Board Minutes 2011 April 19

Sakai Foundation Board of Directors Meeting

April 19, 2011

Present: Josh Baron, Nate Angell, Stephen Marquard, Ian Boston, Maggie Lynch, Ian Dolphin (ex-officio), Mary Miles (staff)

Absent: John Norman, Chuck Severance

Guests: Tamy Arthur and Jim Farmer (for financial portion of meeting); Patrick Masson for UMass Online Initiative.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Patrick Masson joined the call to discuss the UMass Online Initiative he had previously submitted.
- In an effort to overcome barriers to evaluation, adoption and participation, UMassOnline is volunteering to create, manage, and fund a web space at which functional requirements can be collected and featured in the form of "user stories" that describe what a system can do, not merely what it has done.
- UMassOnline has reached out to commercial affiliates to get quotes on their various user stories. These will be aggregated to form a project that would be of value to the larger higher education community and completely in line with the open source philosophy.
- UMassOnline would like to work with the Sakai Foundation to help raise awareness of this. The Foundation is asked to do nothing other than promote the project. Patrick would like to have further conversations on ways to operationalize this concept within the upcoming conference, and within the Sakai community. UMassOnline is taking on all of the actual costs to do this; they are simply looking for ways to ensure that experts in all of the covered areas review the content.
- Josh Baron commented that this resonates with the work done by the Teaching & Learning Group around the design lenses. He agrees that getting away from tool specific evaluations are the way to proceed.
- This would drive interoperability from a user perspective. It would be targeted at two audiences, (1) instructional designers from institutions who have already made a product choice, and (2) those campuses who are seeking to make a product choice. Once a decision is made, this would provide an aid in checking on functional requirements for each platform or a way to contribute to the development of the platform you have chosen. If there is a gap in platform x, this would be a way for developers of that platform to guide future development activities.
- UMassOnline is releasing the user stories that they have – those will be posted. UMassOnline is planning to contract services of some group to post the existing user stories. That will be contributed back to complete the portfolio of options. The next step is reaching out to other groups that offer support as a consortium to their members so that awareness and hopefully participation increases. From there, working relations will hopefully be established with other open source communities and recognize this as an endeavor that they support.
- Only asking that the Sakai Foundation acknowledge that this exists. Josh Baron responded that there are currently about 160 user stories developed for the design lenses that could easily be contributed. The harder work would be getting the community engaged in the test scripts. How might the Foundation get at the test script generation process? Perhaps a session on user stories at the upcoming conference. Follow-up with a discussion on how to get involved. Michael Feldstein suggested that a fair bit of help documentation is scattered throughout the community. Although there have been sporadic efforts to gather them, you might want to start with organizing a group to match up the help documentation that already exists with the various user stories. It could also be used to identify gaps or area where help documentation is missing or incomplete. Some easy barrier or low entry sign-up sheet could be devised so that people could sign up to complete one or more of the missing pieces. Josh added that the user documentation group is also working in some of these areas and might be engaged to work more closely with this project.
- User stories work will be completed and posted this summer. After the RFP is all done, the Foundation would be engaged to begin community development. Over the summer UMassOnline will begin to raise awareness on their own and then reach out to the Foundation for guidance as to whom this should be presented.
- Patrick was encouraged to attend and possibly present a session at the upcoming Sakai conference to discuss this topic further with the attendees. Might be useful for a couple of folks from the Board to review the format for the user stories that are being used.
- Most effective process would be for a couple of people to go away and work on this and then get back to Patrick on this. Ian volunteered. In addition, John Lewis and Michael Feldstein were asked to work with this as well.
- Following the call, Josh will forward links to existing user stories, link to OpenEd Practices, as well as links to the TWSIA winners detail stories. Patrick will follow up with an email to Ian, Michael, and John Lewis to set up a first meeting or call with an agenda of trying to identify opportunities at the Sakai conference to make people aware of this.

GENERAL BOARD BUSINESS:

- There were no new items to add to the agenda.
- March minutes were reviewed and approved.
- Financial update:
  - These reports were provided to the Board in advance of the call.
  - Plans already laid out are progressing as well as expected or better. You can see that the cash balances are doing well compared to current payables.
  - The General Fund (year-to-date) is in a net positive position.
  - Cash projection report shows that year to date collections ahead of projection due to receivables coming in earlier than expected. Expenses have been less than expected and cash deposits are slightly ahead of projected.
  - In order to have a cash neutral year, an additional $75,000 of new revenue would have to be generated, or cash being collected quicker would also accomplish this goal.
  - The issue of currency exchange was raised once again. A method of hedging again increase in exchange rates needs to be addressed at some point. Opening a foreign currency account would be a good, it's just a matter of making sure the benefit is there. Ian agreed that it is now worthwhile to move ahead with a UK currency account.

- Jim Farmer pointed out that there needs to be an increasing focus on new membership in order to have funds that can be allocated to upcoming opportunities to jump-start a project that is considered very important and needed to be done quickly.
- Jasig-Sakai Joint Working Group: Some pro bono legal advice has been obtained, but it may be necessary to expend funds for some legal advice. More communication and more engagement around plans for the joint community are being requested from the community. More input is being sought although the general consensus is that more information around membership and other concerns will be addressed. Similar documents to the value proposition are being planned. Those specifics may generate more discussion and hopefully more support. From within both communities, an area of general overlap is seen as generally positive and is generating significant discussion outside the communities.
- May Board Meeting: This meeting will be cancelled and an extended Board meeting held in June. Any necessary business will be conducted online. Ian noted that a number of policy documents will need to be approved prior to filing the necessary tax returns. Most of these are fairly straightforward and can be addressed in a different manner. Might want to create a Google document to allow for the review of these documents. Board members were asked to keep the date on their calendar in case it is needed. Nate moved that the May meeting be cancelled. The motion was seconded and there was no objection. The motion was passed.
- June Board Meeting: Logistically, Monday is probably the best day to hold this meeting. While it conflicts with pre-conference sessions, there seems to be no better time for this meeting. At that meeting, a goal will be to have some of the details of a joint organization more fully fleshed out for additional discussion. Josh will send out an email with more details of the June agenda.

With no further business before the board, the call ended at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Miles