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Reimagining software for video conferencing and data storage

considering overlaps with Google functionality

Chairs and Directors Meeting - February 26, 2026
Leadership Advisory Board Meeting - March 3, 2026

Janet Scannell

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Why are we talking about this?

- Software costs are increasing at rates never seen before
- Annual Budget Committee visit with set of planning questions, including approach to hypothetical 10% reduction in budget
- Shifts in the use of collaborative editing over past 5 years has led to more engagement with Google Drive
- Opportunity to improve how we share documents (and to retain them more effectively after students and colleagues leave)

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Software Cost Trends

Software licensing costs have been increasing dramatically. Gartner expects an average increase of 9% per year, with some significantly higher than that due to **buyouts, inflation, and the lack of competition**.

- VMware (for server virtualization)
  - after a 2023 buyout, costs went up by 800% to 1500% nationwide
  - ITS avoided a 400% increase by moving 300 servers to open source solution (took a yr)
- Zoom
  - most recent renewal was a 50% cost increase
- Microsoft
  - most recent renewal quote was a 300% increase (same price from 3 reseller quotes)
  - alternate licensing and persistent negotiating kept renewal near current pricing

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Current $ Situation

- ITS budget has many fixed costs and increasing campus needs
  - WiFi capacity, Software (acad & admin), Research (servers & storage), Security
- Some applications have overlapping features with Google
  - Zoom, Dropbox, Microsoft Office, CrashPlan, Duo
- Total annual (out-of-pocket) cost of those applications (in FY26):
  - **$ 230K** for those 5 applications
  - $ 20K for the Google Suite
- Upcoming increases?
  - Dropbox indicated that our unlimited storage contract won't be renewable. Cost will likely go up* **$100K/yr** for current # users. *more if don't get a 40% higher ed discount

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Campus input on software usage

- Evaluation announced in Oct. 14 email (by Janet, Michelle, Eric)
- Survey had 175 faculty and 295 staff respondents. Covered videoconferencing, short & long-term file storage, and backup
- Followed by 33+ discovery sessions with faculty and staff
- ITS staff have been gathering and testing use cases

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From the evaluation …

- Survey showed strong use of Dropbox, Google Drive, and Zoom with limited use of Meet. 22-61% of staff use Dropbox; 58-90% use Drive (varies by use case)
- Google Meet features are now equal to Zoom in most cases
- Few users are aware of the **Google Meet app** (less browser dependency)
- **“Google Drive for desktop”** is now equal to “Dropbox desktop app”
- Advanced features of Excel can get altered in Google Sheets (browser app)
- There is varied attention to document sharing, handoffs and backup

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The changes ahead...

- Changes will be timed with software renewal dates in mind
- The journey from Zoom to Meet will happen faster (**by Sept. 1**)
- The journey from Dropbox to My Drive will be slower (**multi-year**)
- Zoom and Dropbox will have ongoing exceptions for specific use cases
- CrashPlan will be opt-in*. *in alignment with users' risk management needs
- Will move from Duo to Google Authenticator in **Winter/Spring of 2027**

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Dropbox to Drive approach

- Goal is 40-60% fewer Dropbox users by January 2027
- ITS will contact people and departments with low use of Dropbox
- Users will determine timing for a move (and amount of cleanup effort)
- One month window of preparation, including training and curation
- ITS has a tool to move files (& sharing settings) -- not a manual process

NOTE: the renewal in March 2027 will benefit from these efforts. Will continue migrations in 2027/2028, as warranted.

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Brittle Sharing Practices

Current data management practices result in a LOT of storage (~50 TB) being “used” by departed students, fac, and staff. They are retained using a dummy owner called CarlFileKeeper (aka “CFK”).

	Active Users	Total Storage	CFK TB (% of total storage)
Dropbox	1031	95.6 TB	16 TB (16.9%)
Google Drive	3376	163.0 TB	31 TB (19.2%)

In 2028, ITS will start an annual deletion of files that have been in both the Google and Dropbox CFK for 5 years (i.e. owner departed in 2023). We want to encourage document sharing practices that will **avoid losing living documents**, especially faculty research-related and essential administrative materials.

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Summary

- this plan recognizes a shift to Google Drive, that has been happening over the past five years, and is a **strategic decision to utilize Google when possible**
- first phase is spread over 12 months and the long-term plan includes some continued use of Zoom and Dropbox
- **targeted outreach to low-use Dropbox users in March**
- training on use of Shared Drives and Google Groups will improve our data sharing practices and hand offs from departing community members
- contact Wiebke Kuhn or Erica Johnson with questions

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Questions & Discussion