

My Migration to G Suite

Stewart Gruneklee

Subsequent to the committee's decision to move the club email away from Microsoft Office 365 to Google's G Suite, I looked hard and long at how I was using email. Probably my methods are a mixture of old and new attitudes. My first experience of email was in the early 1990s when I was playing with dial-up and also playing with a VT100 terminal emulation connected to an interstate Unix server. Time moved on and my company adopted Microsoft Office. So I used Outlook as an email client and have continued to use it for over twenty years.

With the recent decision by Microsoft to implement annual subscriptions for all of their products, I decided it was time for a change. I have replaced MS Office (paid) with Libre Office - open source and free - donate if you want to support the development. And I have been very pleasantly surprised at how good Libre Office is. Write replaces Word, Calc replaces Excel and Impress replaces PowerPoint with almost seamless compatibility. There are some differences with the way the Libre Office replacements work, but easy enough to learn. A good decision.

Now I get to the email decision. I have used Mozilla Thunderbird (TB) as my email client in the past - also open-source and free. So it was an easy decision to pick TB from amongst several possible (free) candidates. I was amazed at how TB has improved over the intervening years. The latest version is very easy to use and has similar functions to MS Outlook.

After a lot of web searching for hints on the best way to transfer all my email across from Outlook to TB, I hit on the simple way of just opening my email accounts (I have several IMAP email accounts) in TB and allowing them to synchronise from the server. I also had quite an amount of email in archives and off-line folders that I transferred by putting them into the inbox of Outlook and seeing them reappear in the inbox of TB. The only downside to this is the transfer of multiple gigabytes of information - bad news if you have broadband data limits or a slow connection. The advantage of this method is that it overcomes the conversion of different file types used by Outlook versus TB.

Once I had my emails transferred into TB and tidied them up, I was ready to tackle the migration from Office 365 (O365) to G Suite that is being implemented by Melb PC.

I received an email and an SMS declaring that my G Suite account had been created and my O365 account was synchronised with, and forwarding any received emails across to, my new G Suite email account. I was asked to nominate a time and day when I could be at my computer to receive a phone call and be talked through the migration process.

Several days later I received a phone call at the nominated time. The caller told me my temporary password to access the G Suite account and waited while I logged in to the webmail client through the browser. I changed my password to something that only I know and I looked at the content of the email account. It looked very similar to what I remembered from last looking at the O365 account, but some emails that I knew I had deleted were still in the Inbox and some emails that I remember sending were missing from the Sent box. The caller explained that this was because there were several days between synchronising the two accounts and any transactions that I did in that time would not be transferred across, although all incoming mail would be forwarded to the new account. That part of the job was complete and took about 20 minutes in all.

I then opened up TB and set up the new G Suite email account. Once that was done, I waited for TB to retrieve all my email from and synchronise with the G Suite server. When that was complete, a comparison of the O365 account in TB with the G Suite email account in TB showed me the differences caused by the several days' delay. It was a relatively easy task to compare the various folder contents and

adjust the G Suite mail to match the O365 mail.

I then resolved to only use the G Suite email in TB so that only one account is kept up to date. The O365 account should be deleted. The Transition Team were then notified that the task was completed and my access to O365 email could be cut off.

Lessons to be learnt from my experience are:

1. Don't attempt to migrate away from Outlook email client to another email client before the migration from O365 to G Suite mail. This can be done at a later date if that is what you wish to do and "flattens the learning curve".
2. Act promptly when first notified of the assistance to migrate your email to G Suite. This ensures that the transition is as simple as possible with little or no manual synchronising to do afterwards.
3. The Transition Team are there to help us through this email migration and are working hard to make this transition as easy as possible for all members.

I am now keen to explore the new features that are available to me through Google G Suite.