The Best Online Collaboration Software of 2018

By Jill Duffy; June 27, 2018

Collaboration apps have changed the way people work, and it's about time. A collaboration app is any piece of software that helps people get work done together. These apps save us from having to email colleagues, knock on doors, and leave voicemails every time we wrap up some element of work and pass it along to other team members. They alert people to activity on work that pertains to them. They are essentially productivity apps that emphasize and enable teamwork.

**Best Multipurpose Apps**

A few of the best collaboration apps don't fit into one category because they are multipurpose tools. **Podio**, for example, is so broad you have to choose which pieces you want from a menu of options. **Asana** is another example. Asana includes tools for managing tasks and workflows.

**Best for Project and Resource Management**

**LiquidPlanner** has everything you'd want, including interactive Gantt charts and roll-up reports, and automated scheduling tools. **Zoho Projects** is an A+ alternative, especially for teams on a budget. Zoho Projects and LiquidPlanner are our top choices.

**Best for Task and Workflow Management**

**Asana** is different from more-traditional project management apps because you can use it to manage ongoing work, whereas project management apps are usually designed to handle work that has a firm end date. **Airtable** is, technically speaking, a collaborative relational database, but it may make more sense to call it a collaborative spreadsheet.

**Best for Team Messaging**

When conversations are open, anyone on the team can read them and participate in them at will. When they are private, they are by invitation only. **Slack** stands apart from other apps in this category because it has more customizations and alert options than any other. **Glip** by RingCentral remains one of the best alternatives in this category and a high scoring service in our testing.

**Honorable Mentions**

**Workfront** is an enterprise-grade workplace hub. It's like Podio in the sense that you customize it to make it what you want it to be, but ultimately, it's where colleagues come together online to get work done and communicate.

In the project management category, **Teamwork Projects** also earned an Editors' Choice award.

**Outplanr** is another app that's hard to classify. It's designed for teams that need something in between a to-do list and full-scale project management platform. **Samepage** and **Quip** are collaboration tools that focus on collaborative document creation and editing.

**Culture Is Key**

Throwing a new tool at a bunch of people and telling them to use it instead of email doesn't work. To start using a collaboration tool successfully, all the key players on the team need to buy into it. It has to become part of the culture. When you're up and running with a collaboration app that fits your needs and everything starts clicking, you may be amazed at how much more productive and organized your team has become.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2489110,00.asp>

<https://rubygarage.org/blog/collaboration-software-types>