



Bedework Calendar Implementation Details
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A little about me:

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Project lead for calendar replacement.

Why are you here?

I want to know more about this “Bedework” thingy.

My university’s decided to go with Bedework and I want to know what implementing it is like.

I’m responsible for replacing my university’s event calendar, should I go with Bedework?

I really liked the first slide, and I’m wondering if there will be any more like that one.

Revamped university homepage in early 2008.
<http://www.uchicago.edu>

Tell stories about what's going on in all corners of the university.

Let people know what a dynamic place the university is, by keeping the content fresh.

Full time employee responsible for content of homepage.

Replacing home-grown calendar at university.

Our VP for Communications understands that a well-curated calendar is a powerful marketing tool.

Our old calendar will blow up at any time.

I want to know more
about this “Bedework”
thingy.



Become a calendar standards expert in **ONE MINUTE!**

iCalendar - The standard by which calendar data is formatted. iCalendar formatted files usually have the suffix .ics.

iCal - The name of Apple Computer, Inc's calendar client. Often used as the abbreviation of the iCalendar standard.

CALDAV - A standard protocol to allow calendaring and scheduling via extensions to the WebDAV protocol. Adding, editing, deleting, scheduling events.

From <http://www.bedework.org>:

Bedework is an open-source, enterprise calendar system designed to conform to current calendaring standards.

Made for higher education and built in Java, Bedework has a centralized server architecture allowing immediate update of public and personal calendaring information.

RPI: <http://events.rpi.edu/>

uChicago: <http://event.uchicago.edu/cal/>

It's true! I see Gary Schwartz and Mike Douglass (two of the three people of the Bedework triumvirate) attend the calconnect.org meetings.

From the <http://www.calconnect.org> site:

Calconnect is focused on the interoperable exchange of calendaring and scheduling information between dissimilar programs, platforms, and technologies. The Consortium's mission is to promote general understanding of and provide mechanisms to allow interoperable calendaring and scheduling methodologies, tools and applications to enter the mainstream of computing.

If you want an insider's view on evolving calendar standards, get your university to join calconnect.org.



My university's decided to go with Bedework and I want to know what implementing it is like.

Technically:

Implemented it on two Red Hat 5 virtual machines

Runs on tomcat and apache

With a mysql database

Make sure you have in-house expertise on tomcat, Java servlet/jsp, and mysql. For our department, sysadmin department, and our dbas, it was a learning curve.

See bedework.org for the details.

Giving university units incentives to use the calendar:

Worked with the VP of communications to make it clear to university departments and organizations why they should contribute events to the new calendar.



Once you put your event data in, you can get it back out in RSS, iCalendar format, plaintext for email, by category, or by administrative group! You won't need to re-enter your data to get it onto other calendars (e.g. homepage featured events, Arts calendar)!



Once you put your data in, your event data will be two clicks away from the homepage, since the main search interface will be linked from the homepage!

Testing the waters:

With all the learning curves, we were not interested in failing publicly. Generally we knew what we had to do, but didn't really know who needed what until we started in.

We chose a beta partner who was a discrete department, visually finicky, medium visibility, and patient.
Smart Museum of Art.

<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu>

<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar>

Tackled harder cases:

student events calendar: <http://event.uchicago.edu/students/homepage>
student feature: <http://www.uchicago.edu/students/chicago>
chicago studies calendar: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/>

None of these are departments or organizations! Yet everyone in the calendar system wants to contribute to these “audiences”. Made each audience calendar a privileged category that only certain people, the calendar administrators, could assign to an event. Used “magic” and tinkered with XSLT.

As we work on the main campus calendar (the sum of all events at <http://event.uchicago.edu/cal>):

Carrots and sticks ready: we're working on friendly and tantalizing messages to our current customers to get on board with the new calendar.

Quality assurance: we fully expect to have a part time position whose job it is to solicit events, occasionally enter events, identify departments and organizations that need to be on the calendar, deal with events that fall through other cracks, identify where we have low event density, and police for bad grammar and spelling.

Developed calendar cases:

After tackling several different calendar cases in detail, we've formalized the types of calendars available. See horrifying handout.

We'll be making the main campus calendar live next, and then contacting those on the old calendar to convert to the new one. These cases allow us to set the expectations of new departments, organizations, divisions and special-case audience calendars wishing to get a calendar on the new system.

Lessons learned:

Partner with the person who can help you spread the word (in this case, the VP of Communications). Don't treat it like an IT infrastructure project!

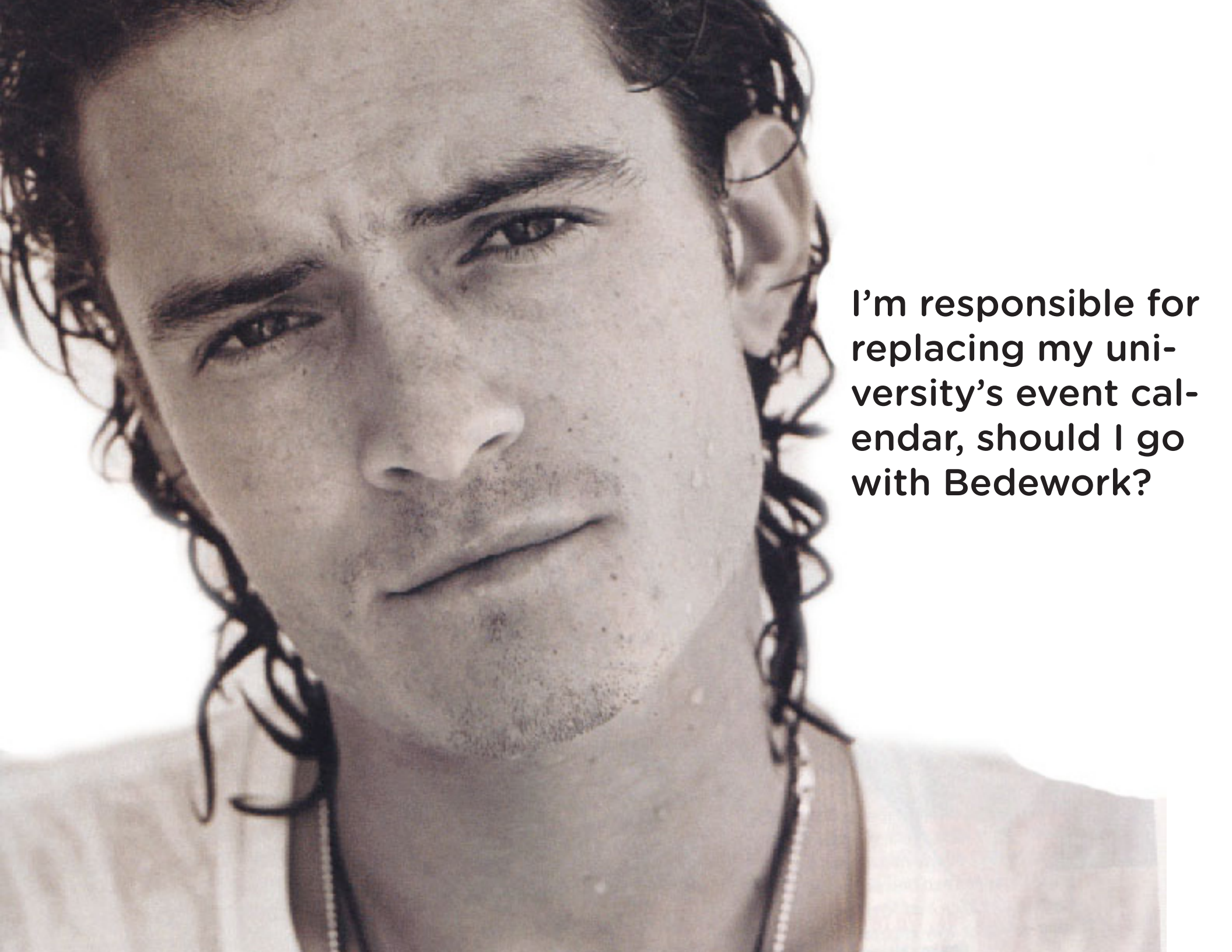
Don't start with your central university calendar presence. Do something safer first.

Bedework developers are working towards a standard for their products -- you may have to write some things (in our case, php against mysql) if they haven't been implemented in the core product. It's OK.

Lessons learned:

Be sure to have your tomcat, mysql and java resources identified. Otherwise it will take you forever.

Use an agile approach to this project. It's bigger than you think.



I'm responsible for replacing my university's event calendar, should I go with Bedework?

Probably.

You'll benefit from the steadily improving Bedework product, the contributions made by other schools, and the network of schools already on Bedework and their use cases.

But talk to Gary Schwartz to make sure.

To learn more about Bedework:
<http://www.bedework.org>
Gary Schwartz: schwag@rpi.edu

To talk to me some more:
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