CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Open Up! Webmail Roadmap

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UF Information Technology

UFIT
2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>
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Open Up! Webmail Roadmap

We have been hearing a lot of buzz on the topic of Webmail lately. In response to this interest, we thought we would take a moment to focus on this popular service.

What is it?

WebMail is a very basic Web-based e-mail service provided by the Open Systems Group (OSG) to aid faculty, staff, and students, when travelling.

With Webmail, if you can make an Internet connection, you can access your GatorLink mailbox from anywhere in the world from this website. There is no need to install a new mail client or reconfigure the existing one on the computer you are borrowing while out of town.

What is the current status of UF’s webmail?

We have recently announced the availability of a new Webmail client called GatorLink WebMail. Written by our own staff members, we believe it will be a much more robust service. We will also have the advantage of having the authors on-site for updates and other support.

The new Webmail service will provide a stable environment, an addressbook feature, and the ability to handle attachments -- a popular request. The features provided in Gator WebMail were selected and developed in response to feedback from users of the current webmail service.

You can access the new Webmail site at https://webmail.ufl.edu. The previous version of Webmail will still be available via a link from that site. The version prior to that will be discontinued.

Availability Issues

One of the chief reasons that we replaced the previous Webmail product was that it was not as reliable as we wanted it to be.

However, some of the downtime associated with old Webmail was not actually caused by the Webmail service. Some of the downtime has been caused by intermittent problems with our GatorLink servers.

GatorLink provides you with a mailbox but it does not provide direct access to it. You need an e-mail client to access your GatorLink mailbox. Any e-mail client can be used to access the mailbox; and if that client (like Webmail) is unavailable, your GatorLink mailbox can still be accessed by another mail client. However, when the GatorLink service is unavailable, no e-mail client (including Webmail) can access the GatorLink mailboxes.

We have been working with our mail server vendor as well as with UF management to resolve GatorLink problems.

Usage

This new mail client still does not compare to desktop e-mail clients. Webmail is an effective stop-gap measure for accessing mail when out of the office. It is meant to supplement your
usual mail programs when you are travelling -- not to replace them. Eudora, Netscape, Outlook Express, and others like them, are the products that you should be using to access and handle your daily e-mail.

Or, if you prefer a web-based client for your everyday e-mail needs, we recommend that you use one of the commercial Webmail products offered by companies like AOL, Juno, Yahoo!, or Earthlink. They are robust programs and are supported by consultants at the UF Computing Help Desk [http://helpdesk.circa.ufl.edu/] (392-HELP) and/or by the vendors who offer them.

## Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

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2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>