

# IMPACT REPORT

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**<sup>®</sup>  
System

20

21

# WELCOME

Here in the Information Technology Services division of the University of Nebraska, we know it is critical to always be listening, partnering, and collaborating with the students, faculty, and staff we serve, continually looking for opportunities to align to what matters most. In 2021, we heard and saw our community dig deep, as the second year of the pandemic continued to require new ways of teaching, learning, and working at NU.

I am so grateful for the opportunities our division has had to not only to provide consistent, reliable IT services and support to the campuses we serve, but that we also were able to partner in driving key innovative efforts like the unified network project, Open Nebraska, and ConnectEd Nebraska, which are further described in this annual impact report.

Security continues to be our number one priority, and keeping the University of Nebraska well-positioned to do its work with the proper protections in place requires balance and partnership. Through intentional, meaningful collaboration with faculty and administration, we made substantial progress in key security initiatives this year. These efforts will continue on in 2022.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to take a look at this annual impact report. Your continued partnership is vital to the success of our students.

**Bret Blackman**  
Vice President of IT and CIO, University of Nebraska



# STRATEGIC GOALS

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We listen, collaborate, and participate directly with a wide range of partners, committees, and teams across the NU system. We continually identify strategies to increase efficiency and enhance operational effectiveness as a division, while also driving innovation and encouraging digital transformation at the University of Nebraska. Our NU ITS organization's five strategic goals are:

**Services.** Provide an exceptional customer experience and outstanding, responsive IT services that are consistent and reliable across all locations, well understood, and valued by our communities.

**Security.** Create a safe and secure environment that minimizes risk, protects privacy and data, and empowers the university community to do its work through transformative technology. Security is a part of everything we do.

**Scale.** Work together to achieve economies of scale so that we optimize resources, deliver on our financial commitments, and reallocate resources for emerging needs and innovation.

**People.** Commit to investing in people so that we build an exceptional work environment with avenues for advancement and growth, and maintain an inclusive culture that embraces diversity in all forms. Empower our staff to facilitate broad collaboration and be outstanding partners to students, faculty and staff.

**Alignment.** Through agility and a bias for action, support and align to what matters most in service to the University of Nebraska and the campuses we serve.

**"ITS continues to be a model of innovation, collaboration and impact for the entire University of Nebraska System. Even in a period of unprecedented challenge and change, our colleagues in ITS have remained laser focused on our North Star: Outstanding service to our faculty, staff and 52,000 students. Congratulations to ITS on another successful year."**

**- University of Nebraska President Ted Carter**

# KEY 2021 EFFORTS

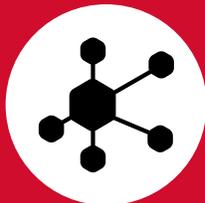
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Our staff provided consistent, reliable IT services and support to NU students, faculty and staff throughout the year. In addition, here are some of the exciting initiatives we worked to advance in 2021:



## 01 — Open Nebraska

Our efforts to support an increase in the use of free and reduced cost digital course materials have now saved NU students \$7.7M. In Fall 2021, we piloted course marking, which identifies these courses at the point of registration, adding transparency for students.



## 02 — Unified Network

Network equipment was aging and not homogenous, making it difficult to manage and secure. Through extensive planning and coordination, NU ITS negotiated a bulk purchase saving \$21.6M, and allowing this critical environment to be upgraded across NU.



## 03 — ConnectEd Nebraska

NU ITS was a collaborative partner with the Nebraska Department of Education, the State Office of the CIO, and Network Nebraska to make eduroam wireless more broadly accessible via K-12 schools, libraries, museums and ESU's across the state of Nebraska.



## 04 — Hardware RFP

Through a NU-wide process, the Board of Regents approved a new strategic IT supplier that drives maximum savings on commonly purchased workstation equipment, providing maximum value to departments across the institution.



## 05 — Humanizing Online

To support faculty in enhancing their goals for greater connection and engagement with students in online courses, Instructional Design Technology Staff on the Omaha campus built and delivered this unique faculty development program completed by 263 faculty.



## 06 — Digital Accessibility

To build upon the NU ITS commitment to accessibility, NU-wide virtual trainings were created in Bridge. These trainings have now been completed by 100 NU staff members, in addition to the 150 faculty and staff who participate in our NU Virtual Accessibility Lab.



## 07 — Sustainability

NU ITS partners with Business and Finance teams and Academic leadership to develop funding models that support the replacement of equipment and services within their scheduled lifecycles. This ensures that our critical IT infrastructure remains available.



## 08 — VOIP Rollout

To support faculty and staff returning to work on campus in 2021, the NU ITS infrastructure team completed a transition to using Cisco for telephone services. This project replaced end-of-life analog equipment and added additional features for users.



## 09 — COVID App & Clinics

ITS teams have been maintaining the Safer Communities app, which has been a critical tool in helping the Lincoln campus navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, ITS staff on the Client Services team provided support for university-hosted vaccine clinics at UNL.



## 10 — GlobalProtect

As individuals engaged in an increase of remote work, there has been a need to access critical data remotely through a reliable, secure Virtual Private Network (VPN). To improve users' experience, NU ITS transitioned to Palo Alto's cloud-based system.



## 11 — Box Migration

The necessary transition from using Box for data storage to using Microsoft Services neared its completion in 2021, with 52,000 users moving to OneDrive and SharePoint. This accounted for more than 300 departmental accounts and over 200 research folders.

More about our up-to-date key project list:  
[its.nebraska.edu/strategic-plan/projects](https://its.nebraska.edu/strategic-plan/projects)

# MEASURING PROGRESS

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We are continually monitoring the health and performance of our key services and support, always looking for opportunities to become leaner, more effective, and more efficient. These metrics provide a snapshot of the breadth and depth of the industry-leading services we support and our commitment to customer service.



## SECURITY

**36%**

year-over-year increase in the installation of Cortex for endpoint management security

**27,486**

endpoints managed by NU ITS

**1.5M**

identities managed by NU ITS

**100%**

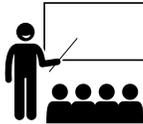
active users protected by DUO two-factor authentication

**5,300**

unique user sessions on the Virtual Private Network (VPN) per month

**7.6B**

attacks blocked per month across all network border firewalls



## TEACHING & LEARNING

**\$7.7M**

savings for NU students created by the Open Nebraska digital course materials program

**438M**

Canvas page views

**277M**

Zoom meeting minutes

**2.8M**

minutes of instructional video created by faculty and students in VidGrid

**19%**

increase in industry standard BIG accessibility maturity

**755**

classrooms and learning spaces supported at UNK, UNL and UNO

NU ITS conducts a biennial user satisfaction survey with NU students, faculty and staff. In April 2021, we received very strong feedback from respondents:

**86%**

of respondents indicated they are satisfied with NU ITS and its services

**2,965**

total survey respondents

**89%**

of respondents indicated they were satisfied with service at our Help Desks



## NETWORK, EMAIL & STORAGE

A strong, secure foundation supporting every aspect of the NU academic and business enterprise.

In 2021, the NU ITS infrastructure team made significant progress on the unified network project, which included a complete overhaul of the network architecture and security models, resulting in a faster, more secure, and more reliable experience for our users.

The network project spanned more than 325 buildings, and through a partnership with NU Business & Finance created \$21.6M in contractual savings and incentives.

**2,300**

switches installed

**10,000**

access points updated

**1.2PB**

data migrated from Box to Microsoft

**193M**

files migrated from Box to Microsoft

**13,812**

SharePoint sites managed

**236M**

emails delivered

**174K**

email inboxes managed

**404M**

spam emails blocked

**12 / 12**

months our customer surveys surpassed industry standard of 90% satisfaction

More about the NU ITS strategic plan and our commitment to service:  
[its.nebraska.edu/strategic-plan](https://its.nebraska.edu/strategic-plan)

# THE NU ITS TEAM

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The staff of NU ITS are critical to the success of our services and support. We appreciate the dedicated service of our teams, and are continually investing in them.

In 2021, we presented our highest departmental awards - The Rick Fredericks Collaboration Awards - to Jay Killion for his thoughtful approach to IT project management, as well as to the DUO two-factor authentication project.

Marcia Dority Baker, Assistant Director for Academic Technologies on the Lincoln campus, was honored by EDUCAUSE with the Community Leadership Award, which recognizes an active volunteer for their outstanding professional service to the broader higher education information technology community.

The IT Strategy Division of NU ITS pursued external funding in support of Open Nebraska. The Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN) philanthropic organization awarded NU ITS \$84,000 to further accelerate this program, which was matched with an additional \$84,000 of grant funding from the NU Provost's Office. We invested the majority of these funds into supporting NU faculty adopt free and reduced cost digital course materials.

**We thank you for your continued partnership and support of NU ITS**

## Our Staff

281 members

3,330 combined years of NU service

49 ITS employees received NU service awards in 2021



# SCOPE OF SERVICE

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Our unified IT division has the privilege of serving the Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha campuses, as well as the NU system, since the OneIT Initiative of 2017 brought our organization together. We work closely with UNMC IT in areas where there are opportunities for sharing best practices and finding operational efficiencies.



## KEARNEY

Andrea Childress, Assistant Vice President of NU ITS and Kearney Campus CIO



## LINCOLN

Dr. Heath Tuttle, Associate Vice President of NU ITS and Lincoln Campus CIO



## OMAHA

Bret Blackman, Vice President of NU ITS and Omaha Campus CIO

In addition to campus-specific teams in Academic Technology and Application Development, NU ITS is comprised of five shared services divisions, each led by an Assistant Vice President: Infrastructure (led by Andrew Buker), Security (led by Rick Haugerud), Client Services (led by Neil Wineman), Enterprise Services (led by Cheri Polenske), and IT Strategy (led by Dr. Jaci Lindburg). We also partner with the NU System Business and Finance Office for budget, human resources, and financial services functions (led by Carol Kirchner).

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**More about the NU ITS team and the campuses we serve:**  
[its.nebraska.edu/meet-our-staff](https://its.nebraska.edu/meet-our-staff)

# SUPPORT FOR ITS

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Meeting the needs of our valued partners across the NU system is the most rewarding part of our work. Here's what a few key collaborators had to say about our commitment to service excellence:

**"The staff in NU ITS are incredible partners. As we have had rapidly emerging needs in compliance training and accessibility the past few years, I have been so impressed at the ITS response to solving complex problems, delivering solutions, and bringing leadership and competence to each unique project and situation."**

**- University of Nebraska at Omaha Chief Compliance Officer Drew Nielsen**

**"The needs of UNK have been addressed by ITS with unsurpassed professionalism and expertise. I could not be happier with the service we have received. It is the vision they have for our mission and the success of our students that impresses me. We are fortunate to have such dedicated people serving our campus. ITS has been a vital part of our momentum."**

**- University of Nebraska at Kearney Chancellor Doug Kristensen**

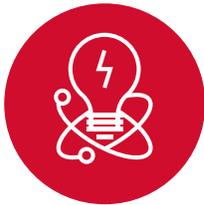
**"ITS support is paramount in the success of the academic mission of the university and our ability to create meaningful experiences in our classrooms, establish cutting-edge research in our labs, and generate impactful creative activity that inspires. As the pandemic first reared its head and UNL faculty were tasked with bringing all courses online in just 14 days, ITS rolled up their sleeves right alongside and innovated to help solve problems to make what we all did possible."**

**- University of Nebraska - Lincoln Faculty Senate President Steve Kolbe**

# WHAT'S NEXT

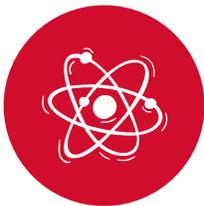
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In order to continue aligning to what matters most in service to the campuses we serve, we will partner with the NU community in 2022 on exciting efforts including:



## NU Innovation Hub

Each year, we invite Innovation Hub proposals from NU students, faculty and staff suggesting transformative opportunities for NU to innovate in the way we teach, learn, research and serve. We look forward to launching a new series of projects through this process.



## Research IT

In partnership with research organizations and faculty, NU ITS is launching a Research IT Unit to achieve economies of scale on core research IT services, design and build shared resources, and improve University posture for grant funding.



## Unified Service Desk

A top-quality, unified service desk will help to streamline troubleshooting for members of the NU community, maximize a common knowledge base, leverage consistent training among staff, and allow for the most efficient coverage of a 24/7 operation.



## CRM Project

To better achieve the vision of a truly connected university, we are partnering with campus enrollment management units to improve and upgrade the CRM technology used in personalize the recruitment, retention, and lifelong learning journey for all students.



## Security

In 2022, our focus will be on advancing endpoint security, progressing IT policy, rolling out privileged access management, updating Splunk and Sailpoint, and enhancing security practices in application development.

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More about the NU Innovation Hub:  
[its.nebraska.edu/innovation-hub](https://its.nebraska.edu/innovation-hub)

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