

# Arizona State University Success Story



---

“Google Apps for Education is helping ASU become a highly flexible university that can provide extraordinary technology experiences for its students.”

**Kari Barlow**  
assistant vice president  
University Technology Office

---



---

## MORE INFORMATION

To get more information and sign up for Google Apps for Education, please visit <http://www.google.com/a/edu>.

If you have a specific question that's not answered on the website, please contact us at [education-solutions@google.com](mailto:education-solutions@google.com).

---

Oct. 10, 2006 – Arizona State University (ASU) makes Google Apps for Education available to 65,000 students. ASU configured and deployed Google Apps for Education, Google's hosted email, IM and calendaring solution, in under two weeks, including integrating it with home-grown single sign-on and user provisioning systems.

### The Problem:

Recently, members of the University Technology Office at Arizona State University asked themselves some important questions: “Why is our talented IT staff spending so much time patching, upgrading and maintaining software and hardware systems that don't keep up with the pace of innovation in consumer technology? And how do we get those staff members to focus on creative applications of technology specific to our university?”

ASU identified student email as an area where technology companies were rapidly developing innovative solutions for consumers. Also, administration costs were spiraling as ASU was forced to spend more on spam filters, virus protection software, and storage upgrades. According to Ron Page, Director of Technology Integration at Arizona State's University Technology Office, “ASU's homegrown web mail client required consistent development attention to keep it close to the state of the art. Even though ASU's disk quotas were severely limited compared to Google's 2GB per mailbox offering, maintaining a secure, backed-up email service consumed significant hardware and technical resources.” All told, ASU was spending over \$353,000 per year for a mail system that wasn't as powerful as the personal accounts that students could get for free.

---

“ASU also realized that we'd benefit from Google's unique approach to software development and deployment, where Google's perpetual-innovation process will bring a steady stream of improvements and new products to the solution, deployed without disrupting the user experience.”

---

### The Decision

ASU studied a number of potential alternatives to its current hardware and software email system configuration. After the investigation, ASU chose to deploy Google Apps for Education. Google Apps for Education is an integrated email, instant messaging and calendaring solution hosted by Google. ASU picked Google Apps for the following reasons:

**1) Students were already using it:** From mail logs, ASU could see that approximately 3,500 students were already forwarding their student email to Gmail; this gave ASU confidence that the solution would be well received, and that students would know how to use it – thus eliminating any training costs. “I enjoy using Gmail because it lets me keep a lot of my emails, especially those with attachments, without going over my quota,” said David Aniuk, ASU Student. “I really like the layout too; it's not very overwhelming to look at so it doesn't strain my eyes. And I have not received a single spam email in my Gmail account,” he added.

---

## MORE INFORMATION

---

To get more information and sign up for Google Apps for Education, please visit <http://www.google.com/a/edu>.

---

If you have a specific question that's not answered on the website, please contact us at [education-solutions@google.com](mailto:education-solutions@google.com).

---

**2) Best existing product with a compelling long-term vision:** Previously, ASU only offered its students email; however, ASU realized that Google's integrated email, instant messaging and calendaring offering would make it easier for students to collaborate with each other and for the school to communicate with students. ASU was excited about Google's goal to create a unified communications hub that included a number of applications, with the email inbox at its center. Kari Barlow, assistant vice president, University Technology Office, felt that "Google's tightly integrated messaging suite is the industry-leading web solution," and that "the browser integration of webmail, instant messaging and calendaring is second to none."

**3) Continuous innovation:** ASU recognized that Google's proven email, calendar and IM applications were not just innovative, but were continuing to evolve. According to Adrian Sannier, university technology officer, "ASU also realized that we'd benefit from Google's unique approach to software development and deployment, where Google's perpetual-innovation process will bring a steady stream of improvements and new products to the solution, deployed without disrupting the user experience."

### The Deployment

ASU went from final decision to deployment of Google Apps in under two weeks. Top priorities for ASU were integrating email with existing security and student administration systems so the solution would be safe and easy to deploy and maintain.

**Integration with security systems:** ASU has a student single sign-on system, developed in-house, that's similar to the Yale CAS system. Once signed in, a student has seamless access to personal registration, transcripts, course assignments and other information without having to log into multiple systems. ASU was able to integrate Google Apps into this homegrown system in a matter of days using Google's single sign-on API, based on the SAML 2.x standard. According to Ron Page, director of technology integration for ASU's University Technology Office, "The single sign-on works as advertised and was extremely straightforward." He added, "It's amazing how responsive Google has been to our needs."

**Integration with student administration systems:** Not only did ASU want to ensure that its deployment was well integrated for students, but it also wanted to make it as easy to administer as possible. ASU was able to use Google's available REST-based user provisioning API to integrate Google Apps with its home-grown user provisioning system in less than a week. Now ASU can automatically add, pause and remove students from Google Apps as their status changes in ASU's registration system.

**Phased user migration:** ASU needed a solution that would allow them to move users over to a new system without disrupting students and faculty using their existing implementation. With Google Apps and a mail gateway ASU was able to maintain student and staff's @asu.edu email namespace on either Google's system or their own. This integration allowed ASU to migrate students mid-year to Google Apps for Education without disrupting student's email service while preserving their original email address.

### Next Steps

ASU will migrate all 65,000 ASU students to Google Apps by January 2007, and eventually bring the service to the entire community, including faculty, staff and alumni. For Kari Barlow, assistant vice president, University Technology Office, "Google Apps for Education is helping ASU become a highly flexible university that can provide extraordinary technology experiences for its students." Google is committed to helping ASU and other educational organizations realize this goal, and we endorse the sentiments of Adrian Sannier, university technology officer, who feels that "strategic alliances with technology leaders like Google will be critical to accelerating the contribution that technology can make to an academic enterprise."

