

Services to Retire, Remove, or Review for Change from the UW-IT Service Catalog

*Recommendations of the University of Washington
IT Service Management Board*

December 9, 2013

Introduction

In April 2013, the [IT Service Management Board](#) (SMB) was asked by Kelli Trosvig, Vice President for UW Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, to identify services that should be retired from the [UW-IT Service Catalog](#). This request followed the work the Board completed earlier this year to recommend a “[Top Five](#)” list of services that UW-IT should add or enhance.

A number of services in the current UW-IT Service Catalog that have either very low usage or are being supplanted by more modern and readily adopted services. Historically, UW-IT has often found it difficult to stop offering services that likely should have been evaluated and discontinued. Services tend to continue beyond their useful life because of pressure from a small but vocal number of users of the service, a desire to just “do it all,” or internal legacy or organizational issues. With the ever-present demand for new services—which typically does not come with any increase in funding—the capacity to introduce, operate, and support new services requires that some existing services be retired.

The request to identify UW-IT services that should be retired was based on the need for an external assessment of the most appropriate balance of services that should be offered to users and that reflect the UW’s service priorities. This responsibility is part of the [charter of the SMB](#):

“Conduct an annual review of the UW-IT Service Catalog and provide recommendations for adding, changing, and removing services and for any associated recommended changes in investment levels.”

Methodology

The SMB began by reviewing the roughly 80 services found in the current UW-IT Service Catalog. Basic information on each service was provided to the Board and an initial survey of the members was conducted. In the survey, members were asked to do an assessment based on their personal knowledge and experience. Members were asked if they believed a service should be kept, removed, or possibly relocated to some other area of the University. This methodology was chosen as a fast way to create a short list of services perceived by multiple members as worthy of further investigation. Approximately 38 services were identified by at least one member, and the Board agreed to look in more detail at the 20 candidate services that received the highest number of “votes” from Board members.

The Board reviewed additional details of each of these services, which included looking at the Annual Service Assessments (ASAs) written by the service owners and service managers, when available. In a few cases, the Board did not believe it had adequate information to properly assess the value of the service and so it was omitted from consideration. Recommendations on 11 services that the Board collectively agreed it had sufficient information to evaluate are listed below in the following sections: Services to Retire, Services to Move Out of UW-IT, and Services to Review for Change. If the retirement of a service was already planned or underway, it was included for the sake of completeness.

In some cases, the Board found that a service should not be fully retired, but instead should be significantly narrowed in scope or changed in a substantial way. In others, the Board found that low demand for a service meant that it no longer made sense to offer it centrally, or that it might be offered more efficiently by a different unit.

A draft set of these recommendations was shared with members of the UW Computing Directors group at their June 2013 meeting, and feedback was solicited. While some concerns were expressed, few questioned the services that had been identified. Most questions focused on “when”, not “if”.

Creating a timeline for service retirement is beyond the scope of the SMB’s responsibility. Should UW-IT elect to proceed with any of these recommendations, it will be important for service owners to address user impact. Careful planning and a phase-out strategy that involves customers will be necessary in some cases.

It is important to note that this review did not address the cost of providing these services, but focused on customer needs based upon the perspective of the Board members. In nearly all cases, the Board did not have any details on the cost of providing a service or the number of users. The Board also did not have any studies that showed the impact on users if a service were to be discontinued.

The recommendations included in this report are based primarily on Board members' perceptions of whether it "makes sense" for UW-IT to continue offering these services, recognizing that other stakeholders could have varying perceptions. However, the only way UW-IT can continue to introduce and operate new services within its current budget is to eliminate or reduce existing services—with the ultimate goal being to maintain an appropriately balanced set of services in its catalog.

Recommendations

Services to Retire

Note: Some service descriptions may have been abbreviated. Full descriptions are available in the [UW-IT Service Catalog](#)¹.

1. Alpine and Web Alpine (Client) Email Software

Service description: Alpine is an email client developed at the University of Washington that is based on the Pine® Message System and the IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) mail protocol, which were also developed at UW. Web Alpine is a Web-based version of Alpine.

Retirement justification: The strategic direction for email services at the UW is toward two cloud service providers: Google (Gmail-based) and Microsoft Office 365 (Exchange-based), both of which are available at little or no cost. Gmail and Office 365 email services both support proprietary mail protocols as well as the open-source IMAP protocol. Both can be used with bundled Web clients (Gmail, Outlook Web App) as well as more traditional native clients (Thunderbird, Outlook), none of which require local maintenance. UW Gmail service has been available for more than four years, and Office 365 email service will be available very soon. The Office 365 contract includes a Business Associates Agreement (BAA) to address HIPAA compliance, making it suitable for UW health sciences units and in other settings where Protected Health Information (PHI) is handled.

With viable, more feature-rich email client applications now available that do not require local development, maintenance, or Tier 2/3 support, it is time to retire and stop supporting locally built and locally operated email services and software systems. (Also see recommendations 3 and 4.)

This retirement of Alpine and Web Alpine should begin as soon as possible. In support of

¹ <http://depts.washington.edu/uwtscat>

this, UW-IT will need to develop a timeline and phase-out/transition plan that is clearly communicated to users. A significant number of UW faculty and staff have used Pine/Alpine as their email client of choice for many years, and transitioning to a new solution could be difficult for some.

2. IMAP - UW Software Toolkit

Service description: IMAP is a method of accessing electronic messages kept on a mail server. The IMAP - UW Software Toolkit is a suite of software written and distributed under an open-source license by the University of Washington. The UW is no longer actively developing IMAP.

Retirement justification: The development of an IMAP toolkit was a major contribution made by UW-IT in 1990s. However, IMAP is now a mature Internet standard that has been widely implemented by all major email client and server vendors (including Gmail and Office 365). Since UW-IT is no longer actively developing nor maintaining the IMAP toolkit or the underlying code, and it is available through open-source channels, the toolkit should be removed from the UW-IT Service Catalog.

3. UW Email (aka “Email – locally hosted IMAP”)

Service description: UW Email is a “back-end” email service that supports the IMAP protocol and is usable with a wide variety of email client applications.

Retirement justification: With the adoption of cloud-based email services (Google Apps and Office 365), hosting of IMAP-based email services for the University is no longer necessary, and represents an unnecessary cost. The SMB recommends that users no longer be permitted to subscribe to campus-based email services, even before the service is discontinued (with exceptions as appropriate), and be directed to either the UW Gmail service or the UW Office 365 (Exchange-based) service when it is available. End users should not be directed to Alpine.

It is important to note that while cloud solutions may work for almost all UW users, there may be a limited number of cases where these cloud solutions are not viable (e.g., classified research). Therefore, it may be necessary for UW-IT to continue to offer some on-premise solution for these cases, with costs borne by those “niche” users.

The Board also recommends that campus departments operating email services “in-house” also discontinue that service, and migrate to cloud-based email services.

4. Local Exchange (aka “Email – locally hosted Exchange”)

Service description: UW Exchange Local provides integrated services for email,

calendaring, contact management, directory services (Global Address List), and task management. Exchange ActiveSync synchronization is available for many Smartphone/mobile devices. BlackBerry synchronization is provided via dedicated BlackBerry Enterprise Server.

Retirement justification: As noted above, the on-premise hosting of basic email services is no longer necessary or cost effective, including in those settings where HIPAA compliance is a concern.

As noted in the UW Email recommendation 3, there may be a small number of “edge” cases that require UW-IT to still provide on-premise email service. Those cases need to be carefully determined, and the necessary on-premise email service should be scaled and funded appropriately. Ideally, the “UW Email” and “Local Exchange” edge cases can be consolidated, so that they can be supported with a single back-end email service. The number of such cases is very small, and serious consideration should be given to supporting the on-premises email service through cost-recovery from its users, many of whom may be able to use standard email service for the majority of their communications and calendar/scheduling needs.

5. UW Application Portfolio

Service description: The [UW Application Portfolio](https://sharepoint.washington.edu/oim/app-portfolio)² is a catalog of administrative applications in broad use throughout the UW, and supported not just by UW-IT. The portfolio is a resource for UW developers to find other developers and learn about information systems at the UW. It contains information about departmental systems as well as the enterprise administrative applications. The UW Application Portfolio is incomplete and has not been actively maintained for several years, but it does provide a much broader picture of the systems used to support the breadth of administrative activity at UW than the standard UW-IT Service Catalog provides.

Retirement justification: This portfolio is based upon an inventory completed several years ago, and included a significant breadth of the campus. The purpose of the inventory was to help identify shadow systems that were in use on campus and help developers find out what applications had already been created so duplication of effort might be avoided. The data is not being actively maintained and has not been updated in several years. While it is not being used within UW-IT, it does represent a significant inventory of shadow and other systems that may be useful for many purposes. The Board recommends that the portfolio be removed from the “active” UW-IT Service Catalog, but kept for reference there in a “sunsetting” state.

² <https://sharepoint.washington.edu/oim/app-portfolio>

6. Computer & Printer Troubleshooting

Service description: This service provides troubleshooting, repair, and relocation of desktop computer hardware, printers and associated peripherals, as well as “malware” infections of desktop software systems.

There are two types of repair services available. One is a fee-based service for departments that provides and facilitates repairs of desktop computers, printers, and associated peripherals, as well as physical relocation and setup.

The second is a free drop-in service offered to UW students, faculty, and staff to assist with computing problems, including operating system updates, anti-virus software installation and updates, peer-to-peer (P2P) software removal, and infected computers blocked from UW network access. Typically, only advice is offered, rather than hands-on remediation of infected or out-of-date systems.

Retirement justification: The SMB questions the necessity of the repair service because nearly all new computers purchased for campus use have three- or four-year vendor warranties available at a relatively small additional cost, and there are a number of local computer repair services available in close proximity to campus. At one time, this UW-IT service provided the convenience of free pickup and delivery; however, in the move for UW-IT to fully recover costs, there is now a fee for pickup/delivery that has made the UW-IT repair services less compelling. The most recent ASA reveals that use of the repair service is not particularly high, and it notes that this service would likely not be offered if it were being considered as a potential new service today.

While “relocation” services continues have value to campus units, a more appropriate delivery can be accomplished through a combination of UW Moving Services for the actual moving and outside vendors for “packing” service to ensure that the equipment is not damaged in transit. UW Moving Services would be the appropriate “central” coordinator for outside packing services.

The SMB therefore recommends that the hardware troubleshooting, repair and relocation services be discontinued.

The Computer Vet service – technically a software, not a hardware-oriented service – still provides important value and should be continued.

7. Husky Kiosk Service

Service description: The Husky Kiosk Service provides a secure, maintained software configuration suitable for public spaces, offering basic Web browsing; viewers for PDF, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents; and virus protection. This service is an

excellent option for those departments that wish to offer Web access in a public space.

Retirement justification: Demand for this service is very low, and there are many technologies that make it quite simple to “lock down” a machine that is available in a public space, including the “DeepFreeze” software. Should a department need a kiosk setup, the SMB believes it could easily either implement one on its own, or find others on campus to help. There does not appear to be sufficient demand or complexity in such a setup for UW-IT to offer this service.

Services to Move Out of UW-IT

8. Pager Services

Service description: Pager service has been arranged through a contract between the University of Washington and a local provider. The most basic pager is the display/vibrate type, which only displays the telephone number of the number to be called. The alpha-numeric type allows the person doing the paging to send a message up to 240 characters in length via email or Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). Two-way pagers can both send and receive text messages and have the same coverage as nationwide pagers.

Relocate justification: The primary customer for this service is UW Medicine for use in the hospitals. UW-IT should pursue the option of moving this service to UW Medicine.

9. HuskyTV

Service description: HuskyTV is the cable television service for the University of Washington community, and is predominantly used in the residence halls.

Relocate justification: Technology has changed significantly in this area. The primary customer of this service is Housing & Food Services, and the primary service is the redistribution of “commercial cable” and standard broadcast television content to locations on campus, traditionally through a TV cable infrastructure. However, students now typically view television content through other media: Netflix, YouTube, Hulu, and other Web-based services. The SMB had little information regarding this service, and recommends that UW-IT carefully consider whether this is a service that makes sense to continue to provide in the current environment. In this consideration, the SMB recommends that UW-IT gather demand and “value” data through surveys of students, where the end-user cost for the different options for viewing content be fully described.

Services to Review for Change

10. Videoconference Studios

Service description: Videoconferencing allows users to meet “visually” with people across the state or around the world without leaving the University of Washington, making it is easier and more cost effective than traveling. Participants can share documents and slide presentations across a videoconference link.

Two studios are available, both by reservation: Odegaard Videoconference Studio (capacity: 16; in stadium-style seating), and the Health Sciences Videoconference Studio (capacity: 35; with configurable layout). Both facilities charge an hourly fee, which covers the cost of operation, but does not cover equipment refresh costs.

Review for change justification: The SMB recommends that UW-IT develop a comprehensive strategy for videoconferencing services. While UW-IT has a strategy for some videoconferencing scenarios, such as Lync on the desktop, there is no holistic plan that takes into account all scenarios, ranging from 1:1 meetings to instructional/course needs to high-end/high-fidelity multi-point meetings. There are a number of recent changes in the videoconferencing landscape that are important to note:

- **No cost:** Campus users are now able to conveniently engage in 1:1 videoconferences at no cost and on their own using commonly available tools such as Skype, Google Hangouts, and Lync. It is not clear that there is a significant role for centralized, expensive, high-end/high-touch videoconferencing facilities today.
- **Operator-assisted, event capture:** The rapidly increasing capability and the rapidly dropping cost of videoconferencing solutions and camera technologies make possible a new videoconferencing service option: providing high-quality, operator-assisted videoconferencing and “event capture” services at any location. A “capture on-demand” service is currently offered in the high-end videoconferencing room in Odegaard and in Kane Hall auditoriums, but it is likely that many people want such an operator-assisted service at their own meeting room or classroom location.
- **Academic use:** The role of videoconferencing in the teaching and learning area to support distance education activities is large. Yet the UW-IT Service Catalog has no services for such cases. UW departments have been on their own when needing to deploy videoconferencing/collaboration tools in support of their academic mission.

The SMB recommends that UW-IT do a comprehensive assessment of the videoconferencing services that are in demand, and develop a strategy that leverages modern technologies and fosters broader use of videoconferencing, video capture, and distance learning. The status quo is not meeting the needs of many individuals and departments.

11. Mobile Phone Support

Service description: UW-IT provides support for many models of smartphones, including Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, Windows Mobile, and Palm devices.

Review for change justification: This service was initially established in an era when smartphones were difficult to setup and deploy. Today, they are but one example among a variety of devices where enterprise offerings are being overtaken by “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD). While many UW executives currently subscribe to and pay for this service, the Board questions if it remains valuable enough to continue. The fact that people are paying for this service could be because they started using it long ago when it was more needed, and simply haven’t thought about or used it in years. Alternative strategies to support users with mobile devices—whether personally owned or institutionally owned—should be considered, such as providing self-help resources, partnering with unit-level IT, and outsourcing to the cellular carrier, device manufacturer, or even to the app provider for some set of typical mobile apps.

The Board recommends that UW-IT follow both the short- and long-term recommendations regarding end-user devices that were included in the IT Costing Study³. These recommendations were listed as the second priority in the IT Costing Study report (see Section 9), and are as follows:

Short Term:

- Establish an interim process for campus units to communicate their interest in virtual desktops and coordinate pilots and planning efforts.
- Conduct a pilot with a small group of campus units using a virtual desktop infrastructure established and managed by UW-IT.

Long Term: Develop an institutional strategy and direction for end-user device management that addresses the role of virtualization, the role of the cloud, and refresh cycles.

In addition, the Board further recommends that UW-IT work with the SMB in coordinating and providing other assistance with server and storage pilot projects and related efforts to assess end-user needs and demands.

³ University of Washington Campus IT Costing Study Final Report, March 2012
<http://www.washington.edu/uwit/reports/2012.campus.itcosting.report.pdf>