Digital Culture Network Resources: Remote Working Tools

Introduction

This resource gives you information and suggestions around some of the tools available to work remotely and collaborate with your colleagues.

How to and what is possible

Many of the tools have functionality for online chats, collaborative working and project management. We've highlighted some of the popular ones, but there are many more out there.

Tools available

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is part of the Office 365 suite, which you may already have. There is also a free version available. It is integrated seamlessly with O365 and is available as a phone and tablet app, desktop app, or can be access in your web browser. All three methods of accessing Teams are useful depending on where you are and what tech you have access to.

There's three main ways to use Teams:

1. Video meetings – With geographically spread teams, it is important to be able to still have face-to-face meetings. If you can create a meeting in Outlook, you can create a meeting in Teams, as it is a very similar process. Up to 250 people can join a meeting from any location, offering a similar experience to Skype. You can blur your background for privacy, share your screen for presentations and record your meeting for future viewing.
2. File sharing – Often documents are collaborative efforts, worked on by more than one person. With Teams you can access them anywhere and have confidence that the one you are working on is the latest and most up-to-date version. Any document saved to a team is accessible anywhere by members of the team. It also integrates with One Drive so all of your cloud-

based files are accessible through the Teams interface. You can also set up individual channels and decide who can access key files, so you can maintain some level of security for more sensitive documents and any planning tools.

3. Chat – many of us used to tools such as What's App, Facebook Messenger as ways of keeping in touch with our friends and family. Teams has similar functionality which allows you to chat to the whole team, some team members, or a single person. It's great feature for just staying in touch, and chat is also a great way at reducing email trails and keeping track of conversations. Teams uses a function called channels that allows you to separate out important team conversations from interpersonal chat.
[Find out more about Teams](#)

Slack

Slack is a platform that is often highly rated by its users and offers similar functionality – meetings, chat and file sharing. There is a free version available, which limits usage to 1-2-1 meetings. For three or more people in attendance you need the first paid tier which is around £5.00 per user per month.

Like most of the main players, you can integrate Slack with a lot of other apps including Outlook, Google Drive, Trello and many others. One of the benefits often cited for Slack is the ease of set up compared to MS Teams. So, if you're a technophobe, this might be the platform of choice.

[Find out more about Slack](#)

Workplace by Facebook

Easy to use, as Facebook Workplace looks almost identical and uses a lot of same user interface elements as it's more public facing platform. Like Slack and Teams, Workplace allows you to have hassle free video meetings, group chat and share files. You can also broadcast via Facebook Live and work with other companies that also use the same platform. You've likely used Facebook Groups before and these are available in Workplace as well, so you have all conversations all in one place.

There is a powerful free version available and if you are a charity, their Advanced tier is also free. The main (and maybe only) con is that you must have a Facebook account to use the platform, though all personal activity is kept separate from business activity.

[Find out more about Workplace](#)

Best of the rest

[Whatsapp](#) and [Skype](#) are powerful tools for group chats. [Google Hangouts](#) and [Google Drive](#) offer similar functionality and have free options. And there are many more out there.

Further reading and links

Skillcrush have written a great blog where they talk about the tool mentioned here but also a lot of smaller ones that might be just what you're looking for your organisation. [27 tools every new remote worker needs](#)

Further Support:

The Digital Culture Network is here to support you and your organisation. If you need help or would like to chat with us about any of the advice we have covered above, please get in touch. Email digitalnetwork@artscouncil.org.uk with some background information about you, your location and your current dilemma, and we will connect you with one of our 9 Tech Champions for some in-depth 1-2-1 support.

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