



## Web Portals Constituent Group Meeting Minutes

**Session:** Wednesday, October 2, 4:55 – 6:10 p.m. (50 participants)  
**Facilitator:** **Jameson Watkins**  
Assistant Director for Internet Development  
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Like last year, the majority of people in attendance were struggling with decision processes and evaluation criteria they should use to select a portal product. It was suggested that the EDUCAUSE Web Portals Constituent Group could produce a document that built on the experience of other universities that have already gone through a selection. Jameson agreed to produce a draft and distribute it to the group as a starting place. The resulting document will be posted on the group Web site (<http://www.educause.edu/memdir/cg/portals.html>). Another suggestion was made to create a directory of portal implementers who were willing to discuss their plans with others. After the meeting Jameson spoke with Joan Couse, the EDUCAUSE staff coordinator of the constituent group program, who said they are discussing using Microsoft SharePoint Portal in a redesign of the EDUCAUSE site that may facilitate such a directory.

Of those that discussed their pilot or in-production portals several were using uPortal, and one was using Novell Portal, though they were re-evaluating other portal products.

Some interesting discussion revolved around who the driving force behind a portal on campus was. Several said it was IT telling the campus community it needed a portal. Others pointed out users are asking for web services that stretched beyond HTML-based web sites, and it was the role of IT to identify solutions like portals.

Directory services was discussed as being critical to a portal project, while others argued they struggled more with producing portal content that captured the interest of first-time users.

The question of what open source products available was asked. One person noted that open source should not imply a solution that was without cost, just a different distribution of resources. A subsequent conversation about JA-SIG's uPortal commenced. Many were concerned with the necessity of having Java expertise on their staff to implement a portal, especially an open-source portal with known problems with documentation. One person suggested those with concerns contact Denison University, who have uPortal in production with very little Java experience on staff.

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