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Changes Ahead:

*Understanding the Email, Calendar, and Google Storage Changes
for Employees and Departments*

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The landscape has changed: Virginia Tech needs to adapt

- Virginia Tech's use of 'no-cost' Google storage began in 2008 and quickly changed the way we managed file storage.
- In 2021, Google announced they were placing costs and caps on storage. For VT, these new costs are effective **July 1st, 2024**.
- Microsoft is doing something similar, but their cost increases will start in July 2025.

The era of 'no-cost' or 'low-cost' and 'unlimited' online storage is ending across all cloud-based software solutions.

While the university will continue to centrally fund a large portion of the costs for Google and Microsoft, the costs for additional storage will be covered by departments who need additional storage.

The landscape has changed, part 2

- Cyberthreats are increasing in risk and sophistication; we need to protect our people, data, and systems.
- Virginia Tech has made increasing our cybersecurity protections a top operational goal: it is a focus area of the IT Transformation.
- ***Email is the #1 vector for cyber attacks.***
- Increasing the security of our email systems is critical to strengthening our overall cybersecurity posture.



About Google storage and services

First, let's clear up a misconception we've been hearing over and over:

“We're moving from Google to Microsoft.”

This is **TRUE** for email/calendar, **FALSE** for online storage.

**The university is maintaining access to BOTH
Google and Microsoft collaboration platforms for employees and students**

These changes include two initiatives



Email migration: Gmail to M365 Exchange Online

Goals:

- To leverage security benefits that come with M365 licenses
- To realize efficiencies of consolidating on a single email solution



Google storage management

Goals:

- To mitigate the fiscal impact of new Google storage charges

About Google storage and services, cont'd

- Virginia Tech will continue to centrally fund a large portion of the costs for Google (and Microsoft) storage.
- Beginning in July 2024, the costs for *additional* Google storage allocations will be purchased by departments as needed.
- Departments, colleges, and administrative units will need to consider how they want to manage storage on an ongoing basis.



New approaches to persistent issues

For the last 10+ years, we've have had little incentive to cull files or manage email storage, but as these changes take effect, we will need to give it some thought.

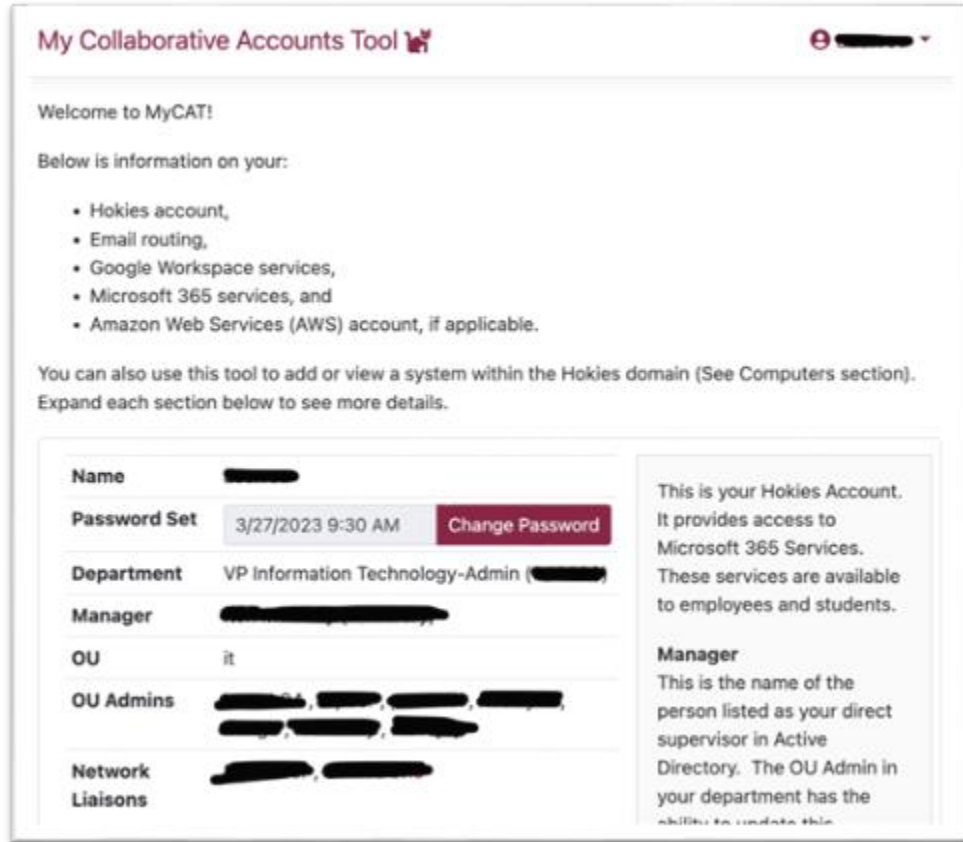
Historically, Google Shared Drives have been too easy to set up, and too easy to abandon with no clear owner or management. To resolve this, we're asking departments to claim existing Shared Drives that need to continue, and to approve the creation of new ones.

We need to manage storage again, as a university

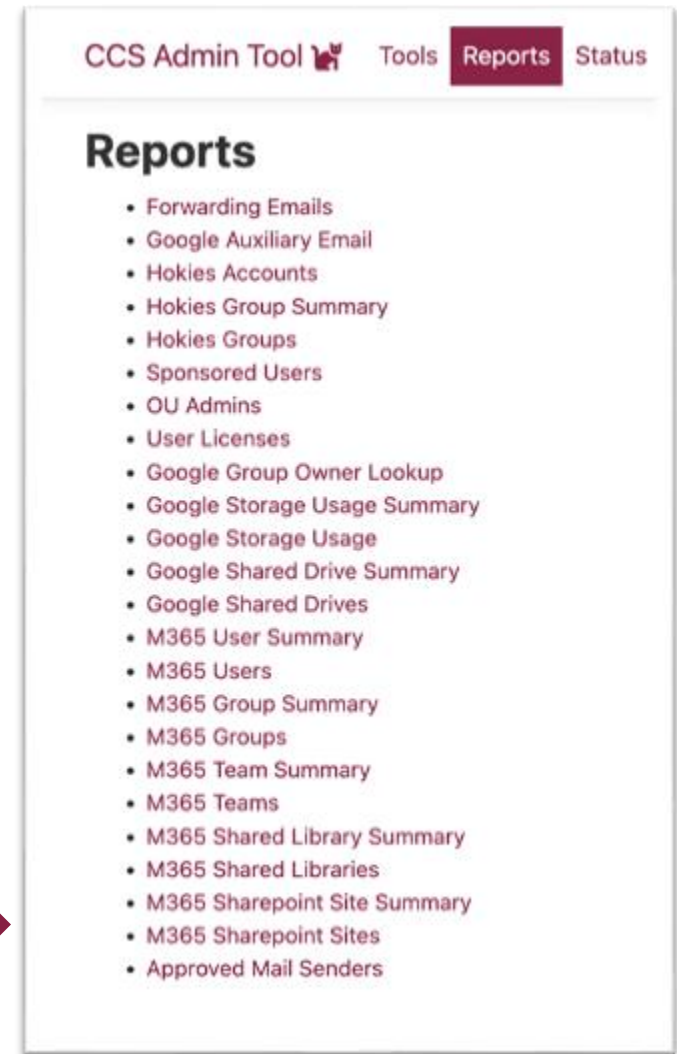
- Each department/unit needs to understand how much storage they currently use across both Google and Microsoft platforms.
- You can then consider the costs to supplement your base storage allocation, as well as what could reduce those costs and maximize the efficiency of storage purchases.
- Also, we need to properly manage stored data when someone leaves the university or changes jobs.
 - Files shared from individual accounts can lead to unanticipated data loss when a person moves on.



Tools to help support these considerations



The Division of IT has developed tools that allow IT staff and employees to assess and manage this information in real time.

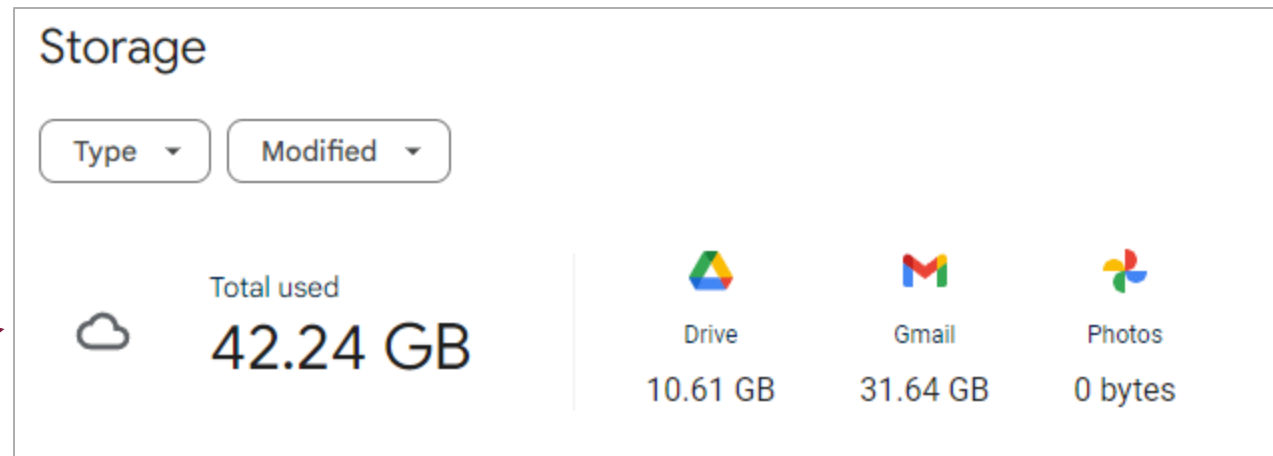
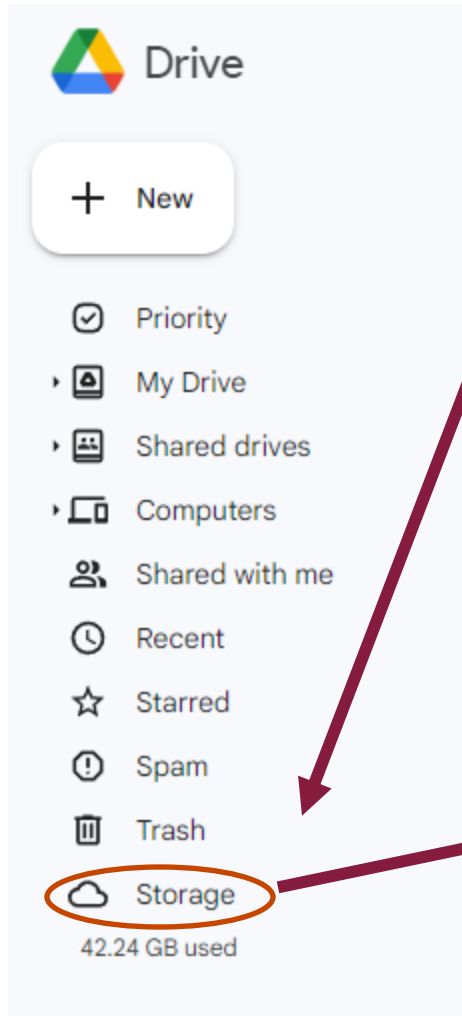


Individuals: Log into MyCAT (My Collaborative Accounts Tool) - mycat.ccs.vt.edu to see **your** Shared Drive storage totals.

IT staff: Use the CAT (CCS Admin Tool) to monitor and allocate storage department-wide.

Tools to help support these considerations, cont'd

- You can also view your total storage (not including Shared Drives) within your personal Google Drive Account.



A note about data retention & file management

- Many of us work with files and other data that must be kept for a required period or deleted according to prescribed schedules, in compliance with university, state, or federal policy.
- ***We must keep those retention schedules in mind as we review our online storage.***
- The Division of IT is working with Records Management Services (rms.vt.edu) and other groups on campus to develop additional guidance on this topic.
- Consult your department records coordinator, the Virginia Public Records Act, and VT Policy 2000 (policies.vt.edu/2000.pdf) for detailed information.

A note about Google Photos

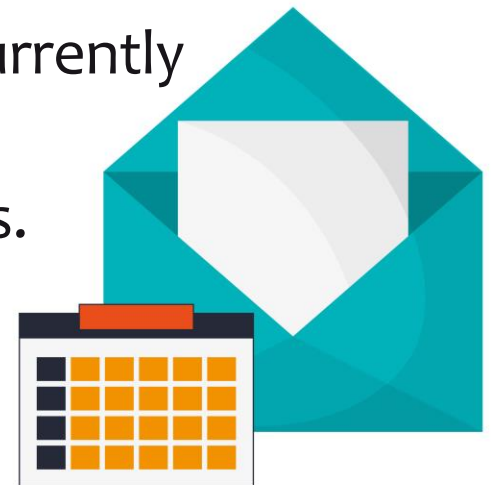
- Google Photos will be removed from our Google apps on January 16, 2024.
- Under the new Google Workspace for Education contract, **the Photos app will no longer be available on Virginia Tech Google accounts.**
- Everyone needs to empty Google Photos, and stop any auto-uploads into the app.
- **Be sure it's completely emptied out by January 16, 2024**



*We released new guidance on this earlier this week! Check the website – it.vt.edu/license-changes

About email and calendars

- For employees and students, email and calendar administration will centralize on Exchange Online (Microsoft).
- This change provides:
 - **Significant security improvements**
 - A solution to the incompatibility that persists between Google and Microsoft email and scheduling applications
 - Reduced redundancy in enterprise applications, a goal of IT Transformation
- Email and calendar will be migrated for all employees who are currently using Gmail.
- Employees who already use Exchange Online will see no changes.



Email and calendar migrations

Employees will be migrated with their departments, beginning with some test groups in late November. As migrations begin, our communications will include:

- Posting and sharing the complete schedule on our website
- Publishing a campus notice when the schedule is available
- Reaching out to departments and individual users 3-4 weeks in advance so that they know their scheduled dates, understand how the migration will work

There will be an option to decline email migration services. We will share more information on this option soon.

We are defining the migration windows now and will ask departments (through their IT Staff) to rank the options.

This will help align our plans with department preferences as closely as possible.

Administrators and IT staff at the department, college, and unit level

- **Organizational Unit Administrators** (OU Admins) within your IT staff are very important to this process.
 - The Division of IT hosts a monthly OU Admin meeting coordinate and resolve questions; open to all OU Admins.
- OU Admins can access the CAT tool, modify storage allocations, approve requests for new shared drives, and more.
- Once leadership has a clear understanding of current storage totals and future costs for each department and unit, departments can chart a path forward and, if necessary, plan for the costs of additional storage with finance staff.

At the department, college, and unit level, cont'd

- We recognize that this is a complex decision that must be tailored to the needs and existing culture of each college, department, or unit.
- Many departments and OU administrators have begun developing plans for consideration.
- It is important for deans, directors, and department heads to discuss these topics with their IT staff (OU Admins).

The screenshot displays a quota management interface. At the top, it shows summary statistics: Total Used: 6 GB, Quota Assigned: 70 GB, and Quota Planned: 201 GB. Below this, there are filters for Department User (Yes), OU User (Yes), and Department (Collaborative Computing Solutions (0586)). There are 'Select All' and 'Select None' buttons. The main table lists users with columns for OU User, Assignment Last Set, Assigned (GB), Planned (GB), and Used (GB). A red highlight is under the 'Assigned (GB)' column for the first user. To the right of the table is a 'Selected Users' section with a table of user details and 'Deselect' buttons. Below that is an 'Action' section with a dropdown menu set to 'Set New Planned Quota'. Further down is a 'Select Planned Quota Assignment' section with a dropdown set to '25 GB'. At the bottom, there is a 'Planned quota assigned after change:' section with a table showing 'Storage Available' (510 GB), 'Quota Allocated' (201 GB), 'Quota Remaining' (309 GB), and 'OU Plan Status' (Good). A green notification bar at the bottom right says 'Quota assignment updated'.

OU User	Assignment Last Set	Assigned (GB)	Planned (GB)	Used (GB)	Action
Yes		5	10	6.24	Select
Yes		5	25	0	Select
Yes		5	15	0	Select
Yes		5	25	0.01	Select
Yes		5	25	0.13	Select
Yes		5	20	0.01	Select

Pid	Used (GB)	Quota (GB)	Planned Quota (GB)	Action
tbraki93	0	5	25	Deselect
pzachiy	0.01	5	25	Deselect
zsmit856	0.1	5	25	Deselect

Planned quota assigned after change:	
Storage Available	510 GB
Quota Allocated	201 GB
Quota Remaining	309 GB
OU Plan Status	Good

Know these key dates

- **January 16, 2024**
 - Google Photos app is turned off for all users - you must have no data stored in Photos by that date, or it will count against your department's storage allocation, and you will be unable to remove it on your own.
- **March 15, 2024**
 - Departments/Colleges/Units implement Google storage allocation plans for individual employees and Shared Drives.
- **May 1, 2024**
 - Departments confirm FY 2025 storage purchases

Where can I get help?

- The Google and Microsoft License Changes website – it.vt.edu/license-changes
- Your department's IT team or person
 - *Who is that? Look on MyCAT (mycat.ccs.vt.edu)*
- Contact 4Help – by phone at 540-231-4357, or at 4help.vt.edu
- Request a CCS (Collaborative Computing Solutions) consultation through the IT Service Catalog, viewable at 4help.vt.edu

Take home messages

- The days of 'free cloud storage' are over – departments must get back in the business of managing our storage across platforms
- These changes do not mean that all stored employee files must be moved from Google to Microsoft
- Employee and student email and calendars are consolidating on the Microsoft platform for added security and efficiency benefits
- Emptying the Google Photos App is something that requires immediate attention from all users prior to January 16, 2024
- Departments, colleges, institutes, and administrative areas need to consider their current Google storage totals and their options for how to proceed

Questions?

For additional details, visit it.vt.edu/license-changes, especially the 'Info for Employees' and 'Support Resources' pages.

Thank you for taking the time -- and for your questions!