Explore Outsourcing Email

Committee Members

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1) Problem Statement – The IT Operational Oversight Committee (IT-OOC) has been charged with exploring the pros and cons of outsourcing Purdue University email services offered to faculty, staff, and students. This IT-OOC team shall provide recommendations as to whether or not Purdue University should outsource either the Exchange email service offered to faculty and staff and/or the MyMail email service offered to students. If the committee recommends that exchange server email and/or MyMail should be outsourced, then we also recommend that the appropriate group assess and recommend the best fit email vendor options for Purdue University. The next task for the committee is to review the most recent outsourcing email report conducted here at Purdue to determine what, if anything should be updated and/or amended. In addition, we will also survey our peers for more information regarding email clients and decisions to outsource or keep in-house.

2) Executive Summary – Purdue University currently maintains an Exchange server (primarily used by faculty and staff), a MyMail service (primarily used by students), and a few other email services housed in distributed IT areas. The campus email service provides the ability to forward email from campus to cloud providers. Of the third that forward email off-campus, 56% are forwarded to Google while only 7% are forwarded to Microsoft. The key objectives are to:
   a) Review the previous Outsourcing report
b) Determine what our peers are doing, some in-house discussion of preferences, some review of current reports on the web ranging from compromises to better security, and finally,
c) Recommendation a course of action for Purdue University

3) **Recommendation(s) & Action Items** –
   a) Provide a detailed recommendation for investigation and the action items necessary to carry out.
   b) Determine organizational units responsible for implementation.
   c) Determine additional stakeholder groups to provide guidance and feedback related to: security, data integrity, intellectual property concerns, and restricted data handling concerns.
   d) Provide more literature to our user community related to additional risks to outsourcing email to a 3rd party vendor.

4) **Investigation:**
   a) Survey of our peers
      i) University of Michigan has “completely” outsourced their email to GMail except for the hospital which runs their own exchange server, and the executives, which has an in-house email service. Faculty, staff, and students, have been completely outsourced.
      ii) University of Minnesota has “completely” outsourced their email to GMail. They may have exceptions, but I am not aware of them.
      iii) Michigan State University continues to provide email for all faculty, staff, and students. Nothing is outsourced.
      iv) University of Illinois continues to provide email, Exchange, centrally for all faculty, staff, and students. They only have “speed bump” quotas but practically, there is not quota for any of the groups.
      v) Penn State, Ohio State, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Iowa, have outsourced their students, but kept the faculty and staff in house.
      vi) Indiana University has changed their model of outsourcing, but to what I am not sure.
      vii) Nebraska is completely outsourced to Office 365 with two tenants; one for faculty/staff and another for students.
      viii) Rutgers maintains multiple internal email services for faculty/staff while their student email is outsourced to Google. They intend to outsource everything at some point in the future.
      ix) Northwestern’s status is currently unknown
b) Purdue Academic IT Directors discussed the option of outsourcing email and everyone preferred keeping email in house.

c) Web articles of interest
   i) http://www.redorbit.com/news/technology/1113060411/yahoo-mail-hacked-again-013114/
   iii) http://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2013/08/29/secure-google-docs-email-results-in-mailbox-compromise/

d) other information of interest
   i) Status of Indiana University outsourcing student email. Originally, IU had a relationship with both Google and Microsoft. Recently, IU has only been provisioning students with Gmail.
   ii) Migration of University Development Office (UDO) from purdue.edu to prf.org which is Office 365

e) Other relevant activities
   i) ITaP already has an active project that is evaluating some of these issues

5) Where to from here?

Some additional thoughts and perhaps a more palatable recommendation: It seems as though there are likely several things that should be pursued before making a decision. Email is outsourced regularly by many of our peers as well as large corporations, but even those that claim that they have completely outsourced email likely still run some small amount of email functionality, locally. Whether it is for a hospital or for the executives, there is still some email that is not outsourced. Another area, which uses email that does not get outsourced, is the computers themselves. Often times, the amount of email is relatively small, but the system must run. Items that need to be reviewed include but are not limited to (and we welcome suggestions from the rest of OOC):

(1) include the Purdue in-house counsel at least for advice on what needs to be reviewed

(2) discuss with faculty, staff, and students or ask for credible concerns

(3) do a cost-benefit analysis

(4) do a cost assessment

(5) do a risk analysis

(6) compare the products – what do we get from Google, Office 365, and in-house email
At this point, it is clear that there are competing concerns from savings to security. So, it is likely that we should have a/this committee continue on sharing the responsibility with the ITaP project to collect the rest of the information, use the ITaP project information, to help inform a more complete recommendation. We would suggest that this could take place over the next OOC project period.