

Small College Constituent Group Meeting Notes
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Leader: Joanne Kossuth, Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering

One major conversation took place around the topic of web-based e-mail. Some of the products and comments that were disclosed during the conversation are listed below;

EMU mail can be run on a small Unix/Linux server. Most are running popmail but IMAP clients are available;

Silky Mail from Cirrus Software stores preferences on a server so that these can be accessed from any location. Mulberry is the desktop client;

Squirrel(?) Mail which is a PHP based product;

Exchange was suggested due to its powerful scheduler and the fact that the licensing structure is part of the Campus Licensing Agreement. Virus protection is running directly on the server and Outlook web is the access client. The program provides a high degree of convenience, especially for faculty and staff; It was noted that one institution uses Exchange to handle room reservations and equipment reservations as well.

VMS Ya Mail, Groupwise, and send mail (with an integrated portal) were also used by members of the group.

It was noted that the students are going to campus having multiple e-mail addressees and are heavily using instant messaging. The general consensus was that at some point (if it has not already occurred) students will be requesting not to have college e-mail addresses and will focus on instant messaging as their communication tool of choice. One institution provides an option to students to keep the address they are using off-campus and that address is inserted into the address book. One draw back to this path is the need to communicate with others students in the same courses. Most course management systems provide an interface for LDAP or other protocol to populate e-mail lists. If students do not use institutionalized addresses the process for this population of courses will be more complex.

Most institutions represented in the room have e-mail orientation and training as part of the academic responsibilities of the students. E-mail addressed can be a single point of authorization for many campuses. Responses to the question about how often to purge e-mail ranged from 6 months to the academic year with some types of expiration rules in place. The majority of institutions provide alumni with popmail accounts and lifetime forwarding. Storage quotas ranged from 25MBs to 100MBs per students or up to 8GB for 2000 students. The group reminded each other to be aware of legal precedent especially with regard to lawsuits and discovery processes as related to the purging/saving of e-mail.

A second major discussion covered the area of converged Library/IT resources. The general consensus was that things were made easier by having the Library and IT Directors report to the same person. Deliberate planning and strategy are critical to success.

In the case of one institution, the search for a Library Director and an IT Director were going on at the same time. Faculty at this institution were strong advocates for keeping the positions separate.

In the case of another institution, it took three years for the merger to take place. The Librarians and IT staff were also considered faculty and this included all administrative computing personnel.

At other institutions, Library and IT each do their own thing have a cordial relationship and perform planning in parallel so that the approximately 30% overlap in information resources (primarily in training and literacy areas) is handled strategically. It was noted that a program on joint facilities (Library and IT) is scheduled to be held at Dartmouth College in conjunction with CNI.

Regardless of the final decision to merge or not to merge, it is important that these two areas build a good working relationship and work on a culture of understanding the new needs/reality of information resources.

A third conversation was in reference to host and network security policies. A comment was made that the more sophisticated the desktops get, the less sophisticated the users get. All institutions represented at the meeting agreed that an acceptable use policy that covered items such as virus prevention and repair responsibilities, patching responsibilities, and disconnection guidelines and costs.

At some institutions, there is one person in charge of security in terms of the concepts. However, everyone has some responsibility for security. The bottom line is that there has to be senior level sponsorship of the importance of security. In other words, security is about the necessity of access and not convenience, per se. The group had some constructive conversation around the use of NT/Server 200 versus Linux/Unix solutions.

Virtually all represented institutions were using some form of packet shaping such as Packeteer. Some institutions were separating various departments such as Science and math onto separate network segments and event T1s. The quality of service and bandwidth issues is high on everyone's list. One suggestion was to find an appropriate way to share information and approaches with regard to shaping traffic. It was stated that Stanford has a mailing list for Packeteer users and that Packeteer was sharing information on some configurations.

This conversation was followed up by one that asked about the student reactions to bandwidth control/packet shaping. A number of institutions had experienced numerous

DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) complaints. At some institutions, staff spent the time to visit all of the residence halls to talk about the issues. In this way (or others) students became involved with the policy that provided them with some ownership of the process. At other institutions, staff produced booklets on technical resources and their limitations as well as examples of violations of the various policies in order to help clear up some of the rules. At yet other institution, IT staff depend on the Student Life Resident Assistants to get the word out and act as liaisons.

A number of institutions have wireless pilots but most have not moved toward incorporating wireless LAN technology into core services due to security and standards issues.

Someone asked a question about regarding how much bandwidth is enough? OC3 was one answer ☺ Other answers ranged from 2 T1s to 4T1s to T3s. The bottom line seems to be that whatever the size of the pipe, the utilization curve will always max out.

The CGL reminded attendees to take a look at Dave Smallen's COSTS project and consider participating in the project.

The EDUCAUSE staff member and the CGL facilitated a discussion on the types of services the group wanted to have available in order for the group to keep functioning between Annual Conferences. The listserv is bursty in terms of traffic. Web pages, forums, discussion threads, and specific hosts for these were discussed. Educause is considering a total redesign of the group workspace into virtual communities. While this will provide a number of features the group has been seeking, the approach will also require regular participation from the group. If the group is not interested in this regular participation then the virtual communities will not be worth their initial investment. The group provided feedback to EDUCAUSE. EDUCAUSE will follow up with the constituent groups and at some point in the near future would like to try and pilot one of these groups in a virtual community. Volunteers anyone?