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University of Minnesota system, including Morris, one of 22 universities worldwide bringing Google+ to campus

Summary: Serving as an early adaptor of Google+ illustrates the University’s position as a leader in institutional technology.

(October 30, 2011)-The University of Minnesota system, including the Morris campus, is one of only 22 universities worldwide bringing Google+ to campus. Google+ has been added to the list of Google apps that are available to Morris students, faculty, and staff who already have a University Google account.

Jim Hall, Morris director of information technology, says, “Serving as an early adaptor of Google+ illustrates the University’s position as a leader in institutional technology. I’m excited to see how the Morris campus will adapt Google+ to support the teaching and learning mission.”

Morris users will soon see, if not already, the social networking feature link for Google+ in their list of available Google apps. Users will have the option to use Google+ to connect with colleagues at the University and beyond.

With Google+, students can share their thoughts with a project group, friends, or family circle have a “Hangout” with up to nine classmates or keep up with their connections from their mobile devices. Faculty can host virtual office hours in “Hangouts” share information with their class circles or share published articles with those that might be interested. Staff can use Hangouts to meet with a distributed team share information with a project circle or keep in touch with colleagues, students, and faculty.

Hall adds that at first look, Google+ appears to work a lot like Facebook. You post your status, change your profile photo, etc. In Facebook, you put people into groups. In Google+, you put people into Circles.

Relationships work a little differently in Google+, too. If you “friend” someone on Facebook, the other person has to agree to be your friend before a connection is made. In Google+, you put someone in a Circle, but they don’t have to add you back. The concept here, says Hall, is “I share with you, but you might not share with me.”

Hangouts, believes Hall, will be a “neat feature” that might be interesting for meetings, especially with colleagues and committees located on the Twin Cities campus. Up to 10 people can participate in a live video chat. Students might use Hangouts for group work. Instructors might want to use Hangouts for online classes or advising.

In addition to the University of Minnesota, other early adopters include Arizona State, Boise State, the University of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt University, Wake Forest University, as well as universities in Egypt, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Kenya, Mexico, and Italy.

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