Since the fall session of school started, I’ve heard numerous complaints about UIUC’s CITES Express Email. These were accompanied by similar remarks toward other systems like Compass. Because the majority of my skills is web-based work, I feel that this would give me an opportunity to demonstrate what I can do as well as possibly improve the experiences of university students both on-campus and online.

Obviously, the audience would include students who use Express Email and/or are enrolled in classes that utilize Compass. However, what some people don’t realize is that instructors and teaching assistants also have to go through the same pains to use the systems (and sometimes more, for posting and editing material). So, after all, this revamp/replacement of the email and “learning system” will target both students and teachers.

Initially, I thought that putting a mask on top of the existing systems would suffice. Even though this may be an appropriate option for Express Email, I feel that a complete reworking of the gradebook/materials management system would be more beneficial to the university (mostly financially, but it can also change students’ opinions).

Another aspect of this project I considered is “polish.” If I were to split the time that I spent on the project between two separate endeavors, I don’t think I would produce results of the same caliber as if I worked on only one of them. I have heard substantially more complaints about the Express than about Compass (and apparently different departments and schools at UIUC use different grade management systems), so I think the best choice for me is to give only the email interface a truly refined makeover.