



# Why Switch to the Cloud? Ask Orlando.

A year later, Google Apps is saving money, time and headaches for city employees.

**Two years ago**, Orlando, Fla., was faced with an aging e-mail system that needed replacement. The system was no longer maintained by the vendor, and in-house efforts to keep the system up and running were becoming cumbersome and costly. In addition, the e-mail system wasn't meeting the city's needs in today's modern world.

"The hardware was getting old, and the features that we needed were not available for the product that we had," said Orlando CIO Rosa Akhtarkhavari.

Orlando started looking at other alternatives. After creating a list of desired features, the city shopped around and chose Google Apps and Google Postini Services, a cloud solution that met Orlando's need for new features and saved money.

Google Apps provides software as a service. It includes applications such as Google Mail (Gmail) and other collaborative tools, like Google Docs. Google Apps includes video and voice chat, and users can even create internal wikis and websites.

Orlando worked with Google partner Infosys to implement Google Apps in late 2009; the migration from their prior system took just over two months. The new solution not only gave the city more functionality and better security for its e-mail system, but over the

last year, the use of the Google applications has evolved to include a host of collaborative tools that allow Orlando to conduct business more efficiently and save money.

And because Google Apps runs in Google's secure data centers, the city doesn't have to worry about maintaining the system or upgrading it as new features become available. Since these applications require no hardware replacement or system maintenance, Orlando will save \$200,000 annually over the next few years, said Akhtarkhavari.

"We moved from capital costs, especially at the point where we needed to replace our system, to an operational cost," Akhtarkhavari said. "The skills needed to maintain the system are much lower, so we are able to meet our customers' demands much faster."

## E-Mail Efficiency, Security and Filtering

Orlando has realized a great deal of efficiency since implementing Gmail as its e-mail system. Many important security and filtering features were also included in the package, saving the city money.

Previously fire and police personnel — 50 percent of Orlando's e-mail users — didn't have access to the full e-mail client. Thus their mailboxes were only 200

## By Moving to the Cloud, Orlando Is:

- ✓ realizing \$200,000 annual cost savings;
- ✓ increasing e-mail storage more than 100-fold, saving valuable time for many employees;
- ✓ enhancing access to information on mobile phones; and
- ✓ streamlining communication within and among departments with new collaboration tools.

MB, and they often spent valuable time cleaning up their mailboxes. With Gmail, each Orlando employee gets 25 GB of e-mail storage, more than a 100-fold increase for public safety employees.

Gmail provides a number of features that Orlando employees like using, such as autosave for e-mails. The autosave feature automatically saves an e-mail as a draft in case a browser unexpectedly closes before a message is sent. Akhtarkhavari said Orlando was initially concerned about e-mail threading cluttering employee mailboxes with unnecessary messages, but Google lets the city turn e-mail threading off or on as it chooses. Another Gmail feature that Orlando employees like is the priority inbox, which automatically sorts messages by importance to a particular employee, said Akhtarkhavari. Gmail's internal filter enables it to recognize common senders and give messages priority based on that and other factors.

"So we like getting all those features, and what we like most is that Google does talk to us and listens," Akhtarkhavari said. "And we see those changes coming in much faster than we would have been able to do with an internally maintained system."

Google Apps also provides mobile access to e-mail and securely supports multiple devices, such as smartphones. Mobile access is a great advantage for public safety workers, allowing them to check messages while in the field.

Gregory Hoggatt, deputy chief of the city's Fire Support Service Bureau, said Gmail has made access to e-mail, documents and calendars easier.

"We have been able to make our own groups for specialty workers and have the ability to edit these groups as needed," Hoggatt said. "Gmail has also simplified the e-mail program. Each person uses the same program, therefore no special training is required."

Google Apps also includes Google Postini Services, which provides e-mail security and content filtering support. Postini enables IT to turn on transport layer security, which securely exchanges e-mail communications over the Internet, allowing secure remote access for mobile or telecommuting employees. Postini's e-mail reporting feature helps maintain IT compliance by providing content filtering and monitoring tools.

Postini's spam filtering capabilities also allowed the city to do away with its two existing spam filtering appliances, saving Orlando the time and money previously spent maintaining those appliances.

Orlando's Active Directory manages employee access to Gmail and Postini, which is helpful because the city has been consolidating Active Directories. Akhtarkhavari said Active Directory control also helped the city meet its Dec. 1 goal of implementing e-mail archiving and e-discovery from Google.



## Collaborative Tools

Besides providing an efficient way to manage e-mail, Google Apps includes several collaborative features, such as Google Docs and the ability to create internal websites. These tools are changing the way employees communicate with one another in Orlando.

Akhtarkhavari said Orlando is seeing an increase in the creation of internal sites and the use of collaboration tools. The city's Minority and Women Business Enterprise program uses its website to post board meetings online. The Orlando Police and Fire departments are creating their own sites and posting video for internal use. Officers can now easily share visual information via video and also post comments.

Using Docs as a way to correspond between departments has made communication much smoother. Akhtarkhavari said her own IT department uses Docs to create questionnaires. Once recipients fill in their responses on their computer, the information is automatically captured in a spreadsheet for easy review.

Employees are also using Google instant messaging to communicate more efficiently. "I meet with police and fire every other week, but I get to chat online with the deputy chief three or four times a day with quick questions," Akhtarkhavari said. "It just saves us the phone call, the e-mail or waiting for a meeting."

Implementing Google Apps has transformed the way business is conducted within Orlando. Not only has the city found a cost-effective way to manage e-mail and security, Google's collaborative tools also have increased Orlando's efficiency.

"Everyone is coming in with their ideas and contributing to make things work better," said Akhtarkhavari. "It's just opening up more collaboration, and innovative ideas are coming from everywhere."



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