 22nd May, the project becomes a fully sponsored Apereo software community.

Xerte is completely aligned with the Apereo mission of providing tools, environments and infrastructure to support the delivery of the academic mission. It is 100% open source, and has worked consistently to produce an authoring environment that is both

easy to use and integrate with other environments. Learning materials authored in Xerte are highly accessible. Xerte worked closely with TechDIS, a former UK advisory agency for much of it's life to ensure accessibility standards are met. More than this, the Xerte community has always striven to develop a culture where accessibility is a priority.

Apereo will work to bring Xerte in front of a wider community - Xerte brings a community committed to openness and rich in expertise to Apereo.

Discover more about Xerte at Open Apereo 2015 http://lanyrd.com/2015/apereo/schedule/ or check out the introductory Xerte Apereo Webinar from earlier this year at https://youtu.be/B9LMAHantwI

9. Open Academic Environment (OAE) 11/OAE Jack Snipe Release

The Apereo Open Academic Environment (OAE) project team is extremely pleased to announce the eleventh major release of the Apereo Open Academic Environment; OAE Jack Snipe or OAE 11.

OAE Jack Snipe brings a wide range of new features and capabilities, including group profile pages, the ability to delete and archive groups, an editor role for collaborative documents and increased configuration support for landing pages and the footer. Next to that, OAE Jack Snipe also includes an extraordinary number of usability gains, accessibility improvements and bug fixes.

Changelog
Group Profiles

OAE Jack Snipe brings group profile pages, allowing for groups to be better contextualised and presented to non-members. A group profile page contains a description of the group, ensuring that the subject and goal of the group is clear to the visitor, a public activity feed, showcasing the recent activity that has taken place in the group, and a list of featured members, providing an idea of the people involved in the group.

Group profiles are anticipated to be especially useful when browsing and discovering public or joinable groups, but will also provide convenient additional context when visiting groups you're already a member of.

Delete group

OAE Jack Snipe makes it possible for group managers to delete groups, allowing for inactive or unused groups to be removed from membership libraries. Deleted groups are not removed from the system entirely though, but are archived instead. Therefore, deleted groups can be re-activated by an administrator at any point in time.

Editor role
Recent usage feedback has indicated a need for allowing people to edit a collaborative document without being able to perform other administrative tasks such as deleting the document. Examples include a collaborative writing course where students needed to be able to contribute to a collaborative document without being able to delete it.

Therefore, OAE Jack Snipe introduces an editor role for collaborative documents. Users and groups with the editor role will be able to edit the collaborative document without being able to manage it (delete, manage access, etc.)

List items
Up until Apereo OAE 10, the display of list item titles was limited to a single line of text. As space was limited, this often meant that the title was cut off too quickly, making it difficult to identify an item.

OAE Jack Snipe ensures that all list items (libraries, search, etc.) will display a much larger part of the item's title (up to 2 full lines), making it a lot easier to identify the item you're looking for. We are convinced that this relatively small usability improvement will make a world of difference when using the system.

Mobile login
On mobile devices, there will no longer be a need to sign in every time a user visits their tenant. A session will now be remembered for up to 30 days, ensuring that OAE and its activity feed can be accessed quickly and easily.

REST API improvements
As easy-to-use and well documented REST APIs have always been a critical part of the OAE architecture, OAE Jack Snipe introduces a range of REST API enhancements.

Next to various REST API usability improvements, OAE Jack Snipe introduces a cross-origin resource sharing (CORS), making it easier for external applications to integrate with the OAE REST APIs.

The Swagger REST API documentation framework has also been upgraded to the latest version, adding some nifty additional features to the REST API documentation pages.

Google Authentication
The Google Authentication integration that ships with Apereo OAE has been upgraded to work with the latest version of the Google Authentication API. Next to that, it is now also possible to configure multiple Google Apps authentication domains per tenant.

Landing page configuration
Apereo OAE tenant landing pages can be fully customised, allowing for an institution to present and contextualise their tenancy with great flexibility. OAE Jack Snipe introduces a number of additional tenant landing page configuration and customisation options,

providing even greater control over their look and feel.

Footer configuration
The page footer can now be fully configured and customised on a per installation basis. Amongst other things, this will allow Apereo OAE hosting providers to name the installation, link to a website for the installation and link back to the website for the hosting provider.

Try it out!
OAE Jack Snipe can be tried out on the project's QA server at http://oae.oae-qa0.oaeproject.org. It is worth noting that this server is actively used for testing and will be wiped and redeployed every night.

The source code has been tagged with version number 11.0.0 and can be downloaded from the following repositories:

Back-end: https://github.com/oaeproject/Hilary/tree/11.0.0
Front-end: https://github.com/oaeproject/3akai-ux/tree/11.0.0

Documentation on how to install the system can be found at https://github.com/oaeproject/Hilary/blob/11.0.0/README.md.

Instruction on how to upgrade an OAE installation from version 10 to version 11 can be found at https://github.com/oaeproject/Hilary/wiki/OAE-Upgrade-Guide.

The repository containing all deployment scripts can be found at https://github.com/oaeproject/puppet-hilary.

Get in touch
The project website can be found at http://www.oaeproject.org. The project blog will be updated with the latest project news from time to time, and can be found at http://www.oaeproject.org/blog.

The mailing list used for Apereo OAE is oae@apereo.org. You can subscribe to the mailing list at https://groups.google.com/a/apereo.org/d/forum/oae.

Bugs and other issues can be reported in our issue tracker at https://github.com/oaeproject/3akai-ux/issues.

Briefly

10. Apereo Incubation Process

The Apereo Incubation Process was formed in 2013 in order to provide support for software projects and communities that wish to operate as part of Apereo. The Incubation Working Group has since collaborated with representatives of several

projects, out of which some, including Unitime (http://www.unitime.org/) and the Xerte Project (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/xerte/index.aspx), have already graduated and became part of the Apereo Foundation. The process itself has recently been reviewed and received positive feedback from various stakeholders. We will work on suggested process improvements and continue to mentor new and existing incubating projects.

The Incubation process cuts both ways as it helps both incubating projects and the Apereo foundation in gaining momentum. It is very rewarding to be part of this process, and I would like to encourage those who are interested to join us in our mission to support new Apereo projects!

-- Jaeques Koeman

11. NYU Coordinates Work on New Sakai Gradebook

NYU is coordinating the development of a new Gradebook in Sakai. Based off of the framework of the current Gradebook tool, the new Gradebook has been designed to provide easier and faster grading capabilities centered around a new spreadsheet-style interface. The tool will also feature improved usability/accessibility and an enhanced import/export process.

NYU, Notre Dame, Asahi Net International, and Longsight are all contributing toward this effort.

The Gradebook project team will be presenting at Open Apereo 2015. For additional information on this project, including recordings of previous presentations/demonstrations, please see the Gradebook Enhancements Project wiki page.

12. What's New In UPortal: Webinar Video

The uPortal Steering Committee held a uPortal Community Call on Wednesday, April 29th 2015, at 11:30 EDT. This call was devoted to covering what is in the newly released uPortal 4.2, what California Community College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison are doing with uPortal and AngularJS, and what you can look forward to at the June Apereo conference. An archive of the webinar is available at http://youtu.be/MCgrWVOuDbA

13. Update on Karuta Open Source Portfolio: Webinar on June 17

Join us on June 17, at noon US EDT, for an update on the latest version of Karuta Open Source Portfolio, which is currently under incubation by the Apereo Foundation. Karuta is LTI-enabled for integration with an LMS and offers dramatic flexibility for designing ePortfolios for learning, assessment, showcasing, and reporting. Karuta 1.1 brings significant improvements, including an assessment dashboard, customized reports, and a user interface to showcase student work.

Karuta webinars use Big Blue Button. Choose Apereo Room 1, enter your name and the password apereo at http://apereo.blindsidenetworks.net/apereo/

-- Janice Smith and Jacques Raynauld

In Depth: For Longer Reading
14. Community Update: Crowd-Sourcing a Communication Strategy for Sakai

Over the its fall semester, Marist College partnered with the Apereo Foundation to experiment with a new "crowd-sourcing" model for providing higher education open-source projects with communication and marketing services while also providing students with real-world learning experiences. The initiative, coordinated by Dr. Mark Van Dyke, affiliate associate professor of communication in Marist's School of Communication and the Arts, focused on evaluating the Sakai projects strategic communication needs and developing a related strategic communication plan to address those needs.

To implement the project Dr. Van Dyke worked with two Apereo Foundation communication interns, Veronica Mohrmann, a 2014 graduate of Marist's Master of Arts in Communication program, and Julia Palermo, a senior in Marist's Bachelor of Arts in Communication program. The two intern positions were supported by the Foundation and Marist College. In addition to these interns, Dr. Van Dyke integrated the project into two of his graduate-level communication courses with one course focusing on research activities and the other on strategic planning.

Students used a range of primary and secondary methods during the research phase, including an extensive SWOT analysis, interviews with key members of the Sakai community, and surveys as well as Internet research. Some of their findings from this phase include Sakai's need to connect better with key audiences such as institutional decision makers, increase and improve use of social media and increase its brand recognition among key audiences.

Following this research phase, students and interns developed a strategic communication plan, which was published in early 2015, which would address these challenges. The student team working on this phase of the project proposed a range of innovative communication ideas including positioning Sakai as a "thought leader" in the Learning Management System (LMS) space by publishing articles, best practices, and white papers on topics of general interest to the educational technology sector.

Those interested in obtaining a copy of the strategic communication plan developed through this initiative should contact Ian Dolphin at an.dolphin@apereo.org .

This "crowd-source" model provides students and faculty members with valuable opportunities to work on authentic communication problems and cases through projects and assignments for courses, topics for research study, and campaigns for student-run

organizations. In return, organizations like Sakai benefit from high-quality, affordable, sustainable communication services and materials produced by students and faculty.

Apereo Foundation Board Member and Marist College Assistant Vice-President, Information Technology for Digital Education Josh Baron also emphasized the potential value of the model to other Apereo projects and to the larger community of open organizations. Given the limited time and resources available to Marist College students and faculty last fall, it was necessary to focus development of the model on one project: Sakai. "However," Baron said, "if this model works for Sakai, it can work for others. What Apereo grows out of this model can benefit many other projects and the Foundation itself."

Administrators and staff members interested in collaborating on this project and contributing to development of this model should contact Josh Baron at josh.baron@marist.edu. Interested faculty members and students should contact Dr. Mark A. Van Dyke, Marist College affiliate associate professor of communication, at mark.vandyke@marist.edu.

-- Dr. Mark A. Van Dyke, Marist College