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Communication and collaboration are the tracks upon which an interdisciplinary research institution operates. National discussions are underway with the various federal agencies, including NSF and NIH, as to the impact of new generation tools on scholarly effort and the explosion in volume and options at individual and institutional disposal. At a local level, Berkeley campus departments are engaged in numerous efforts to use this new generation of tools for their daily activities. As our options in this space continue to expand, I have asked the Collaboration Services group within IST's Data Services department to build an overview of the current state of collaborative tools on campus and the planned future directions of these tools and assess those directions in the context of the national discussion.

“Collaborative tools” for our purposes are limited to systems that provide computer users with:

- Email
- Calendaring and scheduling
- Content Sharing (Photo, Video, Social Bookmarking, Files, etc.)
- Group Interaction\* (see footnote below)

The Collaboration Services-led team will be gathering and analyzing data related to these collaborative tools. They will be contacting your department and other departments and units on campus to determine:

- The current needs filled and users served by each collaborative tool your department provides to your customers
- The current cost of delivering each tool
- A three-year roadmap for each tool

The team will also be performing user research to determine if there are major unmet collaborative tool needs that should be addressed as part of this strategy.

The project's final report will be used not as a tactical reaction to the current technology offerings on campus, but rather as input to this year's update of the campus' broader technology strategic plan. This plan will be made available to every campus community member for comment.

The information from this overview of campus-wide collaborative tools needs and capabilities will inform our efforts to refresh the strategic plan, helping us to better understand the current landscape and discern what trends are emerging regarding the user of these tools on campus, to identify the issues we should be considering as we move forward, and to prepare guidelines for evaluating and selecting solutions.

This group will be reaching out to your organization soon. If you have a point person with whom the group should work with, please forward that name on to Ian Crew (Supervisor, Collaboration Services, [icrew@berkeley.edu](mailto:icrew@berkeley.edu), 2-7795) or me.

Thank you,

Shel Waggener  
Associate Vice Chancellor and  
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\*-“Group interaction” tools help members of departments and units, teams, and other groups interact with one another on shared work. A few representative examples include discussion forums, collaborative editing tools, wikis, and tools for managing task assignment and tracking.