Sakai Paris OSP Future Enhancements Birds of a Feather Summary

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These notes are organized according to three topics discussed at this session:

- Improving the user experience by integrating OSP workflow
- Enhancing the portfolios tool for social networking
- Action items

Improving the User Experience

- We need to focus the next round of development on making user experience of OSP better by integrating tools within OSP toolset, but the problem is that there are no specific ideas on how to do it.
- Until we can look at OSP and say wow, otherwise we will not have portfolio tools adopted. People are adopting Sakai to use OSP but are having second thoughts.
- Different people, different ideas about what is wrong. Some examples are:

1. We need to make exposed wizards work.
2. Goal management is currently unsupported but is the best example of how to do OSP to date.
3. Indiana University is implementing goals with assignments and matrix cells.
4. In order to really do what we have in mind, we need core services across the OSP tool set, not just within OSP tools. This will be a huge effort with lots of design, thought, and time. We won't get the opportunity to do anything if we focus on the larger issues right now because we won't get adoptions.

- Ultimately we need to focus on core services and core activities. What should students be able to do with Sakai? A list like this is achievable even if this is not the final list:

1. Collect
2. Reflect
3. Tag
4. Associate
5. Evaluate
6. Share
7. Report

- As we build new tools, we need to build in some core services that all tools share. We need to think about human activity versus technical activity. Sakai needs to be driven by human activity, but we also need to be able to defend it technically. Each core activity should be able to blend and merge across all activities regardless of where the user is or what the user is doing. For example, reflection should be possible for any individual object and any collection of object. Unfortunately, we don't have the development resources necessary for core services yet. In addition, OSP is a built-on right now. Sakai is fragmented and is not ready for fluid interaction between tools.
- To improve the UX perspective, we need to develop our tactics. It would be helpful to have UX people involved in process. UX needs a lot of work and it needs immediate attention. OSP workflow is better now but not good enough.

Enhancing the Portfolios Tool

- We would like to enhance the functionality of the freeform portfolio to enable self presentation with creative control and artifacts for guided experience. Adding social networking functionality to OSP and Sakai would increase its breadth of capability. It is possible to tackle the portfolios tool so that any school could begin to use the functionality. All the functionality is already there to do this
- To what extent is portfolio activity discrete from other activities in Sakai? IT would be good to be able to share anything within the system through freeform or structured portfolios. Portfolios should leverage any tool that makes sense within portfolio activities, Users need to know that the result is sharable with anyone at any time. The portfolios tools should allow basic content hosting to take place such that all Sakai artifacts can be linked through portfolio structures.
- The freeform portfolio could be used for such a variety of things. It is a powerful page creation tool, a grass roots expressive piece that can be sold to any institution. The problem is how to allow individual and institutional end users to access all their data and present any of that data to anyone.
- When Sean Keesler demoed OSP to Cambridge University faculty, 9 of 15 got up and left because of their goal, which is the expression of the user experience, is not currently feasible.
- Indiana University behaving like the portfolios tool does not exist. UI redesign can solve the problem even though IU still has institutional imperatives and is already under-resourced.
- LaGuardia Community College is already working on enhancing the freeform portfolio.
- Can we do freeform portfolios as well as google pages? IU is in discussion about a possible collaboration between Google and Sakai. What implications might there be? No resources involved at this point for a possible IU-ASU- Google doc integration. We should not expect resources from Google, but rather anticipate that Google will act as a supportive enabler and potentially assist with documentation. We can look at tools that do these things well and not reinvent the wheel. For example, we can have a loose integration with Google with a single sign-on.

- The OSP environment is not as engaging as other environments like Facebook and Second Life. We want a portfolio that looks like Facebook. Core Sakai folks are talking about social networking. Can we somehow segway this into a portfolio concept - the freeform portfolio for social networking functionality?
- The freeform portfolio is what we would like to draw on. We can concentrate on tagging as a discrete piece of social networking. The generic vision of social networking can be described as:

1. I am a user
2. I have a virtual persona
3. Others can find me in a directory
4. We can collaborate

- Sakai is missing a user-centric view of all a user's content: Expressing mysefl, my view of the world, how I present myself to my colleagues, professors - with each group I present a different subset of me. This is a Facebook-like function, an application view where I present facets of myself like through activities like the following:

1. Expressing
2. Tagging
3. Blogging
4. Communicating
5. Sharing a specific view of self

- Users need to have a user-centric perspective, a virtual persona, where all content blogs are representatives of your data and that allows connections to assignments, quizzes and tests, currently loose connections in Sakai.
- Evaluation/metrics need to be a central part of the view allowing:

1. Reflection
2. Formal evaluation
3. Evidence in support of competencies
4. Right now in OSP, there is a good UI for this. It offers the strongest appeal of OSP. We need to push it a stop forward.

- The freeform portfolio needs to offer content authoring that works out of the box. The freeform portfolio is the only OSP tool that can stand alone. We can put this tool in every user's hand, where they can create content using a powerful, self-representation tool that creates links to share artifacts, reflections, and other items in order to display them selectively to different audiences. This tool could also be used to create course websites and respond to assignments.
- We need to focus on portfolio to make it more of a presentation tool with a broader focus than a portfolio. Right now students lack the ability to express themselves. We can start with the freeform portfolios to make it something more comprehensive. We need to examine the user experience in creating a portfolio and redesign the portfolios tool.
- In the process of doing this, it would be good to incorporate the following functionality:

1. Allow portfolio templates to include freeform elements/
2. When users select artifacts for portfolios, they need the ability to create an artifact at the time they select it.
3. Users need a better way of representing the drop-down lists of selections for a portfolio.
4. See Lynn Ward's write-up of portfolios for self-representation.
5. Allow end-users to transform matrices and wizards into portfolios without specific institutionally-created portfolio templates.
6. Allow end-users to meta-tag portfolio items with goals.

Action items

- Unless we engage more institutions in development, we can never can reach our vision. We need something that will bring resources into the OSP community now, if goal is better adoption of OSP. We need something compelling to larger audience.
- We can focus on a few tasks and workflows now to attract new adoptions and then later tackle the more comprehensive vision. We need to focus on making something we have more usable. We need to deliver a platform that does something and lower the bar for institutional start-up costs.
- The technology of OSP (JSP and JSF) is much different from where Sakai is going. Sakai is moving away from JSF. No one is opposed to getting rid of JSF. We are willing to re-examine OSP technology and move toward what Cambridge is using. We need to narrow in on the selling of what OSP is.
- What's the hook that motivates institutions to what to give users a portfolio? OSP need to be interpreted to larger community. Building on vision. We need to focus on why OSP changes are relevant to all. OSP support could be expanded to a much larger audience.
- Nathan Pearson's UX work in other areas of Sakai has inspired ideas to help OSP. We can focus on social networking to dovetail with the interests of others in Sakai
- We need to form a SWAT team on OSP composed of a UX expert, developers, and QA people. This team could start with enhancing portfolios tool and then move to more specific assessment workflows. Developers understand the portfolios tool better than more educationally focused workflows. We need to chop off a piece of OSP, clean it up and make it more usable.
- We could also commit to writing a white paper as a catalyst to getting others involved.
- Getting the resources for a project is a Catch-22. It is easier to justify starting the project if we know there are resources to back it up. Having a vision is useful, but it will take a good deal of effort to build a prototype.
- Nathan and developers are meeting right after the conference, so this possible project is not out of running. If we have a narrowed focus where the enhancement of the portfolios tool could dovetail with what others are talking about, we could be selected. Chris Coppola has been advocating that this be one of candidate projects.
- We need 2-6 ideas for a possible final product to be fleshed out by end of August. To develop the functional requirements, we need to start with what we have now and where we want to go. Our documentation should represent the end user perspective. Design discussion is not productive at this stage. We need to define scope, secure approval from Sakai leadership, and provide an analysis of requirement by documenting end-user (individual and institutional) activities.
- Jan Smith with provide an initial document on Sakai Confluence, send a notice to the portfolios list, and send a copy to Nathan Pearson. We need to keep it simple, with a one-page document. We need to know what it does today and what it should do

tomorrow. What did we try to get it to do? What problems does it have today? We need to identify what it does now and how it does it poorly, focusing on what we should do to enhance it.

- OSP community members will next talk about this issue on the July 14 community call.
- In the meantime, everyone should talk to five other people about relationship of OSP ideas to other Sakai projects in Sakai. We need to advocate for other people to get involved. Almost all Sakai people want to use portfolios at some point. We need to see if others are willing to contribute.
- Beth Kirschner will get in touch with Ros Orgel and Tony Camilli at LaGuardia Community College about this effort.
- We need to bring up our message, write up our proposal, work with Michael Korkuska for approval, bring in LaGuardia, talk to others about our ideas, and, attract needed resources for improvements to benefit all concerned.