

Undergraduate Student Email in the Cloud Investigation

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Information Systems and Technology

Background

- Currently, students are offered the choice of using their existing personal email account for university correspondence, or the university-provided email service, called mailservices.
- Student preferences and trends in higher education suggest it is time to re-evaluate maintaining an in-house email system for students. **Only about one third of students use our in-house email.** The rest forward their university email to their personal account, with Gmail and Hotmail being the most popular choices.
- A recent survey of Ontario universities found that 75 per cent have moved student emails to one of two main cloud email services: Google Apps for Education or Microsoft Office 365

Charter

- <http://ist.uwaterloo.ca/~bruce/StudentEmailnTheCloudProjectCharter.pdf>
 - *This project is an investigation into the potential use of cloud email services for undergraduate student email*
 - *The objective of this project is to investigate whether or not a cloud based email solution is right for undergraduate student use at uWaterloo...*

CTSC and UCIST

- Both the Computing Technology and Services Committee (CTSC) and University Committee on Information Systems & Technology (UCIST) committee have been consulted and support this investigation
- CTSC [May 16, 2013](#)
 - *Bruce Campbell sought CTSC input on whether there is interest in re-examining outsourced student e-mail options. Committee members unanimously agreed that an investigation should begin as soon as possible*
- UCIST May 24, 2013
 - *CTSC members have been consulted and unanimously support an investigation. UCIST members support an investigation, as well.*

Publicity

- [June 7, 2013 Daily Bulletin](#)

- *Information Systems & Technology (IST) is planning to evaluate the use of cloud email services for students. Currently, students are offered the choice of using their existing personal email account for university correspondence, or the university-provided email service, called mailservices*

- [July 10, 2013 Daily Bulletin](#)

- *During the month of June, the '[Student email in the cloud](#)' survey received 104 responses from students, faculty and staff. The survey results indicated a clear desire from students for a cloud-based email solution that allows them to retain a University of Waterloo affiliated email address*

- [February 18, 2014 Daily Bulletin](#)

- *A continuation of the investigation into cloud-supported email services had Information Systems & Technology (IST) and the Student Success Office (SSO) collaborate to host a student consultation group to receive student feedback.*

- [uWaterloo tweet June 20, 2013](#)

- [Announcement on IT Strategic Plan site](#)

Survey

- During the month of June 2013, a voluntary survey[1] was conducted which received 104 responses from students, faculty and staff. The survey indicates:
 - A clear desire from students to retain a uWaterloo affiliated email address (88% students desire a uWaterloo email address)
 - A clear preference by students of a cloud hosted solution (while maintaining a uWaterloo email address) (80% of those 88% students)
 - Students expect a richer communications/collaboration tool than we currently provide
 - Employees prefer to communicate with students using a uWaterloo email address
- [1] – While the sample size is adequate to provide 95% confidence level with 6% confidence interval, it is vulnerable to voluntary response bias which can over-represent or under-represent population segments based on level of interest in a topic or other factors.

Student Success Office

Student Consultation

- <http://www.bulletin.uwaterloo.ca/2014/feb/18tu.html>
- *The student consultation group ... revealed the majority of students use Gmail and Hotmail as their primary accounts to communicate with the university. Clean designs and user friendly interfaces were the main reasons cited for forwarding email. One of the other main complaints about the current mailservices system is the lack of responsive design for students to view email on their smartphones.*
- *Many students felt that switching to a cloud email service would be a win-win situation, providing an easier and faster system for students, and a more cost-effective solution for the university*

GSRC and USRC

- Presentation to Graduate Student Relations Committee May 22
- Presentation to Undergraduate Student Relations Committee June 19

Privacy and Security Impact Assessment (PSIA)

- *The purpose of a Privacy and Security Impact Assessment (PSIA) is to identify potential privacy and security risks of new or redesigned university business processes or services which use personal or other sensitive information and identify risk mitigation strategies.*

PSIA

- The following information would need to be disclosed by the University, to the cloud e-mail service provider:
 - uwuserids of undergraduate students
 - Full names of undergraduate students
- The cloud e-mail provider may make student names and e-mail addresses available to other users of the system in a global address catalog or equivalent.

PSIA

- PSIA has been submitted to IST Security and Secretariat September 16

Recommendation

- Upon successful conclusion of the PSIA process, IST recommends to UCIST that undergraduate student e-mail be moved to a cloud e-mail provider.
- Upon acceptance of this recommendation, and approval by other levels of University governance as needed, the next phase would be to select a cloud e-mail provider (Google Apps for Education or Microsoft Office 365) and implementation.