UNCG Outsources Student Email to Google
Pilot Program Survey Reveals “High Levels of Satisfaction”

In late January, UNCG finalized the decision to outsource student email to Google through Google’s Apps for Education program. UNCG Student Email (powered by Google) will replace e-Spartan (Lotus Notes) as the University email program offered to students. The decision to select Google is based on feedback from key client groups and is the result of an outsourcing study initiated in Fall 2006. ITS expects to move all student email accounts from Lotus Notes to Google by Fall semester 2008.

ITS completed a feasibility study in January 2007 that identified Google Apps for Education as a potential solution to improve student email services while reducing or containing costs. Last October, ITS launched an email pilot program that allowed students to opt-in to UNCG Student Email (powered by Google) as the email system of choice. A formal survey of students who participated in the pilot program revealed high levels of satisfaction with the Google email service. ITS is also investigating the possibility of outsourcing faculty and staff email.

Remote Support Available via Bomgar
ITS now offers remote support to UNCG faculty and staff who are using computers on campus. The goal of remote support is to quickly give UNCG clients the solutions they need to continue working by increasing the efficiency of communication between clients and ITS support staff. This service is delivered by the Bomgar application, which is compatible with both Windows and Mac computers.

When clients call 6-TECH, ITS staff may ask them if they would like to collaborate through Bomgar to solve the client’s request for support. If the client verbally agrees to participate in a remote support session, a window will appear on the client’s computer screen. The client will need to approve the connection from Bomgar to start the session. Once a client has granted permission, Bomgar allows ITS support staff to remotely view and manipulate applications on the client’s computer. When the session is over, the client closes Bomgar, the connection to ITS support is severed, and the Bomgar application is uninstalled from the client’s computer.

Wireless Network Upgrade is Underway
As part of the process of refreshing the wireless network equipment, the University is upgrading its wireless network by replacing Cisco equipment with Aruba equipment. After an evaluation process, ITS selected Aruba as the preferred vendor to meet UNCG’s wireless network requirements. Upgrading the campus wireless network allows ITS to design a long-term, sustainable wireless network that operates as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. The upgrade also provides for nearly ubiquitous, full campus coverage.

During the scheduled upgrade for a given building, wireless service may be interrupted occasionally as access points are being replaced. To minimize interruptions in wireless service, ITS has developed an aggressive schedule to complete the upgrade within a three month period (March through June 2008). For more details, visit http://its.uncg.edu/Projects/Wireless_Refresh/.
Accessibility & Software Purchasing
ITS has updated the Software Installation Request Form to address the issue of accessibility when departments request software to be provided on the campus network or in ITS computer labs. The form has been modified to ask requestors of software to review the software’s accessibility to persons with disabilities. To access the form, go to http://its.uncg.edu/Labs/Software/.

ITS has long partnered with the Office of Disability Services to serve the technology needs of students with disabilities at UNCG. The change to the Software Installation Request Form is part of ITS’ commitment to providing support for assistive technology. For more information about assistive technology at UNCG, including available resources, visit http://its.uncg.edu/Labs/Assistive_Tech/ or contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324).

Campus Technology Updates

Web Printing Service
There are several updates regarding the campus Web printing service. A new version of the Novell iPrint software required to use the Web printing service will soon be available for clients to install. In addition, the Web printing service is now compatible with the Microsoft Vista operating system. However, it is currently not compatible with Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5). Web printing, available through the UNCG wired and wireless networks, is also now available from off-campus (including the wired network in the residence halls). Due to the risk of interception by a third party, ITS recommends that clients not submit documents with sensitive or confidential information to campus printers from off-campus. For more details about this service, go to http://uprint.uncg.edu or contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324).

Microsoft Work at Home Program
Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007 and Office 2008 for Mac are now available to faculty and staff through the “Microsoft Work at Home” program. Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007 replaces Microsoft Office Professional 2007 as the Windows software offered through the program. Faculty and staff who use a home computer for University work may purchase a CD of the software for $5 by completing the form located at https://6-tech.uncg.edu/ra/Forms/Microsoft_Work_at_Home.pdf.

Network Refresh Effort
The network refresh is a multi-year effort to maintain the performance, reliability, and security of UNCG’s wired network. The second year of the network refresh cycle began in July 2007. As of early March 2008, the network components in the Moore Nursing building and the EUC have been updated. The Bryan and Curry buildings are scheduled to be refreshed in late March or April. The network components in the Mossman, Gray Home, and police station buildings were replaced during the first year of the refresh cycle. For more details, visit http://its.uncg.edu/Network_Refresh.

Oracle Upgrade
In early March, ITS upgraded UNCG’s Oracle database software. Oracle is the database system that underlies all of UNCG’s Banner applications, as well as applications that rely on information from Banner such as the online Campus Directory. UNCG clients who use the Financial Aid module of Banner are especially benefited by this upgrade, which is a vendor requirement for the continuance of “regulatory releases.” These regulatory releases help keep the system up-to-date in accordance with federal regulations and laws that govern the administration of federally-funded financial aid.

Banner Human Resources (HR)
UNCG clients are testing the Banner HR system in anticipation of the July 1st go-live date. Clients are reviewing their business processes and ensuring that those processes match the functionality that they have built into Banner HR. Training sessions for the campus will begin on April 1, 2008. Ninety sessions of training are scheduled through September, and many of the early classes are already fully enrolled.

Student Laptop Initiative
UNCG is now selecting the 2008-2009 laptop models offered through the Student Laptop Initiative (SLI). Details regarding laptop specifications and pricing are being finalized by ITS working in conjunction with the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee. MacBooks purchased through the SLI this year will be shipped with the Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5) operating system. For more information as it becomes available, visit http://its.uncg.edu/Laptop/.

Collaborative Hardware Procurement
ITS continues the process of selecting preferred vendors for the collaborative hardware procurement program. The program will allow campus units to obtain volume discounts on desktop and laptop computers. According to the current schedule, the opportunity to place orders through the program will be available in mid-April to early May.

Security Training
UNCG has arranged for FishNet Security, a nationally recognized security consulting group, to provide security-awareness training for faculty and staff who work with restricted data. The training will include instruction in protecting your computer, protecting confidential information, and other best practices. To register for classroom training sessions, go to https://utlc.uncg.edu/workshops/ and click on the link for Security Awareness Training. Online training will be available via Blackboard starting in early spring.