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**UC Tech Awards 2023 Candidate**

**Category:** OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE  
**Name:** Brendan Bellina, Lead IT Architect, IT Services, UCLA, staff (1)  
**Number of people:** (1)  
**Location:** UCLA

1. **Person submitting the application/nomination**
   1. Brendan Bellina, Lead IT Architect, IT Services, UCLA, staff (1)
   2. **Email address:** bbellina@ucla.edu
   3. **The name of your organization:** UCLA
2. **Award category**Operational Excellence
3. **Name of person, name of the team, or name of the project to receive the award** Brendan Bellina
4. **All project team members - if applicable**  Brendan Bellina, staff, bbellina@ucla.edu
5. **Which location was affected by the work?** UCLA
6. **Summary**: From the initial implementation at UCLA of Slack as an enterprise communications and collaboration product in September 2020 to May 2023 Brendan Bellina, in the role of Grid administrator and migration coordinator, has completed the successful migrations of almost 200 (precisely 186 as of 5/3/23) external workspaces created and used by UCLA researchers, professors, scholars, and administrators into the UCLA enterprise Slack Grid. Workspaces migrated have included as many as 3700 people, and migrations have been as frequent as 27 in a single month. The UCLA Grid has almost 25,000 members and guests.
7. **Narrative**

Under the direction of UCLA CTO Michael Van Norman, UCLA implemented the Slack product as an enterprise communications and collaboration products for the UCLA campus in September of 2020. The adoption of the Slack product was expected to occur in two ways: firstly, the creation of new Slack workspaces for labs, administrative and academic departments, and courses; and secondly, the migration of existing free and paid workspaces created by UCLA faculty, staff, and researchers into the UCLA Slack Enterprise Grid so that the workspaces would have the greater collaborative benefits and capacity of a paid service without the expense. It was anticipated correctly that existing users of independent Slack workspaces would be the most interested in utilizing the enterprise service and that there would be an ongoing demand for workspace migrations.

As IT Architect for the project, Brendan Bellina implemented workflows in Slack to facilitate workspace creations and migrations, and authored documentation to be provided to workspace owners to explain these processes and how workspaces within the UCLA Grid would behave differently than independent workspaces. From September 2020 to October 2022 Brendan Bellina created 282 workspaces within the UCLA Grid and from September 2020 to May 2023 he has completed the successful migrations of 186 Slack workspaces.

While the process of workspace creation is straightforward and is measured in minutes, the migration of Slack workspaces can be very complicated and take weeks or even months of coordination and communication with the workspace owners and Slack account representatives to schedule and complete. Workspaces that contain a large number of members, such as the Anderson School of Business workspace which included over 3700, require a large amount of review and analysis to determine appropriate identity matching between members or guests in the workspace and the 83,000+ accounts provisioned within the UCLA enterprise Grid. This matching is critical in order to ensure that all direct messages and channel messages for the individuals remain accessible following the migration, and to prevent the creation of mismatched duplicate accounts.

There are further complications when workspaces are owned by students and there is no formal sponsor, and when workspaces have a large number of guests or non-UCLA collaborators. A significant cause of complication is when workspaces are on a paid plan requiring Slack to alter their billing for the workspace

The review process implemented by Brendan Bellina for identity matching compares extracts of users from independent workspaces provided by their primary owner to information about the members in the UCLA Grid. By importing information into intelligent spreadsheets and comparing the data it is possible for workspace owners to be given a list of the specific members of their workspace who may need to correct their information prior to the migration. This process is efficient enough that it is often done multiple times for each migration, as workspace owners work with their members to correct their email addresses. Because of the use of this process there have been very few problems reported by workspace owners following migrations even when workspaces contain hundreds or even thousands of people.

Lastly it should be noted that because workspace migrations are performed by Slack and do take a workspace offline for their duration, to minimize impact on workspace members all workspace migrations are scheduled after hours and monitored by the migration coordinator to ensure they complete satisfactorily.

As a viable alternative to email, Slack has become a mission critical communication and collaboration tool for the University and the success of almost 200 workspace migrations has played a large role in the growth of the service.