

## Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USU) Moves Email to the Cloud; DLT Solutions Manages Implementation and Added Security Requirements

### Program Overview

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) is the Nation's federal health sciences university. With over 3000 billeted and approximately 6000 non-billeted faculty, staff, and students, the University is committed to excellence in military medicine and public health during peace and war.

As USU continued to grow and technology evolved, the University began looking at alternative options to its existing on-premise Novell email system. USU wanted to enable more effective collaboration, but still maintain the tight security controls required by the Department of Defense (DoD).

Technology changes daily and USU knew with the right email solution and the right team in place, it could do so much more. Without much flexibility built into its system USU had to take multiple steps to get even the easiest collaboration tasks completed. The email system didn't offer anything more than basic messaging and lacked storage capacity and complementary collaboration tools.

### Finding the Right Combination of Tools and Expertise

Towards the end of 2011, the University formed a committee of experts from different departments to review alternative options to its existing email system and address organization-wide challenges — reduce operating costs, consolidate disparate systems, and ultimately create a better workflow.

The committee set three main objectives:

- Improve communication and collaboration while adding additional storage
- Provide better integration with the existing learning management system (LMS)
- Reduce costs

USU evaluated both cloud, hosted and on-site options, but ultimately decided to conduct a pilot and USU contracted with DLT Solutions (DLT) for the acquisition of 3,700 licensed seats and migrated to Google Apps for Government from its existing Novell GroupWise and Microsoft Exchange 2003 environments. DLT brought on leading cloud services brokerage, Cloud Sherpas, to help execute a seamless migration.

In addition to the need for a more modern email solution, USU was looking at ways to collaborate more closely within study groups as well as among faculty and staff. For example, keeping track of the ever-changing flow of information would require users to build a spreadsheet, send it out to 40-plus people

via email, and as updates were made, one person would try to keep up with version control. A better way to work together was needed.

It was when the University added all of its other non-email requirements, it pushed toward selecting Google. With a straight Exchange USU would have had to add additional costs for storage of the networks. After reviewing its options, USU found that so many things it wanted came with Google Apps for Government.

### Efficiencies Beyond Email

In addition to Google's email application, USU implemented other applications including Calendar, Chat, Drive and Sites.

With Google Drive, the spreadsheet lives in the cloud, so USU's team could update the doc at the same time, eliminating version control. Google Apps allowed team members to access spreadsheets and other important documents from any location. For USU, this was a game changing way to approach a shared project.

The new environment increased government transparency by allowing faculty, staff and students complete access to email and information on demand, vastly improving efficiency and collaboration.

### Going Beyond to Keep Data Safe and Secure

For USU, this wasn't an "out of the box" implementation. As the implementation progressed, DLT and the University discovered additional security challenges. For users to collaborate on tasks and other project documents and deliverables, the University needed to maintain DoD-mandated security controls.

One critical component of the overall email solution was the unique requirement to have Google Apps for Government fully Common Access Card (CAC)-enabled and digital signature and encryption capable. This would include the ability to utilize CAC for authentication purposes for the Google Apps for Government suite.

To move forward with the added layer of security, modification was needed and with the support and expertise of DLT and its team of solution partners, the cross talk capability — a SecureAuth SAML-bridge — was deployed. Even with the added challenge, DLT was able to draw on its numerous internal and external resources to deliver the hardware needed to set up the SecureAuth SAML-bridge.



Throughout the implementation, DLT worked closely with its network of cloud partners, allowing the team to keep the project on time and provide flexibility to meet the strict security demands mandated by the Department of Defense.

## Impact

Google Apps and DLT have enabled USU to successfully streamline its internal communications process, which has resulted in enhanced collaboration. Users are now able to gain secure access to accurate and updated information, improving operations for faculty and staff and providing improved communications with its students. They are also able to quickly create, edit and share calendars to one or dozens of colleagues and classmates and even telecommute. USU found that faculty and staff could work just as efficiently even if they didn't have their standard government-issued laptop with them. With Google Apps, users can gain access through CAC login and can see their documents and emails via the cloud.

*"USU found that switching to Google Apps would save the university approximately \$55,000 in capital expenses/maintenance fees year-over-year and \$30,000 in personnel resources annually," says Greg Mullin, director of public sector, Cloud Sherpas, a DLT Solution Partner and Google Enterprise 2011 Partner of the Year. "Google Apps provides robust security and privacy features including encryption, advanced spam, virus and phishing protection and physically secure data centers, as well as 99.9 percent uptime."*

## Added Benefits:

- **Mobility** - Access information from any location and any device 24/7.
- **Productivity** - With 70-80 distributions lists that were in various stages of accuracy, Google Apps tools enabled USU to tie the Google groups and the memberships for those groups back to the University's corporate central database.
- **Collaboration and Transparency** - Users have found that Google Apps collaboration features such as calendar overlay and Google Docs allow for more transparent work processes.
- **Storage** - With 122TB of storage in the cloud provided by Google for email and other data, the University's faculty has also been able to take advantage of its video capabilities.

USU also took advantage of the Google APIs Discovery Service, which offers a central location to find the applications programming interfaces. The service includes one year of archived email storage where users no longer need to call tech support to gain access to outdated or accidentally deleted emails. The added feature will save hundreds of man-hours by eliminating a large percentage of email restore requests.

## Working Smarter

Google Apps, with the support from DLT, has enabled USU to lower costs while providing better tools for its faculty, staff and students. With a modern email platform and collaboration applications, everyone within the university is able to be more productive.

USU has conveyed its confidence in DLT and the security measures put in place. With the expertise of DLT and its partners, USU was able to enjoy a smooth transition to the Google Apps for Government platform, save resources and reap the benefits of a government-only cloud.

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