

**Apereo Newsletter
November 7, 2015**

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From the Editor:

We are in the midst of a full season of Apereo community events, and this month's newsletter brings reports of those past as well as many upcoming. There are so many opportunities to learn more and get involved in all areas of community work!

The newsletter also provides an 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 .

Deadline for items for the next newsletter is Monday, November 30.

Lucy Appert, Newsletter Editor

Upcoming Events

1) Open Apereo 2016 To Be Held at New York University

I am pleased to announce that Open Apereo 2016 will take place at New York University's Washington Square campus in New York City on the 24th and 25th May 2016. The event will be preceded by a day we're calling the "Open Summit" - an opportunity for open initiatives in education to share best practices, state-of-the art and strategic directions. Apereo is leading the development of this event together with the Open Source Initiative (OSI). We believe it will be a significant opportunity to develop alignments and meeting points across a range of higher ed open activities. Registration, program and hotel information will become available over the coming months – but hold the 22nd-25th May!

As in previous years, we're seeking the maximum involvement of the Apereo Community in organizing the conference. If you would like to serve on the Program or Planning Committee for Open Apereo 2016, please drop me a line at ian.dolphin@apereo.org

-- Ian Dolphin, Executive Director, Apereo Foundation

2) Apereo South Africa 2016 Conference

The APEREO SA 2016 conference will be held on premise at UNISA in Pretoria, South Africa on the 9th and 10th of March 2016. No registration fees.

Contact: elsabe@opencollab.co.za | [+27 12 640 3517](tel:+27126403517) | [+27 82 463 1919](tel:+27824631919)

-- Elsabe Botha

3) MyUW Presentation & Hangout Nov. 11

A Hangout, on Air no less, on November 11th, at 2pm Central, surveying the new MyUW and the software components that make it up.

The idea is a broad, feature-focused, product-focused presentation, showing and talking through what features the new MyUW is delivering, what's working, and emphasizing that this is built with free and open source components backed by a uPortal instance. Other campuses can be inspired to implement parts of this locally. Others gain a leg up on progress, MyUW gains potential collaborators. Everyone wins.

<https://plus.google.com/events/cu1qpp19uelsedr3h6qirkpvgbs>

This follows up on the hopes articulated by uPortal steering at

<http://thread.gmane.org/gmane.comp.java.jasig.uportal/18512>

-- Andrew Petro

4) Upcoming Monthly Mighty Project Site Group Showcases

Ever wish you could see and explore what other institutions are doing with Sakai? Do you feel you may be using project sites in a unique way and wondering who else out there may be doing the same? The Mighty Project Site group exists for these very reasons!

This group originated as a result of a session at 2014's Sakai Virtual Conference, and has been meeting monthly ever since. This collaborative and supportive group includes teaching faculty, educational technologists, and IT personnel, which spans back-end/administrator, front-end/trainer, and teacher expertise with Sakai. Our mission is to work towards benchmarking standards of use of project sites in Sakai through collaboration and showcasing of our institutions' instances of Sakai.

Our upcoming monthly meetings will be a series of Sakai showcases, during which the presenter will highlight a variety of aspects about their instance, such as use of course vs. project sites, common tools, roles/permissions, general support challenges, site host, site creation policies, etc.

If you want to see what other institutions are doing, then don't miss out!

The dates, and "showcasers", are as follows:

- Nov 9, 2015 – Trisha Gordon, University of Virginia
- Dec 14, 2015 – Jennifer Loudiana, Walsh University
- Jan 11, 2016 – Sarah Kentner, Loyola University Chicago
- Feb 8, 2016 – Harold Hale, Antioch University
- March 14, 2016 – Adam Marshall, University of Oxford
- April 11, 2016 – Rebecca Taylor, Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College

If you'd like to join in, or would like to request more information, please email Rebecca Taylor at rtaylor@cmcc.ca!

-- Rebecca Taylor

5) Learning Analytics Events @ University of Amsterdam, Dec. 8-11, 2015

The Apereo Learning Analytics Initiative (LAI) in conjunction with SURF, LACE, and the ICTServices at the University of Amsterdam are pleased to announce two events. The first is a national code jam based on the Open Dashboard. This two-day event will consist of hacking at learner activity data and creating supporting dashboards. This is the third of a series of code jams; the last event was at LAK15. The infrastructure provided includes the full range of applications in Apereo LAI's arsenal. We plan to follow on the code jam with further opportunities including a hackathon supported by the JISC national LA infrastructure as part of LAK16.

The second event is a one-day International seminar also held at the University of Amsterdam and sponsored by LACE on the subject of Institutional readiness.

If you find yourself in Holland and have a coding/community/planning itch, please join us. If you have any further questions or wish to replicate or share resources from an event, feel free to contact Alan Berg: analytics-coordinator@apereo.org

-- Alan Berg

Announcements:

6) Marist College Joins Open Source Initiative

Many within the Apereo community may not know that the Apereo Foundation is an Affiliate Member of the Open Source Initiative (<http://opensource.org>), as is the Xerte Project (<http://www.xerte.org.uk/index.php?lang=en>) which recently graduated from Apereo Incubation (<https://www.apereo.org/incubation>). In June of 2015 the OSI announced the extension of its Affiliate Member Program to include institutions of higher education (<http://opensource.org/node/752>) and in August announced admission of its first member from the higher ed community, the University of Southern Queensland (<http://opensource.org/node/770>). This month the OSI announced Marist College has joined as well. Marist is an important supporter and contributor to not only the advancement of open source software within colleges and universities, but within the Apereo Foundation as well. The OSI is very excited that their experiences in adoption, development and advocacy can inform the OSI's work within higher education and help shape the Affiliate Member Program to best serve institutions exploring, using and producing open source software.

The OSI welcomes and thanks the Apereo community--the projects, the people, and the institutions--for all of your support of open source software. Affiliate Membership is available at no charge and allows institutions of higher education to directly participate in the development and direction of the Open Source Initiative. You can learn more about the OSI's Affiliate Member Program, its benefits and how your institution can join, at: <http://opensource.org/affiliates>

-- Patrick Masson

7) UW-Madison Web Application Developer Opening

UW-Madison is looking for someone to join the MyUW portal team. If you have had the opportunity to meet some of our team members online or at a conference, you likely know it is a fun and lively team proudly delivering an innovative uPortal-based solution to over 100,000 students and staff throughout the University of Wisconsin System. We offer a lot of flexibility and are very family friendly! To learn more or to apply, see <https://www.doit.wisc.edu/jobs/web-application-developer/>

-- Jim Helwig

8) Sakai's Review Accessibility (RA11y) Plan: Fully Funded & At Work on Phase 1

The RA11Y Plan (Review Accessibility Plan - accessibility drops 11 words, and looks like a pair of letter l's, to make "*rally*") is an initiative by the Sakai Accessibility Working Group to commission a substantive review of Sakai's accessibility by a respected third-party with a goal of obtaining a certification, including a VPAT and WCAG2-based review, that would assure potential adopters and current users alike.

The plan itself is outlined here

<https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/2ACC/rA11y+Plan>.

The Sakai Accessibility Working Group would like to thank the organizations that pledged \$61,000 and 60 hours of in-kind development. Thanks to: Apereo, Durham

Tech University, Tufts University, Oxford University, Pepperdine University, Longsight, and Brock University.

Everyone involved in creating Sakai and other Apreo projects wants our projects to have a positive impact on all who encounter them. Sakai has a good history of accessibility but resources are limited and new developments in Sakai need to be reviewed and brought up to standard.

The rA11y plan address the Sakai project's need to transition from a project with deep resources around accessibility testing within it to seeking out commercial support with community funds to support the work. These ebbs and flows of resources are typical of many long-term projects.

Members of the Sakai Accessibility Working Group are currently selecting a respected third party to review of Sakai 11's accessibility. After the group is selected and completes a report based on sample content and configurations of Sakai, the work on other requirements associated with report will be brought to the community for remediation and review. Through commissioning work and asking for volunteers to work on areas of interest, Sakai can work towards not only being a being a more accessible LMS, but also one that can make that claim with certainty.

To learn more about this initiative please check-out the rA11y plan web site at <https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/2ACC/rA11y+Plan>, join the Sakai Accessibility Working Group bi-weekly call (details at <https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/2ACC/Sakai+Accessibility+Working+Group+Teleconference>) or follow the Sakai Development mailing list

-- Matt Clare and The Sakai Accessibility Working Group

9) Join the Marist Diwali Celebration in Apereo OAE Nov. 9-13

At Marist College this fall, the department of Academic Technology, the Center for MultiCultural Affairs, and the School of Communication and the Arts, along with our international students from India have all partnered to create a multifaceted Diwali celebration. We have already held a successful workshop on rangoli (sand painting) and are working on the culmination of our Diwali celebration that will take place November 9th - 13th. Throughout the week, on our campus we will be having an Indian exhibit, displaying artifacts, photographs, jewelry, and clothing. We will hold mehendi workshops (henna hand painting) and then culminating the week with a celebratory fashion show and party with food, music and dance.

In addition, we are sharing our story of building and celebrating Diwali via the Open Academic Environment (OAE) and we are inviting other institutions to share their stories, pictures and videos as well. Joining is easy -- just click here: <https://network.unity.ac/signup>

PS. If you are sharing your celebrations on any other social media site, please use

#mydiwali #my(insert your campus name) for example: #mydiwali #mymarist
#myoxford
-- Dede Hourican

10) NYU Steinhardt Uses Sakai for Professional Development, Course Innovation Grant

This summer Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at NYU hosted its first Course Innovation Grant program supporting the development of technology-enhanced courses. Thirteen faculty (representing twelve courses) were selected for the inaugural eight-week professional development program.

The goal of the course innovation grant was twofold: to support individual course enhancements and to provide a group professional development experience for faculty. For the twelve courses enhanced with technology, approximately seven leveraged Sakai as a primary technology resource, supporting flipped and blended environments to fully online courses. Almost all courses involved used at least more than one technology solution within their newly enhanced courses.

The professional development component leveraged Sakai as the online course site environment. A curriculum was developed based on the ADDIE model, an instructional design framework. Faculty members were enrolled within a course site as students where they submitted assignments, participated in online discussions and interacted with weekly modules released by the Lessons tool.

-- Jeffrey Lane

11) Conference Report: HEC Montreal - Oct. 2, 2015 : "L'éducation supérieure à l'ère du logiciel libre. Partage d'expériences en France, au Québec et à l'international."

Apereo along with ESUP-Portail, its sister organization, were invited to participate in a conference dedicated to open source in Higher Education in Montreal. Representatives of both foundations were able to share their experience on how to develop and promote open source solutions in higher ed institutions. Participants were given a glimpse of projects such as OAE, Karuta, and the Learning Analytics Initiative to illustrate how our model, based on collaboration, helps achieve great things and how it benefits the Higher Ed community.

Another session focused on the ESUP-Portail Consortium to describe its goals and organization (*the community, the working groups, its relationship with the French Ministry of Higher Ed, etc.*), explain its involvement with the Apereo Foundation and provide examples of actual projects conducted at a national level.

The panel discussion was a highlight of the event and a perfect way to conclude that conference as it helped the audience better understand our missions and how we implement them by pooling resources, building partnership with organizations with similar goals, and using an incubation process, among other strategies.

-- Mathilde Guerin

Project News & Releases

12) Xerte Project News

The Xerte Project's team of developers are working toward the release of Xerte Online Toolkits v3.1 at the end of November. v3.1 will be the team's second release in 2015, and will contain a number of new features and fixes. In particular, the release will include a completely overhauled setup utility, with thanks to Leonard Johnson; the first steps toward a much more responsive suite of templates, with responsive text adapting to different sized windows and devices, a new 'dictation' template that will complement the existing templates designed with language learning in mind. We've noticed that the new themes introduced in v3.0 are really popular with our users and we have extended the range of themes available. We have also fixed dozens of issues that have surfaced since the release of v3.1 back in the summer: v3.1 will be our best release to date!

-- Julian Tenney

13) Opencast 2.1 Release on Dec. 8

As next major release, Opencast 2.1 is to be released on December 8, 2015. The release process strives forward and we are currently in the public QA phase. Test servers can be found at:

- <http://octestallinone.virtuos.uos.de>
- <http://testallinone.usask.ca>

Opencast 2.1 brings several small additions to the administrative user interface and the player, but most importantly, it upgrades a lot of the underlying OSGI architecture by switching to Apache Karaf as new OSGI runtime.

Apart from this major release, the 1.6.3 maintenance release is planned for November 1st and the 2.0.2 maintenance release for December 15th.

-- Lars Kiesow

14) Sakai 11 PA System Tool

The PA System tool, available in the upcoming Sakai 11 release, provides application administrators with the ability to deliver customizable system-wide or targeted alerts to users in their Sakai instance. These may take the form of dismissible, rich-text popup alerts or simple text banners, color-coded by alert severity. All alerts are centrally managed through the PA System tool within the Sakai Admin Workspace and can also be controlled via a set of RESTful APIs.

Popup alerts are modal windows that users see upon logging into the system. These popups may be temporarily or permanently dismissed by the user. The content of these alerts allow for rich HTML content/formatting.

Banner alerts, similar to notification banners in mobile operating systems, appear at the top of the user interface and are designed for delivering simple and concise information to users. These alerts can be pushed to all users or a targeted subset of users.

Furthermore, banner alerts can be delivered on all servers of a Sakai instance or to only selected servers. There are three different types of banners in the PA System, color-coded by alert severity:

- **Blue (Low Severity)** - can be dismissed by the user
- **Yellow (Medium Severity)** - can be hidden (minimized) by the user
- **Red (High Severity)** - can be neither dismissed nor hidden by the user

The PA System is available for testing in the Sakai nightly trunk build.

-- Kyle Blythe

15) Update from the Fall 2015 Karuta Meeting in Montréal

Members of the project team for the Karuta Open Source Portfolio met at HEC Montréal in Montréal, Canada, September 28 to October 1, 2015. At our meeting we worked with our Apereo mentors, Ian Dolphin and Jacques Koeman, to finalize progress toward graduating from Apereo incubation. We also increased the visibility of Karuta in the French-speaking world through a presentation by Jacques Raynauld and Eric Girardin at the “Higher Education in the Era of Open Source: Sharing the Experiences of France and Quebec Internationally” conference that took place in Montréal on Friday, October 2.

The most significant work to take place in our four-day work session is the development of a new user interface for Karuta to replace the software’s plain vanilla look and feel. The new interface is already in testing and will be added to an upcoming release of Karuta 2.0 targeted for February 2016. A highlight of the new interface is the ability of institutions to easily add their own banner and institutional colors to Karuta pages.

Developers at the meeting did an extensive code review along with additional performance testing. Given ample server memory and a sufficient number of processors, when there are at least two seconds between different Karuta log-ins and/or users opening portfolios, the performance of Karuta is excellent.

Functional team members at the meeting worked on new terminology to differentiate Karuta portfolios from rubrics, portfolio components, dashboards, reports, and batch files. In addition, a simple use case with an accompanying workbook is being designed for the admin welcome page in order to provide direction to new Karuta designers. The functional team also documented current institutional use cases for improved sharing on the project website and for use in conference presentations on Karuta.

-- Janice Smith

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