Google Apps for Education enables Historically Black Colleges and Universities to transform campus IT while cutting costs

Spanning the United States, 104 unique learning institutions – America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs – provide an educational home for hundreds of thousands of African American students. As a source of education for some of America's most influential leaders, doctors, lawyers, and business professionals, HBCUs are an integral part of American society and history. Small and focused (usually with fewer than 5,000 students), privately or publicly funded, and far-reaching in curriculum and tradition, these 104 communities share a proud history of addressing educational equality and preparing many of our nation's minority students for whatever life opportunities they seek.

Like any university, HBCUs rely on technology to build communication among their students, staff, and alumni, and to ensure collaboration and connectedness across their teaching community. In addition, these schools know the importance of preparing students for the technically-wired workplaces they'll enter when they graduate. These schools have relied upon the same traditional email and productivity platforms that colleges everywhere first adopted – the server based, on-site systems that required deep IT support, frequent updates or upgrades, and costly licenses, maintenance, and hardware.

"The money we've saved by switching to Google Apps has helped us direct funds to scholarships, letting more students who couldn't afford to stay enrolled continue their education."
—Billy Rector, CIO, Texas Southern University

But today, more and more of these schools are setting their sites higher: to the "cloud," the connected, always-on access available online through Google Apps for Education. Google Apps allows learning institutions to rethink their use of technology, minimizing the complexity of getting started, introducing, and maintaining their email, word processing, spreadsheet, and other systems.

Google Apps contains a full suite of technology tools designed to help everyone on campus communicate and collaborate, sharing and creating information together. Google Apps' features and capabilities help everyone on campus connect and work together with ease – while measurably reducing IT costs.

Free Google Apps for Education is available at no charge, and completely free of ads, to nonprofit educational institutions anywhere in the world.

Familiar and easy to use Google Apps is the system countless students choose for their personal email – so they already know how to use it.

Google Apps includes:

Communication tools
Gmail: easy, familiar email hosted on your school's domain with plenty of storage
Google Calendar: shared scheduling and event/resource planning and management
Google Groups: manages team and workgroup information sharing with dynamic updates – without cluttering email inboxes

Collaboration tools
Google Documents: word processing, spreadsheets, and more, with real-time editing, reliable version control, and online access
Google Sites: easy, web page creation, publishing, and sharing that doesn't require programming knowledge
Google Video: Securely hosted video for sharing, commenting, tagging, and rating within your school's domain.

Accessible from anywhere Access from any browser, whether on a desktop, a laptop, or a mobile device, further increases ease and success. Online access, security, and sharing removes the need for flashdrives and external media.

Innovative The latest features, including free voice and video chat, real-time collaboration, and more are integrated right in to Google Apps – without requiring uploads or downtime.

Security, privacy, and stability Reliability is built right in to Google Apps. With SAS 70 Type II certification and a 99.9% uptime guarantee, Google's expertise and data centers give you access you can depend on and reduce the need for on-campus hardware, staff, and maintenence.

Extensibility and integration Google's open standards ensure easy integration with Blackboard, Sakai, Moodle, LDAP, Active Directory, portals like Luminis, and more. Advanced tools like LDAP directory sync, OAuth, OpenID, and Single Sign-On simplify user administration and enable migrations from other systems like Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and Microsoft Outlook.

Howard University

Washington, D.C.'s Howard University was using Microsoft Outlook for campus email, but was concerned by low usage and the fact that teachers were using their personal email to communicate with their classes. Seeking a better way, they tested Google Apps for Education in their business school and saw an immediate improvement. Suddenly, everyone was on the same system – and students began increasing the ways they worked together by using Gmail and other Apps capabilities to create and share information. Howard's Administration also loved how Gmail, Google Sites, and Google Groups enabled the creation of classroom "hubs" for sharing information and updates.

"Google Docs helps students enjoy group work since members are more accountable for their portions of projects. After assigning tasks each member can enter their own portion without relying on one person to do most of the work."
—Jewel Burke, Student Body President and Apps Implementation Lead

Spelman College

Georgia's Spelman College wanted an expert opinion on what email system to choose – so they asked their students. The resounding response: Google Apps. The school piloted Google Apps for Education to their Student Government and IT students, and soon – encouraged by the success and positive feeback – moved to campus-wide integration. Because so many students already used Gmail, it was easy to move over to the campus system. The change was welcomed by students, and also by the support and Help Desk professionals, who noted a marked reduction in the number of quesions and technical issues they addressed once they moved to Apps.

"Students welcome the move to Google Apps. Since many already have their own Gmail accounts, it's easy for them to move to the student-based Gmail service."
—Chandra McCrary, Associate VP of Media and Info Technology

Morehouse College

The IT team at Georgia's Morehouse College had plans to implement a Microsoft Exchange solution, but came across concerns with integration, complexity, and total cost of ownership. Wanting to evaluate the benefits of moving to a hosted solution, they decided to pilot Gmail, part of the Google Apps for Education suite, in Spring 2010. They posted an online sign-up sheet to seek volunteers for the pilot and maxed out their 500 student capacity in a few short days. Results – including increased student email participation, reduction of service concerns, and high collaborative activity levels – have convinced the Morehouse team to launch Google Apps for their entire campus as the 2010-2011 academic year begins.

"We looked to the cloud for a better, lower-cost email alternative. We chose Google for its reputation and universal acceptance. Gmail will simplify email administration and save us hundreds of thousands of dollars – and Google has been great with tech integration."
—Joseph Dixon, CIO, Morehouse College

Tuskegee University

Tuskegee University, an Alabama HBCU, was continuously plagued by a "lost email" issue where student and faculty email seemed to just disappear. They switched to Google Apps for Education and suddenly realized the benefits of a reliable service – along with a more intuitive UI and better navigation. They easily adopted Apps' customizable features, enabling things like "emergency notifications" letting faculty broadcast important information quickly and guiding students to respond accordingly. Thanks to the access-anywhere mobility of Google Apps, students even get the benefit of receiving these notifications on their mobile devices.

"Google Apps makes it easier to connect in and out of the classroom. It's also easier for students and teachers to share documents successfully without them getting lost in the system."
—Bruce Heath, Instructor in Aerospace/Engineering and Apps Implementation Lead