



September 2009

This entire newsletter is devoted to providing further information about our plans to convert Hamilton's e-mail and calendaring environment to Google Apps for Education. While the initial motivation for considering this move was financial, as we evaluated the potential benefits we saw them as being substantial and wide-ranging. In particular, this change will provide Hamilton with a rich set of communication tools that will more fully support Hamilton's institutional mission in a world that is increasingly interconnected.

Dave Smallen, Vice-President for Information Technology.

In this issue:

- Why Google?
- How and when will this take place?
- How was the decision made?
- What did the pilot testers say?
- How will we keep you informed?

WHY GOOGLE?

Hamilton is currently preparing to move its e-mail/calendaring environment to Google Apps for Education. Why make this change? The reasons are:

- **B**eneficial e-mail and calendaring features
- **E**fficient use of Hamilton resources, focusing on solutions in addition to e-mail and calendaring
- **T**ools that have been previously unavailable to our community
- **T**ransition will be smooth
- **E**nhanced collaborative possibilities that will facilitate work between members of the Hamilton community and colleagues elsewhere
- **R**eliable access to your e-mail and calendar worldwide.

I guess we could simply say that we feel that Google Apps is BETTER.

HOW AND WHEN WILL THIS TAKE PLACE?

This is a major initiative requiring substantial time for planning and implementation, with completion by June 30, 2010. All members of ITS will be involved in various ways in supporting the implementation process. We expect a detailed implementation plan by November 30, 2009.

In order to help guide our planning and decisions, we'll use the following guiding principles for the project:

1. Minimize interruptions
2. Minimize loss of service or features
3. Abundant Support
4. Maintain same levels of integration
5. Favor efficiency, streamline existing processes where feasible
6. Preserve as much data from the old system as possible.

Learn more about the Google Apps for Education environment and participate in a Q&A session to help us plan our transition from our current e-mail and calendar system to Google. Bring your lunch and we'll supply drinks and dessert.

Tuesday, October 6, 2009, Noon – 1:00 p.m., KJ 102 – [R.S.V.P.](#)

Thursday, October 8, 2009, Noon – 1:00 p.m., Science Aud. – [R.S.V.P.](#)

HOW WAS THE DECISION MADE?

In January 2009 a task force was formed to reduce/eliminate the expense of providing e-mail to the College (\$30K+/year); lower Hamilton's carbon footprint (by eliminating servers); and provide equivalent/ enhanced e-mail/ calendaring capability. To that end,

- ITS did an in-depth investigation of the functionality of Google e-mail and calendaring, technical integration, Google support and legal issues.
- In March 2009, over 100 people volunteered to test out the Google system for four months. Information sessions were held in March and April to explain the differences between our current environment and that of Google
- In May and June face-to-face feedback sessions were held, a web survey conducted and a final request for comment was sent to all the volunteers. As a result of the positive feedback the VP for IT recommended to the senior staff that we transition to Google Apps.

WHAT DID PILOT TESTERS SAY?

People who tested the system reported that Google's capabilities substantially exceeded those of our current system. Some representative comments were:

- I like Gmail and intend to use it instead of Communications Express regardless of what Hamilton decides.... I think it makes sense to save resources when there are good, less expensive alternatives available. You can't please everyone, but life involves tradeoffs and I think the move to Gmail makes sense.
- I've been very impressed with the functionality and overall quality of Google mail and calendar and am enthusiastic about their adoption here at Hamilton!
- I definitely say two thumbs up for using Google mail. I find that most of the students I come in contact with use Google anyway as their primary e-mail system. I use Gmail for my personal e-mail system and love it. Especially with saving money for the college I think there are many, many reasons that the switch would be positive.
- I've been using Gmail exclusively since the experiment started and I have had no problems
- I find Gmail a much better client than the current options (Sun and Thunderbird), and although it took some getting used to the pros far out weigh the cons.
- As with all new systems, there is a bit of a learning curve. Fairly short for Gmail. For the most part, I liked using Gmail once I got used to it. There are a couple of things I like better in Communications Express but they are not deal breakers. I would support the move to Gmail.

- I, too, am very impressed with the Google mail and calendar system. The calendar alone will be a huge improvement to my day...I'm keeping my fingers crossed!!!

HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU?

We want this to be an easy transition for you, our students and colleagues. So, please, help us help you by providing us with your preferred means of communication by completing this short [survey](#). Along with your preferred means of contact, the ITS newsletter and Web site will continue to provide you with monthly updates. We will strive to ensure timely, clear and informative communication with the campus community.

Transitioning to Google will be complex – for ITS. But our goal is to make this transition easy for you with support, communication and information.

Questions

If at any time you have questions about the transition to Google Apps for Education, please don't hesitate to contact the ITS Help Desk at x4181 or helpdesk@hamilton.edu.