

ARE WE AT THE END OF EMAIL ?

You come in, sit down, and log in. Your morning coffee steams while you peruse the dozens of emails that await you. Some are important. Some are even urgent. But most are destined for the trash. You grind through your inbox, replying to some and flagging others for later. And by the time your real work starts, your coffee is cold and you can't find that one important email your client sent yesterday.

Change is finally on the horizon. Though the end of email in the workplace has been predicted before, there are now a number of viable alternatives that pose a genuine threat to email's dominance.

One increasingly popular alternative is Yammer, a provider of internal social networks for companies. There are no cat photos or recipes here. Instead, Yammer enables person-to-person communication in a method similar to Facebook's walls. Yammer users can also create meetings, share documents, and acts as a centralized location for institutional knowledge, all in a mobile-friendly package that's much cleaner and more organized than a cluttered inbox. Big names like Ford, eBay, and DHL have already adopted Yammer, a powerful testament to its potential as an alternative to email.

While these technologies and more offer significant promise for the future of business communications, we're not out of the email woods just yet. The end of email may yet be a long way off. But business's reliance on it as the primary means of communication may be coming to an end.