

A Use Case for Participating in Sakai CLE

UNIVERSIDAD DE
MURCIA



"Switching from a homegrown environment to an open source solution is not the end of your journey, its actually the beginning of a new challenge. You could choose to sit back and wait for the evolution of Sakai but, that evolution depends on the community, and soon after you realize that we are all part of the community."

University of Murcia's Technical Staff

Introduction

This brochure describes the maturing relationship between the University of Murcia and the Sakai community. We will look at the lessons learned and describe a maturity model that aids in efficient interactions. If you are wondering why you should invest resources in the community, where you are at in the maturity model and how to improve contact then read further.

The roadmap of Sakai is driven by the efforts of its community as a whole. If you want to see new features, save on the cost of local deployments or have a Learning Management System that improves over generations then your organization needs to actively involve itself.

Spotlight on the University of Murcia

The Spanish city of Murcia is the seventh largest city with a population of around half a million. It lies in southeastern Spain. The weather is fantastic with generally mild winters and warm to hot summers. Murcia is a University town.

The University (<http://www.um.es>) has a long tradition dating back to the thirteenth century, but was actually founded in 1915. It supports around 32,000 undergraduates and 3500 graduate students. Murcia uses Sakai CLE as their Learning Management System. The University development team has become increasingly active, influential and efficient in its interplay with the Sakai community.

The beginning

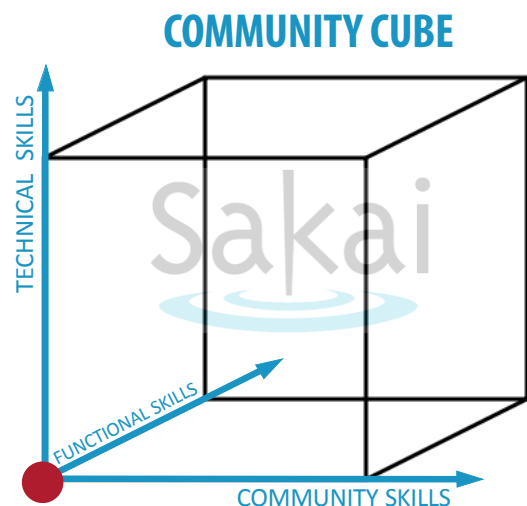
Switching from a homegrown environment to an open source solution is not the end of your journey, its actually the beginning of a new challenge. You could choose to sit back and wait for the evolution of Sakai but, that evolution depends on the community, and soon after you realize that we are all part of the community.

"At the beginning your team's focus is on getting your Sakai instance ready as soon as possible no matter what it takes."

It is important to adapt yourself to a new way of working, the team should be open minded and start thinking globally. It can be hard at the beginning but in the long term, its fundamental and pays back with many local efficiencies. We visualize this process in a graphical concept that we called "The community cube". Technical skills are needed in order to understand and modify Sakai code. Functional skills are needed to understand how Sakai works and the needs for teaching and learning. Finally, community skills are needed in order to align yourself with the community and to understand the best channels for collaboration. Through interaction with the community you can accelerate the learning process and share common requirements.

During this first stage of adoption, much of your effort will focus on connecting Sakai to your institution and to your custom deployments. For most of us, where are you located in that cube, at the beginning, does not really matter. At the beginning your teams focus is on getting your Sakai instance ready as soon as possible no matter what it takes.

"Congratulations, you have started, you will find your team at the bottom left quadrant of the community cube."



Stepping forward

During your journey, you have improved your functional and technical abilities. Your team's mentality is now at a tipping point. You will instinctively feel like the need to contribute back local improvements. The centralization of effort saves local patching and extra maintenance effort as you migrate between Sakai versions. A positive, you might have created new functionality that will be needed by other institutions. A new question emerges: Why have you joined an open source project if you are only changing lines of code as if it was your previous homegrown environment?

"Your teams mentality is now at a tipping point. You will instinctively feel the need to contribute back local improvements."

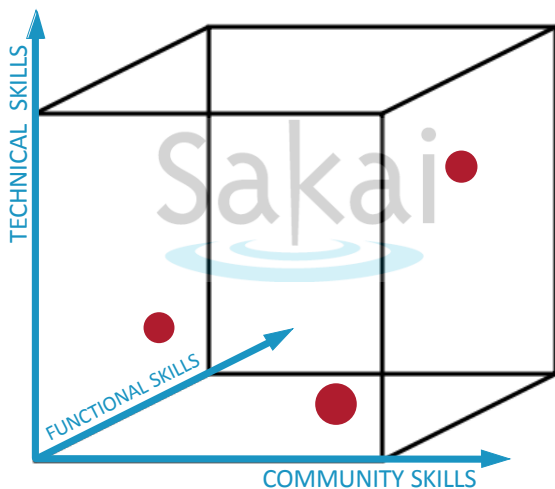
It's normal that you feel lost, it's normal if you are not sure about how you should contribute your work. We experienced this. You might not believe that your local improvements can be of any interest to others. We had valuable help from members of the community, helping us to contribute our first patch.

"Why have you joined an open source project if you are only changing lines of code as if it was your previous homegrown environment?."

Recently the Apero foundation has a new member of staff, the CLE Community Coordinator (CLECC) who facilitates your job and puts you in direct contact with the right community members. The CLECC is there to ensure and facilitate your journey through the Community Cube.

Returning to the cube, at this stage you realize that you are gaining some valuable experience in the different areas. You are now moving forward in the three directions. In our case, we were gaining community skills and we realized that we had enough technical and functional experience to move forward in the community. At this point we had all our code in msub, an Apero Foundation central repository with our local version of Sakai code. However, we didn't think that this was the proper way to contribute back our work. Can you locate yourself inside the Cube?

COMMUNITY CUBE

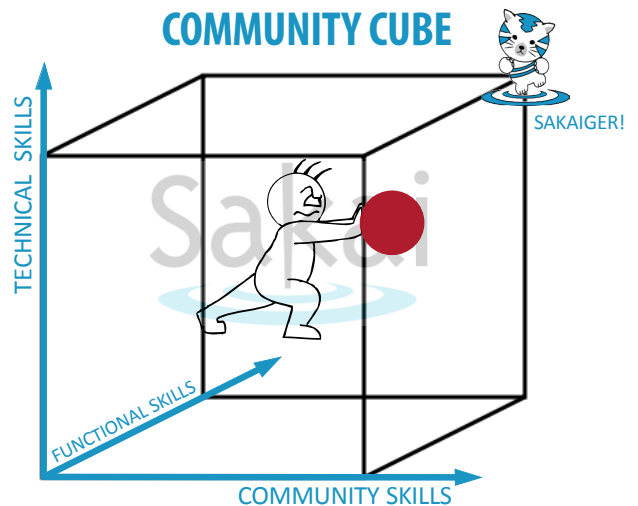


Where are we now?

At this point, we feel mature enough to analyze and share our journey, all the mistakes made along the way and also our cases of success. Do not hesitate to contact us if you want to know a bit more about our experience.

We know that we are inside the cube, moving in all three directions, far away from where we started three years ago. We hope that this experience can be valuable for others and help them to move faster and smarter within the cube.

"The most valuable element that the Sakai Community can have is an institution or individual with all three skills developed. That stage is when you become an agile Sakaiger."



A few tips on interacting with the community

Here are a few useful tips for improving your interaction with the community.

- Keep up the latest news from the community. Subscribe to the Announcements list, point your browser to planetsakai.org for aggregated news, follow the Sakaiger on Twitter. An intoxicating source of information are the email groups. You can find the full list at <http://collab.sakaiproject.org>. Production, sakai-dev, and sakai-qa are the most technical.
- Interact by asking and later answering questions on the email groups. Become engaged. Use Nabble (<http://old.nabble.com/Sakai-f18101.html>), Google, or Collab archives to search posts.
- Bug tracking: Register an account with <https://jira.sakaiproject.org>. This is our bug management software. Learn to report bugs, track issues, and search for existing issues. Learn JQL (Jira's query language). Search from Google using the "site:jira.sakaiproject.org". Use filters by date to get more current results.
- Review documentation at <https://confluence.sakaiproject.org> (note: please check with the email groups to ensure you are looking at the pages with the latest information).
- Get involved in a special interest working group: Accessibility, Security, Internationalization, QA testing, CLE Release team.
- Devote development time centrally to improve the features in Sakai. It pays back later when you migrate between versions.
- Some institutions get help with the transition to Sakai CLE by engaging with a Sakai Commercial Affiliate (SCA). <http://www.sakaiproject.org/commercial-support>

If you have any questions you are welcome to contact Neal Caidin (Sakai CLECC) at: nealcain@sakaifoundation.org



Check out our 2.7 to 2.9 upgrading roadmap. Feel free to contact us at aualvirtual@um.es if you have any questions.