Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by meggebrecht - 2010/05/06 15:30

University of California-Davis has chosen not to use Google as its e-mail provider after conducting a pilot test of Gmail, reported Information Week earlier this week. Gmail had been under evaluation for organization-wide deployment for the universityâ€™s 30,000 faculty and staff members.

Whatâ€™s particularly interesting, though, is that university CIO Peter Siegel, among others, sent employees a letter explaining that there were doubts about whether Google could keep their e-mails private. According to Information Week, the letter said faculty members were concerned that â€œour campusâ€™s commitment to protecting the privacy of their communications is not demonstrated by Google and that the appropriate safeguards are neither in place at this time nor planned for in the near future.â€•

The memo also referred to another letter -- this one sent by international regulators last month complaining about the Google Buzz launch debacle and suggesting that the sloppy introduction of the social networking service reflected Googleâ€™s continued lack of respect for the privacy of its users.

In March, Yale opted to put on hold its migration to Google Apps for Education. One of Yaleâ€™s concerns, according to computer science professor Michael Fischer, was privacy. Fischer told the Yale Daily News that Google wouldnâ€™t provide the university with a list of countries to which Yaleâ€™s data could be sent. â€œYale is an international, multicultural community of scholars,â€• he said. â€œStudents deserve to have rights to their information while on campus.â€•

Corporations may not have the same political concerns as universities, but privacy goes hand in hand with security, and I wonder whether this is indicative of a growing anti-Google sentiment. Will Googleâ€™s reputation on privacy affect its ability to become a larger player in the enterprise space?

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by caragarretson - 2010/05/10 09:41

As you point out universities tend to be more sensitive to privacy issues than corporations, but still I would think that these doubts that two influential universities have will spread to other organizations. Google still has quite a bit to prove in the enterprise space,and these privacy concerns aren't going to help.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/05/11 13:25

I tend to think that in fact corporations are more sensitive about privacy and IP. Universities are all about free and clear access. When was the last time you walked thru a campus and you had to show your ID? When was the last time you went to see a client in Chicago/NY/SF, and you DIDNâ€™T show your ID? Google has a way to go with being enterprise ready, and this is the first blow.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by caragarretson - 2010/05/20 13:24

I agree with what you say about univerisites being more open about security, but I think privacy is a different story. Higher education doesn't want to restrict access, but I think it cares very much about who has access to students' and professors' information. Sometimes that's a controdiction, to be sure.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/05/21 18:58

Well just like the current cloud offerings from many companies, Google is going to have to climb a steep hill in order to gain the trust of these different institutions be them educational or corporate. This is the whole crux of the cloud debate

right now, can your data be truly secured through these providers? If we are having this problem with simple email, just think how it will be with information that needs to be really secure.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by caragarretson - 2010/05/28 09:52

Which is why the security, privacy, and standard-setting aspects of cloud computing still need a lot of work, in my opinion. Hopefully we'll see a lot of positive activity in those areas in the coming months.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/05/30 00:58

Very true, I think that there is allot of progress being made with these technologies and hopefully the development people will remember to built in security up front instead of catching it later. If this is done well the next 20 years will be quite good for these companies.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/07/22 11:05

Before we get to a technology comfort level that we can put our data on the cloud, we need to get to a mental comfort level. Legal and security folks specially will need to accept the new wave of technology and trends.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/07/22 11:49

Very true, there is a nice comfort from knowing that your data exists inside a locked room inside a secure building and this makes people feel warm and fuzzy especially when they control the building and the room.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by caragarretson - 2010/07/26 11:32

The latest news on this front is that the city of LA must postpone its implementation of Gmail because Google didn't meet all of the LAPD's security requirements. This doesn't bode well for the company:
http://www.ciozone.com/index.php?option=com_myblog&show=Security-Woes-Delay-LAs-Switch-to-Google.html&Itemid=713

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/08/15 16:18

These technologies can be made as secure as you want to make them, the question is whether it is worth the effort. I

don't see it as worth the effort to gmail to look for this business in the first place. Other cloud/Server based more private alternative would seem to work better whether from Google or not.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/08/20 11:03

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True â€“ there are more security standards, and products out there than practically any other product. There needs to be â€œok, enough is enoughâ€• time that inserts some reasonableness in the equation. After all, the most secure computer is the computer thatâ€™s turned off and unplugged :) how far do we need to go to feel secure?

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/08/22 17:42

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That is the key point that some people seem to miss when wrapped in the hype that is "The Cloud" (Think deep voiced, voice over..). While these offerings are becoming more innovative many are a new face on an old offering. The amount of security these companies put on these offerings is directly related to the audience they are trying to appeal to. I tend to thing that the high security required for personal records is probably outside the scope of most of these offerings.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/08/24 17:52

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For personal data, I have no problem with â€œcloudâ€• but I donâ€™t want to share. I want a dedicated server for me and no o else. Thatâ€™s the only way I would feel secure. That defeats the purpose of cloud, but I donâ€™t care â€“ I have no issue pa a premium if I want the â€œfeaturesâ€• offered by an always-online infrastructure.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/08/30 00:50

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True, I know that I utilize Amazon for some of my backing up of my personal machines and I have little problem with this.
If it comes down to it I can always provide additional encryption before it goes onto their servers.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/09/23 14:40

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for backup yes --- I still have a redundant fileserver at home which is obviously faster that getting stuff from â€œthe cloudâ€•.
The issue is that backing up your data could take days. Wish there was a better way.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/09/25 03:02

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Well for me I run both, I have a system at home which is used for backup and is run on average every 2 hours when I am using my computers. I use Amazon as a backup to that, in the small likelihood that there is a significant system failure or fire I still have it saved somewhere off site.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/09/27 11:13

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for backup yes --- I still have a redundant fileserver at home which is obviously faster that getting stuff from â€œthe cloudâ€•. The issue is that backing up your data could take days. Wish there was a better way.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/09/28 05:04

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For me I run a synchronization software which only backs up the changes to amazon, this way only the initial backup takes a couple of days while the additional backups only take minutes.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/09/29 11:31

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I like to use SVN for â€œbackupâ€•. I have a script that runs at night which â€œchecks inâ€• my changes. It is slower, but I hav access to the older versions. I know SVN is not meant for documents, etc, but it does a really good job.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by millsy17 - 2010/09/29 22:43

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Where cloud computing stubbed its toe at the beginning was the complete focus on cost. I actually believe that from a technology perspective, including security, companies like Google & Amazon already do and will continue to outpace the IT staff of pretty much any company with a core focus other than running datacenters. Because they led with cost we all looked for a downside and we end up focused on privacy/security.

The actual issue is control - if we're in control we feel more comfortable. Statistics have proven this is not always a correct interpretation of the situation (see safety of flying vs driving).

But think of the scale that these companies can work at - they can spend multiples of most IT budgets on research alone. I'm sure they're in production with systems that none of us know exist.

And they've needed to pay attention to privacy since day one. Every one of us has trusted Amazon with our credit card and other personal information and most every company does financial transactions with Google on AdWords. If their security is breached we're already in trouble - email is just one more thing for them to offer in a more scalable fashion behind the already trusted security infrastructure.

I think its a matter of when not if for most every company out there to move to the cloud. Google supposedly has millions of organizations using Gmail. If that work instead was spread millions of individually run mail systems - which situation do you think would result in fewer problems? I'd bet Google wins on this one.

To come clean I have set up a domain on Google Apps after an upgrade to Exchange 2007 from a ISP hosted webmail was considered. The best part is the accessibility of their products. I can use an iphone, blackberry and of course android. I can get to my email from any browser so no more bringing a laptop home every night. And they've just added

two-factor authentication via SMS which was ridiculously easy to set up. Could any company implement this? Sure but it would draw from a pool of limited resources. I've had enough involvement with Big IT Departments to know that there are plenty of projects that would bring real business value that never get done because resources are spent on things that can be 'put in the cloud'. It can be a big new step to consider but the service is good, the contract is fair, the price is right and users I've seen tend to be happier than they expected with the change.

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by srw134 - 2010/10/05 06:21

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It is an interesting thing to watch, I would recommend these services to individuals and some small businesses but I would have to look much closer at the specific provider in order to recommend it for a larger scale deployment.

-sean

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by caragarretson - 2010/10/05 06:48

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The actual issue is control - if we're in control we feel more comfortable. Statistics have proven this is not always a correct interpretation of the situation (see safety of flying vs driving).

This is an interesting point. The complaints about lack of security and privacy in the cloud could indeed stem from the fact that if people don't have control over their data they naturally assume that it's not secure. I wonder how much that mindset may have slowed cloud adoption to date, and what it will take to overcome such thinking?

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Re:Will Privacy Issues Hurt Googleâ€™s Enterprise Efforts?

Posted by sediga - 2010/10/06 09:58

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I agree with Sean on this --- it is one thing to run your mom-and-pop shop on Google, but a whole different ball game if you are a large organization with a national presence. Companies want to save money any way they can these days, so if they spending time and money on R&D, it is not because they are wasting $, but because some of these problems (legacy oneâ€™s in particular) are difficult to solve.

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