

Campus-Wide Community Source: Principles for Successful Implementation

These principles are based on the idea that each institution has some constituencies that immediately embrace open/community source and some that need some convincing. The recommendations below address each constituency and are designed to reduce resistance and enable a successful, campus-wide implementation. They are based on our experience at Portland State since our process began in 2002. Depending on the conditions at your institution, some or all of these recommendations may be useful.

Implementation Team Recommendations

- Build consensus among decision-makers and stakeholders about needs and requirements.
- Use Sakai and OSP *together* to provide an integrated platform for teaching, learning, and portfolio creation.
- Build an effective implementation team. These characteristics/skillsets are required from at least one member of the team:
 - Ability to effectively communicate technology solutions that align with organizational needs.
 - Faculty standing—as faculty are more open to the ideas of their colleagues than by those of administrative/IT staff.
 - Long-term, high-level vision of technology and its future/trends.
 - Develop an implementation timeline for pilot and campus-wide rollout.
- Establish concrete project goals with measurable outcomes and regular reporting schedule.

IT Recommendations

- Find ways in which Sakai/OSP solves existing IT problems (integration, customizability, consolidating platforms/skillsets, etc.).
- Identify open/community source advocates or champions within IT and partner with them.

Instructional Technology/Design Staff Recommendations

- Sell to Instructional Technology/Design Unit by finding the ways in which it solves existing CMS problems (customizability, funding).
- Bring Instructional Technology/Design Staff to one of the bi-annual Sakai/OSP conferences.
- Help Instructional Technology/Design Staff engage with Sakai/OSP community and resources.

Departments/Programs Recommendations

- Identify departments/programs with existing portfolio practices, portfolio-friendly cultures, etc. and pilot in those areas.
- Pilot small and use pilot successes to support production rollout.
- To prepare for campus-wide rollout, develop departmental liaisons who can sell the vision to and train their own faculty.

Tech Support Recommendations

“A poorly supported technology is actually worse than no technology at all.” -Jeffrey Young

- Provide comprehensive (24/7?) tech support to students and faculty face-to-face and via phone and email (few will actually need or use it).
- Provide documentation of steps for basic functions like getting an account, posting assignments, uploading artifacts, etc. (this was the most popular form of tech support used at Portland State).

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Faculty Recommendations

- Any transition to Sakai/OSP must be carefully planned and implemented as some faculty and staff resist change, even positive change.
- Potential piloting faculty should be interviewed about the CMS/CLE functions they find critical. If Sakai doesn't currently have that functionality or that functionality is not stable, those faculty should not participate in the pilot.
- Transitions to Sakai/OSP should have a three-step "sell" for faculty that provides them with:
 - 1) The whole Sakai/OSP vision and how it can meet teaching, learning, and assessment needs.
 - 2) A brief overview of Sakai/OSP functionality. Faculty members' observed interest in specific features should drive the subsequent tailored "sell" of specific tool use within Sakai/OSP.
 - 3) An abundance of hands-on training which is both just-in-time and available on an ongoing basis.

Administration Recommendations

- Align functionality of Sakai/OSP tools with mission and values of the institution, or offices and units.
- Integrate Sakai/OSP use into institutional assessment processes for program review, promotion and tenure, accreditation, etc.
- Work to establish procurement processes that enable open source solutions.

We have found, in general, that students are enthusiastic about Sakai/OSP. In fact, in our experience, using Sakai and OSP together is often academically transformational for students and results in them making connections between each course they have taken that enrich their educational experience at Portland State. We have, therefore, made no specific recommendations to implement successfully with students aside from their obvious tech support needs.

Recommended Reading

"The 361° Model for Transforming Teaching and Learning with Technology: Focusing Technology Initiatives on Learning While Aligning Them with the Institutional Mission Can Transform Teaching and Learning."
Educause Quarterly: The IT Practitioners Journal. Volume 28, Number 4, 2005.