

ITS Management Briefing – Faculty and Staff Directory

Background

In 2012, ITS and the Communications and Marketing (C&M) unit decided to end production of a printed UNB phonebook. Key factors contributing to this decision included:

- End-of-life of the software system used to produce the printable file
- Significant personnel time required for acquiring and processing phonebook updates
- Emergence of alternative directory tools, including the Global contacts list in Exchange; the VOIP directory on the Fredericton campus; the web-based UNB Directory service.

Some faculty and staff members have expressed disappointment over the lack of a printed directory.

Print directory production challenges

Producing a reliable, accurate, and up-to-date directory has never been a trivial matter, and as technology changes, approaches to providing the university community with readily accessible directory information, including departmental and individual phone numbers, email addresses, fax numbers, and physical addresses must also change. The last fully updated printed UNB phonebook was published in the Fall of 2012, when it had become clear the software code used to generate the printable file was no longer sustainable given changes to underlying technologies including database architecture; coding languages, practices, and standards; and print setup requirements. Efforts were made to resuscitate the failing system, but were unsuccessful. Finally, due to continuing reductions in staffing across the university, neither ITS nor C&M could justify the staff time required to edit the directory. In the meantime, new ways of delivering directory information were being developed.

Online directory tools and resources come of age

With the introduction of connectED, the suite of productivity tools including Microsoft's Exchange email and calendaring, ITS launched a new directory system used to authenticate faculty, staff, and student users to UNB IT systems. This directory is hooked into the Datatel system, and contains names, email addresses, position titles, office numbers, etc.; maintenance is largely automated. This directory populates the Global contact list in Exchange, and is the primary source of information for the VOIP directory system. At the same time a new, web-based faculty and staff directory was introduced; access was restricted to community members only, but this has since been changed to make the UNB Directory more open—no login is required. This tool can be searched, or browsed alphabetically by department or individual name, and is campus-specific. The web address is <https://phonebook.unb.ca/listings>.

Still want a print directory?

ITS has a project underway to develop a printable version of the UNB Directory, including lists of departments and individual faculty and staff members. A new way has to be found to collate and format individual entries however, so an availability date is not yet known. ITS will let you know when the directory is ready to print.

March 18, 2014, Terry Nikkel, AVP, ITS