



Weill Cornell Medical College

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Accellion improves the way internal and external researchers share information.

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Steven M. Erde, PhD, M.D.
Senior Director and
Chief Security Officer

Cornell University’s Weill Medical College (WMC), situated in the heart of New York City, operates one of the premier medical research institutions in the United States. Comprised of various research centers and institutions dedicated to a wide range of medical studies, the WMC has built a reputation for excellence in numerous medical fields. WMC’s Office of Academic Computing (OAC) supports more than 5,000 computer users, over 100 servers, and numerous clinical, research, and administrative software applications.

Challenge

Cornell’s research laboratories have been completely renovated in recent years, increasing the laboratory space by more than 25% and enabling WMC medical staff and researchers to conduct more extensive research. In addition to conducting WMC’s world-class research, WMC operates one of the premier medical universities in the United States. In parallel, the WMC’s Office of Academic Consulting (OAC) is creating innovative computer systems and applications for specific clinical and research projects, including cutting-edge work in genetics and structural biology.

WMC faculty members have a long history of medical research in a variety of fields. Typically, their work entails collaborating with research partners around the globe.

Collaboration of course isn’t confined to just faculty and staff. The nature of medical study and research is a collaborative one; students and researchers must work with classmates and colleagues in order to complete assignments and lab projects. For example, researchers often work closely with one another to develop grant proposals, compare results, and finalize presentations. While technology has allowed researchers to share and compare data more efficiently, often times the sheer size of data sets and other content can pose problems for external research partners.

Steven M. Erde, Ph.D., M.D., Senior Director and Chief Security Officer at the WMC’s OAC, recognized the challenges associated with sharing and collaborating on medical research with external recipients. “Researchers need to share a surprisingly large amount of data, and often do so via email, which can pose problems for individuals not operating on WMC servers. It was important that we identify a solution that would allow

Quick Facts – Weill Cornell Medical College



Deployed Since

2005



Number of Users

**1000 internal
unlimited external**



Custom Web Interface

Yes



Email Integration

Yes



Mobile Integration

Yes

- Eliminates need for end users to use FTP and offloaded file attachments from email servers
- An easy-to-use interface for non-technical users
- Reduces IT involvement in administering, managing and troubleshooting user accounts

for the efficient collaboration on research data with external parties, and would simultaneously permit those external parties to review, comment on, and return data back to WMC researchers.”

The OAC had previously implemented a file transfer protocol (FTP) solution that allowed users to share data with external parties using guest accounts. Unfortunately, the FTP solution proved to be far too complex for the average non-technical user. In an attempt to update the WMC’s file transfer system, Erde sought to identify solutions that were both effective and more user-friendly.

The WMC team specifically wanted a web-based solution in order to minimize training and ensure ease of use. “The reason that so many people depend on email to share files and collaborate on information is because everyone knows how to use it,” said Erde. “Therefore, one of our priorities for a new solution was enabling external users to easily collaborate with WMC personnel. We had to find a solution that wouldn’t require users to undergo extensive training on how to utilize the technology.”

Solution

OAC finally settled on Accellion, a secure content collaboration solution, as it offered an intuitive interface for both internal and external users. Erde also liked the fact that Accellion provides a web interface for users to send research and other data with a link to the file in lieu of the actual attachment, eliminating the concern of large file sizes, version control and infected files. Instead, recipients simply click on the embedded link and the file is downloaded instantly and securely from the Accellion platform.

Since adopting Accellion and incorporating the solution into WMC research workflows, faculty, staff, students and external collaboration partners have reported improvements in their collaboration processes and overall productivity. Erde concludes, “Accellion was exactly what we needed. Not only can internal users collaborate quickly and easily, but external users can use the solution as well. The issues we dealt with in the past have been completely eliminated.”

TOP-SELLING POINT	STAND-OUT FUNCTIONALITY	COOL USE CASE
An FTP replacement that is easy to use and easy to administer, manage and support.	A web-based collaboration solution that looks, feels and works like email but can handle very large files.	Faculty and student researchers send and receive large data sets – 20MB and larger – with external researchers.

About Accellion

Accellion, Inc. enables enterprise organizations to collaborate on content with external partners securely via private cloud. Enterprises can leave existing content where it lives today, and extend it outside the firewall without having to migrate content or disrupt their business workflows. Accellion’s solutions are used by more than 15 million users and 2,500 of the world’s leading corporations and government agencies including Procter & Gamble; KPMG; Kaiser Permanente; Latham & Watkins; National Park Service; Umpqua Bank; Cargill; and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).

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