

# Public/Private Partnership

Boise State University

## Google Applications for Education

### Executive Summary

Boise State University manages in excess of 50,000 email accounts. All staff, faculty and students receive university email accounts although the majority of the accounts managed by the university are student accounts. Students receive access to personal email accounts and capabilities almost before any other university services are available to them and retain these accounts beyond their departure from the university for a limited time. It is the official media by which the university communicates. It is then no surprise that all have expectations for this mail system's functionality, availability, and security. In addition there are expectations for regular support and training. It is by far the university's system of greatest demand, highest expectations and universal visibility. It is also one of the greatest resource demanders. An increase in dedicated staff, equipment, software, licenses and vendor support is necessary to meet email users growing expectations for additional functionality, increased storage space and more readily available support.

Google, Inc. has within the past two years entered selectively into the education market space with requests for partners willing and able to assist in the development and deployment of enterprise based products. Boise State University has partnered with Google, Inc. to provide a suite of collaborative tools to the university community. These include email (G-Mail), personal and enterprise calendaring, (Google Calendar), text messaging and international voice calling (Google Talk); an ability to create, share and collaborate on documents, spreadsheets and presentations (Google Docs and Spreadsheets); and, the ability to create and publish individual web pages (Google Page Creator). This entire suite of collaborative tools is provided to the university at no charge within the conditions of the partnership agreement.

Cost saving associated with equipment, staff, licensing and support are being realized immediately. These resources are then reprioritized. Students and self selected faculty and staff experience an immediate increase in capabilities, access and support. Limited university resources are being leveraged and the demand for increased and more up-to-date services is being met as a result of this partnership.

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### NARRATIVE

#### a. Description and Time in Operation

Boise State University manages in excess of 50,000 email accounts. All staff, faculty and students receive university email accounts although the majority of the accounts managed by the university are student accounts. Students receive access to personal email accounts and capabilities almost before any other university services are available to them and retain these accounts beyond their departure from the university for a limited time. It is the official media by which the university communicates. It is then no surprise as to the expectations all have for this mail system's functionality, availability, and security.

University students arrive on campus having been a member of the online generation their entire lives. Most own or have personal to laptop or other computers, regularly use wireless mobile devices and own and manage multiple technology accounts including email, text messaging, music and video downloading, and a multitude of social computing and networking related spaces. In reviewing student email accounts, soliciting user feedback and speaking with students on campus it is estimated that a majority of students have at least one email account besides that provided by the university. It's also estimated that approximately forty percent of all students forward their university email to often free alternative off campus email accounts. The majority of students forwarding university email appear to be using Google's free G-mail for individuals.

Students have what can only be described as a reasonable expectation of support for today's technologically connected student. It must be available at any time from any where. The university provides support but only during normal business hours. University email is by far the university's system of greatest demand, highest expectations and universal visibility. It is also one of the greatest resource demanders. Dedicated staff, equipment, software, licenses and vendor support in addition to an ever increasing need for additional functionality and storage space are necessary to meet the growing expectations of university email users.

The university has relied upon its Groupwise Novel mail system for more than a decade shunning the significant expense of updating to alternative enterprise mail systems. Novel mail products although at present adequately capable of meeting the needs of the university and students is beginning to fall behind expected functionalities when compared to competitive products and as a result has continued to loose market share. Experienced Novel engineering staff is difficult to come by and express a regular discomfort with the potential lack of continued career path.

In August 2007, the Executive Director for Information Technology at Boise State University having had conversations with Google, Inc. proposed to the university a partnership between Boise State University and Google, Inc. for the provision of a series of educational related services to be known as Google Applications for Education. After brief executive presentations, conversations at length and a broad campus dialogue engaging university executives, deans, faculty senate, student government and IT engineering staff the decision to proceed was made. Contracts were drafted and reviewed by legal council, and selected engineering staff members were flown to Google, Inc. headquarters in Mountain View California for product review and training. Confidentiality Agreements were signed and by September 2007 Boise State University and Google, Inc. were set

to begin the deployment of Google Applications for Education. These include email (G-Mail), personal and enterprise calendaring, (Google Calendar), text messaging and international voice calling (Google Talk); an ability to create, share and collaborate on document, spreadsheets and presentations (Google Docs and Spreadsheets); and, the ability to create and publish individual web pages (Google Page Creator). This entire suite of collaborative tools and functionality is provided to the university at no charge within the conditions of the collaborative agreement.

Google products have as their origins web based functionality designed for and marketed to individual users. Their introduction into the enterprise market space is a paradigm shift of sorts for the company and provides significant opportunity but challenges as well. Google selected the higher education market place with purposeful forethought. Google is recognized as an aggregator of information and openly promotes its mission “to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful”. It doesn’t take much imagination to see the correlation between this mission and that of education. The challenges faced by Google products in the enterprise market space are foreign to the concept of “individualism” and are best illustrated by concepts of shared access and collaborative tools with user defined parameters for access and security. It is in these areas the University and Google will attempt to collaboratively find scaleable solutions.

Approximately fifty early adopter accounts for Google Applications for Education were initially created in the late summer of 2007. Users included technical staff, administrators and volunteers. By September 2007, two specifically identified university classes were engaged in use of the full suite of collaborative tools available in the Google Applications for Education. This was followed by the opportunity for all university students to opt in to the use of Google Apps. By late April 2008 the number of users was approaching eight thousand. Students will continue to have the ability to opt in to this set of tools until September 2008 at which time all legacy student email accounts will be migrated to Google Applications for Education. This provides each student not only an official university email account (BroncoMail) powered by Google and branded as Boise State University but access to the full suite of collaborative applications.

As the assessment and collaborative relationship between Google and the University matures it is anticipated that all faculty and staff will also be given the opportunity to opt in to the use of Google Apps for Education. This will, however, be depend upon the ability to resolve the issues grounded in the product’s historical “individualism”. Shared access to calendars and email with read and write privileges are of high priority for enterprise applications. These will be most likely followed by improving the “busy calendar search” and “email delivery confirmation” functions.

#### **b. Significance to the Improvement in Operation of Government**

The implementation of Google Applications for Education provides for a significant reduction in dedicated staff and a refocusing of scarce university resources. It provides for a reduction in dedicated equipment and a cost savings in licensing fees. Fewer calls to the university helpdesk by students and faculty result in better services to those who do call.

1. **Reprioritizing Staff and Projects**  
Transferring operational responsibility for ten’s of thousands of student email accounts to non-university resources at no cost provides an opportunity to restructure university project priorities and resources, re-address university centric issues without requesting additional resources and reduce demand for unnecessary increases in staff and funding.
2. **Reduction in Equipment and Maintenance**  
Moving services and support to off campus hosted systems reduces equipment demand, equipment replacement requirements, maintenance and staff support requirements.

3. Reduction in licensing costs  
The long term (24 – 36 month) migration of campus email to Google Applications for Education will ultimately remove the licensing cost burden associated with the current GroupWise Novel application and the looming threat of licensing cost increases as a result of continued university growth.
4. Unlimited Growth at Limited Costs  
Boise State University continues to grow. The systems, licensing and staff necessary to support this growth must also grow. The cost for system's growth is often troublesome if not regularly prohibitive. The ability to scale the functionality provided by the partnership with Google, Inc. assures that for the contract period no additional fees associated with equipment, licensing or maintenance will restrict the university's growth and will permit the limited resources once dedicated to support systems and systems growth to be refocused.

**c. Benefits Realized by Service Recipients**

1. High Availability & Convenience  
Students have access to their Google accounts online from anywhere at any time. University regularly scheduled systems maintenance periods no longer impact access to student email accounts. Access to helpdesk support and online documentation is no longer bound by university business hours or resource limitations. Students, faculty and staff using Google Applications for Education have access from anywhere at anytime. In addition many faculty are now requiring students to record, post and manage class assignments in the collaborative tool sets provided in Google Applications for Education. No longer are assignments lost, left on the computer at home or inaccessible for any reason. They are securely stored and readily accessible by the student at anytime from anywhere.
2. Increased functionality  
Past BroncoMail functionality was limited to simply email. Google Applications for Education provides not only student email (BroncoMail, Powered by Google) but a full suite of collaborative tools and sufficient storage space for any and all emails, class materials and personal web pages. The ability to text and route voice messages world wide is drawing increased curiosity. Its academic application is just beginning to create ideas.
3. Improved customer service and support  
Students, faculty and staff using Google Applications for Education have been able to take advantage of not only ubiquitous access and increased functionality but to customer service and support around the clock.

**d. Cost-benefit Analysis, Short-term/Long-term Payback**

Short term cost savings are the result of reductions in equipment, licensing, staff and ancillary software associated with providing BroncoMail, Powered by Google to students. Additional savings will be had as a result of moving faculty and staff to the Google Mail and Google Calendaring products. The resulting demise of GroupWise Novel products provides a significant savings. See Cost Comparison Table below.

**Google Applications for Education  
Cost Comparisons for GW Novel**

<b>Groupwise</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>(6 - 12 mo's)</b>	<b>(12 - 24 mo's)</b>	<b>(24 - 36 mo's)</b>
Annual Costs				
servers	18,300	18,300	18,300	0
GW Acad license	81,000	81,000	81,000	0
support staff	109,200	72,800	36,400	0
Gwava utility	4,000	4,000	4,000	0
anti spam	12,900	12,900	12,900	0
SSL Cert	100	100	100	0
	225,500	189,100	152,700	0
<b>BroncoMail (via Groupwise)</b>				
Annual Costs				
server	3,000	0	0	0
Netmail license	0	0	0	0
support staff	16,800	0	0	0
SSL Cert	100	0	0	0
anti spam	12,900	0	0	0
	32,800	0	0	0
<b>BroncoMail (powered by Google)</b>				
One Time				
server	12,000	0	0	0
Gwava utility	400	0	0	0
Delphi	1,300	0	0	0
Advansys Archive	6,000	0	0	0
calendar exporter	1,000	0	0	0
contacts exporter	1,000	0	0	0
	21,700	0	0	0
Annual Costs				
server	0	3,000	3,000	3,000
virtual server	0	1,200	1,200	1,200
licensing	0	0	0	0
support staff	0	37,800	37,800	37,800
load balancer	0	1,000	1,000	1,000
anti spam	0	12,900	12,900	12,900
	0	52,900	52,900	52,900
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$280,000</b>	<b>\$242,000</b>	<b>\$205,600</b>	<b>\$52,900</b>