



Sakai Newsletter

December 4, 2008

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1. From the Executive Director

The elections for the Sakai Foundation Board are officially open. The slate of candidates can be found on the Sakai Foundation website under the "Foundation" tab. Or use <http://tiny.cc/sfboard2008>. There are eight candidates for two open positions this year. I must say that the quality of candidates is excellent and I'm glad that I don't have to choose myself. The voting closes on December 11 and results will be communicated soon afterwards.

Voting is open to Sakai Foundation members. If you are a member representative and have not already received a separate email on how to vote, please contact Mary Miles immediately at mmiles@sakaifoundation.org.

Michael Korcuska
Executive Director, Sakai Foundation
mkorcuska@sakaifoundation.org
phone: +1 510-931-6559
mobile (US): +1 510-599-2586
mobile (FR): +33 (0)6 31 11 58 97
skype: mkorcuska

2. 2009 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award Application is Now Available!

The online application form for the 2009 Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award, which was announced at the Sakai Regional Conference at Virginia Tech last month, was launched on Monday, December 1, 2008.

Instructors or other interested parties can visit www.OpenEdpractices.org to learn more about the award and access the application and evaluation rubric. The application deadline is February 27, 2009, at midnight GMT. Winners will be awarded a trip to Boston, Massachusetts, to present at the 10th Sakai Conference and receive their award during the conference. Entries will also seed a collection of innovative practices in the OpenEdpractices.org repository, a community of practice for teaching and learning with open/community-source tools supported in part by rSmart, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Marist College.

The second annual Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award will build on the energy generated at the 9th International Sakai Conference in Paris, France, where last year's first and second place winners, Dr. Aileen Y Huang-Saad from the University of Michigan and Mr. Salim Nakhjavani from University of Cape Town, South Africa, excited attendees with their examples of how Sakai enhanced the educational experience of their students. This year's award is being sponsored by the IBM Corporation (www.ibm.com) with additional support from rSmart (www.rsmart.com), both Sakai Commercial Affiliates.

Joshua Baron
Director, Academic Technology and eLearning
Marist College
Josh.Baron@marist.edu

3. Multi-Institution Surveying of Sakai Instructors and Students

Sakai Community Members,

As many of you know, here at Michigan we administer an annual survey to our faculty and students asking about their use of information technology in general, and Sakai in particular. You can view our results and instruments here:

<https://ctools.umich.edu/portal/site/!gateway/page/d73c5aac-2fc3-48a0-802b-bff1e3cd031f>.

We are very interested in expanding the scope of our survey to include a multi-institutional analysis of how instructors and students at other academic institutions use Sakai for teaching learning. We hope to generate a shared set of core survey questions that are asked at every institution, and you can add additional institution-specific questions that serve your own needs. Our goal is for all surveys to be administered in March-April 2009. To reduce software-related variability across institutions, we are recruiting specifically from Sakai-using institutions who will be running a production version of Sakai 2.5.

If your institution is interested in participating, please send Steve an email by December 15th. We will then schedule a conference call for early January to begin working on the core set of survey questions.

Thank you.

Steven Lonn
Doctoral Candidate, Learning Technologies
School of Education, University of Michigan
slonn@umich.edu

Stephanie D. Teasley, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
School of Information, University of Michigan

4. Invitation to the 2nd European Sakai Conference

Stockholm University is proud to invite the Sakai community to the 2nd European Sakai Conference, to be held in Stockholm, May 5-6, 2009.

The main focus will be on different aspects of implementation, with sessions aimed at newcomers interested in Sakai, heads of IT departments, developers and teachers.

The European Bologna process will serve as one base for discussions, localization of Sakai from a developer's perspective another. Right now we expect the conference to have two parallel tracks, looking at topics such as, an introduction to Sakai, implementation stories and a technical track for developers.

The location of the conference is Stockholm University main campus, Frescati. We'll start at lunchtime on May 5th, with a social event in the evening. We then continue the whole day of May 6th 2009.

You will find more at:

<http://bugs.sakaiproject.org/confluence/display/MGT/European+Regional+Conference+in+Stockholm+2009>

It will soon be possible to register for the conference and to submit a proposal. Importantly, mark the date (5-6 May, 2009) in your calendar now. May next year will come faster than we think!

The contact person in Stockholm will be:

Magnus Tagesson
IT educational developer at the Section for IT and media
Stockholm University
magnus.tagesson@it.su.se
+46 816 2044

5. Sakai First Semester Use Exceeds Expectation

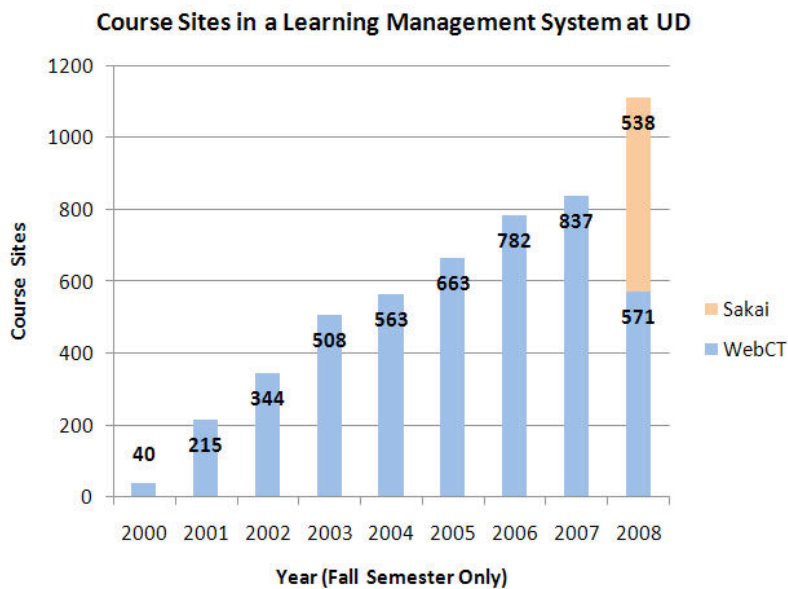
When a university announces a major change to a key system on campus, one of the questions usually heard is, "How long can we keep using the old system?"

As the University of Delaware (UD) announced that it was phasing out MyCourses, UD's version of the WebCT Learning Management System (LMS), in favor of Sakai, the question most often heard from faculty was, "When can I move to Sakai? "

Fall 2008 is the first semester UD has offered Sakai to all faculty teaching credit courses. "We had set goals of about 120 faculty using approximately 180 Sakai courses during fall 2008," said Janet de Vry, IT-User Services. "Faculty use has exploded past those targets."

She indicated that, as of October 22, 327 faculty members are teaching 538 courses with Sakai@UD. "We've seen ongoing growth in faculty use of an LMS. This fall, over 1,100

courses are being taught with an LMS, and 48% of those courses are being offered on Sakai@UD." (See chart, below.)



Allen Prettyman, Nursing, moved two classes (NURS620, Advanced Health Assessment and NURS625, Episodic Care of the Adult) from MyCourses to Sakai@UD. He said that he used many of the tools developed by IT to help him convert his classes, adding that he "found the video clips that demonstrated step-by-step how to perform a task such as copying files" particularly helpful.

James Dean, English, said he was going to wait to migrate, "But I realized that, since we are migrating anyway, I might as well take the plunge. I don't regret that decision at all." Dean moved two of his classes to Sakai@UD: British Literature I (ENGL205) and Studies in Medieval Literature: King Arthur (ENGL323).

Prettyman said that his students, enrolled in both his on-campus course and his distance learning course, have found Sakai@UD easy to use: "The clean, crisp standardized layout makes navigating in a Sakai course painless for students." He added that students adapt easily to the structure of the Resources tool and that they like being able to see an ongoing grade report at any time during the semester. "In fact, the online grading is an improvement over that in WebCT."

Dean agrees: "I particularly appreciate the full integration of all the features involved in grading. I'm pleased that I can provide students with special features using the Schedule tool, directing them in detail as to what they should read and what work they should turn in electronically." He said that his students, like Prettyman's, were thrilled that their graded work -- and their grade for the term so far -- is so readily available to them.

Overall student reaction to Sakai@UD has been very positive. "At midterm, I asked both courses' students whether they liked Sakai," Dean said. "They praised Sakai almost

unanimously. Some volunteered that Sakai is much easier to use than MyCourses [WebCT]. "

According to Carl Jacobson, acting vice-president of Information Technologies, UD is one of many universities that are moving to Sakai in response to WebCT's purchase by a competitor, Blackboard. "Blackboard announced it is phasing out support for WebCT; beginning in October 2009, Blackboard will no longer offer full support for its WebCT customers." He said that UD will provide support for WebCT through the spring 2010 semester, but plans to turn off WebCT in July 2010. "Therefore, faculty currently using MyCourses should start planning their migration to Sakai@UD as soon as they can."

According to de Vry, "The possibilities opened up to faculty and students by the wiki, blog, and other 'Web 2.0' tools in Sakai have excited students and faculty alike. Therefore, we think that faculty who move their courses to Sakai@UD during 2009 will be very pleased."

For Further Information:

Sakai@UD: <http://www.udel.edu/sakai>

UD LMS Committee Website: <http://www.udel.edu/udlms>

Richard Gordon
University of Delaware
richard@udel.edu

"I love the Wiki!"

When asked about things that have surprised him about his experience with Sakai@UD, Allen Prettyman, Nursing, responded, "I love the Wiki!"

Prettyman posted a case study on the wiki in NURS-620 (Advanced Health Assessment) and asked his students to develop a paper on the topic "Arguments For and Against Patient-Centered Interviewing in a Clinical Practice Setting."

He said that, "18 students jumped in, and all contributed to a 19-page, well-written, fully-documented paper in the course of one week. I simply provided some daily guidance and comments."

The results of this exercise in collaborative authorship exceeded his expectations: "I sent the paper to a colleague, an editor for a national nurse practitioner journal, and she was impressed enough to suggest that I prepare the paper for publication."

Prettyman says that publishing the results of this wiki assignment does pose a new issue: "I am still thinking about how to give all of the students credit for their work, should I pursue having this paper published."

Richard Gordon
University of Delaware
richard@udel.edu

6. Cyber Teachers Institute Series Schedule Now Posted

You are invited to participate in the Cyber Teachers' Institute (CTI)! In its eighth year, CTI has served as a meeting place for great teachers to learn, unlearn, and relearn how to make effective use of web technologies to support online teaching, learning, and collaboration. The engaging dialogue on teaching principles and best strategies is the highlight of CTI.

"I laughed, I cried, I had a good time and I learned something new every day," wrote veteran English professor Suzanne Floyd from West Los Angeles College in her evaluation of CTI.

CTI is offered entirely online in an asynchronous format, delivered through Sakai / Etudes. It consists of the following professional development courses:

- CTI 100: You CAN Teach Online
- CTI 101: CLASSIC Cyber Teachers' Institute
- CTI 102: ADVANCED Cyber Teachers' Institute

Registration for the first course in the series, CTI 100, is now open! For more information or to register, go to: <http://etudes.org/cti/>

The CTI experience is best expressed by past graduates of the program:

"It was great to experience the excellent modeling of our facilitators who demonstrated through example quite an assortment of stellar techniques to help us follow best practices as we embark on or continue our journey into the land of Online Instruction." -- Suzanne

"The courses challenged me to question my old habits more intensely than I have done in the past. I have experienced an exponential growth in those things I need to teach (and learn) in the future." -- Russ

"I am going on my third year of teaching so I am considered new to academia. However, I have learned more in these short weeks than my 3 years of teaching." -- Mark

Vivie Sinou
Executive Director, Etudes, Inc.
<http://etudes.org/>

7. CLE-SIS Gradebook Integration: UC Merced and rSmart Make it Happen

Not long ago the University of California, Merced encountered what seemed to be a major stumbling block in adopting Sakai -- lack of integration between the Gradebook tool and Merced's SIS. As a fast growing institution, Merced couldn't afford to take on a new CMS/LMS that couldn't push grades out to an SIS. Not surprisingly, they felt they had to consider alternatives.

The solution to their problem turned out to be easier than expected: They simply contracted with rSmart to develop the necessary capabilities. Just a few months later, they now have a fully integrated gradebook.

rSmart's solution for UC, Merced, has implications for all our clients. These implications can best be understood by seeing integration as a two-step process:

Export from the Gradebook -- rSmart developed an efficient export capability that is invoked from within the user interface of the Gradebook tool. We also incorporated this functionality into CLE 2.5.2. As a result, you can now export grades to a file with the click of a button.

Import to the SIS -- The requirements of SISs vary widely, so there is no single solution to the gradebook import. UC, Merced, uses Banner, so a large part of rSmart's work for this client was to develop an import function that transfers data from the CLE to a staging database where it can be imported into Banner.

The bottom line is this: If your institution is interested in integrating the Gradebook with your SIS, rSmart has already done the first chunk of work (export) for you. For the second chunk of work (import), you have two options. If you have the resources, you can develop import functionality in-house. If you don't have the resources or don't want to

employ them for this purpose, you can make use of rSmart's expertise. Services Director Karen Crawford and her staff are happy to help. You can reach Karen at karen.crawford@rsmart.com or contact us at www.rsmart.com/contact for more information.

8. Join the rSmart Community with the New MySakai

Sakai colleagues,

I would like to extend a special invitation to you all to attend a webinar we are giving at rSmart where we'll introduce our new MySakai service, where individual users can run real-world Sakai pilots at no cost and connect with a community of their peers.

Need help generating support for Sakai on your campus? Want to try Sakai, but don't know where to get started? Want to connect with other rSmart CLE and Sakai implementors?

rSmart is relaunching its MySakai service as a user-friendly gateway for Sakai adoption. The new MySakai combines a free, hosted, online environment where individuals can try Sakai in real-life situations, along with a new community and user-driven knowledge base built with Sakai's collaboration tools and especially geared to faculty, administrators and other non-technical users.

Take a guided tour of MySakai and join the discussion about fostering Sakai adoption and use on your campus and beyond.

Join us for a Webinar
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM PST
Thursday, December 11, 2008

Space is limited -- reserve your Webinar seat now at:
<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/514026322>

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.

System Requirements:

PC-based attendees
Required: Windows® 2000, XP Home, XP Pro, 2003 Server, Vista

Macintosh®-based attendees
Required: Mac OS® X 10.4 (Tiger®) or newer

Nate Angell
602.714.9677 work
<http://rsmart.com/>

9. rSmart's Automated Testing

Last June rSmart's Corey McGarrahan gave a presentation about the automated test scripts we were developing and the tools we were using to do it. His talk drew a terrific response from our own clients and from people in the larger Sakai community who realize how critical automated testing will be to ensuring quality in the delivered product.

In the months since then, rSmart has gone even further down the road of automated testing. Thinking that many folks might like an update, we've created a short video. It shows what we're doing, how to do it, and where you can learn more. To watch the video, go to:

http://www.rsmart.com/assets/cle25/selenium_tutorial/selenium_tutorial_controller.swf

By the way, we've donated many of the automated scripts to the Sakai community. There, the scripts are being maintained by rSmart staffers and several other members of the community. If you're an rSmart client, the community has you to thank: this is one of the important ways your rSmart support dollars contribute to the health and growth of the overall Sakai community.

Thanks!

Megan Perrone
megan.perrone@rsmart.com

10. Job Opening: Web Services Developer at University of Maryland

The University of Maryland at College Park
Office of Information Technology
Software Development Services

Position Title: Web Services Developer

Category: Permanent, 12 months, full time

Responsibilities: The University of Maryland, College Park seeks a Web Services Developer who will work within both an internal OIT group and inter-institutional Sakai working group designing and implementing the online course evaluation tool, CourseEvalUM, which is based on the Sakai-based Evaluation System project. The Web Services Developer will also work on in-house developed, JAVA-based extensions to the Sakai Evaluation Tool including the Evaluation Reporting module. The focus for this position is as a hands-on development team member working under the direction of the team lead. The Web Services Developer is responsible for: working within a development team in the implementation (coding) of the Evaluation System tool to meet Maryland requirements; for writing code according to specifications; for following a formal development methodology and working within scheduled timelines; for deliverables as required, peer code reviews, documentation, and formal testing. The Web Services Developer will work closely with the team lead in keeping to the development schedule and for proactively addressing issues.

Qualifications: To be eligible, the candidate must hold a bachelor's degree preferably in computer science or related field and have a minimum of two (2) years full-time experience as a Java developer (language and platform), including experience in object oriented principles, software design, and use of design patterns. Must have experience with at least one of each of the following technologies: ORM (hibernate, EJB, tophlink, etc), MVC frameworks (Spring, Struts, JSF, etc.), SQL database (Oracle, MySQL, etc.), and view technologies (JSP, XSL, Velocity). Must have understanding of relational databases and experience working with databases in web-based applications. Must have understanding of established software engineering standards and methodologies including some or all of the following: creation and use of Use Cases, UML modeling, naming conventions, source control facilities, documentation; unit testing. Experience working productively within a software engineering team in the design, development, and implementation of software is required. Experience with Sakai community/open source projects or other community source project is highly desirable. Experience with Integrated Development Environments and tools such as Eclipse, Maven, and JUnit and source code management systems such as Subversion or CVS is preferred. The successful candidate will possess excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, be a self-starter who is highly organized, learns quickly and has the ability to work independently and in teams.

Salary: Commensurate with qualifications. Excellent leave, medical coverage, retirement, and tuition-remission benefits.

Applications: Screening of applicants will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Please send resume and/or experience profile by email to:

oit-resume@umd.edu

or to:

Web Services Developer Search
Office of Information Technology
University of Maryland
3317 Computer and Space Sciences Bldg. (224)
College Park, MD 20742-2411

10. Recent Email Group Discussions

Here are some topics that have been discussed in the last couple of weeks in Sakai email groups. Most of these discussions can be found at these Nabble URLs:

- Sakai-dev - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Development-f18040.html> (DEV)
- Sakai Portfolio - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Portfolio-f18155.html> (PORT)
- Sakai Pedagogy - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Pedagogy-f24248.html> (PED)
- Sakai UI - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---User-Interaction-f25634.html> (UI)
- Sakai Migration - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai-Migration-Group-f27621.html> (MIG)
- Sakai Announcements - <http://www.nabble.com/Sakai---Announce-f28489.html> (ANN)

To join an email group, go to <http://www.collab.sakaiproject.org>. While you are in your workspace, click the "Membership" link in the left-hand menu and then click the "Joinable Sites" link. Click "Join" next to any of the groups.

Discussions:

- 2.6 Release Meeting Notes DEV
- alternative css files PORT
- Conceptualizing user groups UX
- determining max concurrent users DEV
- Digital Youth Project research findings released PED
- Enable same groups within different worksites USER
- image scaling PORT
- Language learning with Sakai PED
- ldap connections DEV
- Matrix Footer? PORT
- nightly2 logs UI
- No database objects created even after tomcat restart DEV
- POM inconsistencies: <license> vs. <!-- Sakai copyright statement --> DEV
- portal/xlogin? Moodle DEV
- Problems with comments form PORT

QA Help with OSP Test Scripts Needed (was: QA assistance with Selenium) PORT
SAK-12152 Moodle DEV
Sakai vs Moodle DEV, UI
Search is not working with HQSL DB Moodle DEV
Stealth mailtool and presentation tools in 2-6-x and trunk DEV
tasks at login time DEV
Test&quizzes webservice in sakai DEV
Trunk: update poms to 2.7.0-SNAPSHOT Moodle DEV
Using Sakai to support accreditation process PED, UI
UX project check in for Monday 12/1 UX
VT BOF Follow-Up: Teaching & Learning and End-User Support PED, USER

12. Events

The OPEN Forum for Higher Education Executives
December 7-9, 2008
Palm Springs, California
<http://theopenforum2008.com/index.html>

2009 JASIG Spring Conference
March 1-4, 2009
The Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Dallas, Texas
<http://www.ja-sig.org>

eLearning Africa 09
May 27- 29, 2009
Le Meridien President
Dakar, Senegal
www.elearning-africa.com.

10th Sakai Conference: Boston
July 8-10, 2009
Cambridge Hyatt
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Here are email addresses to contact if you encounter problems with
various Sakai Community systems:

Collab -- collab-admins@umich.edu
Confluence -- confluence-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org
Jira -- jira-admins@collab.sakaiproject.org