

## Cloud Computing Comes to UNB

### What does this mean for AUNBT members?

Over the next two years, ITS will be rolling out a cloud computing platform and related services, known as connectEd, for UNB faculty, staff and students. Two among these services will be email and file storage.

#### What is it?

Cloud computing refers to a system where services (data and applications) are delivered over the Internet. The person or persons using the service do not store any data locally but rely on the Internet. Data is stored on servers at some unknown location. Common examples of services that use cloud computing include Gmail, Hotmail, Facebook, and YouTube.<sup>1</sup>

Faculty and staff email and files will continue to be stored on a UNB hosted system while, beginning later this month, students and alumni will be using a cloud computing based system.

Faculty and staff will be offered the option of moving their email and file storage accounts from the UNB hosted system and to the “cloud”. The following information is intended to assist you in your decision whether to stay with the UNB-hosted service or to switch to the cloud.

***Whatever you decide, you need to be aware that student emails are now cloud-based. The UNB administration advises that we should consider emails no more private than post cards. Members are advised not to use student email for confidential communications.***<sup>2</sup>

#### Should I switch to the cloud for my email and/or data storage?

There are advantages to cloud computing, but also some risks and some areas where we do not have all the information.

#### Advantages

- An increase in file storage space from 1GB to 25GB;
- An increase in email quota from 150MB to 10GB; and
- An improved collaboration environment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For general information about cloud computing and its implications: Reaching for the Cloud(s): Privacy Issues related to Cloud Computing / Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada:

[http://www.priv.gc.ca/information/pub/cc\\_201003\\_e.cfm#toc2d3](http://www.priv.gc.ca/information/pub/cc_201003_e.cfm#toc2d3)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unb.ca/its/resources/pdf/about-its/productivity-platform-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>

## Risks

- A loss of control over data: this risk exists both because of potential actions of the cloud service provider and the laws of the place where the server is located. Note that many cloud servers are located in the United States and are thus subject to the *Patriot Act*.<sup>4</sup>
- The cloud provider controls access to the cloud; your right of access to your account is controlled by a contract between UNB and the cloud provider. The terms of the contract have not been provided to AUNBT.
- A lack of transparency about the location of the data: since cloud providers often have servers in multiple jurisdictions, your data and email could be anywhere.
- A lack of access to local courts if there is a dispute: the terms of the (secret) contract determine where a dispute would have to be resolved.
- A false sense of confidentiality and security: the continued use of the UNB domain name may suggest to senders of email and files that the service is more secure than it is.

## Areas of uncertainty

- Terms of service are important in assessing how secure data will be. Since we do not have access to the terms of service document, we therefore do not know what level of protection has been provided.<sup>5</sup>
- No information has been provided whether one could opt into the cloud option now and reverse that choice to return to the internal server at a future time.
- No information has been provided whether one could use both systems, e.g. using the cloud service for non-sensitive storage and the internal server for sensitive data and communications.

## Why you might need more information

- If you are engaged in scholarly or professional work involving sensitive intellectual property, you may want to get more specific information about the service before switching to the cloud.

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<sup>3</sup> connectEd, UNB's Productivity Toolkit: <http://www.unb.ca/its/about-its/projects/connected/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the impacts of this, and comparable Canadian anti-terrorism legislation, on cloud computing generally see: <http://www.obj.ca/Opinion/2011-01-20/article-2139749/Cloud-computing%2C-the-Patriot-Act-and-you/1> In the academic sphere see: <http://www.slw.ca/2011/02/26/commissioner-cavoukian-says-the-patriot-act-is-nothing/>

<sup>5</sup> Privacy in the Clouds: Risks to Privacy and Confidentiality from Cloud Computing: [http://www.worldprivacyforum.org/pdf/WPF\\_Cloud\\_Privacy\\_Report.pdf](http://www.worldprivacyforum.org/pdf/WPF_Cloud_Privacy_Report.pdf) p. 16-17.

- If you have professional confidentiality obligations, you want to check with your regulator. Some professional organizations, such as the American Bar Association, have strict policies against cloud computing.
- If you have access to restricted files in the course of your scholarly activities, you may require permission to use the cloud.
- If you are contractually bound to keep information confidential, you need to raise the issue with your contracting partner. Some organizations and funding bodies may not view cloud computing email and storage as secure enough for confidentiality.