

# GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION CONCERNS

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## Common Concerns Raised

Throughout process of investigating the use of Google Apps for Education for the college, we've found ourselves answering many of the same concerns with the beta testers, during learning sessions, and anytime we've been questioned by individuals with concerns about Google. In our reviews of the support sites for many of the other institutions we found the same concerns often mirrored there. In this section we hope to identify and address many of these common questions – pulling the answers from Google's documentation and the support sites for other universities who've "Gone Google."

### Is our data secure?

All communication is encrypted whenever using web-based e-mail, web-based chat, web-based calendar, docs, and sites. The Google Talk desktop client is not encrypted. Also, if you sync your e-mail or calendar with mobile devices that material may not be encrypted either (details on how best to secure your mobile devices will be provided).

All e-mail is filtered for spam, viruses, and to prevent phishing attacks. More details are provided on Google's [Security and Privacy](#) page. Google Apps offers a strong and extensive security infrastructure<sup>1</sup> to support these and other benefits:

<sup>1</sup> "Security Whitepaper: Google Apps Messaging and Collaboration Products"

[http://static.googleusercontent.com/external\\_content/untrusted\\_dlcp/www.google.com/en/us/a/help/intl/en/admins/pdf/ds\\_gsa\\_apps\\_whitepaper\\_0207.pdf](http://static.googleusercontent.com/external_content/untrusted_dlcp/www.google.com/en/us/a/help/intl/en/admins/pdf/ds_gsa_apps_whitepaper_0207.pdf)

- Google's data centers are protected by advanced physical security controls, and access to information is monitored at multiple levels.
- Google performs software patching rapidly across identical server stacks to help keep users updated with the latest patches.
- Google allows you to set fine-grained access controls for documents, calendars, and other types of information you store in the cloud.
- Google has entire teams of security professionals dedicated to protecting customer data.
- Google's use of https (SSL) ensures that the data you exchange with the server is, in fact, encrypted while in transit.
- Google has received an authority to operate at the FISMA-Moderate level -- the standard level for Federal email systems -- from the U.S. federal government. The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, or "FISMA", is a United States federal law pertaining to the information security of federal agencies' information systems. FISMA applies to all information systems used or operated by U.S. federal agencies -- or by contractors or other organizations on behalf of the government.
- When data is sent to the Google cloud, the data is sliced up and distributed to a multitude of Google's servers. The data is simultaneously obfuscated, which is similar to redaction, so that even if it were possible for someone to gain access to the data, they would only see portions of the data.
- An independent third party auditor issued Google Apps an unqualified SAS70 Type II certification (industry standard security audit).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "What does a Google Apps SAS70 Type II audit mean to me?"

<http://www.google.com/support/a/bin/answer.py?answer=138340>

**NOTE:** Although TMCC's e-mail would be outsourced to Google, [TMCC's Telecommunication Use policy](#) would still apply, which under some conditions the college has the right to examine electronic information stored on or passing over IT resources.

### Availability of Service:

Google maintains a number of geographically distributed data centers, the locations of which are kept discreet for security purposes. Google's computing clusters are designed with resiliency and redundancy in mind, eliminating any single point of failure and minimizing the impact of common equipment failures and environmental risks. Plus, our contract with Google specifically addresses the issue of availability: "During the Term of the applicable Google Apps Agreement (the "Agreement"), the Google Apps Covered Services web

interface will be operational and available to Customer at least 99.9% of the time in any calendar month (the "Google Apps SLA")."<sup>3</sup> This equates to about 45 minutes of downtime for a standard 31-day month.

<sup>3</sup> "Google Apps SLA". "<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/terms/sla.html>". 1 July 2010

## Who administers TMCC Google accounts?

TMCC Google accounts will be set up and administered by TMCC staff. The College also will provide user support through the Information Technology Operations help desk and technical staff. TMCC controls the tmcc.edu domain; we add, modify, and delete accounts.

## Will TMCC's adoption of Google Apps give Google access to student/faculty e-mail communications, addresses, identifiable browsing histories, etc? Will this information be used to target advertising at us?

Google does not "mine" TMCC's stored data - it is still owned by the College. Google has agreed to protect the confidentiality of TMCC's private information with the same standard of care in which they protect their own private corporate information, and they are known for the level of security with which they protect their own data.

## Will I see advertising?

Contractually, Google is not allowed to exhibit advertising to active TMCC faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and staff accounts will not see advertising unless TMCC desires them to see it. This does not apply to the use of any third-party add-ons (i.e., Doodle, etc.).

## Is my privacy and the confidentiality of our e-mail protected?

Google may be compelled to disclose TMCC's confidential Information when required by law but only after it, if legally permissible: (a) uses commercially reasonable efforts to notify the owner; and (b) gives the owner the chance to challenge the disclosure. This is at least as much protection as is afforded by existing TMCC policy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Google's page on the subject: <http://www.google.com/support/a/bin/answer.py?answer=107818>

## What if something needs to be totally private?

One should remember that no e-mail system is completely secure, and privacy in e-mail cannot be assumed. With this in mind however, Google utilizes best of breed hardware, software, and security architecture to maintain confidentiality and privacy. If something needs to be totally private, e-mail is perhaps not the best method for storage.

## Accessibility

Students needing assistive technology were specifically targeted during the testing phase of the student Google implementation. Information on Gmail's HTML view and other accessibility details can be found here:

- Google accessibility statement:  
<http://www.google.com/accessibility/resources.html>
- Accessibility information for Gmail's basic HTML view:  
<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=64950>
- Using the basic HTML view with a screen reader:  
<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=146375>
- Using Gmail with screen readers:  
<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=90559>

- Using Google Calendar with screen readers:

<http://www.google.com/support/calendar/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=152654>

## Would moving to Google violate any FERPA rules?

Moving employee e-mail to Google will not change any policy, rule or regulation that deals with FERPA. All existing policies will be adhered to.

## Is my e-mail address going to change when we move?

No, you will continue to receive and send your mail from the same address. *currentTMCCusername@tmcc.edu* (i.e., *jdoe@tmcc.edu*) will become your Google Apps @ TMCC address. While this is ultimately up to campus policy, the task force does not foresee that e-mail addresses will change in a move to Google Apps.

## Will this affect my personal Google/Gmail account?

Your TMCC Google Apps account is totally separate from your personal Google/Gmail account, so nothing about your personal Google account will change. Your private account and institutional accounts will not be merged.

## How will faculty and staff access their TMCC Google Mail account?

College users will use their TMCC username and password to sign in through the College standard Internet login page. When the College goes live with Google Apps for Edu, faculty and staff will log in to the Web interface at <http://www.tmcc.edu/facstaff/>.

## Can I continue to use Outlook, MacMail, Thunderbird with the new service?

There are ways to use these clients but we prefer you use the Google web interface. Using Google's mail interface will give you a more consistent experience in and out of the office, and also give you access to many great features of this new service not available through other e-mail clients. Many people find they are more productive using Google's mail interface. In addition, these third-party clients are not supported by the College.

## How does Google Apps for TMCC faculty and staff differ from the Google Apps service that was rolled out to students in August 2009?

It is the same service, but the transition will be handled differently for faculty and staff to minimize as much interruption of campus business as is possible. In addition, we are migrating employee GroupWise data to Google Apps.

## What are the limitations on e-mail sizes for my TMCC Google Apps account?

You can send and receive mail messages up to 25 MB in size including attachments. There are other campus services for transferring large files (for example, secure FTP) and Google Docs also offers a way to share large documents between collaborators without worrying about e-mail storage space.

## What is my new e-mail quota for my TMCC Google Apps account?

Currently, the e-mail quota for each account is 7.6 gigabytes, a number that Google increases by the second (as it were) as part of Google's "Infinity+1" plan<sup>5</sup>. This will be increased to 25 gigabytes in the near future.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noticed that the quota was 2 GB in October 2010. <http://gmailblog.blogspot.com/2007/10/more-gmail-storage-coming-for-all.html>

## Can I increase my quota?

As of this writing (August 2011), Google does offer a way for Educational domains to purchase additional space for individual accounts. It should be noted that your e-mail quota is separate from your Google Docs quota. Google provides unlimited quota for documents created within the Docs service. Only stored files (.PDF, .DOCX, .JPG, etc.) count towards your 1GB storage limit. Google Docs formats don't use up your storage space.

## When I reply to a message in a conversation thread, how do I know who will be copied?

You will see their addresses in the To: or CC: areas as you compose your reply.

## Are there any shortcut keys available to increase my productivity?

Yes, you have to go to settings and enable them, then refresh your mail window before the change takes effect. Here are our current favorites:

- When in a message or after doing a search, type 'u' to go to inbox
- When viewing a message, type '!' to label it as spam
- When reading a message, type 'r' to Reply ('R' to Reply in a new window)
- When reading a message, type 'a' to Reply All ('A' to Reply All in a new window)

The full list of currently available shortcuts is here:

<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=6594>

## What does archiving in Gmail do? Where does it go and can I get it back?

Archiving items keeps your Inbox tidy. The items are not deleted, but they will no longer appear in your Inbox. The items will appear in search results and can also be accessed by clicking the "All Mail" link.

## Will I be able to access my Google Mail and other apps from countries that censor Internet traffic?

It is Google's goal to make sure that all Google services are accessible everywhere. However, there are times when there may be service interruptions in certain countries that are beyond the control of Google and the College. This challenge exists regardless of the service provider. Of course, these interruptions don't just affect Google services, but other sites (Yahoo, Amazon, etc.), as well. Google continues to work to provide direct access to Google services in these countries. TMCC makes a campus Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection available (<https://tmccconnect.tmcc.edu>) and encourages its usage as it may, in some cases, lessen the difficulty.

## Why are you looking at Google only?

We have gotten some feedback that IT seems to be championing Google, as opposed to giving equal time to all potential solutions. We wanted to take this opportunity to remind the College of our charge. It's our job to determine if Google Apps Education Edition can fit the bill when it comes to campus employee e-mail and calendaring. For that reason, we are focusing on this product exclusively, and only if the beta test finds that Google can't do the job will look at other alternative solutions. Also, it is doubtful that any product can completely replicate current use at TMC, but we'll also weight that against any new functionality or opportunities it would bring to the College, not the least of which would be to have the entire TMCC community on the same system. Failing to offer a specific function did not disqualify Google as an option.