FLUID Project Launch Meeting
April 19-20, 2007
Agenda

• Introductions
• Roles, Partners, Participants
• Communication Plan
• Collaboration Supports
• Governance
• Risk Management
Agenda

• Review of Deliverables
• Review of Technical Architecture
• Overview of Proposed Process
• Getting Started Plan
Overview of the FLUID Project
The Context for FLUID

- Poor usability and accessibility is a significant barrier for community source
- Now is a critical time to address the usability concerns of our communities
- Our goal is to incrementally improve overall user experience
Our goal is to incrementally improve the user experience of Sakai, uPortal and Kuali Student.

Holistic approach: integration of UI technology and user experience design.

Social: creating community supports/process.

Technical: UI dev tools.
Design Deliverables

- Start with heuristic analysis and usability reviews
- Establish a baseline of usability and accessibility: know where we need to improve
- Shared library of design models: personas, scenarios, etc.
- UI Design Patterns
- U-Camps
- Iterative design and testing of FLUID components
Design and Development

- The last thing community source needs is yet another presentation technology
- To be different, the technology needs to be fundamentally driven by user needs
- Agile development model: close interaction and accountability among designers and developers
What are we going to build?

• A living library of flexible UI components that can be used across applications
• A new component framework built specifically to improve usability
• Easy to wire up new components or customize properties of existing ones
• Components are more than widgets
Core Architecture

- Component framework
- Repository of shared components
- Semantics and specifications
- Integration
A bit about the technology

- Leverage existing presentation frameworks
- Based on AJAX and DHTML; gives us degree of presentation technology independence
- Advanced customization based on user preferences
- Decouples UI from application logic
- Enables easy switching of components to meet diverse user needs
FLUID in an SOA Context

• Reusable component library provides a source of consistency for developers of new services and portlets
• Recurring patterns throughout toolset
• Build FLUID into cross-cutting areas such as portal navigation
• High degree of customizability for institutions and individuals
FLUID Accessibility

• Leverage ARIA and ongoing toolkit accessibility work for Dojo, YUI, etc.
  • Ajax will be accessible, just a matter of time
• Transformation enables equivalent, accessible components designed for specific users and uses
• Accessibility from the ground up
Integration

- Early and often
- Heuristics to measure improvements
- Testing harness at first, project integration as soon as possible
- Requires regular collaboration with partner projects
- Litmus test of project usefulness
Design, Development & Testing Process
FLUID Deliverables

- Designer’s Toolkit
- Components
- Framework
UX Drives Development

- Heuristic analysis
  - Expert analysis of usability problems
  - Low cost and fairly quick
- Usability synthesis
  - Identify and communicate what we already know
- Usability testing
Component Identification

1. Top Down
   - Find general patterns of pain points across projects
2. Reusable components
3. Specific components in context of tools/portlet
   - Rationale:
     - build confidence
     - small, incremental improvements
     - technical evaluation
4. Bottom up
Component Lifecycle

1. Identify pain points
2. Identify and understand users
3. Define user needs/goals
4. Enough information to proceed?
5. Define requirements
6. Design component
7. Implement component
8. Evaluation & testing
Milestones & Short Term Goals

• Choose technology frameworks: May

• Evaluate technology in practice
  • Develop real components with candidate technology

• Create prototype image gallery components
  • Design, develop, integrate, test, iterate
  • Create accessible alternatives or equivalents

• Aim for a demo at the June conferences
  • Sakai
  • JA-SIG
Criteria for Choosing Initial Components

- Align with local needs/priorities
- Simple “known” design
- Complex technically
- Test AJAX accessibility
- Generalizable
- Addresses “pain point”
- Accessible alternatives
- Learn early!!!!!!!
Starting Point: Image Gallery

- Create new components for organizing image resources
- Support drag-and-drop and other familiar idioms
- Create exemplary accessible version
- Support JSR-168 for Sakai/uPortal
- Leverage existing design material
Eileen Otrovsky
Resourceful Adaptor

Description

• 19th Century Russian Avant Garde Art Movement Professor
• Jumped on digital band wagon a few years back.
• Overwhelmed by creating first course gallery on-line & didn’t feel directly rewarded for 25 hours of work.
• Reuses class images from semester to semester
• Department providing access to online image resources
• Has 1000 images in personal collection
• Starting to use ppt in interesting ways to present images in lecture

Goals

• Spend time on activities that support her research and writing.
• Decrease barriers between her students and the content
• Allow her students and TAs to leverage her collection
• Inspire students to consider Art History as an intellectual pursuit
• Easy access to relevant images.
• Stay Organized
• Get Published
The First Component

• Pain point: Users cannot organize their images in meaningful ways
• Pattern: Reorganize images within a collection/album
  • not between collections/albums
• Components:
  • Drag & Drop
  • Accessible alternative
The First Component - Con’t

- **Potential Scenarios:**
  - **Reorder images within an existing album**
  - Reorder the list of albums
  - Several albums of images from lectures throughout the semester. Now I want to create a new collection for student’s to use for studying for an exam
The First Component - Con’t

• Image Organization Accessibility
  • What does accessibility mean in this context?
    • Keyboard control
    • Low vision / screen reader
      • Screen magnification
      • High contrast
    • Etc.
  • Create scenarios for accessibility
  • User research
U-Camps

- Design workshops & talks
- Hands-on activities related to UX
  - heuristic reviews
  - design advice/reviews of in-progress software
  - prioritization and synthesis of pain points
- Opportunity to bring developers and UX people together
- Brainstorm: what is the perfect U-Camp?
  - triage and prevention
  - live demos and accessibility reviews
  - usability testing clips
Summary

• The FLUID Project is a reality: 
  www.fluidproject.org

• Design and development work is ramping up
• Goal: incremental, achievable improvements
• Join our community, we need your input!