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Google switch delayed for students, staff

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The UA is going Google; it's just having some trouble loading the page.

Students' e-mail was on schedule to be fully migrated to Google by Aug. 1 but has been delayed due to contract signings, according to Michele Norin, the UA's chief information officer for University Information Technology Services.

UA officials signed a contract with Google two weeks ago, which is now being reviewed by Google's lawyers. It should be signed within a few days, said Tom Rees, associate director of UITS frontline services and student computing.

The contract is expected to go through in its current form because of its close similarity to a contract already in place at Northern Arizona University, Rees said.

He added, "It just takes a long time to get things done."

The *Daily Wildcat* reported in June that the UA was in the negotiation process for a \$150,000 contract with Google, which would be the least expensive option for an e-mail server over alternatives such as Microsoft Exchange.

The delay comes not from reworking the contract or running into problems, but rather from the administration misjudging how long the negotiation process would take, said Derek Masseth, senior director for infrastructure services at UITS.

Once both parties sign the contract, it's uncertain how the student migration will take place.

It is anticipated that there will be a significant number of students who want to migrate immediately, so the UA is focusing on a voluntary rather than a mandatory transition, Rees said.

"There will be a sign-up with first-come, first-serve," Rees said. "Doing it the voluntary way gives the students much more control as well as makes it easier on us."

The migration system, which will facilitate the student sign-up process, is expected to be up and running within the next few months. The ultimate goal is to have full student migration completed by the end of winter break, Masseth added.

E-mail addresses and logins will remain unchanged; only the website will be affected by the transition.

Members of the UA faculty and staff attended Google Road Shows held on campus to examine the Google system and raise questions and concerns. A list of major concerns and questions was turned in by a committee of faculty and staff to Norin June 30. Since then, no decisions have been made.

Some of the major issues that were brought up, according to the report released by the CIO's office, dealt with compliance with federal regulations for Internet systems. The university is required to abide by such regulations, which include the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, International Traffic in Arms Regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Masseth said.

"We need to make sure that we know what the federal requirements are and then compare that to the environment we would have with Google," Norin added. "Can a Google environment sustain our requirements? That's what we're looking at."



Tim Galaz/ Arizona Daily Wildcat

Another major issue raised according to the report was data security for individuals such as e-mails and documents.

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