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Review of the Campus Collaborative Tools Strategy at UC Berkeley

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Review of the Campus Collaborative Tools Strategy at UC Berkeley

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The Campus Collaborative Tools Strategy at UC Berkeley

<http://collab.berkeley.edu/projects/cctsd/>

Collaboration tools are becoming popular across campuses. Many institutions are struggling with how to provide support for the multitude of diverse, ever-changing, often open source programs that are frequently used “to fly under the radar” of campus IT protocols. Scores of collaborative tool choices exist, but many are fragmented and unmanageable. How do faculty know which collaborative programs to select? How can faculty collaborate with others when everyone is using different collaboration tools? How do IT folks support this multitude of programs? Which tools does IT recommend when asked? Do they build a toolbox of resources--resources that might change next month when something new develops?

The University of California Berkeley Information Services and Technology (IST) division began to address this issue a few years ago. UC Berkeley recognized the need to create and to support an easy, convenient environment for people on and off campus in which to collaborate on scholarship, teaching, learning, and administrative services. The Collaboration Services Group, part of the Data Service section of IST, had a general mission to support collaborative tools for the entire campus community and took charge of initiating this project. They began to search for an internal departmental solution for collaboration that grew into formulating a best-practices strategy supporting campus-wide collaboration.

The preliminary goal of determining and implementing a tool or a set of tools changed over time. The Collaboration Services Group discovered that before it could identify this set of tools it was necessary first to create a road-map for supporting collaborative environ-

ments. In 2008 the Campus Collaborative Tools Strategy Development (CCTSD) Project was born. The CCTSD project explored the current usage, needs, and expenditures for collaborative tools specifically on the UC Berkeley campus. This initial phase led to the creation of a common strategy which can be applied across the campus - or at other institutions -in order to analyze current online collaborative tools or prospective new tools. The strategy consists of two parts to help “embrace the chaos” of innovation overload: (1) provide guidance to expand choice and (2) lower barriers to collaboration. The CCTSD project group determined seven goals relating to their two-part strategy and stressed the importance of periodic reevaluation of the collaborative landscape. CCTSD’s strategy required the campus to eliminate barriers to infrastructure and policy issues that had obstructed the use of many collaborative tools. Also noted in the strategy is a need for guidance and training across campus on effective selection and implementation of possible tools.

Libraries struggling with the same issues of the overwhelming number of collaborative tools should review the CCTSD Project by reading the Executive Summary from March 2009 for an overview of the project that includes the seven goals. The entire thirteen-page strategy is available online with all of the supporting documentation such as defining collaboration, legal/policy issues, tool selection criteria, IT management and services, and phases and timelines. Libraries should explore what their institutions are doing to solve this problem and get involved in the process. Or better yet, libraries can model collaboration for the campus by using UCBS CCTSDs, creating a more natural way for collaboration to occur across the campus and beyond the institution’s physical boundaries. Find all the details freely available at:

<http://collab.berkeley.edu/projects/cctsd/>