Board Minutes 2005 Aug 18

Sakai Board Conference call minutes of 8/18/05

Members present: Mara, Brad, Joseph, Mike, Chuck, Mary, Jeff, Jutta, Ian, Carl

Topic: Conference Updates

The registration page for the conference is scheduled to be up on September 1. The call for sessions will go out within 1.5 weeks. There will be two different forms: one to submit session proposals, descriptions, abstract; one for demonstrations.

The Program Committee met yesterday, with good input. The focus will be on 4 high level tracks then topics underneath
Technology
Education & eResearch
Management
Community Source

These will be fleshed out in the next week or so to provide structure for people to classify session proposals. This group will be meeting weekly for the next month and is still very much in the formative stages. The OSP people are interested in an OSP track. Their concern was that it was going to be buried, but happy with the direction of it being integrated.

Logo suggestions had been closed, but are being re-opened. Board members should get back to Joseph for suggestions for which is the most promising. Need logo as soon as possible.

Educause update: Sakai people will be needed to be present at the Unicon booth. Not opposed to an insert in the Sakai Educause pamphlet that lists the SCAs and the booth numbers. Are there other affiliates? Vendor space on floor is just affiliates and projects (such as Internet2). Lois and Brad will simply decide. They are designing brochure.

Atlanta for the next winter conference is the loosest as far as decisions go. If people have other suggestions, send to Mary.

Topic: Project Update:
Mike Elledge noted that there are two documents on board site. Key issue - how and if ad hoc groups will be implemented for version 2.1. Oliver is figuring out implications of groups from UI standpoint. A follow-up meeting will be either next week or the following week in Berkeley between the sectioning team and Chuck.

Oliver Heyer reported on the project management of the sectioning tool effort - an equally critical issue to groups is the overall problem of how we are going to handle site administration with the introduction of sections into Sakai. Now have a meeting set up for next Wednesday. Chuck & John Leasia to come out here, to Berkeley - come to some resolutions. Any questions for Oliver?

Mara: are you going to go over the report you sent out? Did everybody read that?

Evaluation of where we stand? Mike: milestones are up and we are hitting them. At this point nobody has raised a red flag with respect to the work going on in the framework. Crucial concerns, figuring out how to use tools within the UI with sectioning tools and admin and getting the framework done for that. At this point everyone is saying we can do it.

Chuck: time's going to be short. I would suggest that we have more solid designs in hand than we have ever had in this project and yet we are still going to have to hurry to meet the deadlines. Now that we are organized on both sides of the sections and groups equation, we have to come together on the GUI. Need in hand by 9/1 so we can move very rapidly by 10/15. If we spend too much time before we have the GUI and API stuff, it's very difficult to get it done in less than 6 weeks.

Joseph: Chuck you had said that around 9/1 you would know where we were in trouble. That still feel good?

Chuck: actually code may be started before 9/1. Only major issue is the one we will be discussing next week at Berkeley. GUI and framework design is rich enough to make absolutely sure we have made all the connections.

The approach Glen & Chuck are working on is far more capable than just the needs of the GUI. Committed to not add more than what we need - just far more generalized than what the GUI requires. Not expanding the scope of the GUI but things like adding hierarchy or fine grained authorization can't be done half way.

Oliver: - Update to Board.... Sent August 11...

Diagram included at the end of that document. Functionality added in terms of section awareness. Flow diagram. Two boxes at top that represent enterprise data; see email coming from Mike...

Reconciliation of SAS data with Sakai data. Something we are not able to tackle in this timeframe. On left-hand side - schools that have reliable data coming from outside of Sakai around courses and course structure. Either choose to deploy the sectioning tool as part of your release or not. Indiana has good section data and it also has complete data so that for each course, each section, there are TAs assigned. All is handled outside of the LMS. If you drop down to the box below, there is the section and student data is fixed and cannot be changed in the section tool. Very limited sectionality.

Sectioning tools allows for a lot of flexibility in terms of managing that. That's the scope of the sectioning tool. That feeds into the section aware tools. 3 of them for which there are wire frames, tests and quizzes, and Gradebook, announcements. This was mapped out at the Boston meeting for 2.1. There are some things missing. No ability to take the roster data you have and create other groups out of them. No way to break it up into groups so a group of students can break it up into sections. It's a complex UI issue and we decided not to tackle it.

Also missing is sub-sites. At the course hierarchy, the tool is inside the tool itself. Sub-Sites are not part of what we scoped out. This is probably one of the things Chuck was talking about. Framework will handle sub-sites, but the current way Sakai manages courses is going to be a difficult assignment just given the GUI . Imagine that we did enable the ability to have sub-sites. That would have implications for how we managed the tabs, how do I get to my sub-sites....none of that has been designed or thought through.

Brad: number one issue here is that someone is teaching two sections and I don't want to have to build my power point document twice. Is that going to make a stab or address any part of that issue. Oliver: that seems like a resource and syllabus issue. Neither one of those are going to be made section aware. Because we are not going to be dealing with sub-sites, I don't think it will directly address that. Document Chuck sent around is the flavor of what we are needing here. Berkeley is managing things differently than Indiana. If there is a course A101 and there are 4 sections, you are able to break out the individual sections. At Indiana, each section is being loaded as a separate course.

Brad: for Sakai as a whole going forward, we are going to support both.

Mike: add that we started doing an evaluation of accessibility of Sakai 2.0.1 this week. Moving ahead to be sure it's XHTML validated code. That's forward progress.

Interoperability: Jutta: sent site as a reference to see what sites people want to have access to. This is related to the task I committed to tackle back in June. Statement of which interoperability standards were being forwarded, then a statement about which ones we aim to or hope to comply to. In terms of what we do at the moment, because there is some disagreement on various pieces as several sections are open to interpretation. Put up draft statement and have people critique it.

This should be a public discussion. Go ahead and work through the different interpretations about the use of OSIDs and also the use or support of SCORM. SCORM is a huge debate. Goal was to come up with some statement, but it will be more of a discussion than a statement. Need something description as we go forward. Have created a draft from all of the Sakai documents. Draft for comment which simply states the direction we seem to want to go in terms of interoperability. Can make statements about the general direction we want to move in. Mara: outcome is a basic statement of goals, or is it a statement of requirements? Jutta: I was tasked with external interoperability. Open standards that we are hoping to address. TPP would have additional goals and vision that we are hoping to follow. External specifications and standards are a listing of the activities we participate in. What are we taking from the larger community and what have we internally decided to do with that as well.

This conversation should not be driven by specific discussions about the merits of certain specifications and standards, but rather, as a community, what are the functionality and interoperability principles that we want to adhere or comply to. We have created a wiki that gives an educator high level access to specifications and standards that are associated with various things and what principles each of those are attempting to achieve. My proposal was to put up a discussion about what are the specification or standards that we want to adhere to.

Mara: is the idea here that coming out of these discussions there will be some decisions about the set of standards that Sakai interoperates with and then that the enterprise bundle would specifically endorse.

Jutta will put some pages up on confluence. Would like to form a discussion group. Put on confluence and accepting comments. Ian will work with Jutta on this...

Brad: OSP had a functional requirements group. As we look forward, they are going to split into 2 distinct groups. One group called visioning, and the other called the requirements group with overlapping membership. If we are always mindful of date driven development, we will always face challenge as to which version of what to use. Sakai might benefit from two different groups doing that work. Requirements is getting into the details - working just one step ahead of the developers. Visioning document is more the conversation about where should we go, what should happen next, bigger things. This is just for the software.

Joseph: Articles of Incorporation
On confluence you will find a set of directions of how to get to the discussion around the bylaws and links to foundation bylaws documents itself, some past papers that are important papers, conference consensus documents, pointers to recent governance part 2 discussions. At the very top is a link to the Sakai bylaws discussion documents. Suggest that people take a look at this. Recruiting shepherds who will help with the pages and discussions that hang off of confluence and the lists that are generated. Combining Confluence and Sakai advocacy lists. Have put up pages with links that are called article xx discussion pages.

Mara: do we have a timeframe on this? What about the various topics we need to come to agreement on around governance?

Joseph: we had previously talked about polling every week or two about people's position on section 6, number 4. That gives us a mechanism to get public representation.

Who's making the final decision and how is it being made about which bylaw is being adopted?

Joseph's answer is that the final decision about this document and the initial documents and bylaws will be made by the current board. Everyone he has discussed this with agrees this is the only appropriate group capable of making these decisions.

Brad: have to act responsibly to keep discussion running out there. Some signaling of dates and processes may be helpful. May be worthwhile to make it clear that this process is moving forward and the first round of summary will happen by September 10 and the next round by September 20 (MAKING UP DATES HERE).

Ian: definitely time to put some deadlines in here.

Joseph: you should all put that up as suggestions immediately.

There will be some disagreement among the 4 core schools as some have not been advised on the issues and feel they have not been kept up to date here. We talked that all out among the 4 schools and in communications among and between different sub-sets of people. One of the things these bylaws discussion signals is that all of that is now public. Open to suggestions as to when this should be brought to closure. We've rehearsed these discussions and arguments. If we can't get through this in 4-6 weeks, we have a real problem. We'll see what happens among the members. Would like to put a September 21 deadline for this. September 1 first round of polling, then another the second week of September.

August 24 - VTC call re governance.

Approved SCA Discussion group.
Jim Layne and Chris Coppola are going to chair it. Convey the board's thanks to those who have pulled this forward.

Ian: Latin American visit?

Brad: no new information.