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New Webmail system has enhanced features

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Along with the recent upgrades to Oakland University's e-mail system, Webmail users now have a new system that's more reliable, has a user-friendly interface, and a variety of features that allow more versatility.

OU's Webmail Direct 3.0 System allows users access to their Oakland e-mail accounts from any computer with a Web browser. OU's **University Technology Services** enabled the new system during the migration to the Mirapoint system in early March. Current and projected growth of e-mail usage along with the need for reinforced security mandated that the new system be installed.

"Basically, the old Webmail system was a separate product from the former e-mail server," said Chris Sellers, systems programmer II. "Now Webmail is integrated with the Mirapoint system. There also is some redundancy in the hardware, which can provide a system backup in case of a failure."

WebMail contains a variety of new features in a user-friendly interface. With WebMail, users now can:

- import and export an address book;
- add more information, including birthdays, into an address book;
- use spell check;
- select a priority before sending a message;
- easily upload attachments;
- sort messages by priority and other categories;
- search messages by keyword or senders;
- consult an extensive help menu for assistance.

WebMail also allows users to easily perform several useful tasks without having to log on to a UNIX host and edit text files. Through the Web-based interface, Webmail users can:

- forward a copy of incoming messages to another account, such as AOL, Yahoo or ISP accounts;
- check messages from an external POP e-mail account;
- more easily make password changes and vacation messages.

Students will find the mail-forwarding feature especially handy this fall as OU begins sending notification of items like bills, grades, schedule of classes and news to their free OU e-mail accounts. The new system also allows users to easily make a password change to their accounts without having to personally visit the Kresge Library computer lab with identification. And auto-responders, more commonly called vacation messages, can easily be created without having to go through a cumbersome programming process.

The new system server also allows up to 100 MB of storage including attachments. Through an access control feature, WebMail users can check the storage capacity of their e-mail folders.

"The new system is behaving far beyond our expectations," Sellers said. "Users have told us that it is faster and performs much better overall. The features such as password changes, creating vacation messages and message forwarding also are more visual and intuitive for users. We focused on the main features people used most often and tried to make them as Web friendly as we could. At any time, there's also a help menu to guide users through the features. The new system also allows us to perform diagnostics that will tell us beforehand if there's an impending problem.

"With these improvements, we can now focus more on the technology needs of the campus and work on ways to provide services that need our attention without having to baby the e-mail system."

For general information and answers to questions on OU's new e-mail system, visit the **OU E-mail Account Document Library** Web page. For other news, check the **University Technology Services** Web site by clicking the Info Tech button from anywhere on the OU Web site. For more information or to provide comments on the new e-mail system, contact the Helpdesk at

(248) 370-HELP (4357) or e-mail helpdesk@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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