

Notes to accompany Sakai and e-Business presentation

AuSakai 08

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Aiming to take the Sakai portal to outside organistaions, finding a way for them to use it.

1. Link between SME and e-Science

- e-Science is super computing, gathering data, getting data to users in a way that is meaningful
- problem: what interface to use to get to that data
- UK, looking at using portal based tech (novel interfaces) to allow humans to harness super-computing
- in diagram, Sakai is top, SME's are light years away from super computing, email is an issue!

2. Where SME's are at now

- large companies have access to computing resources they need, millions of pounds is ok
- smaller businesses, too complicated, don't have resources
- software houses don't know how to deal with SME's, every one has own requirements, own niche group
- UK, big issue:
 - 4.3 million businesses in UK are SME
 - 1997, SME sector accoutned for 40% GDP & employment
 - now its 60%
- if we can focus these technologies to SME's, we can increase productivity, may also lead to increased national economic performance
- SME can benefit from open source, but must not look like open source
- from previous experience, here's a linux distro now go find your drivers, no way, off putting because they don't have techniccal expertise
- so, we can provide a service, web-based, offload techincal part to us, the SME is now just a consumer

3. Wikinomics

- talks about economics of the data age
- the internet is evolving, sharing more than ever before
- own blog, own wiki, open source software to support, Wordpress, MediaWiki etc

4. Cloud computing

- MS recently announced, Apple & Google have been doing it for a while
- computing power elsewhere, secure
- Providers: Web Office, Central Desktop etc
- BUT, closed source, fragmented development
- also economic issue as pay in US dolalrs, exchange rate can fluctuate leading to increased cost

- potential privacy issue
- Sakai has tools that do all of this already, exploring how to do this in business sector to rival commercial companies
- not aware of anyone else doing this research
- aim=no monopoly, but to be competitive, force prices down.

5. Sakai – see slide

6. Survey

- Asked the question “What is the demand for ecollab tech amongst SME's?”
- time is money, so can this work for you and make you more productive
- see slide for results
- see ictresearch.org for results/papers

7. Second phase

- highlighted technology to SME's, asked what they felt about it when they saw it?
- 13 interviews (see slide)
- key findings
 - data security is important (especially as stored on someone else's computer)
 - [highlighted to them that often, most store their data outside their organisation anyway, if they use any sort of external mail/backup solution]
 - great that they could access documents anywhere at anytime
 - most wanted a hosted solution rather than host inhouse on own hardware
 - any ISP could run it, keep market nice and cheap
- every SME different so developed SakaiAdminX
 - web service based admin facility wrapping up all tasks into friendly interface
 - extra level of administrative people
 - in Contrib, comprehensive install docs, try it out!

8. e-Community tools

- new profile, social interactions, more info, more sharing, more searching
- sakai people, profile of all participants at a glance
- feedback is driving development of other new tools
 - new Forum (email alerts as well)
 - Agora, video conferencing
 - SakaiAdminX
 - search options important, otherwise data is locked away, especially important in profile, Forums, Blog.

9. Third phase

- Looked at, spoken with, now installing into organisations:

- Professional Footballers Association (PFA)
 - linking trainers with football coaches in the field
- LEAD
 - business course for improving leadership
 - education but expanding to be socially interactive
- CME McKinley
 - delivering training modules to hospitals on how to use specific instruments
 - assessment as well
 - also linking participants together
- users enjoy using it, increased uptake over previous systems they had used, phpBB and Moodle.

10. Future directions

- Distributed cloud based computing is here to stay
- Sakai portal has a great deal of capabilities
 - but has academic flavour
 - need to 'retune' for business applications
- Forming company
 - launching portal next year (early 2009)
 - flexible to meet SME's needs
 - developing high end community based tools
 - will remain open source

Summary

- Complete redeployment of e-learning platform into different environment

More information

- see slide for links to papers and survey results