



Case Study - Education & Non-Profit

CUNY Hunter College



Hunter College researchers use Box to make research materials available to colleagues inside and outside the university.

“Box is very reliable. It’s never been down, and our old solution was often down. Box does what we need it to do.”

John O’Neill
professor of counselor
education, CUNY

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Hunter College, located in the center of Manhattan, is the largest college in the City University of New York (CUNY) system and one of the oldest public colleges in the country. Well known for its research pursuits, a Hunter research team received the “Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics” grant, funded by the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research in the U.S. Department of Education.

Challenge

With researchers both at Hunter College and other institutions, the Rehabilitation research group was constantly emailing files back and forth and holding conference calls in order to sync the efforts of its geographically distributed team members. The team had previously been using Blackboard, an education software package, to collaborate, but new versions stopped allowing researchers outside of the Hunter College network to access files—hindering progress on the team’s group work.

John O’Neill, a professor of counselor education at Hunter and member of the research group, started looking around at other solutions, but found that they didn’t need “all the bells and whistles” that most solutions provided. When a colleague at another CUNY college recommended Box, John decided to give it a try.

Solution

John’s 12-person team began posting files for group discussion and realized that Box was a perfect fit. Founded in 2005 with the mission to help people access their information easily from any location, Box.net now has over 2 million users from thousands of businesses that look to Box to help replace FTP software, simplify file management, and accelerate team productivity.

“It’s quite easy to upload materials and create new folders. It’s very intuitive,” said John. Now during conference calls, the group uses Box to post minutes, agendas, relevant documents and timelines for future progress. “It serves its purpose as a net-based workspace, allowing us to share our files as we’re conducting our business,” he explained.

With the opportunity to quickly and easily share files in group settings, the research group is able to collaborate more efficiently during its conference calls. “You can’t collaborate if you can’t share files,” John explained. “You can’t collaborate if you can’t centralize your materials somewhere and access them when you’re not together as a group.”

When documents need quick edits, the research team makes changes to the documents online using Box’s built-in Zoho editing functionality which allows anyone on their team to open a document, spreadsheet or presentation, make changes and then save directly back to Box.



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This saves the group time as changes are made immediately in real time and no one has to download the file, edit it, resave it, and re-upload it.

The Rehabilitation research group now has a collaboration solution that it can count on. "Box is very reliable. It's never been down, and our old solution was often down," John commented. "Box does what we need it to do."