



Pedagogical Assessment of:

Modern Tool Rating: 4

Website: www.slack.com



Usage

Slack is a simple and dynamic messenger tool which offers integration with services students and teachers use every day such as drop box. By using specific filtering, the user can easily search/find information previously discussed. Slack also allows for private or one to one group communication regarding sensitive subjects that are specific for one user and it is accessible on the go via the app. As Slack acts like an instant messenger, this helps to ensure more efficient communication between educators and students.

Ease of Access

Setting up a Slack account is easy, involving the completion of a few simple steps before an account can be accessed. To use Slack, the user needs to fill the sign up form on Slack's home page and follow the onscreen instructions as you go along.

Slack's desktop app is available for Mac, Windows and Linux (beta version) and its mobile app for iOS, Android and Windows phone.

Pedagogical Assessment

Slack was designed to be a powerful communication tool to aid team collaboration. Its main use is to provide a platform for volumes of communication among large teams or classroom. As communication on this scale can become unmanageable and inefficient, this tool can be used to ensure that communications happen all in one place and can be segmented by creating Channels for various topics. Educators can assign users to as many (or as few) channels as they need in order to keep topics visible to the class members who want to see any individual topic.

Reviews

"Slack has certain features that make it perfectly suited for work, including automatic archiving of all your interactions, a good search engine and the ability to work across just about every device you use. As it is hosted online and is extremely customizable, Slack is also easy for corporate technology departments to set up and maintain." - Farhad Manjoo(NY Times)

www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12

Advantages

- Excellent private backchannel. Great for nonessential communication and discussion.
- Wonderful, rich set of tools and options.
- Most discussions in Slack are also archived and searchable. As a result, over time, the chats build up into a corpus of deep historical knowledge.

Disadvantages

- No calendar, task-management, or other collaboration features.
- Requires thoughtful use to be effective.
- Students can be tempted to use it as a generic social tool.
- It does not support Boolean search: you can search messages using one term, but not several.
- It does not allow flagging messages from a specific user (e.g. the teacher).

Conclusion

Slack is a powerful communication tool to aid team collaboration. Educators can assign users to as many (or as few) channels as they need in order to keep topics visible to the class members who want to see any individual topic.