Cornell University
Information Technologies

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Outsourcing and Cloud Computing for Higher Education

Although efforts have progressed apace for some time now in the legal and policy area of cloud computing for higher education — not least the excellent work of the many in the CSG/NACUA community who have produced masterful model contracts — the significance of these efforts is reaching its apogee. Either in pieces, such as Google Mail or Workday, or holistically, such as Internet 2's Net+ Services, colleges and universities across the country (if not the world) are moving away from in-house infrastructures that transmit and store information to "cloud" services that hold and process institutional information outside of the institution's technical infrastructure … and control.

At an earlier stage of this development, the Vice President of Information Technologies at Cornell asked me to write a memo regarding the legal and policy issues involved in "outsourcing." That 2009 document remains in this volume with its primary challenge still the most important on-going question: How much or what degree of outsourcing will render the institution out of control of its services such that it can no longer support its missions? How will the administration know before it would be too late to remediate?

More contemporary challenges have prompted a consideration of at least three discrete areas: Institutional Strategies for Cloud Computing; Cloud Computing and Information Management; and Legal and Policy Issues for Cloud Computing. This volume currently contains the first and second of these chapters; the last is underway, and a product of the work that Cornell has done and is doing with a variety of vendors, services and cloud computing considerations. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the ideas or information in these documents.

See Also:

- 7 Things to Know about Cloud Computing
- Legal Issues in Could Computing Contracts
- Models for Campus Services
- Principles of Outsourcing (PDF) by Ron DiNapoli, Oct. 2010

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