

## **E-Mail System Migration**

One of DoIT's most important goals this year is to migrate from our current email system to new one. In November, DoIT conducted a review of the two major platforms out there – IBM Domino and Microsoft Exchange. We invited representatives for both systems in for presentations to the Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) and we engaged TAC in what features are important from their perspective. These presentations were well received by the committee.

While there are differences in some features and underlying platform of each product, the core functionalities of these products are more or less the same. However, after researching the market share, future strategies of each vendor, integration with John Jay's needs and comparing the cost of ownership, Microsoft Exchange emerged as the favored system.

Based upon our review and careful consideration, it was determined that Microsoft Exchange be implemented as our enterprise messaging and collaboration system. The following summarizes the added values with Exchange compared to our current system (iPlanet).

The current e-Mail system (iPlanet) lacks functionalities that most users want and expect. Exchange will enable us to fulfill those needs; e.g. collaboration (groupware, scheduling, and instant messaging) and calendaring capabilities that are missing in iPlanet. Exchange provides robust solution for these services;

1. The current directory service (Sun One) is used only for Web based services. Exchange uses Active Directory services which are a Microsoft protocol that is currently used at John Jay.
2. iPlanet cannot integrate with Blackberry Enterprise Server for wireless synchronization. Exchange provides wireless integration with Blackberries.
3. There is frequent downtime with the current system. The new Exchange environment will be built with redundancy and failover capabilities.
4. It is difficult to find trained personnel in iPlanet. It is much easier to find trained Exchange professionals.

Advantages of purchasing Microsoft Exchange and major differences between Exchange and Domino:

1. CUNY's existing Microsoft Campus Agreement includes Outlook (the email client) and other value added software in the cost. IBM does not have any such agreement with CUNY.
2. Presence of Microsoft environment and skill-set at John Jay. There is no presence of IBM suite of products on campus.
3. Strong and progressive market share of Microsoft Exchange (Outlook) as compared to IBM Domino (Lotus Notes). Microsoft holds more than 50% market share worldwide and it is growing rapidly.
4. Seamless integration with Active Directory (Microsoft Protocol) which is John Jay's current Directory Services (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol). Integration of Domino with Active Directory is cumbersome and prone to incorrect configuration.
5. Considerable cost advantage as compared to IBM Domino and Lotus Notes. On the basis of pricing provided by both Microsoft and IBM, after considering hardware cost and implementation cost, there is a substantial cost advantage in implementing Exchange.

There are seven colleges in CUNY who use Exchange. Four colleges use Domino and the rest of the colleges use other systems than Exchange and Domino. CUNY-CIS uses Domino. CUNY – CIS' position is neutral at this time. However, previously at some point they were recommending colleges to implement Domino. The e-mail component (Domino licensing) was included in the CUNY Enterprise Technology Initiative (ETI) Program. However, the majority of voting members on the CUNY IT Steering Committee voted against it and the e-mail component was taken out from the initiatives list.

Additional details that reveal the basis for this decision and the features with Exchange:

### **Email System Upgrade Comparison - Microsoft Exchange vs. IBM Domino**

According to Gartner Research, (The largest and the most reputable company that provides well researched and independent advice on information technologies and products) when making e-mail and calendaring decisions (Domino vs. Exchange), organizations sometimes perform detailed feature/function comparisons between these two products. Given the high degree of commonality between the two products for core e-mail and calendaring services, this is not

always particularly helpful. Evaluations should be made at a more strategic level. The most critical factors organizations must consider when making the Domino vs. Exchange decision are:

- Ensuring that e-mail/collaboration investments fit well with long-term infrastructure commitments, such as directories, management platforms, application development strategies, databases, portals, desktop software and security models.
- Examining and aligning current/future collaboration needs (such as team-ware, Web conferencing and instant messaging) and routing/tracking application requirements, given that the incumbent e-mail vendor is likely to supply these services.

A thorough understanding of the long-term implications of a commitment to either vendor is essential to making the Domino vs. Exchange decision. Those evaluating IBM-related investments need to consider the rest of IBM's related products. Likewise, those contemplating Exchange investments should understand the long-term Microsoft application evolution.

### **The John Jay Perspective**

In addition to Gartner's insight, a number of campus factors weigh heavily on this decision. John Jay has already made a significant investment in the Microsoft stack. John Jay is part of the CUNY Microsoft Campus Agreement which includes the client access licenses (CALs) for Windows, Exchange, SharePoint and SMS and John Jay is planning to migrate to Windows Vista and Office 2007 suite within the next six months. John Jay has also leveraged SQL server 2000 as its database management system (DBMS); John Jay is planning on adopting SharePoint portal server in the near future. As a result of these factors, adoption of Exchange would represent a considerable cost savings to John Jay (both in client and integration costs with present and future systems).

There is no use of the IBM application suite at John Jay and currently there are no personnel with expertise in the IBM products. John Jay already has in-house expertise in Microsoft products. This gives the college a unique advantage to more effectively support Exchange as a new messaging platform at a considerably lower cost and with greater personnel redundancy. When one considers how critical calendaring and messaging has become, John Jay's ability to have multiple staff members versed in the college enterprise messaging platform is a serious advantage. This progressive advantage weighs in favor of Exchange in terms of level of customer service, as well as service availability.

John Jay has already migrated to Microsoft Active Directory as its enterprise directory (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol - LDAP). As it integrates seamlessly with Active Directory, Exchange promises the ability of each user to have a single user name and password for email and other applications (i.e. wireless, web proxy, pay for print, etc...). Exchange also ensures that key pieces of updates to enterprise contact information (i.e. phone number, email address, office location, etc...) will be automatically populated into each users email client.

This migration will not affect student and alumni e-mail system at this time. The CUNY-CIS is currently working on deploying Microsoft Live (Hotmail) e-mail system for students and alumni,

which will establish a common platform for all CUNY students and alumni. After this deployment we will be able to migrate student and alumni e-mail accounts from our current iPlanet system to Microsoft Live. As soon as further details as available we will post them on this site.