



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
IT SERVICES

# Email & Calendar at SFU: The Past, Present and Future

**Melissa Luck – Business Analyst, IT Services, SFU**

BCNET 2017 Conference | April 26, 2017

# Overview | Session Content



Over 95%  
Email &  
Calendar  
Goodness!

- **Background**
- **Email & calendar at SFU since 2008:**
  - Successes
  - Challenges
  - Lessons learned
- **What's next for SFU?**
- **Q & A**

# Background | Email & Calendar at SFU

**Current system:** Zimbra Collaboration Suite, a.k.a. SFU Connect

**Number of email accounts:** ~70,000

- Students
- Staff, faculty, retirees
- Sponsored accounts

Alumni are offered email forwarding service, not full email accounts.



*(McFogg doesn't have an email account.)*

# Background | Email at SFU

*Some examples of use cases:*

- **Transmission/receipt** of messages and documents.
- **Data archiving**, e.g., for investigations, as knowledge base.
- **Confirmation of receipt**, e.g., of legal documents.
- **Reminders/task list**, e.g., sending an email to myself to remember to buy bananas.

# Background | Calendaring at SFU

*Some examples of use cases:*

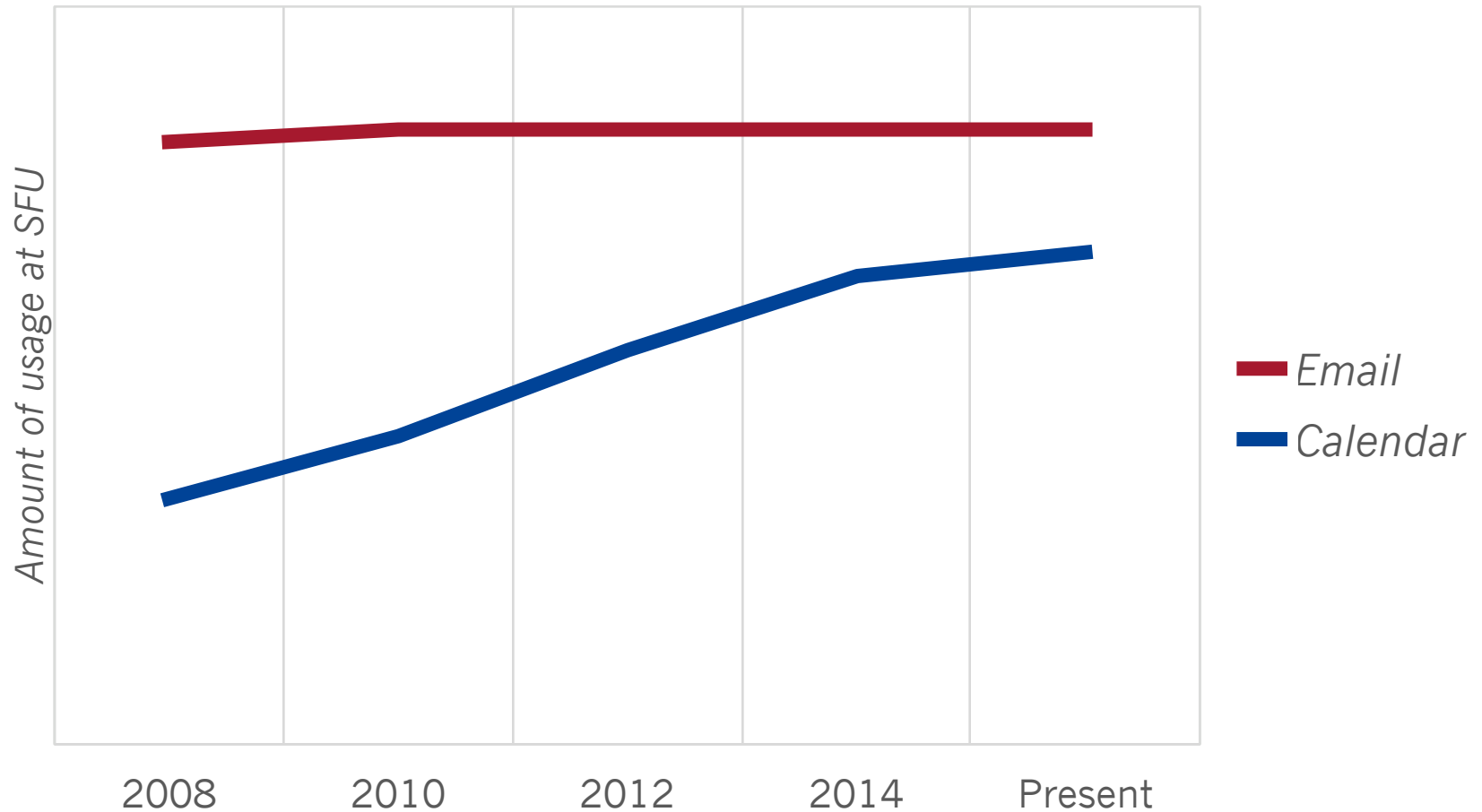
- **Meetings/appointments.** Can be recurring, with or without attendees, room/resource bookings.
- **Reminders/notes,** often as events in a separate calendar.
- **Room/resource management:** Administration of bookings or request of bookings.
- **Public view of events,** either via synchronization or publicly accessible URL.

# Background | Access Methods

## *Clients:*

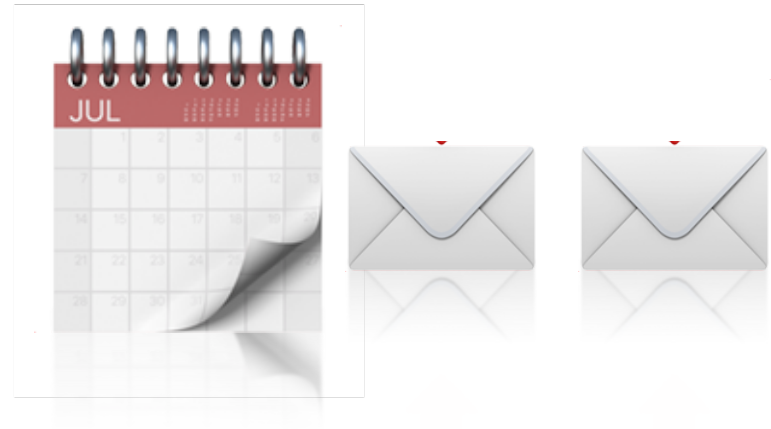
- **Desktop clients**, e.g., Eudora, Outlook, Thunderbird, Mutt.
- **Web clients**, for desktop and mobile browsers.
- **Mobile apps**, native and third party.

## Background | 2008 to Present, Growth of Usage



# Back in 2008 | The State of Things

- **Two** email systems + separate calendar system.
- Limited collaboration
- More **reliance on local** IT support
- **Limited integration** with systems outside of email & calendaring.
- Beginning of the rise in **smart phone** and **tablet device** usage.





# Back in 2008 | The State of Things

- **Two** email systems + separate calendar system.
- Limited collaboration
- More **reliance on local** IT support
- **Limited integration** with systems outside of email & calendaring.
- Beginning of the rise in **smart phone** and **tablet device** usage.

**SFU webmail**

**Protect yourself from viruses.** Do not open an attachment of any kind, even if it comes from someone you know, until you can separately verify that the person really did send it. Do not assume that an email or attachment is legitimate just because you know or think you know the sender.

Welcome to SFUwebmail, an innovative webmail program that lets you check your SFU e-mail anytime and from anywhere, using only a web browser.

1. Please choose the version of SFUwebmail you'd like to use.
2. Enter your SFU Computing ID and password.  
(If you're using the SFU Alumni e-mail system, include "@alumni.sfu.ca" after your user ID)
3. Press the Go! button and you're on your way.

☐ Improved! SFUwebmail Expert User (Frames) [About this version](#)

☒ SFUwebmail Standard [About this version](#)

☐ SFUwebmail Low bandwidth [About this version](#)

ID:

Password:

**GO!**

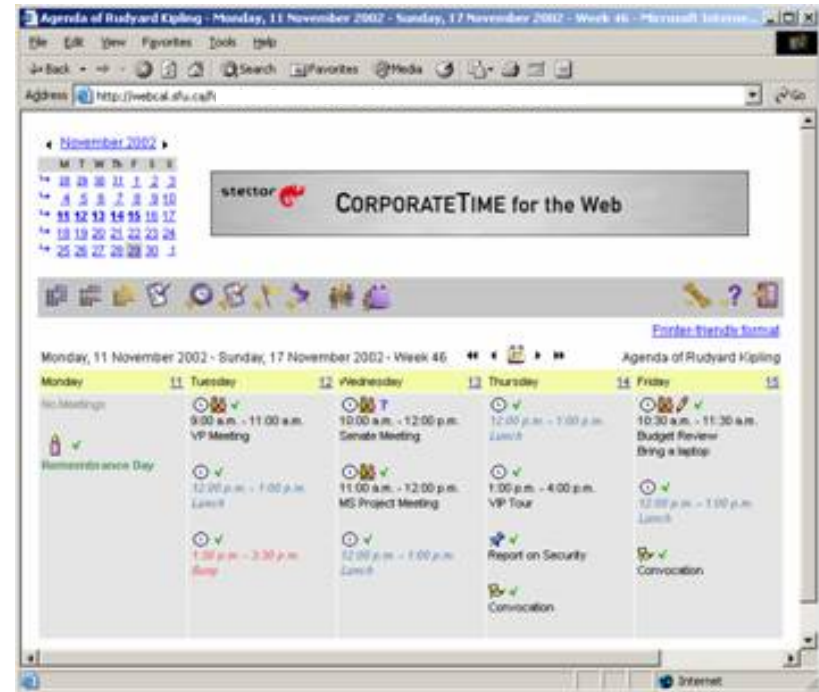
[Trouble logging in? Click here.](#)

EMUmail version 2.7 © 1997 dotSHOP [SFU Home](#)

*SFU Webmail*

# Back in 2008 | The State of Things

- **Two** email systems + separate calendar system.
- Limited collaboration
- More **reliance on local** IT support
- **Limited integration** with systems outside of email & calendaring.
- Beginning of the rise in **smart phone** and **tablet device** usage.



*CorporateTime*

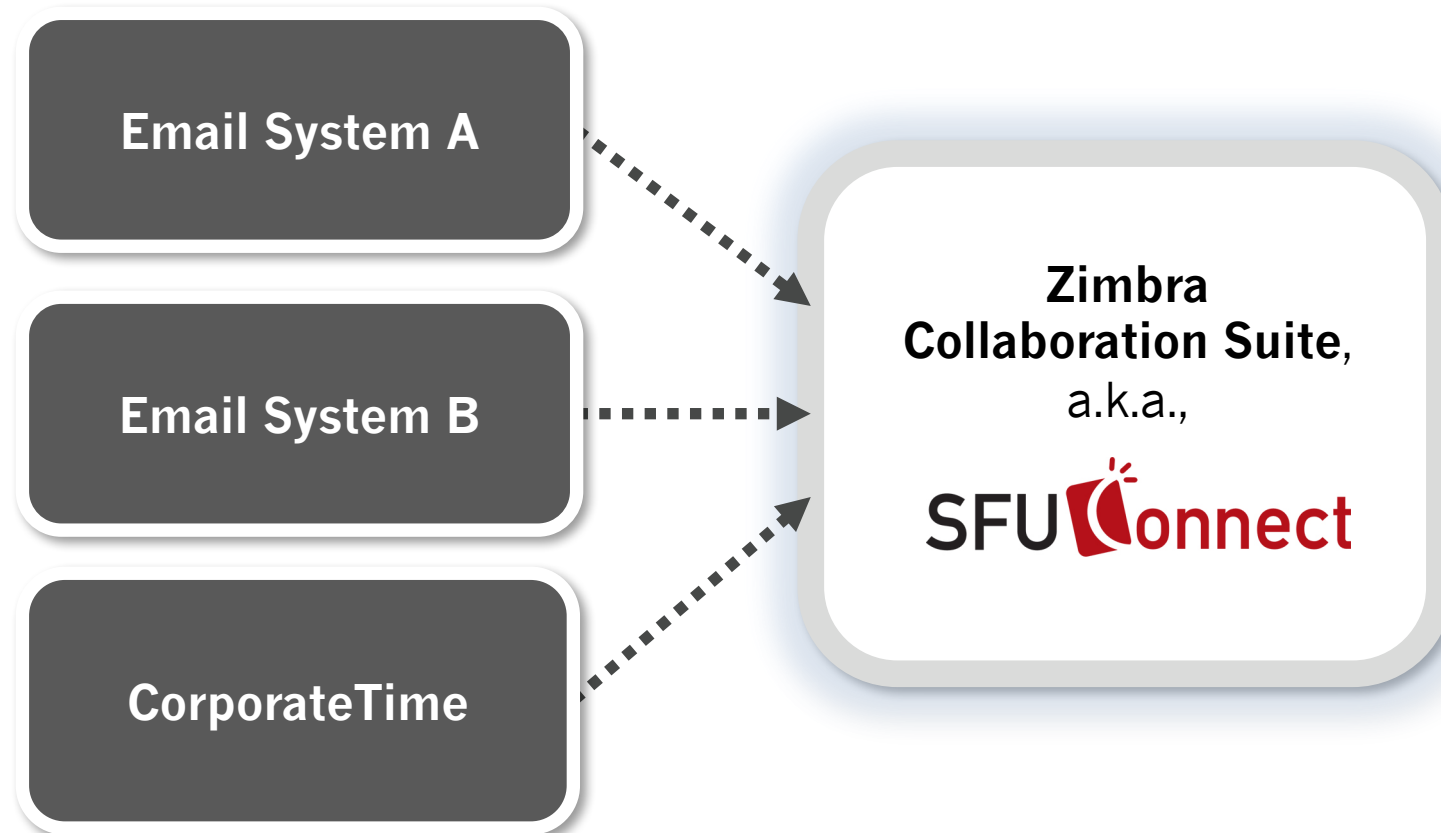
# Back in 2008 | The State of Things

- **Two** email systems + separate calendar system.
- Limited collaboration
- More **reliance on local** IT support
- **Limited integration** with systems outside of email & calendaring.
- Beginning of the rise in **smart phone** and **tablet device** usage.

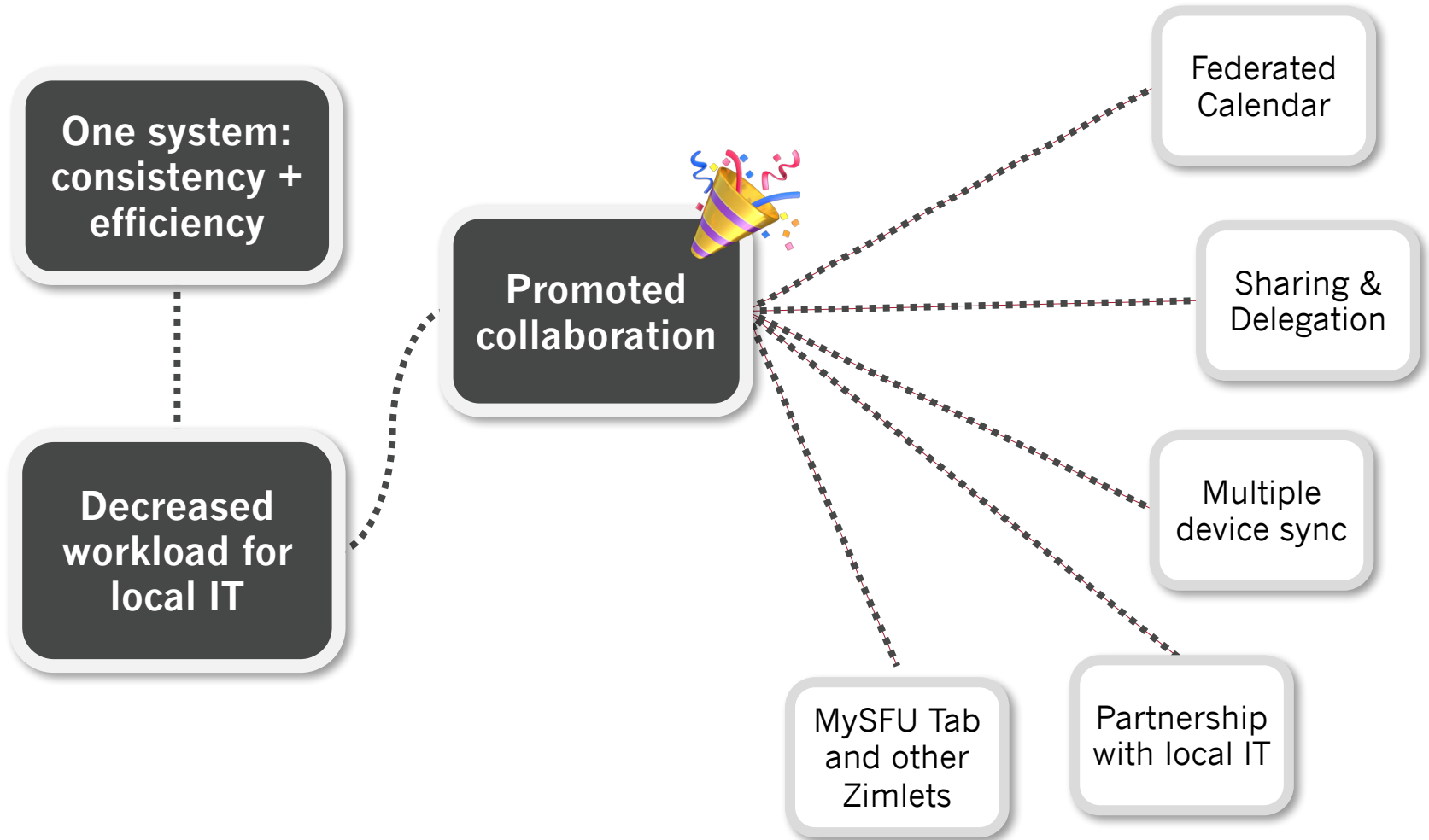


*Eudora*

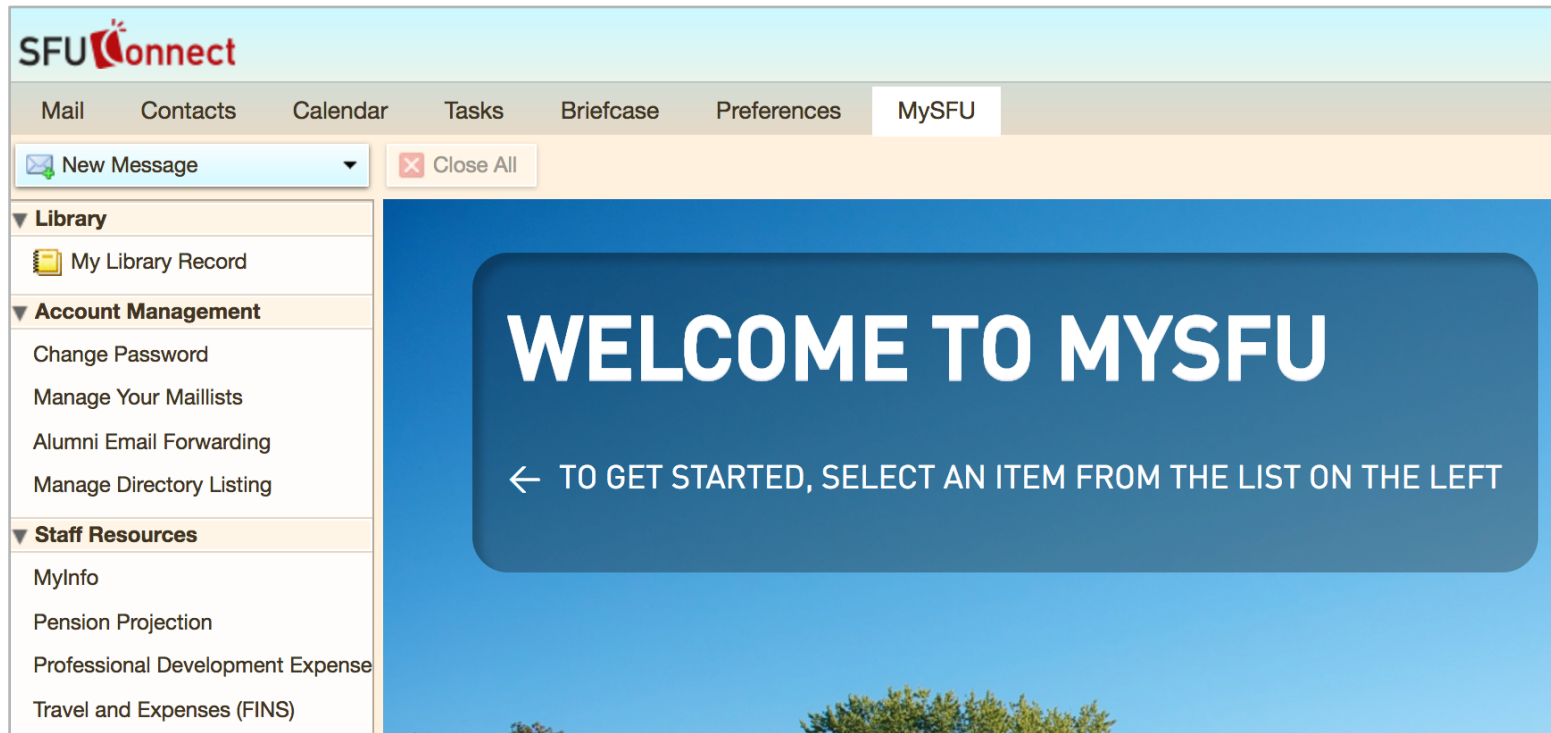
## 2008 - 2011 | Transitioning from two email systems and CorporateTime



# SFU Connect | Successes



# SFU Connect | MySFU Tab



*(Staff view shown above; students and faculty can see course info.)*

# SFU Connect | Challenges



- Complaints regarding performance
- Calendaring:
  - Expected behaviour
  - Best practices
  - Sync issues with third party clients



- Understand users: workflow, foundational knowledge
- Third party clients vs. web client
- Training sessions: separate audiences
- Partnership between local and enterprise IT



# What's Next? | Future of email & calendar at SFU

- Exploration of mainstream solutions
- Cloud vs. on premise

# Conclusion | Last thoughts...

- Continue **improving our communication** with end users and local IT partners to learn about needs.
- **Cloud vs. on premise** isn't necessarily a simple decision for us.
- Email and calendar are **here to stay** in the foreseeable future.

*"...and I'll still be okay without an email account!"*



That's all, folks!

**Questions?**