



# IT PROS **IT UPDATE**

February 2024 Newsletter | Technology Services

## New & Noteworthy



### Cellular DAS at Texas A&M Health

The installation of a cellular distributed antenna system (DAS) at Texas A&M Health Science Center's Bryan campus is complete. This initiative brings commercial cell signals — including AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon Wireless — inside the buildings through discretely mounted antennas, providing more reliable cell service for faculty, staff, students and visitors in each building at the Texas A&M Health location on Highway 47 in Bryan. Verizon was the initial cellular carrier to join the DAS network and partnered with the university's network engineers in the first phase of the project. AT&T joined shortly after Verizon and is now complete. T-Mobile is anticipated to join and be fully optimized by summer 2024.

### Private Cellular Wireless Network Expansion

The TAMU Private Cellular Wireless Network (TPCWN) was recently designed and constructed in the area of Reed Arena and expanded into other areas of West Campus. The private cell network is designed to support both 4G and 5G technology and is expected to be completed by 2026. The next area of campus to be added to this network are main campus and West Campus.

## Project Progress



### Automated Exchange Project Update

The Automated Exchange Provisioning Project streamlines the assignment of Exchange Online licenses for eligible users. This allows all users to utilize the full features of Microsoft 365. This would allow new employees to get their productivity tools up and running without waiting for a manual assignment and students to be able to have a better experience using Microsoft 365. The project team has recommended and developed a change to the license assignment process to provision a license to all eligible users who have Microsoft 365 accounts in our tenant. Unit administrators are still strongly encouraged to submit mailbox claims for their users for administrative purposes. Gateway has also been updated to give users more control over how they show up in the Exchange directory.

### VoIP Phone Service Upgrade

Phase two of the [VoIP phone service upgrade project](#) is underway and will continue through 2025, with the first subset of buildings on schedule for completion this spring. The proposed order of implementation for the remaining buildings within phase two is available online. The BroadSoft/Polycom phone platform is the focus and is going to be retired along with the server hosting Centrex voicemail. These updates will be completed by the end of the summer and we are grateful for all of our partners including AgriLife for making this happen. The overall project remains on schedule for completion before 2026 with 44% of the targeted phone lines either upgraded or identified for disconnect to date.

## **ITxT: IT Experience Transformation Project**

The [IT Experience Transformation project to implement TeamDynamix](#) (TDX) will soft launch later this spring. The project's advisory committee identified the top 10 services, which account for approximately 75% of support tickets currently received by Technology Services. Using these as the baseline, a new service catalog is being established with the corresponding incident, request, knowledge and change management processes. A wireframe mockup of the different page types within the TDX portal has been created and will help create consistency for the university community as they submit requests. Self-help tutorials will be created once the main pages within the portal are confirmed, and virtual office hours will be held as the soft launch date approaches.

### **TechHub**

The university has saved more than \$1.04 million through the first phase of the TechHub launch, [the centralized platform](#) for IT professionals to support their respective units in purchasing computer hardware and accessories. This project has formally begun onboarding colleges, schools and other university units to benefit from collaborative pricing and standard options.

### **Cloud Storage Changes**

The Google Workspace Storage team within Technology Services continues to meet with faculty, staff and student groups and their respective leadership, to present proposed changes to My Drive and Shared Drive services. The team has upcoming meetings with the Council of Deans and Faculty Senate to gain feedback before final recommendations are made. The recommendations being proposed are a result of an analysis of the current usage of Google services. Google formally announced changes to My Drive and Shared Drive services to higher education institutions that will introduce a storage limit. Discussions continue based on the feedback given by the campus community to determine storage capacities necessary for current and incoming students and employees. A strategy is being developed to address the storage needs of unique user groups and researchers. Microsoft will be making similar changes to their cloud storage offerings. A similar analysis will be done to determine next steps to the storage of Microsoft M365 platform.

### **Windows Device Management Unification Project:**

Microsoft Intune system will serve as the endpoint management system, enabling IT professionals to handle university-owned devices under one system for Windows devices efficiently. Local endpoint managers can continue their duties seamlessly within this unified system.

### **Microsoft Stream**

The capabilities of Stream and SharePoint are being merged across all of Microsoft 365. As a result, Microsoft Stream (Classic) will be disabled on March 5. Active users are being asked to review current Stream (Classic) videos prior to the forced migration. After March 5, existing Stream (Classic) videos will be located in the corresponding NetID's Microsoft Stream (SharePoint). Those videos currently saved in Stream (Classic) that have no owner will be archived. Additional details are [posted in the Stream Knowledge Base article](#).

### **PagerDuty Application**

PagerDuty is a risk management application that will serve as the primary incident monitoring and alert system for Texas A&M University. Five pilot critical services are in progress - authentication, networking, network services, Howdy and Canvas. PagerDuty will provide opportunities to optimize incident response workflows, reduce response and resolution metrics, enhance collaboration, provide a proactive approach to incident repair and provide a scalable solution for our growing service health monitoring needs. Additionally, PagerDuty will allow for transparency to discover trending data with service health resource availability, identify risks and lack of redundancy, and allow for greater visibility to our stakeholders of the overall health of all IT services. Contact [pagerduty@tamu.edu](mailto:pagerduty@tamu.edu) for any questions.

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