

Windows Live @ edu
Student Email Project
Fall 2007

ITCS Response to Academic Standards Survey

Below are responses based on survey results presented to ITCS by George Bailey, on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee, regarding the Windows Live @ edu Student email proposal.

NOTE: The questions (and answers) shown in BOLD below represent the specific questions that were presented to ITCS for responses. The additional questions are a compilation of other concerns identified by ITCS in the survey feedback.

Preface

If ECU pursues the Microsoft Live option, students will have two physical accounts:

- 1 - LiveID for email (ex. CRD0902@student.ecu.edu)
- 2 - PirateID for campus resources (ex. CRD0902)

There are several options of how to structure the usage of these two accounts. The email account and the PirateID can be:

- 1 - the same account name and 'could' have the same password (they would truly be two separate entities, but they would not have to be marketed as separate).
- 2 - could be two totally different naming schemes (account names) and passwords and be marketed as two separate entities.

Access to student email will require the student to use their LiveID and LiveID passphrase. Access to campus resources (Blackboard, Onestop, etc) will require students to enter their PirateID and PirateID passphrase.

ECU can synchronize the PirateID passphrase with the LiveID passphrase however; we cannot prevent students from changing the LiveID passphrase directly at any of the Live web sites. For the passwords to stay synchronized, students would always have to perform password changes on their PirateID (as they are accustomed to now).

Q&A from Academic Standards survey:

MULTIPLE ACCOUNT/PASSPHRASE ISSUE

Q: Is there anything in the rules for creating the password students presently use that would prevent them from changing their Blackboard/OneStop/ECU password to whatever their Microsoft email password is?

A: Yes. Currently the MINIMUM LENGTH setting (LiveID - 6; PirateID - 8) for passphrases are different.

Q: Are they going to be able to change their Microsoft email password to accommodate ECU's password change requirements (change our password every so many days)?

A: By default LIVE accounts are not required to change the passphrase*. There is an option for LIVE users to select that will force a passphrase change every 72 days. The current passphrase change for PirateID accounts is every 90 days.

***LIVE users are required to change their password upon using the account for the first time but are not required to change after that.**

Q: Will changing passwords be as easy and secure on the Microsoft system as it is on the ECU system?

A: Both ECU and Microsoft utilize secure SSL protection for passphrase changes. Utilizing password synchronization can make the need to change the Microsoft password moot; however, Microsoft passphrase changes are relatively easy and utilize a similar challenge question method to change 'forgotten' passwords.

Q: The university has spent considerable resources going to the one password one username solution. Does another option exist in which we can keep the authentication as is?

A: The aforementioned passphrase synchronization is a viable option to maintain a seamless authentication.

Q: A concern I have is that I still have a student email account in spite of my employment with the university. To the extent that I would be affected, it may cause a problem.

A: Currently users have only one email account. We would recommend in a LIVE implementation that if a faculty/staff member was also a student that TWO separate email accounts and TWO separate PIRATEID's be utilized. There are utilities that would make this very easy to manage within the current Outlook client software.

Q: Program students also log on to a departmental server to create and maintain electronic portfolios; which password would they use for this function?

A: Students would use their PirateID to access all university resources EXCEPT email. They would only use the LiveID account to access email.

ECU APPLICATIONS ISSUE

Q: Is there anything that will prevent using the student's Microsoft email account address as the address to which email is sent from within BlackBoard, OneStop and other ECU applications students currently use?

A: Although ITCS is still very early in the testing of application integration issues, we believe that current resource dependencies (i.e. Blackboard, OneStop, etc.) will be compatible. Student PirateID accounts would simply be populated with a new email address thus all applications relying on PirateID utilization should be able to utilize the new address.

Q: Is the security of the email and attachments provided by Microsoft as good as under our present system?

A: Like ECU, Microsoft utilizes Anti-Spam and Anti-Virus technologies to protect against malicious email.

Q: In general, is there anything that prevents making the applications at our end conform to whatever password and addressing requirements exist at the Microsoft end?

A: Yes. As noted above, ECU's passphrase MINIMUM LENGTH and requirement to change the passphrase every 90 days are different than Microsoft's. Mirroring Microsoft's requirements, while possible, would not be advisable in our present Active Directory structure.

Q: Would the student's new Microsoft email address be listed in the Outlook Addressbook? Will faculty and staff email addresses be listed in the students Microsoft addressbook?

A: Yes, just as they are currently, students would still be listed in the Outlook Addressbook. ECU has the option of populating the student's LiveMail Addressbook (on a scheduled basis) with faculty and staff addresses. This may not be feasible due to the number of student accounts that Microsoft would host and we may be limited on how many addressbook entries LiveMail can accommodate. The most efficient way would be for the students to utilize existing email address lookup features, as those currently found on the ECU Home Page. Students then could add addresses to their personal Addressbook in LiveMail.

Q: Which email will automatically populate for Blackboard and Banner when the change is made? I currently go to OneStop to find students. Will it now list 2 emails, and if so, which one is the "main" one—the first or second email address?

A: Students would only have one email account, thus only one email address to display in Blackboard/Banner. The exception would be for faculty/staff that are also considered students since this class of users would have a student account and a faculty/staff account.

GENERAL

Q: Will this in any way change the way we communicate with our students and if so how? Will their system have the same functionality as does now.

A: Implementing LiveMail will not negatively impact the way faculty/staff communicate with students. Among other things, LiveMail will offer students greater storage capacity (50MB currently vs. 5GB with LiveMail).

Q: Are we planning to pilot this system before committing?

A: An implementation committee is being formed to determine project parameters and timelines. A successful implementation plan would have to include a pilot of the new system. Last spring, ECU started offering LiveMail to all graduates. The scope of this offering only included email (they do not have a PirateID to access campus resources).

Q: How about describing the reasons for shifting to a different email system? Why pick a solution that doesn't understand Active Directory (I assume that is what you are using to control passwords).

A: There are numerous reasons to suggest the LiveMail solution, chiefly escalating licensing costs with the current system and cost avoidance to offer a comparable mailbox storage limit. LiveMail account creation is based on Active Directory information and has the ability to synchronize Active Directory passwords with Live accounts.

Q: Why two systems? Will students know what email to use?

A: There would only be one email system for students, LiveMail.

Q: How much training will be involved?

A: Like our current student email offering, PirateMail, LiveMail is also a web based email solution. Training materials, videos, etc. would be made available. Users that have used Microsoft's HotMail offering are now actually using Microsoft's LiveMail.

Q: Is there an advantage to going to another email software?

A: LiveMail will not cost the university any money to provide student email; it will provide much larger mailboxes; is web-based; there is no advertising on the email portal; we can have ECU branding on the mail portal; we maintain local control – (ECU creates, deletes & manages userids); provides continuity with existing ECU Alumni email offering; is proven technology – (MS Hotmail); and has Spam & Anti-Virus capabilities.