

Pushing the Boundaries of Innovation Through Community Source: Sakai Project

Chuck Severance

Michigan State University

Abstract:

This session will explore the notion of Community Source using the Sakai Project as an example. Community source is a variation of open source where much of the development of the software is done by the organizations that adopt and use the software. We see community source as a natural evolution of open source as open source projects move from providing basic operating systems and infrastructure applications to developing end-user applications. One of the challenges in an end-user application is understanding and prioritizing the end-user's requirements and then addressing those requirements in a coherent fashion. There is a fine balance between central control and planning of software with the needs and goals of independent volunteer developer teams. Projects such as Sakai and Quali are experimenting with this new form of organizational structure and always learning along the way. This session will explore the issues in community source and the approaches which have been used so far. We feel that Community Source approaches has the potential to radically change how we develop software that better meets our needs by using development talent that we already have in our organizations.