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Whitepaper

Competitive Analysis Between Next-Gen Collaboration Tools

Slack vs Microsoft Teams

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Introduction

Slack is on a mission to make people's working lives simpler, more pleasant, and more productive and bring all team's communication together, giving everyone a shared workspace where conversations are organized and accessible.

Microsoft Teams is new integrated collaboration application recently launched by Microsoft on 14th March, 2017. This new collaboration tool is based on Microsoft Office 365 is immediate & direct competition for online collaboration tools such as Slack & Atlassian HipChat.

This technical paper is talks about the features & capabilities of both Next-Gen collaboration tools – **Slack** & **Microsoft Teams** and how they will help to bring next generation collaboration as well as market presence.



"Slack is a messaging app for teams. It brings all your team's communications & files in one place, where they're instantly searchable & available wherever you go"

Slack is cloud based set of team collaboration tools & services that integrates with and unifies a wide range of communications services such as **Twitter, Dropbox, Google Docs, Jira, GitHub, MailChimp, Trello, and Stripe.**

A San Francisco-based company, which launched its eponymous app in February 2014, was started by a small group of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs that include Flickr founder Stewart Butterfield. Privately-held Slack is on **Fortune Magazine's "Unicorn List"** of startup firms worth \$1 billion or more, with a \$2.8 billion valuation supported by a five percent weekly user growth rate and major brand-name customers including **Adobe, Samsung, Intuit, NASA, Dow Jones, eBay, and Expedia.**



"A chat-based workspace designed to facilitate real-time collaboration while building up the institutional knowledge of a team"

Microsoft Teams is an entirely new experience that brings together people, conversations and content—along with the tools that **teams** need—so they can easily collaborate to achieve more,

It's naturally integrated with the familiar Office applications and is built from the ground up on the Office 365 global, secure cloud. Microsoft Teams is available in 181 countries and in 18 languages to commercial customers with Office 365 Enterprise or Business plans.

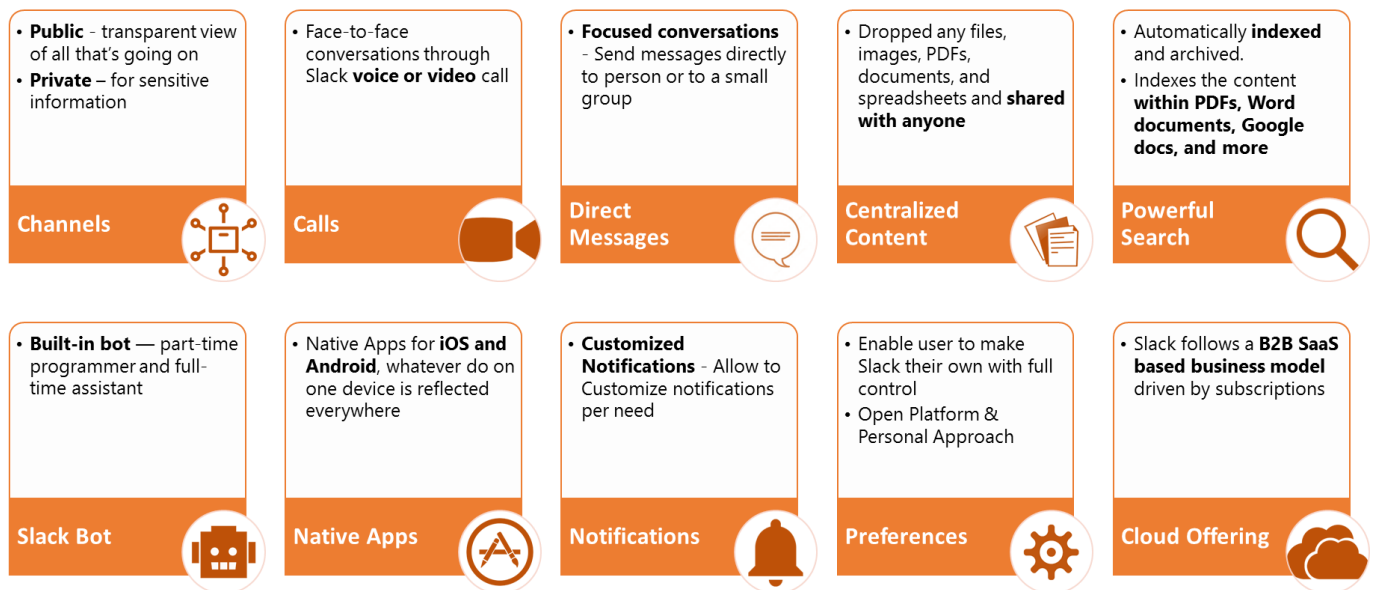
With Microsoft Teams, we aspire to create a more open, digital environment that makes work visible, integrated and accessible—across the team—so everyone can stay in the know.

Slack Capabilities

Slack is a Web-based service that supports collaboration better than any other tools in market. It's a digital workspace that powers organization — all the pieces and the people — so you can get things done.

Per Slack, there are major three factors which makes Slack leader in collaboration world – Thoughtful User Experience (UX), Open Platform & Personal Approach to Customer Service.

Slack is free to use for as long as you want for teams of all sizes. The solution caters to various industries, including **Media, Research, Technology, Education, Financial Services, Retail, Transport and Logistics.**



Below are the key features which makes Slack as a differentiator in collaboration world -

- ✚ In Slack user can be a member of one or more groups that are, in turn, divided into channels and Channels can be public or private;
- ✚ Every channel has a chat board and images and files can be used in one or more channels and accessed in-line and PDFs, Word documents, and text files are all automatically indexed and searchable.
- ✚ Free Mac desktop, iOS, and Android apps are available
- ✚ Slack supports integration with a remarkable array of other services including Dropbox, GitHub, Google Drive, GoToMeeting Free, IFTTT, JIRA, MailChimp, Nagios, Pivotal Tracker, Twitter, Zapier, and Zendesk
- ✚ **Focused conversations** – Send messages directly to person or to a small group
- ✚ Face-to-face conversations through Slack voice or video call
- ✚ Dropped any files, images, PDFs, documents, and spreadsheets and **shared with anyone**
- ✚ User can create Slack App with Customize functionality for your own team as per need
- ✚ In-built API's which will be leveraged for seamless integrations & streamline Business communications & Collaboration
- ✚ In-built App Directory which loaded with over 750 Apps which are ready to use like Bots, Analytics, Design, Health & Medical, HR, Marketing etc.

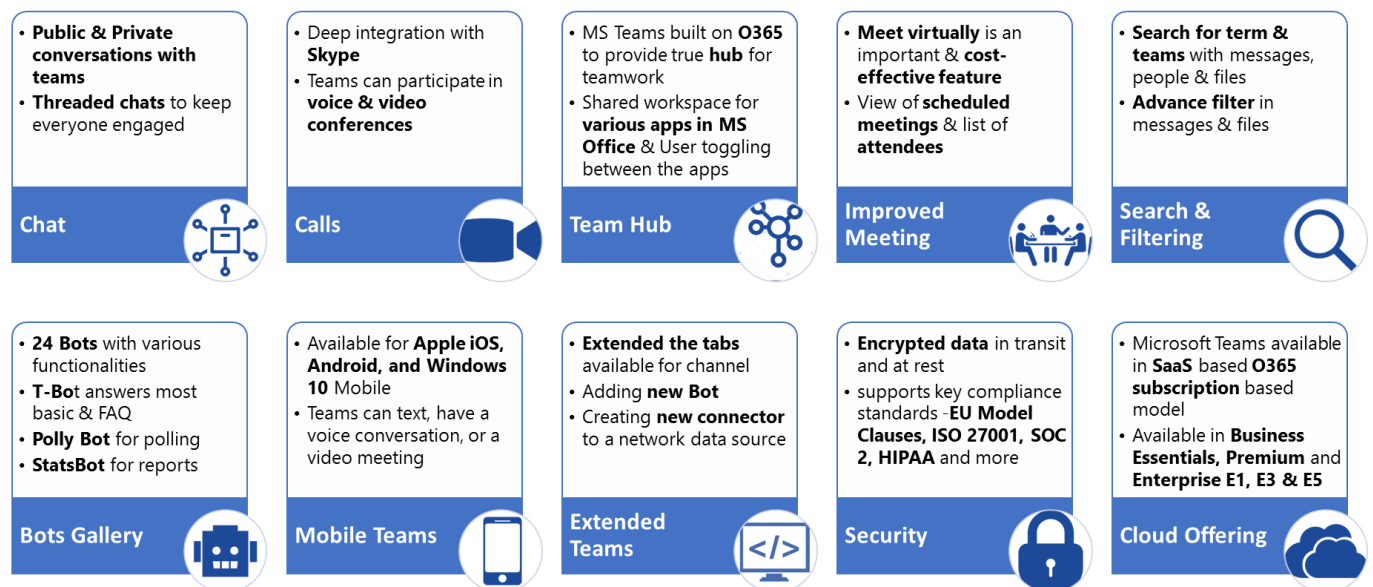
- 🚩 **Bot Users** - Enable teams to conversationally interact with external services or your custom code by building bot users
- 🚩 **Sign-in with Slack** - Allow users to sign in any product, application using Slack like Facebook, Google, Twitter.

Microsoft Teams Capabilities

Microsoft Teams – the new chat based workspace in Office 365 and is an entirely new experience that brings together people, conversations and content, along with the tools that teams need, so they can easily collaborate to achieve more.

Microsoft Teams naturally integrated with the familiar Office applications and is built from the ground up on the Office 365 global, secure cloud.

With Microsoft Teams, we aspire to create a more open, digital environment that makes work visible, integrated and accessible across the team so everyone can stay in the know.



Microsoft Teams provides a modern conversation experience for today's teams, below are the high level key features which makes Microsoft Teams competitive in market –

- 📺 One on One chat
- 📺 Team based chat with unique channels for each team
- 📺 All-encompassing Activity Feed
- 📺 Threaded chat, reply to a specific message so your response doesn't get lost in the massive, quickly flowing chatroom
- 📺 Skype is deeply integrated, so teams can participate in voice and video conferences
- 📺 Everyone can add personality to their digital workspace with emojis, stickers, GIFs and custom memes to make it their own.
- 📺 Full integration with all Microsoft Office and Office 365 apps and programs
- 📺 People can customize their workspace, with rich extensibility and open APIs
- 📺 More than 150 integrations are available or coming soon, with companies like SAP, Trello, Hipmunk, Growbot and ModuleQ building on the platform.

- File sharing, integration with OneDrive and even other third party apps
- Schedule and organize Meetings
- Add in customizable Tabs for quick access to any specific Office apps or Cloud services your team normally uses
- Pull in Connectors for updates from third-party party tools and services
- The same level of security that protects your entire Office 365 suite
- Unlimited number of participants and team members

Technical Comparison – Slack vs Microsoft Teams

While both platforms look and feel similar to one another and even feature similar tools — messaging, file sharing, app integration — however that's where the similarities end. Below is the breakdown what Slack and Teams bring to the table.



Intuitive User Experience

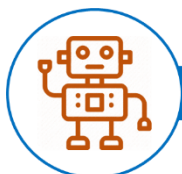
- Slack provides left navigation tabs for Teams, Channels, Direct Messages, Private Groups and Microsoft Teams also has same kind of navigation tabs for Activity, Chat, Teams, Messages & Files.
- In MS teams, the activity dashboard is a Yammer-like feed of everything going on in the organization
- Like Slack, in MS Teams if your name is directly mentioned, you get a red flag or exclamation point next to the message that calls it to your attention
- Slack allows to customize and change the skin of UX with a long list of different theme options but MS Teams isn't there yet. However, it supports three options – default light theme, dark theme & high contrast theme.
- MS Teams clean & interactive design leads to a positive UX, with easy navigation, a readable UI & minimal clutter
- Slack allows for simple and easy communication on all platforms. So between computer, tablet or phone you can have the same conversation going and always access the same information



Next-Gen Chat Platform

- Slack is all about Channels, which allows users to communicate in groups, private settings for a select few or even restricted with direct messages.
- MS Teams is very similar to Slack in both style & functions. Instead of 'Channels', Microsoft uses 'Teams' that can be created to include everyone (Public), groups or select individuals.
- In both Slack & MS Teams, users can share the files, folders, images, documents by simply dragging and dropping them into their respective Channels or Team workspace, making collaboration quick & easy.
- In Slack, users can sync their files from **Google Drive, Dropbox, Box and other Apps** with Slack using paste & link option wherein MS teams is integrated into Office 365, users also have access to its tools & apps as well like **MS Office, SharePoint, Exchange, Skype** etc. which will help users to use & correlate data & file/folders seamlessly from one platform to another without losing context.

- In Slack, all of the public data is immediately searchable and accessible by anyone from any channel unless they restrict them to specific individuals or groups.
- Like Slack, Teams archives everything — messages, data, files and folders, which can be searched using Microsoft's Graph app.
- Like Slack, the Teams group chat app allows team members to chat with colleagues via threaded conversations within specific message channels, direct messages or video



Bots Gallery – Virtual Assistants

- Slack has built-in bot "**Slackbot**"— part-time programmer and full-time assistant —to help you keep things in order and provides provision to add customize & automatic responses
- Slack leverages bots, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and robotic process automation.
- All members and Guests can access Slackbot, but Workspace Owners and Admins can choose to limit some features and Slackbot available to workspaces on free & paid plans
- Slack offers more than 500 apps, chatbots, and algorithms that can be deployed to help make collaboration life little bit easier, covering a wide range of routine tasks and integrations
- Microsoft Teams has two built-in helper bots: **T-Bot** and **WhoBot**.
- T-Bot is similar to Slackbot as it helps you answer questions using the data in Microsoft Teams, but it gives you multiple user interfaces (UIs) to do so.
- WhoBot is built atop the Microsoft Graph artificial intelligence (AI) framework, and answers questions about specific employees. It's essentially a bot that can search company intranet from within Microsoft Teams by pulling data directly from Active Directory (AD).



Personifies Teamwork

- Microsoft Teams brings together the full breadth and depth of Office 365 to provide a true hub for teamwork.
- Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, OneNote, Planner, Power BI and Delve are all built into Microsoft Teams so people have all the information and tools they need at their fingertips and allowing sharing of files and calendars, collaborative editing; you can also switch between voice, video and text chat.
- All documents shared on Microsoft teams are synced with the copy stored in OneDrive and a local SharePoint environment—this ensures that every member always has access to the latest version.
- Slack also allows users to create teams through workspaces for an organization which is on Slack Enterprise Grid.
- There are two ways to add a workspace to an Enterprise Grid organization: existing workspaces can be moved to the organization with approval from the Workspace's Primary Owner, or a new workspace can be created
- All workspaces are connected on Enterprise Grid, but you can control how accessible they are to members of the organization and customize accordingly



Visual Collaboration

- Microsoft Teams has integrated Skype for Business, enabling users to make calls from the chat interface itself.
- Team meetings can only be scheduled with members of the team. Although more than four team members can participate in a meeting, the desktop app only shows the video stream from the four most recent speakers.
- MS Teams has good quality of the video calls, easy to use screen sharing and overall user experience
- Like Slack, MS Teams also allows everyone to add personality to their digital workspace with emojis, stickers, GIFs and custom memes to make it their own
- Slack still lacks in this area and offering a limited 3rd party video calling and screen sharing experience.
- Slack's App Directory has number of apps that you can choose to connect by voice or video call, or share your screen with your colleagues
- Slack integrations with such tools (**Google+ Hangouts, join.me, Skype, WebEx** etc.) may require browser add-ins, user licenses costs etc.



Trusted Security

- Microsoft Teams and Slack both encrypt data, messages, and files, both in transit and at rest and Also both enforce team-wide and organization-wide two-factor authentication
- Microsoft Teams and Slack are **ISO 27001-compliant**.
- Microsoft Teams also add-up other security & compliance certifications - **ISO 27018, SSAE16 SOC 1 and SOC 2, HIPAA, and EU Model Clauses (EUMC)**.
- Files are stored in Microsoft SharePoint and are backed by Microsoft SharePoint encryption for Microsoft Teams
- Office 365 uses AAD (Azure Active Directory) to manage users as well as provide authentication, identity management and access control, including logon processes and authentication services.
- Microsoft uses a combo of additional tech to fortify Teams data while in transit/rest using **TLS** (Transport Layer Security), **SSL** (Secure Sockets Layer) and **Bitlocker**.
- Slack transmits data over public networks using strong encryption. Slack supports the latest recommended secure cipher suites to encrypt all traffic in transit, including use of TLS1.2 protocols, AES256 encryption, and SHA2 signatures, as supported by the clients.
- The Slack service is hosted in data centres maintained by industry-leading service providers AWS.
- Each Slack customer's data is hosted in Slack's shared infrastructure and segregated logically by the Slack application. Slack uses a combination of storage technologies to ensure customer data is protected from hardware failures and returns quickly when requested.



Multi-Channel & Responsiveness

- Slack is available on **Mac, Windows PC**, through web interface, or with Mobile apps for smartphones & Tablet which allows conversations are synced across all devices so user can join the conversation in one place and continue on different devices when user on the move or back to office.
- Slack has more open communication approach due to which conversations get organised within channels
- MS Teams is available for mobile platforms - **Apple iOS, Android, and Windows 10 Mobile** and for desktop apps – **windows & Mac and web platforms**.
- MS Teams also provide users with same experience across the platform and synced all channels conversations across all the devices with same ambience.



Cloud Based Model

- Slack is hosted on a broad range of **AWS services, SaaS** based model and follow the **subscription based model**.
- Slack leveraging AWS services that supports speed of innovation and responsiveness, reliability, and security features to ensure the confidentiality of customer information
- Slack can deliver the kind of enterprise reliability and high availability to support the service-level agreements expected of robust enterprise applications
- Like Slack, MS Teams is also follow the **SaaS based model** through Office 365 which is hosted on Azure platform. MS Teams also follow the **subscription based model**.
- Slack offers a **free** version of their collaboration platform that can be used for an unlimited period of time. This includes the complete version of Slack with up to 10 app/tool integrations (including apps from iOS, Android, Mac and Windows) as well as a searchable archive of 10,000 messages, the ability to make two-person calls and 5GB of total cloud storage.
- Microsoft integrates Teams with several business versions of Office 365 and as such, there is **no free version**, however there is a free Business Premium trial.



Integrations & Customizations

- Microsoft Teams offers the ability to customize work spaces with tabs, connectors and bots from third-party partners as well as familiar Microsoft tools like Microsoft Planner and Visual Studio Team Services.
- Microsoft Teams - **More than 150 integrations** are available or coming soon, with companies like **SAP, Trello, Hipmunk, Growbot and ModuleQ** building on the platform.
- In MS Teams people can customize their workspace, with rich extensibility and **open APIs** available at general availability.
- Slack supports integration with a remarkable array of other services including **Dropbox, GitHub, Google Drive, GoToMeeting Free, IFTTT, JIRA, MailChimp, Nagios, Pivotal Tracker, Twitter, Zapier, and Zendesk**.

Competitive Analysis Between Next-Gen Collaboration Tools – Slack vs MS Teams

- All these integrations allow for the tracking of a huge range of relevant data making the collaborative environment much richer and more useful.
- Slack has in-built App Directory which loaded with **over 750 Apps** which are ready to use like Bots, Analytics, Design, Health & Medical, HR, Marketing etc
- Sign-in with Slack - Allow users to sign in any product, application using Slack like **Facebook, Google, Twitter**.



Price

- Microsoft Teams follows subscription based pricing model - available as part of Microsoft Office 365 subscription
- Microsoft Teams is available to Office 365 commercial customers with one of the following plans: **Business Essentials, Business Premium, and Enterprise E1, E3 and E5**.
- Microsoft Teams will also be available to customers who purchased E4 prior to its retirement.
- Like Microsoft Teams, Slack also follows **subscription based pricing model**.
- Slack available with four pricing catalogue which includes – **Free Plan, Standard Plan, Plus Plan & Enterprise Grid**.

Microsoft Teams vs Slack Feature Comparison

	Microsoft Teams	Slack
Communication		
Real time messaging	Chat	Direct Messages
Team (group) Messaging	Yes (<i>Built on O365 Group Service, which is also directly accessible via Outlook Groups</i>)	Yes
Channels Messaging (topic/department)	Yes (<i>creates a Folder within the Team O365 Group Files with each Channel name to store all files shared in the channel. This files module is driven by a SharePoint Document Library</i>)	Yes
User Experience		
Themes	Yes	No
Multi-lingual	Yes (18 languages)	No

Competitive Analysis Between Next-Gen Collaboration Tools – Slack vs MS Teams

Team Icons, Messages	No	Yes
User Statistics	No	Yes
Emoji, Gifs, Stickers	Yes (personalization)	Yes
Custom Tabs (within Chat & Channel interface)		
Add application driven new tabs to Channels & Chat Interface	Yes (Any other SharePoint Document Library, Any File within the Channel, PowerBI, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Planner)	N/A
Document Management		
Upload Files - Desktop	Yes (all files uploaded are stored in Channel specific folder within the Team O365 Group Files. This module is driven by a SharePoint Document Library and can be directly accessed within SharePoint Online as well)	Yes
Upload Files - Online File Sharing	User's OneDrive for Business & SharePoint Document Library	Multiple 3rd Party Integrations
Create new file, edit files	Yes (Online - Word/Excel/PowerPoint)	Yes (3rd Party App)
Folders	Yes	No
Copy & Move Files	Yes	No
Code Snippets	No	Yes
Productivity		
Search	Yes (Messages, People, files, including full-text of documents)	Yes (Messages, files, including full-text of documents)
Commenting - Files	Yes	Yes
Commenting - Tabs	Yes	N/A

Competitive Analysis Between Next-Gen Collaboration Tools – Slack vs MS Teams

Project or Task Management	MS Planner (Seamless Integration) & 3rd Party App Integration	3rd Party Apps
Notes	Yes (built-in & extended with OneNote)	Yes (Posts)
Notifications	Yes	Yes
User Profiles	Yes (tightly integrated with Azure Activity Directory)	Yes
My (User) Activity	Yes	Yes
User Presence	Yes	Yes
Audio Calls	Yes (powered by Skype for Business)	Yes
Video Calls	Yes (powered by Skype for Business)	Yes
Screen Sharing	Yes (powered by Skype for Business)	3rd Party Apps
Business Intelligence		
Analytics	PowerBI (& 3rd Party)	3rd Party Apps
Integrations		
Calendar	Meetings	3rd Party Apps
3rd party App ecosystem	Selected, early days	Extensive
API	Open to Developers via Program	Open to Developers via Program
Automation		
Bots	Early Days – T-Bot & Who Bot	Mature - SlackBot
Bot Customization	No	Yes
Bot API	Yes	Yes
Cross Platform Apps		

Desktop - MAC	Yes	Yes
Desktop - Windows	Yes	Yes
Desktop - Linux	No	Yes
Mobile - iOS	Yes	Yes
Mobile - Android	Yes	Yes
Mobile - Windows	Yes	Yes

Future Workplace Collaboration POV

The team chat phenomenon is changing the nature of communication in the digital workplace just as much as automation has on the shop floor.

Microsoft **Teams**, a group chat application that competes directly with **Slack**. The launch is a clear response to **Slack's** strong growth as a workplace tool for communications and file sharing that reduces reliance on company e-mail.

Microsoft Teams will be integrated into the Office suite of applications. Like Slack, the Teams group chat app allows team members to chat with colleagues via threaded conversations within specific message channels, direct messages or video. They can also share files and images. Teams will be available in desktop, mobile, and web versions

Existing collaboration solutions aren't as easy to use as they should be –

- Today, Slack is used by teams inside many companies, including eBay, Ogilvy, Salesforce, Samsung, Urban Outfitters, and Hewlett Packard Enterprise.
- Slack says 77 of the Fortune 100 have signed up.
- Enterprises that use older collaboration solutions like Jive or Connections are finding their workers are gravitating toward Slack because it offers consumer-grade ease of use and a "freemium" business model that reduces friction further.

Teams need well-executed chat tools to get things done –

- Yammer, the precursor to Teams, grew fast with its take on enterprise microblogging. WhatsApp grew fast because it made group messaging easier.
- Collaboration solutions work best when they take a more open approach, with messaging functionality that makes it easy to loop in the team you need in a threaded conversation spread across multiple channels in real time.
- Slack works on a Mac, a Windows PC, through a web interface, or on mobile apps for smartphones and tablets. It shows the way for this core component of a smart collaboration suite.

The bots are taking over –

- Slack leverages bots, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and robotic process automation.

- Slack offers more than 500 apps, chatbots, and algorithms that can be deployed to help make collaboration life little bit easier, covering a wide range of routine tasks and integrations.
- There are bots for tracking expenses, setting up to-do lists, and creating polls for a team.
- Bots can also handle integrations with Trello, GitHub, SugarCRM, and other third-party applications.
- This is changing the nature of office work and the digital workplace, in the same way that automation has transformed the shop floor.

New entrants can still disrupt this market –

- Collaboration solutions like Jive or Connections have been available for more than a decade.
- Rise of Slack shows that even in the crowded market of collaboration tools, enterprise social networks, and messaging apps, there is still room for a new entrant with a new approach to gain significant traction.

The writings on the wall for e-mail –

- Smart organizations are adopting productivity and collaboration solutions that allow for the co-creation of documents, reports, and presentations, and the ability to capture the conversations that need to happen around these projects.
- Most effective digital organizations use enterprise social networks to connect their people. They are using enterprise-level, cloud-based products such as Jive, SAP Jam, or Salesforce Chatter to help their employees connect.
- Slack is gaining traction. For example, Salesforce, which was born in the cloud with its own widely used collaboration tool set, has teams that are using Slack to get stuff done.
- Bots and process automation are becoming mainstream in the **digital workplace**

Workplace collaboration: Bottom Line

While both collaboration platforms are nearly identical in looks and features, what separates them is that one is essentially a stand-alone product while the other is an add-on feature to an existing software suite.

Slack would be ideal for small businesses and individuals looking to incorporate an easy to use communication infrastructure where fast communication will help facilitate a more efficient work flow without relying solely on email and telephony.

Small businesses with limited revenue can also take advantage of Slack as it's cheaper (\$6.67 or \$12.50 per month depending on the version) than Office 365 (\$5 to \$35 per month depending on the version) and has a full repository of add-on apps that provide additional features and functions when the need arises.

Larger corporations and companies, on the other hand, would benefit more with Microsoft Teams, especially if they already own or lease Office 365, as the collaboration platform is included in the Business tier of the software suite. Simply put, Office 365 was designed for businesses and features the tools and apps that would benefit larger corporations and companies greatly.