

## Using Slack

### Benefits of Slack

Slack is a new messaging system for teams that brings all your communication tools together in one place. Slack uses channels, which is what differentiates it from other messaging systems. The channels can be created for projects, locations, departments, sub-teams, anything you'd like. The channels can be public – which makes them visible and searchable to everyone (on your company team, that is) or you can make them private and invitation only.

You can make the most of Slack by installing the app on your desktop or using it directly from the web. There is also an app for Android and iOS operating systems, so Slack will work on your phone, tablet, and iPad, in addition to PCs or Macs. You have the ability to integrate just about any other app into Slack and still get notifications. A partial list of the apps you can integrate are Twitter, GoToMeeting, and others. You can connect your Google calendar to Slack and receive notifications from it. You can make phone and video calls.

### Difference between Channels and Direct Messages (DMs)

Channels are for conversations that open to your entire team/company. (Unless they are on private channels, of course). Any posts made to a public channel is visible and searchable by anyone on your company team.

Direct messages are private communications between you and one or more other people.

### Joining a Channel, Posting, and Sending a Direct Message

To join a channel, click the Channel header in your sidebar. This will open the channel browser and you can type in the name of the channel. Click on the one you want to join and you can preview it before you join. When you're ready to join, click the Join button. To post to a channel, highlight it in your sidebar then post in the bottom box of the window. Type your text in, then press Enter.

Send a Direct Message by clicking on the name of the person (or group) you wish to message. Type the message into the bottom of the window and press Enter.

### Organizing Your Channels and Contacts

You can organize your sidebar by doing a few of the following:

- Star channels and direct messages. They'll instantly rise to the top of the list.
- Leave channels if you don't need to be there.
- Archive channels that aren't being used anymore.
- Mute channels if you need to be in a channel, but find it too noisy.
- Make sure your notifications are set at the right level. You can revisit your general settings, or set notifications for things like @channel mentions on a channel-by-channel basis.

To further organize your sidebar, click on your team name, then go to Preferences > Advanced Options and choose to hide channels with no activity and also list public and private channels separately.

## Pinning, Snippets, and Posts

You can pin posts and/or files in a channel to make it easily accessible. To pin an item, hover over it and click on message actions. Select 'Pin to #channel' then click yes to confirm. To view pinned items, click the information icon. To upload a file to Slack, just drag and drop the file right onto the Slack window.

Snippets are a way to post a bit of code or text to your team. To create a snippet, click the + sign next to the Slack message box. Choose 'create a snippet'. Enter a title (optional) and select a file type (text, html, etc.) When you're finished typing it in, click 'Create Snippet.' You can create a snippet by using a keyboard shortcut: Shift+Ctrl+V (on a PC) or Shift+Cmd+V (Mac).

Posts are the default communication method in Slack. Select the channel, then type in the text box at the bottom of the window and push Enter.

## Keyboard Shortcuts

Only the Windows shortcuts are listed but they work with Macs as well, just change the Ctrl for Cmd

Open a list of keyboard shortcuts: Ctrl + /

Increase or Decrease Font Size: Ctrl + or Ctrl –

To Open the Quick Switcher: Ctrl + K or Ctrl + T

To Open the Direct Message Quick Switcher: Ctrl + Shift + K or Ctrl + Shift + T

Move to next/previous Direct Message or Channel: Alt + Up Arrow or Alt + Down Arrow

Mark all messages in current channel or DM as read: Esc

Mark all messages in all channels and DMs as read: Shift + Esc

Formatting messages: **\*text\*** will bold your text (stars or asterisks)

*\_text\_* will italicize your text (underscores)

~text~ will strikethrough your text (tildes)

Find more keyboard shortcuts here:

<https://slack.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/201374536-Slack-keyboard-shortcuts>

## Using Slack on your phone, tablet, or desktop

Using Slack between devices is easy. If you start a conversation on your desktop, you can go to your phone and continue right from where you left off. You must install the Slack app to your phone or tablet and you can also add the desktop app to your computer. If you're at a computer without the app installed, you can go to [www.slack.com](http://www.slack.com) and sign in. Slack is available from any browser.