



## Brown Extends Grouper Use Across a Broad Array of Applications



BROWN

At Brown University, students expect to access an integrated online learning environment that includes a Learning Management System, email lists, wiki,

access to controlled information in Apple's iTunes U and the campus Fedora repository, and other applications. Faculty and staff serve on project teams and committees within and across departmental boundaries, using in-sourced and out-sourced applications (e.g. Google Apps for Education) to support their work.

Academic departments must keep track of a variety of communities, such as undergraduates, grad students, course enrollment, faculty, staff, and "friends" from other departments and other universities. The departments need to grant such communities access to many services and documents; sometimes, there is a need to strictly control access.

Historically, each application maintained its own group roster information. With that model, keeping the access rights consistent across the myriad of services became an overwhelming task.

### The Problem

Within the campus community, there is a huge number of groups. For example, there are course groups, departmental groups, associations, project teams, and several hundred student activity groups. Brown needed a groups management tool to effectively manage this environment.

A key requirement was the ability to reflect new information and status changes from Brown's identity management and course enrollment systems. It was also essential that the groups management tool should track and provision group data for and into the applications. A customizable user interface was desired so that stakeholders throughout the campus could define and update all manner of groups. And all of this had to be driven by an integrated institutional policy allowing appropriate delegation of group membership and permissions.

### The Solution

Brown chose the Grouper Groups Management Toolkit to combine improved groups management capabilities with a better user experience. According to John Spadaro, Director, Technical Architecture, "Feeds from the person registry and the course enrollment system, together with user management to fine tune group memberships and Grouper's set arithmetic capabilities, provide Brown with a centralized group management tool across a wide variety of applications. The recently implemented synchronization with groups to Google Apps has opened new possibilities."

Through use of Grouper, Brown has also developed a valuable information asset — a database that can report on who can do what. Reports from that database can be used to improve service management, as-built IT architecture, and security.

### The Result

Since Grouper works across multiple applications, Brown University's Instructional Technology Group now spends significantly less time setting up and maintaining groups in different applications, particularly at the beginning of each semester. Instructors, team leaders, project leaders, and departmental managers all find that Grouper simplifies their group management task. In addition, the automatic provisioning of many groups ensures that permissions are assigned and revoked on a timely basis.

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*- John Spadaro  
Director, Technical  
Architecture*

### About Grouper

Want to learn more about what Grouper can do for your campus? Read more about Grouper on the back of this page and at [grouper.internet2.edu](http://grouper.internet2.edu).



## Grouper Groups Management Toolkit

*Giving Stewards Control of Groups to Manage Membership and the Resources They Access*

Internet2's Grouper Groups Management Toolkit enables project managers, departments, institutions and end users to create and manage institutional and personal groups. It puts the control of a group in the hands of its steward and enables the person to manage the membership and the resources a group can access.

### Why Should I Use Groups?

Separate applications may use groups to track an individual's role, or to determine which users are authorized to access the resource. Because groups are managed separately in each application, keeping the membership roster consistent across these services becomes very difficult. If a member left a project, for example, the group's email list, wiki space, calendar, research database and other shared resources needed to be updated separately.

Grouper provides a way to define a group once and use that group across multiple applications.

### Manage from One Location

Grouper consolidates group information and creates a single point of management. Membership changes are done once and provisioned to the applications. A group owner can define membership, create a group structure within a domain, or delegate all of this to someone else.

### Distribute Control

Grouper keeps the group membership decisions in the hands of the business/group owners, access control in the hands of the application owners, and the technology management in the hands of the technologists. Individuals can also use the system to review their group memberships.

IT administrators are relieved from the burden of keeping up with the day-to-day group changes and Grouper increases the overall integrity of the policy and technology interaction.

### Help Collaboration Happen

With Grouper, an owner sets up a group in one spot, feeding membership information to applications like

email lists and calendars. The owner needs no technical skills to create, change or delete groups or members. For example, a researcher might create a group and enable members to participate on an email list or view a web site. Students use Grouper to set up and manage groups for similar applications as they work together on shared projects and class work.

Grouper enables group management institution-wide and on an individual level, providing more secure, robust and responsive methods to control access to resources.

### Ease Staff Support Load

Grouper separates the management of groups from the technical system, so a change in technology has no effect. This reduces the end-user support calls associated with underlying infrastructure changes. Removing IT from the middle of managing groups will help ease your helpdesk headaches as well.

### How Do I Get Started?

To learn more about the Grouper Groups Management Toolkit, visit the Grouper website (<http://grouper.internet2.edu>) and join the community by participating on the email lists and attending the workshops and presentations offered around the country.

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