WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

Memorandum

DATE	April 27, 2011
TO	Members, Select Committee on Legislative Technology and Process
FROM	Jamie Schaub, Information Technology Manager
SUBJECT	Legislative Branch Email

As many of you know, the legislative branch is planning to migrate to a new email system and LSO staff has been working with the Select Committee on this process since the fall of 2009. The plan has been to migrate from the current GroupWise environment to the Microsoft Exchange environment for staff and then to migrate legislator accounts to Microsoft Exchange. In late 2009, the executive branch was planning an enterprise-wide conversion to Microsoft Exchange and our GroupWise servers were not reliable, so we migrated our email system to the executive branch to facilitate conversion to Exchange.

The Legislature appropriated funding during the 2010 Budget Session to migrate to Exchange. Our initial analysis examined where the Microsoft Exchange environment should be hosted. The three possibilities were: 1) LSO-hosted environment; 2) executive branch-hosted environment; or 3) Microsoft-hosted environment. Based on our analysis at the time, the Microsoft-hosted solution provided the best options for cost, timeliness of implementation, and services available. In early 2010, the executive branch elected to issue an RFP to determine if they should choose another route for enterprise email, rather than continuing with their planned Exchange migration. We delayed our email migration to determine if the executive branch solution would be a viable option for the legislative branch. In October 2010, the executive branch selected Google as the branch's email provider.

During the 2010 Budget Session, the Legislature appropriated funding to begin conversion of all legislative technology systems to a unified platform and provided an additional appropriation during the 2011 General Session to develop Microsoft SharePoint as the unified platform. We selected SharePoint as our core business application because of its many features including workflow, document management and web content management. A single-platform approach will be beneficial for legislators and staff, so they do not need to use multiple applications to perform legislative tasks and a single application also reduces the learning curve for users and IT support.

After the 2011 General Session, we analyzed the extent to which Google could be integrated with SharePoint, because seamless integration with email is critical to provide automated workflows for many legislative processes as part of the new system. We determined that there are many features within SharePoint that we will not be able to fully utilize if we choose Google. We also believe we would add risk and uncertainty to our SharePoint project by trying to integrate a non-Microsoft solution for our email environment. Finally, there are several executive branch policies in place that could limit the use of legislators' mobile devices if we use the executive branch's system.

Based on this analysis, we recommend selecting Microsoft Exchange as the legislative branch's new email platform. Please let me know if you have any questions. We are very excited about the potential to create more efficient and effective technology support for the legislative branch through these initiatives.