

# Unicon

IT Consulting Services for Education,  
Specializing in Open Source

## *Choosing the Right Open Source Solution*

### Choices

Portal  
Learning Management  
Identity Management  
Email

### Cost

License Fee Free  
Optional Upgrades  
Fits Within Budget

### Control

Vendor Independence  
Liberated Data  
Access the Code

### Community

Collaboration  
Innovation



# Choose Open Source Software with Confidence

Increasing scrutiny is being focused on the declining value of proprietary software with regards to control, capability, costs, and institutional challenges. Higher education institutions are now broadly using open source software as an alternative to proprietary software. Open source technology further increases operational efficiencies by driving down the TCO for new and existing applications.

CIOs are specifically concerned about the unnecessary product features, forced upgrades, lack of application choices, software licensing price increases and skyrocketing maintenance and support costs of commercial software. Adopting open source software provides an excellent solution to address these concerns. Determining the right fit and having confidence in the solution are two of the major challenges of incorporating open source software into an institution's overall IT strategy.



open source  
initiative

## Open Source

"Open source" refers to software that is distributed with its source code so it can be modified and freely redistributed by end-user organizations and vendors to meet unique business needs. According to the nonprofit corporation Open Source Initiative (OSI), "The promise of open source is better quality, higher reliability, more flexibility, lower cost, and an end to predatory [and proprietary] vendor lock-in."

Open source provides higher education institutions the superior control, choices, and the economics required to create a best fit solution based on the institution's needs. Determining an institution's level of community involvement and the peer group associated with the community will help give the institution the confidence in choosing open source software.

## Control

Open source solutions return control of IT to the CIO and provide more options, as well as where and how to allocate cost savings.

Adopters of open source software are free to access the source code of the software they are using. They're also free to pay anyone they like to review this source code on their behalf. Since the source code is freely available to all, there's no barrier to entry, no NDAs to sign to gain access to the source code.

Some of the other benefits of having control over the solution include:

- *Flexibility to scale and modify the solution to meet changing requirements that fit institutional needs*
- *Access to high levels of innovation out of the community*
- *Optional upgrades (No forced upgrades)*
- *Institution's data is liberated*
- *Insource, outsource or community source*
- *Vendor Independence (No Vendor Lock-In)*
- *Separation of software and vendor selection*
- *Change vendor (or self-support)*

## Choices

Adopting open source solutions gives institutions a feature set equivalent to proprietary solutions. Institutions can use open source solutions "out of the box" or can tailor it to meet their specific needs. There are a wide variety of mature applications to choose from, in addition to maintenance and support options.

## Cost

Attaining lower cost remains one of the top reasons for open source software adoption. In traditional TCO, institutions must consider the financial statement of deploying the solution throughout its entire lifecycle.

Adopters of open source software are free to adopt the software to serve as many users as they like, running on as many CPUs as they like, incurring no license fees. There's no procurement of software licenses and management of license keys to bog down exploration and adoption.

Open source solutions also decrease total cost of ownership by offering managed development costs through community participation, along with significantly lower support and maintenance costs.

## Community

Selecting the right open source community can maximize the benefits of adopting open source solutions. Having a community behind the open source solution gives institutions the ability to collaborate and innovate directly with other users in the continued development of the solution. Institutions also have the freedom to use the software off the shelf and not collaborate with other adopters.

# IT Services for Open Source Solutions

## Rely on Unicon

Whether an institution is replacing costly proprietary software or wants to build or integrate new applications, Unicon offers a range of services to maximize the benefits of open source software. Unicon recommends open source technologies to deliver flexible, cost-effective systems in the areas of enterprise portals, learning management systems, identity management, calendaring, email, and collaboration.

Since 1993, Unicon has designed, developed, and managed technology solutions for higher education institutions, corporations including Fortune 100 companies, global publishers, and non-profit organizations.

Unicon has helped hundreds of higher education institutions reduce TCO and increase ROI by eliminating license costs, minimizing system downtime, reducing hardware expenditures, and lowering administration, engineering, and support costs.

## Highly Skilled Experts

Unicon is committed to hiring and retaining the most qualified and seasoned talent in the industry. The expertise and experience of Unicon's people help reduce risk and ensure success. Unicon's staff gain expertise by working with multiple educational institutions which allows them to contribute a broader understanding of open source software and its relationship to education. Institutions can engage this experienced team to help design and build new features, enhancements, and integrations.

Institutions confidently select Unicon for achieving the maximum benefit of their open source investments. Unicon provides a range of IT services for education, specializing in open source. These services include software engineering, systems integration, as well as the delivery of technology solutions and support.

### PORTAL SERVICES



- *Evaluation*
- *Implementation Planning*
- *Branding and User Experience*
- *Installation and Configuration*
- *Platform Training*
- *System Administrator Training*
- *Portlet Development Training*
- *Customization and Integration*
- *Consulting and Mentoring*
- *Cooperative Support*
- *Upgrades*
- *Hosting Services*

### IDENTITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES



- *Evaluation*
- *Implementation Planning*
- *Branding and User Experience*
- *Installation and Configuration*
- *Custom Development*
- *Cooperative Support*
- *Consulting and Mentoring*
- *CASification of uPortal, Sakai, Zimbra, and other applications*
- *Shibbolization of uPortal, Sakai, and other applications*
- *Upgrades*
- *Hosting Services*

### LEARNING MANAGEMENT SERVICES



- *Evaluation*
- *Implementation Planning*
- *Branding and User Experience*
- *Installation and Configuration*
- *Functional Training*
- *System Administrator Training*
- *Developer Training*
- *Customization and Integration*
- *Consulting and Mentoring*
- *Cooperative Support*
- *Application Management*
- *Managed Services*
- *Upgrades*
- *Hosting Services*

### EMAIL AND CALENDARING SERVICES



- *Evaluation*
- *Installation and Configuration*
- *Branding and User Experience*
- *Customization and Integration*
- *Data Migration*
- *Application Management*
- *Disaster Readiness*
- *Managed Services*
- *Upgrades*
- *Hosting Services*

# Unicon is Committed to Open Source

## Commercial Support for Open Source

Organizations can feel more at ease selecting community-driven open source technology solutions by leveraging Unicon's ability to support these solutions through a unique Cooperative Support program. The Unicon Cooperative Support program provides commercial and technical support for uPortal, Sakai, and CAS.

Subscribers gain access to a dedicated support team of experts with specific knowledge of open source projects. All support cases are handled directly by these experts right from the start, there are no support tiers to navigate to get to the person who can truly solve the problems.

When not working support cases, Unicon Cooperative Support program staff works directly on the supported platform, as directed by Cooperative Support subscribers.

This program offers Standard and Enterprise levels of support providing options to best fit the needs of each institution.

## Our Commitment to Open Source

Unicon is committed to be a leading enterprise integrator for the Sakai™ community source Collaboration and Learning Environment and the leading commercial supporter of the uPortal open source enterprise portal initiative. Unicon's unique Cooperative Support program provides support for multiple community source versions of CAS, Sakai, and uPortal.

Unicon maintains the highest level of technology expertise and community relationships with each of the following open source projects.

- **uPortal**
- **Liferay**
- **Sakai**
- **CAS**
- **Shibboleth**
- **Zimbra**


Additionally, Unicon initiated the Sakora Project, an open source integration component providing the functionality for Sakai to consume data via IMS, LIS v2.0. This allows institutions to have seamless integration between multiple Student Information Systems and Sakai.


## Community Involvement


The company actively supports open source communities through direct development and documentation, code contributions, direct participation in various committees, email discussion list interaction, and speaking engagements at conferences. Unicon also provides services such as the free Test Drive for Sakai, where institutions can evaluate Sakai without any financial investment.


Unicon is a contributing member of the IMS Global Learning Consortium, Jasig partner and authorized Solution Provider for both CAS and uPortal, a Liferay Service Partner, and a Sakai Commercial Affiliate.


## Open Source Solutions Used in Higher Education


 uPortal is an open source enterprise portal developed by higher education institutions.

 Liferay is a leading provider of open source portal and social collaboration software.

 Sakai is an online collaboration and learning environment that provides a framework and pluggable tool modules for managing, delivering, and assessing student learning.

 Central Authentication Service (CAS), is a mechanism for accomplishing centralized single sign-on, thereby tightening the security risk profile of a campus.

 Shibboleth is a standards based, open source software package for federated web single sign-on across or within organizational boundaries.

 Zimbra is a Yahoo! Company, and is the leader in open source, next generation messaging and collaboration software.

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