Sakai Newsletter

February 14, 2013

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1. TWO WEEKS LEFT! Send your proposals for 2013 Apereo Conference (Jasig and Sakai) by March 4

Time is running out to submit your proposal by March 4.

https://www.concentra-cms.com/cfp/p/apereo13

The deadline for this year's 2013 Apereo conference is two weeks away. Please submit your proposal so we can learn from you in San Diego, CA, June 2-7, 2013. The conference is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with your peers in higher education.

What makes the conference so compelling is YOU -- your success stories and your amazing work. You may submit a presentation session, birds of a feather (BOF) discussion, or showcase night demonstration. We'd love to hear about:

- Advances in teaching, learning, and research with technology
- Identity and access management
- New developments and features for products like uPortal, Sakai CLE/OAE, CAS, OSP, Bedework, and others
- Exciting and innovative implementations of and integrations with Apereo and other open-source software
- Information security
- Learning analytics
- Advocacy and awareness of open-source solutions (The 2-3-98 Project)
- and more!

The annual conference is a global networking point for developers, faculty, administrators, advocates, support specialists, and others in the open-source community. Join us in Opening Minds to Open Solutions!

Sincerely,

Ian Dolphin, Executive Director, Apereo Foundation
Patty Gertz, Associate Director, Apereo Foundation
Jim Helwig, Planning Committee Chair
Alan Regan, Program Committee Chair

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2. Apereo (Formerly Jasig and Sakai) Board Election Results

I am pleased to announce that the following candidates have been elected to the Board of Directors of the Apereo Foundation, subject to ratification by a meeting of the membership:

Alain Mayeur, President of the ESUP -- Portail Consortium, IT Director, University of Valenciennes (France)

David Kahle, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Tufts University (USA)

Dr. Douglas Johnson, Assistant Director for Learning Services, University of Florida (USA)

Professor Shoji Kajita, IT Planning Office / Academic Center for Computing and Media Studies. Kyoto University (Japan)

Sincere thanks to all the candidates willing to serve, and congratulations to those who were elected.

Best,

Ian Dolphin
Executive Director, Apereo Foundation
ian.dolphin@apereo.org

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3. New Latin America Coordinator

For over a year, David Martinez of Universitat Politècnica de València has acted as Latin America Coordinator between the Spanish Sakai schools (S2U), the Foundation, and interested parties in Ibero America. I would like to offer my thanks to David for all his efforts, and my thanks to UPV for contributing David's time.

The new coordinator is Diego del Blanco Orobitg of Samoo. I look forward to working with Diego to raise the profile of Sakai -- and other Apereo projects -- in Ibero America. Thanks to Diego for taking on this responsibility.

Diego's email is: diego.delblanco@apereo.org

A Spanish news page is now established at:

http://www.sakaiproject.org/news/%C2%A1bienvenidos-sakai

Best,

Ian Dolphin
Executive Director, Apereo Foundation
ian.dolphin@apereo.org

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4. Sakai 2.9.1 Released

Dear All,

I am pleased to announce, on behalf of the community, the release of Sakai CLE 2.9.1 .

The Sakai CLE 2.9.1 builds on the Sakai CLE 2.9.0 release and adds updated context sensitive Help documentation, several performance enhancements and security fixes, and one hundred bug fixes.

Release notes:

https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/DOC/Sakai+CLE+2.9+release+notes

Thanks to all in the worldwide community for your contribution to the development, testing, and documenting of the release.

Best regards,

Neal

nealcaidin@sakaifoundation.org

5. HEC Montreal Ran a MOOC Course Involving More Than 3000 Students Using Sakai CLE 2.8

Dear Community,

HEC Montreal is proud to announce that it has successfully launched and run a MOOC course involving more than 3000 students using Sakai CLE 2.8. You can access our platform and create an account at:

 www.EDUlib.hec.ca

The course called "Introduction au Marketing", which was taught in French, was launched in November 2012 and ran through early January 2013. Of the 4200 students who initially subscribed, 651 completed the course in its entirety.

In order to complete the course, students were required to:
- Watch 6 hour of video (6 weeks of 1 hour classes)
- Complete readings for each week
- Pass online quizzes (using Samigo) each week
- Pass a final quiz (also using Samigo) at the end of the course

Additionally, students were invited to complete their profiles (using the "Profile 2" tool), and to contribute to online forums. Over 1000 messages were posted on the Forums. Finally, students could see their final results through the Gradebook tool.

Many factors contributed to the success of this first MOOC experience:

- First, as far as we know it was the first MOOC offered in business in French. Since business is part of everyone's life, subjects like Marketing gather huge interest among the general public.

- Second, Sakai tools proved to be robust enough to support large numbers of registered students.

- Third, server performance was constant despite peaks of over 1400 visits a day (for a single course!).

- Finally, this project required minimal effort from our technical teams since all the tools used are included in the Sakai platform. The project could be launched quickly following a small amount of configuration to suit our needs.

We are continuing with the MOOC's experience. The next course, "Comprendre les états financiers" (« Understanding Financial Statements »), is to begin soon.

Any comments or questions are welcome,

Marie-Odile Thibault
marie-odile.thibault@hec.ca

6. Call for Entries for the 2013 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award

The Sakai Teaching and Learning community is seeking submissions for the annual Teaching With Sakai Innovation Award (TWSIA) competition. The award recognizes innovation and excellence in technology-supported teaching, academic collaboration, and student engagement. (See last year's winners:
http://openedpractices.org/twsia/2012/winners)

Award categories include:
- Higher Education: Face-to-face
- Higher Education: Fully Online or Hybrid Course
- Primary and Secondary Education (K-12)
- Project Sites & Other Uses of Sakai
- Portfolios

We look forward to entries from those using the Sakai CLE and those pioneering the Sakai OAE (Open Academic Environment).

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

Phase 1: Preliminary abstract submission (recommended but not required)
Opening Date: Feb 11, 2013
Closing Deadline: March 1, 2013

Each applicant should submit a brief description of the innovative teaching method, practice or strategy to be considered for the final award. Instructions and an example of a well-written abstract are included in the submission form.

Applicants will receive feedback on abstracts by March 8, 2013.

Submitting an abstract is not required. However, the three questions on the abstract submission form will be required for all applicants as a part of the full application process. Those who submit a preliminary abstract may edit their responses prior to submitting the final application, in order to incorporate feedback from the judges.

The responses to these three items also will be used as part of the session description at the annual conference.

Phase 2: Final submission (required of all applicants)
Opening Date: March 1, 2013
Closing Deadline: April 5, 2013

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

Resources for applicants:
- Award categories
- How to get started
- Award eligibility, criteria and rubric
- Frequently asked questions

Winners will be announced no later than April 19, 2013 and recognized at the Apereo (previously Jasig-Sakai) Conference in San Diego, California, June 3-6, 2013.

Registration and travel expenses may be available for award winners.

Contact:
Salwa Khan
sk16@txstate.edu
Texas State University, TWSIA Committee Chair

7. Teaching With Sakai Innovation Award -- Looking for Help

Dear Community Members,

Work on the 2013 Teaching With Sakai Innovation Award (TWSIA) is underway and we need your help.

You can participate in the following ways:

- Be a committee member and assist with tasks to promote TWSIA.
- Be a preliminary judge to help select finalists.
- Spread the news about the award at your institution.
- Apply for the award once the application period begins.

We hope that you will consider joining us in our continuing efforts to promote the Teaching With Sakai Innovation Award.

Contact: Salwa Khan, sk16@txstate.edu

Information about the award: http://openedpractices.org/twsia

Salwa Khan, Ph.D.
Coordinator, IT Projects
Texas State University
Instructional Technologies Support
sk16@txstate.edu

8. Google Summer of Code is on Again

We're pleased to announce that this year Google Summer of Code will be happening for its ninth year. Please check out the blog post [1] about the program and read the FAQs [2] and Timeline [3] on Melange for more information.

[1] - http://google-opensource.blogspot.com/2013/02/flip-bits-not-burgers-google-summer-of.html
[2] - http://www.google-melange.com/gsoc/document/show/gsoc_program/google/gsoc2013/help_page
[3] - http://www.google-melange.com/gsoc/events/google/gsoc2013

Anyone interested in participating this year, as either mentors or students? What about running our efforts? Ideas for projects? It would be good to get this one planned out early.

Cheers,

Steve

steve.swinsburg@gmail.com

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9. Sakaigers' Den Spurs European Collaboration

In December last year representatives of European Sakai schools and commercial affiliates came together and discussed ways to better collaborate on Sakai projects. We observed that we often share things we have done but less the projects we plan to do. There exist many great ideas but they often don't get realized because one single institution or company doesn't have the resources for it. And so the idea for a Sakaigers' Den session at the Euro Sakai conference in Paris was born.

The one hour session is modeled after the popular British TV show "Dragons' Den" in which entrepreneurs pitch their business idea in order to secure investment finance from a panel of venture capitalists. The main purpose of the session was to share a large number of ideas for new functionality in the next version of Sakai with a broad audience in a short amount of time. This could stimulate parties interested in similar projects to collaborate to implement their ideas. At the conference 11 pitches were delivered. Each pitch consisted of a 3-minute presentation of the idea and an invitation/proposal for collaboration. After the session the audience was asked to "invest" in the ideas they found most interesting using virtual capital (i.e., play money).

Neal Caidin, one of the pitchers, commented afterwards:

"To me, the main benefits of the Sakaiger's Den are:
- that it is future-thinking, what we want rather than just explaining what we have
- it is fun, and therefore engaging
- concise -- keeping presentations short also keeps it more engaging
- generates ideas and connections between people"

The clear winner was the pitch delivered by Jaeques Koeman of Edia who presented his idea of Sakai CLE as a MOOC platform. Many conference participants were interested in his idea and started a MOOC workgroup. The workgroup aims to bring together MOOC initiatives within the Sakai community and create a community-driven roadmap for Sakai as a MOOC platform.

For more information on the Sakaigers' Den and an overview of the ideas presented in Paris please go to:

https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/x/HwrnB

Mark Breuker
mbreuker@gmail.com

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10. Sakai CLE Community Survey

Dear all,

Please find enclosed a link to a brief survey to poll about your upgrade plans for the Sakai CLE environment. Results of the survey will be shared with the community.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XVR3HQK

The survey will be closed after Friday, March 1.

Your participation is appreciated and helps the community in release planning.

Regards,

Neal Caidin

Sakai CLE Community Coordinator
nealcaidin@sakaifoundation.org

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11. European Events Recap

There were around 170 total attendees for three days of Apereo and ESUP related events in Paris during the last week in January. A two-day Sakai Europe event (organised prior to the merger of Jasig and Sakai) at Université Pierre et Marie Curie heard presentations from a range of European participants in the community. These ranged from approaches to mobile Sakai, and the features and benefits of the recent 2.9 release of the CLE, to institutional stories from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and France. We'll post a link in the newsletter when presentations become available online. A big thanks to Yves Epelboin and his staff for organising the event.

One of the more interesting sessions of the event was the "Sakaigers Den". Based around a popular TV programme from the UK, the session had presenters pitching their idea for

Sakai development to a panel of venture capitalists -- the audience. The contest was won by an audience vote of 7800 dollars for the Sakai CLE MOOC from Edia, with second place going to a pitch for an Experience API from Alan Berg. Now let's make that real ... Thanks to Mark Breuker of Leidse Onderwijsinstellingen for the idea adaptation, and to Neal Caidin for facilitation. We're already working on ways to adapt the approach to a session at the San Diego Conference in June.

The last day in January saw the 15th "ESUP Day" at Université Paris Descartes. ESUP is a consortium of 72 French Universities who collaborate around a variety of software projects. The conference shared best practices around deploying the latest versions of uPortal, mobile developments, and a status report from Sakai OAE. Presentations and an agenda are available here: http://tinyurl.com/b5kqoh4

Ian Dolphin
Executive Director, Apereo Foundation
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12. Apereo Conference Planning input -- "Matchmaking"

Hi All,

Apereo Foundation conference planners are exploring the concept of "Matchmaking." That is, finding institutions with similar interests to have time and space to get together at the conference and discuss, maybe to swap ideas, maybe to form connections within the community, or perhaps even to collaborate on one or more projects or sub-projects. Does that sound like something of interest to you?

Likely we will be tying this into the registration process and we would like to keep this experiment as simple and organic as possible.

A couple of ideas of how this might work which have been floated, included badges or stickers which you could wear at the conference and find others with similar badges for spontaneous break out discussions, or more facilitated discussions by pre-matching individuals/institutions with similar self-identified interests and handling the scheduling of a time and space for you to meet.

Questions collected at registration time could be anything from freeform keywords or tags, through a few structured questions to get a high level sense of which sub-community you have the most interest in (Sakai CLE, Sakai OAE, JASIG, New incubation project, etc.), or even a combination of these two approaches.

Does anybody have any thoughts on what might work or what to avoid? How to keep it simple, but at the same time make it a useful exercise?

One thought I have is anticipating many institutions moving to Sakai CLE 2.9 in the near future, and perhaps a group that shares information about their own planning efforts could provide and receive benefit among peer institutions (a cohort of upgrade schools).

Would really appreciate any feedback you may have. Brainstorm.

Thanks,

Neal Caidin

Sakai CLE Community Coordinator
nealcaidin@sakaifoundation.org

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13. Mobile Initiative Update

Greetings All!

With profuse apologies for this long-overdue update, let me bring everyone up to date on the Sakai Mobile Initiative. Also forgive me for the length of this update; the good news is that positive things have been happening, and as a result, the overdue status means there's a lot to update.

So back to Summer 2012 …

The Jasig-Sakai Conference in Atlanta was a great event; and, no surprise, I encountered a very high level of interest in a mobilized Sakai. I had arranged both to do an update session on the Mobile Sakai initiative and for a Mobile Sakai programming marathon; however, during the presentation it became clear that there were few programmers available to make use of the programming time. Fortunately, an excellent suggestion was raised during the session that we should use the time for a "Use-Case-A-Thon" and give potential users the opportunity to report on how and why they need and want various mobile capabilities. So we did that, and for most of a morning I met with various people -- instructors, students, programmers, administrators -- to discuss how they envisioned using a mobilized Sakai.

The take-away was that users want *all* capabilities in Sakai mobilized, but some institutions have significant questions about whether or not they would want to deploy certain tools in the mobile environment. I'll say more about this shortly.

So interest in a mobile Sakai remains high and is, in fact, increasing. At the same time, it is very clear that our institutions are under increasing budget pressures making it difficult to contribute programmer cycles to this effort. This creates a seemingly insurmountable hurdle; and yet, after the conference we have opportunities we have not had before. Specifically, after banging ideas around with a number of people at the conference, I decided to give up on trying to recruit and coordinate volunteer time to do the programming for mobilizing Sakai and changed focus to raising funds to contract with a programming team to do this work. This has worked far better than I expected.

In short, after more discussions with Sakai leadership to work out the legalities and logistics, I moved forward:

a) Writing up a formal project proposal and submitting it to the Sakai Foundation Board for approval;
b) Soliciting volunteers to participate in a Steering Committee to advise and direct the Mobile Sakai Project;
c) Identifying a formal project name: Project Keitai;
d) Working with the Steering Committee to identify a vendor to handle the programming for this project and securing an estimate of costs from that vendor;
e) Raising the required funds;
f) Writing up a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sakai Foundation Board to define its role in managing and disbursing project funds for Project Keitai;
g) Lining up the contract programmers.
Many of these details are already posted at the Mobile Sakai project site (https://confluence.sakaiproject.org/display/MOBILE/Home), so I will not repeat them here. Perhaps most importantly, the Steering Committee selected Flying Kite, a Sakai Commercial Affiliate in Canberra Australia (https://www.facebook.com/flyingkiteAU) to handle the programming for this project. Flying Kite is Steve Swinsburg's company; so knowledge of and familiarity with Sakai are obviously not a concern. I should also note that all code developed under Project Keitai will be contributed to the Sakai Foundation and will become part of the generally available code base.

I also want to point out that much of the Project Keitai work will focus on updating and improving the Entity Broker. I am particularly excited by this, because it has been suggested to me that updating the Entity Broker is long overdue, and, of course this work will have beneficial implications for the CLE far beyond mobile capabilities.
It has also been announced already (http://www.sakaiproject.org/news/announcing-project-keitai) that the University of Florida has agreed to fund Project Keitai. So the programming resources to mobilize the Sakai CLE and the funding to pay those resources are now in place. In this context I'd like to publicly thank my boss (Fedro Zazueta) for his support and advocacy along with the University of Florida CIO (Elias Eldayrie) for having the vision to fund this project.

Let me return to the issue of how a mobilized Sakai is now conceived.

As the Use-Case-A-Thon progressed, it became clear that a mobilized CLE (or any course management system for that matter) has policy implications that need to be addressed at an institutional level. For example, does an institution want to enable the testing tools potentially enabling high stakes testing on mobile devices? Institutions will differ in their answers to that question; and institutions need to remain empowered to make that and other related decisions.

Therefore, the scope of Project Keitai has been defined as creating the "hooks" in ALL current core tools and a small number of selected Contrib tools to enable those tools to communicate with mobile apps developed or adopted at the institutional level. Project Keitai will not be developing a mobile app itself. This accomplishes three critical objectives:

1. It will enable schools that have already developed mobile apps to "hook" into the Sakai CLE without requiring them to adopt some other app for Sakai access;
2. It will enable individual schools to decide which Sakai tools and features will be mobile-enabled in light of local policies and practices;
3. It will enable 3rd-party vendors to develop and market mobile Sakai apps for those institutions who do not have the ability or desire to create their own.

I should also note that programming is targeted at the 2.10 CLE release and will be back-ported to 2.9 to the extent possible.

So that's the 30,000 foot view. Where are we in the project details?

"On the ground" things have moved much slower than I would like; to a great extent because Project Keitai was caught up in the broader currents of the Apereo merger. As a result, legal review and approval of the Memorandum of Understanding took about 3 months and the contract between the Sakai Foundation and Flying Kite is still pending, but should be resolved within a few days. I know some work has been done on the mobile code; but as of yet, full-scale production is not happening. Furthermore, I have been in contact with a couple schools and institutions (Oxford, Samoo) that have already done some mobile code work on the CLE and are willing to contribute; so that will expedite overall progress. In fact, Samoo has committed up to 200 hours of programmer time to this effort; so grateful thanks to Diego del Blanco Orobitg and his colleagues.

At this time, the projected timeline is that the mobile CLE code can be developed in 8 to 9 months of full production. I had originally hoped that we would be able to announce a fully mobile enabled Sakai at this Summer's Apereo Conference; however, a this time I anticipate only partial coverage by summer; but we do project having some significant improvements to announce at that time. So a mobile Sakai is unquestionably on the way.

Bottom line: Project Keitai – a mobile enabled Sakai CLE – will happen. It should also happen within this calendar year, barring further, unanticipated delays.

Feel free to contact me if you have additional questions; and thanks for your interest and support!

Peace,

Douglas F. Johnson, Ph.D.
Assistant Director for Learning Services
UF Information Technology
wanderer@ufl.edu

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14. Events

First Apereo Conference - 2013
June 3 - 6, 2013
San Diego, California
https://wiki.jasig.org/display/JCON/Apereo+2013+Conference