

Summary

Initiative Overview

To put it plainly, Sakai is ready for some kick-butt design! That's not to say that there hasn't been a lot of great design already. But over time, it's become increasingly clear that coordinating design to cover such a broad and deep product is a bit of tall order – especially given the volunteer nature of the project.

Fortunately, Sakai is a bit of a unique open-source project in that many of the institutions who use it aren't willing to settle for less. Pooling their resources and prodding the Sakai foundation to solve the design challenge has led to the creation of the UX Improvement Initiative.

At the moment, I've been lucky enough to be selected to lead the initiative, and if things go well, which I am confident they will, I'll continue to push the initiative forward. In case you don't know me, I'm [Nathan Pearson](#) and pretty soon you'll be hearing a lot from me. Mostly pestering you to get your feedback, support, and general participation in making Sakai great.

Goals

There's only one goal for now:

- To significantly enhance the user's experience resulting in a better overall product.

Too general for you? Read the [FAQ](#).

Got a UX project in mind?

Sakai is your project and your community. I might be working on a list of priorities, but that list consists of your priorities. If you don't tell me what you need, I might never know. So I encourage you to [contact me](#) and discuss your situation.

Scheduling projects will likely require a bit of trial and error at first. In the end, I'll probably build some type of magic scheduling box that will input all requests and out will come a perfect list of what needs to be worked on next.

In the meanwhile, I can tell you that the more involved you are in any design effort, the more likely your issues will make the top of the list.

Thinking about getting involved?

"Do you want to sell sugar water all your life, or do you want to come with me and change the world?"

– Steve Jobs, Co-founder of Apple Inc persuading John Sculley to leave Pepsi Cola

Of course, none of you are selling sugar water. But you get the gist. This is an opportunity to make Sakai great. I have no doubt that if we work together, Sakai can easily double.. if not triple its mind share.

Here's what's needed:

Support Engineers

During the 80% portion of each design cycle, designers desperately need "open-minded" developers to help them keep the design technically appropriate. This role is an advisory role and is perfect for the person who wants to get involved, but can't commit a ton of time! Keep in mind though, this role does require a creative and constructive mindset.

Some UX projects will push the innovation envelope. So if you're the type that likes thinking outside of the box, plus if you possess the technical savvy to backup your ideas, then [contact me](#) to let me know you're interested.

Production Engineers

Once a design is ready for implementation, it needs a few "get-the-job-done" developers to make the dream a reality. If you'd like the fame and glory that goes along with bringing a design to life, plus get some say-so in improving design on the fly (during implementation), then this role is perfect for you!

This role requires a bit more commitment on your part to see it all the way through, but that's why they pay you the big bucks 🤑.

Testers, Testers, and more Testers

We need Usability Testers, and more of them! If you have the skills, setup, and desire, then I urge you to get involved! Ideal candidates will have design experience but take more interest in testing. Your help will be instrumental in teasing out problems in the design early on – before they make it into the product.

If you're up for lending a hand, [drop me a line](#).

Designers

Interaction, visual, or otherwise. If you have design credentials, and want to make your mark on the design, don't hesitate to [get in touch with me](#). We can work together to figure out how to share the load!

Ideal candidates will have a working knowledge of UCD, have a flexible schedule, and are passionate about design. Okay, maybe a flexible schedule is too much to ask for.

Researchers & Accessibility Experts

Research is a key component to the success of any design. Thankfully, many community members are already steadfastly involved with researching users, contexts, accessibility, and other product issues.

While all that knowledge is helpful, it's always best to have the watchful eye of research specialists involved in picking, prodding, and analyzing where a design is going. Use your research talents to keep us honest by updating personas and making sure we're mapping the design to the user's goals and expectations.

[Drop me a line](#) so we can discuss how you'd like to participate.

Web Development Wizards

Last but not least, we desperately need folks who can work HTML, CSS, and JavaScript magic. Ideally, you're up to date on AJAX frameworks (i.e. jQuery), familiar with nuanced presentation technologies, and well versed on standards and compliance.

I'll admit, this role is a major bottleneck for the success of this initiative! Without it, we're basically dead in the water. While some engineers and designers might have what it takes to muddle through this area, I think this role requires more. I consider this role a specialty that goes beyond broad-strokes and requires a mix of technical expertise coupled with a delicate eye for spotting subtle design details.

Can you spot something that's 1 pixel off? Do hover effects that have clumsy timing or hot spots both you? And most of all, do you know how to fix them? Then by all means, [let's talk!](#)