Collaboration Services: Frequently Asked Questions from Faculty

Choosing Microsoft

Why did the University decide to purchase and deploy Microsoft Exchange software for University e-mail and calendaring, instead of a cloud-based system like Gmail by Google?

Microsoft Exchange was selected because it met the University requirement of retaining sensitive University data, on premise, while providing a robust feature set that is much improved over the University’s current e-mail and calendaring system. In addition, additional Microsoft products were purchased that will integrate with, or in some cases replace, existing communication systems (e.g., voice mail, Adobe Connect), resulting in enhanced productivity and overall cost savings.

The resulting system (known as Northwestern Collaboration Services) will be an integrated platform of tools that will provide a foundation for new collaborative practices, enhanced productivity, and regulatory compliance that includes e-mail, calendar, mobile access, instant messaging, web conferencing, audio conferencing, integrated voice mail, wikis, video conferencing, and document sharing components. The new system will be available to all schools and departments across the University.

How were faculty involved in the decision making process?

Over 35 faculty members were involved in product demonstrations and were able to verify that the Microsoft e-mail and calendaring solution would meet their needs. Each of the schools provided input through designated representatives, throughout the system selection and review process.

Is the University mandating that faculty go to a Microsoft e-mail solution?

No. The University is upgrading its outdated e-mail, calendaring, and voice mail system with a Microsoft solution. You should be aware that if you choose to continue to use an alternative e-mail client (e.g., Thunderbird, Apple Mail, etc.) you will experience varying levels of feature compatibility, and will not have access to some desirable modern features. We invite you to review the software comparison matrix to see which tool will work best for your needs at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html. We are working with representatives from across the institution to minimize the impact, as much as possible, and to continue to provide service options to those who want them. Please be sure to consult with your school technical support group for additional requirements or information.

Policy Questions

Will existing departmental e-mail services be retained?

Yes, if the department wishes to retain them. Several departments are using this transition as an opportunity to retire their e-mail services in favor of the new and integrated solution that is being launched to reduce redundancy, overhead, and the responsibility that comes with needing to maintain the security of University data.
Will e-mail forwarding continue to be allowed (e.g., forwarding my @northwestern.edu e-mail account to Gmail or a departmental e-mail server)?

Yes, forwarding will be allowed. That being said, you are encouraged to carefully consider whether or not this is the best option for you, given the advantages of the new integrated system and risks involved in forwarding to non-Northwestern accounts. If you plan to use the new University calendar or voice mail solutions, you will not want to forward your e-mail because these and other additional features will be unable to function. We invite you to review the software comparison matrix to see some of the differences between the options at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html.

If I choose to forward my e-mail, is there anything I need to know to stay compliant with any relevant laws (e.g., FISMA/HIPAA)?

All current University policies and laws including, but not limited to, the Federal Information Security Management Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act remain applicable and should be adhered to when University business is conducted, regardless of the system. One goal of a central e-mail system is to facilitate compliance and make it easier for faculty to be compliant. For the most up to date University policy information, go to http://policies.northwestern.edu/.

Under what conditions will the University access my e-mail account?

University e-mail administrators can access your e-mail, for instance, to help you with a technical problem. University e-mail administrators can also access your e-mail and provide information to others in response to situations such as: (a) internal University investigations when access is directed by the appropriate University authority (e.g., Provost, Office of General Counsel, Human Resources); (b) discovery in a civil or criminal proceeding; or (c) other government orders. More information about data privacy at Northwestern is available at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/policies/privacy-issues.html.

I need to share documents with my colleagues at other universities, or with Northwestern students. What options do I have?

External services continue to be available although faculty who use these services should ensure that sensitive University data is protected in a manner that is consistent with University policy (http://www.it.northwestern.edu/policies/dataencryption.html). If you have additional questions regarding the use of off-campus service providers contact NUIT Security at security@northwestern.edu.

University faculty who use the Blackboard-based Course Management System (CMS) automatically receive an @u.northwestern.edu account (also known as a Bboogle account) to facilitate the use of Google Apps for Education with students. Faculty who do not use the Blackboard-based CMS and who need to access documents shared by Northwestern students can request an @u.northwestern.edu account by contacting the NUIT Support Center at consultant@northwestern.edu or 847-491-HELP (4357). Be sure to include your NetID and primary school affiliation with the request. In 2012, the University will launch SharePoint, a document sharing solution that you may wish to explore.
How does this new collaboration system relate to the @u.northwestern.edu system used by students?

Students and faculty can share calendar or other information by specifically sharing a calendar, event, or document with one another. Both systems have features that allow the sharing of information across toolsets, if the owner of the information chooses to do so.

In addition, University faculty who use the Blackboard-based Course Management System (CMS) automatically receive an @u.northwestern.edu account (also known as a Bboogle account) to facilitate document sharing, and other collaboration within the Google Apps for Education service. Faculty who do not use the Blackboard-based CMS and who need to access documents shared by Northwestern students can request an @u.northwestern.edu account by contacting the NUIT Support Center at consultant@northwestern.edu or 847-491-HELP (4357). Be sure to include your NetID and primary school affiliation with the request.

Storage Issues

How much e-mail storage will I have? Can I keep my old e-mail?

You can store as much e-mail as you want on your computer’s hard drive and access it with your e-mail software tool of choice. In addition, the new Northwestern Collaboration Services will support 2 GB of active online and offline storage and up to 6 additional GB of archived online storage (essentially creating two sets of folders that are accessible with Outlook Web Access and Outlook 2010). We invite you to explore the software comparison matrix to determine which e-mail software program will best meet your needs at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html.

To create a permanent e-mail archive that can be transferred to another person, it is recommended that a local copy be stored and managed on a server or local computer.

Can I request additional account storage?

Yes. If your academic or research needs require additional account storage, your school technology leader will work with NUIT to ensure that you have the resources you need.

How long will e-mail remain in my inbox?

You decide how long your e-mail stays in your inbox. Unless you delete or move it, messages will remain in your University inbox indefinitely.

Supported Tools Moving Forward

Will the University e-mail service be able to provide similar service to Google’s Gmail in terms of storage space (8GB+)?

Yes. The new Collaboration Service provides 8GB of online storage space that is accessible to everyone through the Outlook Web App (collaborate.northwestern.edu). The University will continue to monitor and invest in additional storage space as it is needed.

Does the new e-mail system work equally for Macs, PCs, and Linux machines?

Yes, through the use of the Outlook Web App (OWA) tool. OWA is accessible on all major Web browsers including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. E-mail clients (e.g. Thunderbird, Apple Mail, etc.) have varying levels of feature compatibility. We invite you
to review the software comparison matrix to see which tool will work best for your needs at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html.

**Will I be able to access my mail from mobile devices (e.g., iPhone, Android, iPad)?**

Yes, mobile access to University e-mail will be available through mobile Web browsers or through the new ActiveSync and BlackBerry Enterprise server which wirelessly synchronizes mail, calendar, contacts and tasks from your server with your mobile device in a way that is much improved over what is currently offered by the University.

**Will I be able to use “non-Microsoft” technologies to access University e-mail and calendaring services?**

Yes, you can choose to access University e-mail and calendaring on Apple-mail e-mail programs as well as Android, Windows Mobile, BlackBerry, iPhone, and iPad mobile devices. Thunderbird is able to access the new University e-mail system. We invite you to review the software comparison matrix to see which tool will work best for your needs at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html.

**Calendar Issues**

**How will I migrate my calendar data from Meeting Maker to the new system?**

NUIT has worked with engineers at the McCormick School of Engineering to develop software that successfully migrated Meeting Maker events occurring on or after June 27, 2011 to the new system. These events were made available to faculty and staff at the start of business on Monday, July 11, 2011, when the Collaboration Services calendar became the University calendar of record for meeting scheduling. For more complete information about the transition, we invite you to review the Meeting Maker transition web site at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/software/microsoft/calendar.html.

**If I choose to use the new calendaring system, who will be able to see my calendar details?**

If you choose to use the new calendaring system, by default other system users will only be able to see if you are “free” or “busy” but they will not be able to see specific event details. The system, when used with the Outlook software, provides a tremendous amount of flexibility so you can personally control the visibility of your schedule. Unless you specifically share calendar details with students or others who are not using the Northwestern Collaboration System, they will not have access to any of your calendaring information. To learn more about other calendaring software options, we invite you to review the software comparison matrix to see which tool will work best for your needs at http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html.

**Will the new calendaring system allow me to easily schedule meetings with medical school affiliates?**

NUIT, NMFF, CMH, NMH, RIC and FSM are working together to provide easy access between these separate calendaring systems. More information will be made available as the project advances.
Personal and Institutional Benefits

What will I gain from this transition?

Transitioning to Northwestern Collaboration Services is more than just getting a new e-mail program or calendar. Full implementation of this system will ultimately result in an integrated suite of products that will enable you to fully collaborate with University colleagues at Northwestern and elsewhere. You can choose to fully use your calendar to coordinate schedules, more easily share and collaborate on documents and presentations, listen to voice mail messages from your e-mail inbox, leverage “real time” synchronization of smartphone devices (including iPhone, Windows Mobile, Android and BlackBerry) and much more.

How will this benefit the University?

As technology continually advances, the University must transition and upgrade its enterprise systems to keep pace with industry standard and peer institutions. The move to a more enhanced communication and collaborative environment will place Northwestern University in a position that is equal to other peers. Specifically it will:

- Provide University-wide, comprehensive collaboration solution that includes integrated e-mail, calendar, mobile access, instant messaging, web conferencing, enhanced voice mail, and document sharing components
- Increase user/team productivity facilitated by the use of a common set of tools for communication and collaboration
- Integrate document sharing and collaboration with day-to-day tools
- Provide common instant messaging solution
- Provide seamless and feature-rich smartphone access to collaboration solution
- Provide fully functional web access to updated communication tools
- Eliminate departmental costs for faculty and staff for:
  - calendaring
  - web conferencing
  - voice mail
  - Microsoft Office
  - Windows 7
- Reduce departmental costs for all future purchases of Microsoft products and support not covered in the agreement
- Keep University data secure within University data centers
- Facilitate compliance with federal and state regulations (e.g., HIPAA, FERPA)
- Facilitate compliance with court-ordered discovery

Transition Support Questions

Why do I have to be switched over to Exchange by mid-December? Who is going to help me move my e-mail?

The University is upgrading its outdated e-mail and calendaring system and plans to retire the old “behind the scenes” system in December 2011. If you are currently forwarding your
University e-mail account to another service provider (e.g., Gmail or a departmental server) and wish to continue using your current e-mail service provider, you do not need to take action.

If you currently use your @northwestern.edu e-mail account, we invite you to learn more about your options by attending an information session, which you can read more about at [http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/workplace-learning/computer-applications/index.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/workplace-learning/computer-applications/index.html). Any transition or set-up assistance that you need can be found from your local technical support specialist, the NUIT Support Center, various support locations across campus ([http://www.it.northwestern.edu/supportcenter/hours.html#collaboration](http://www.it.northwestern.edu/supportcenter/hours.html#collaboration)), or the project Web site’s ([http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/talking-points.html](http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/talking-points.html)) frequently asked questions. Please be sure to consult with your school technical support group for additional requirements or information. If you are wondering who to contact, please call the NUIT Support Center at 1-HELP.

**What will change if I have been using POP?**

While the overall e-mail experience (e.g., mail client, Web access, mobile access, folder synchronization, etc.) will not drastically change if you are using Post Office Protocol (POP), the overall collaboration experience will improve. The new system utilizes MAPI (Messaging Application Programming Interface), which means that when messages and calendar appointments are delivered to you, they will instantaneously appear where you’ve set up your account: your mail client, calendar, mobile device, Outlook Web App inbox, etc. You will be able to log in to your account, anywhere, anytime, from any device and view the most current information.

**Can I continue to use my IMAP-based client, to access my e-mail? What other features would I be missing out on if I did this?**

Yes, the new system supports IMAP set up on Thunderbird. Other supported clients and devices will provide a better overall collaboration experience. We invite you to review the software comparison matrix to see which tool will work best for your needs at [http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html](http://www.it.northwestern.edu/strategic-plan/collaboration/requirements.html). Please be sure to consult with your school technical support group for additional requirements or information.