



Tech Talk

Everything You Always Wanted to Know about SLACK: But Were Afraid to Ask

March 1, 2018

Why Slack? And if so, when?



Improving Communication

GSA IT is always seeking to improve the ways we communicate internally. Slack is a chat client that provides a centralized way to communicate in channels that you want--about projects that matter to you--without overloading your inbox



Don't we already have tools?

Of course! But (after becoming an approved IT standard) Slack has become a "go-to" tool in 18f as it enables teams to coordinate efficiently, and it seems to be a great best practice we'd like to try. You can still use all of your other tools like chat, Hangouts, Google docs, Chatter etc...

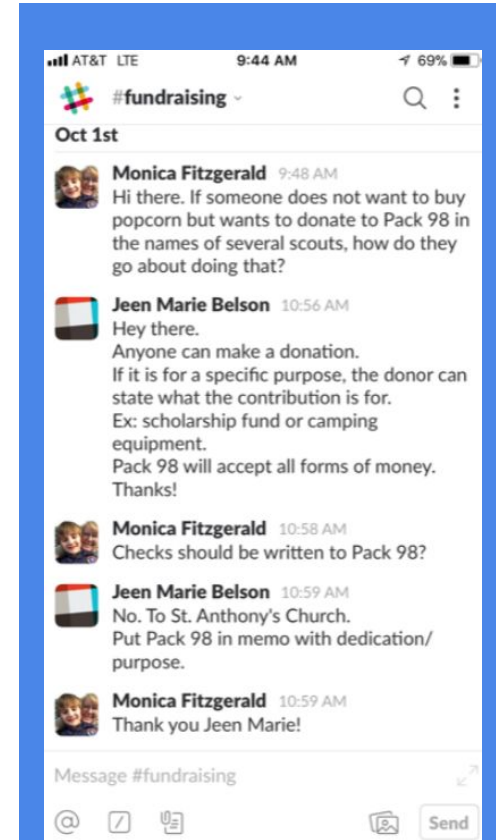
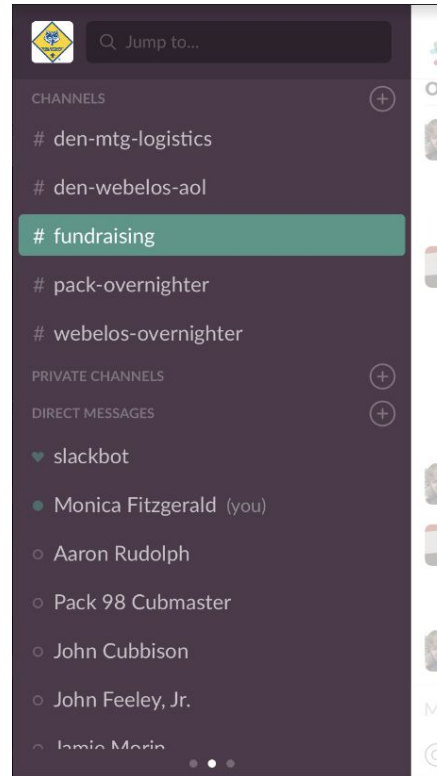
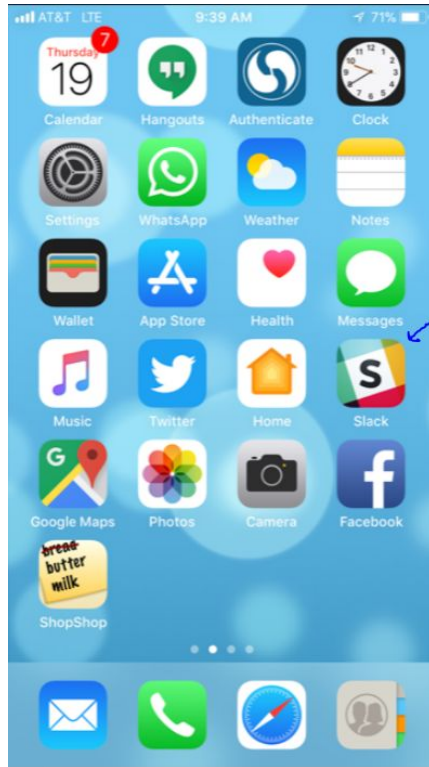


Can I get started now?

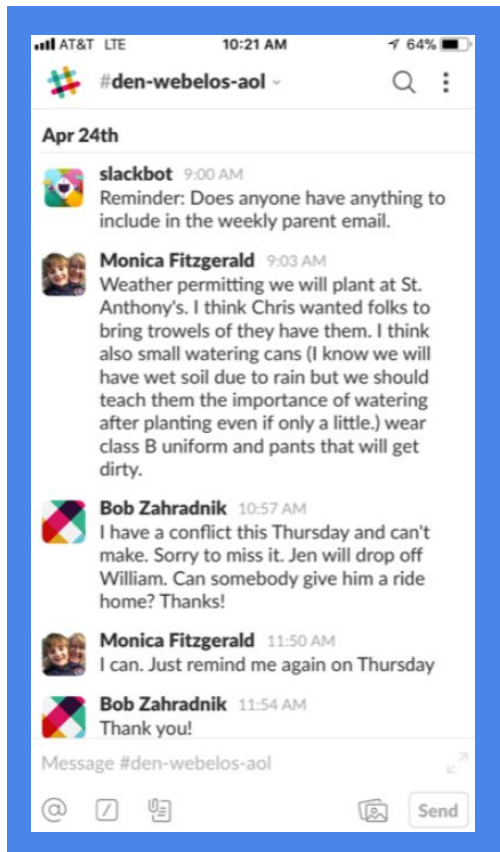
GSA is currently doing a pilot involving about 100 people that should conclude in March. If feedback is positive, the hope is to make it available to others then.

Let's do a little "show and tell" about how Slack has been used elsewhere first, shall we?

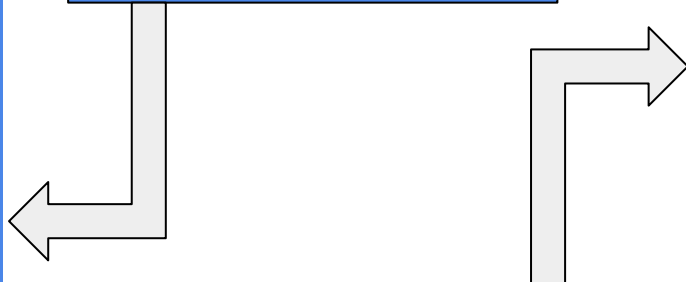
A Real Life Example--Cub Scout Coordination



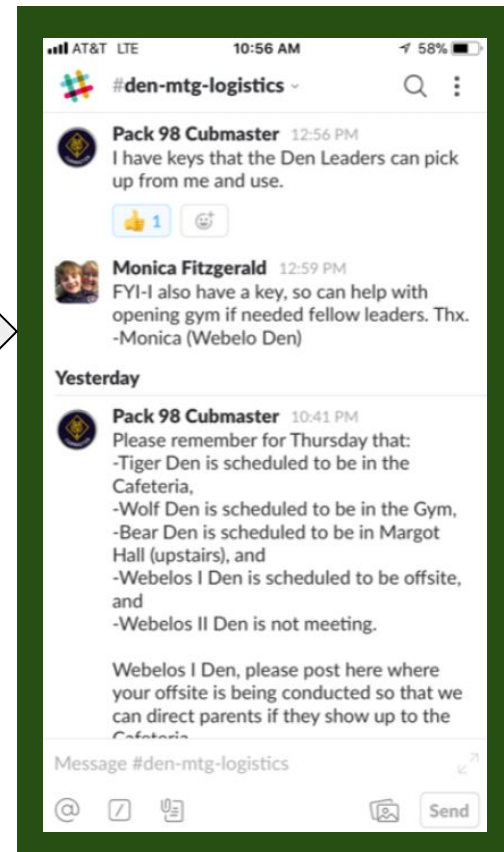
Plan Different Things in Different Channels



This group has only 4 members (Webelo den leaders) and allows them to plan for their smaller group each week.

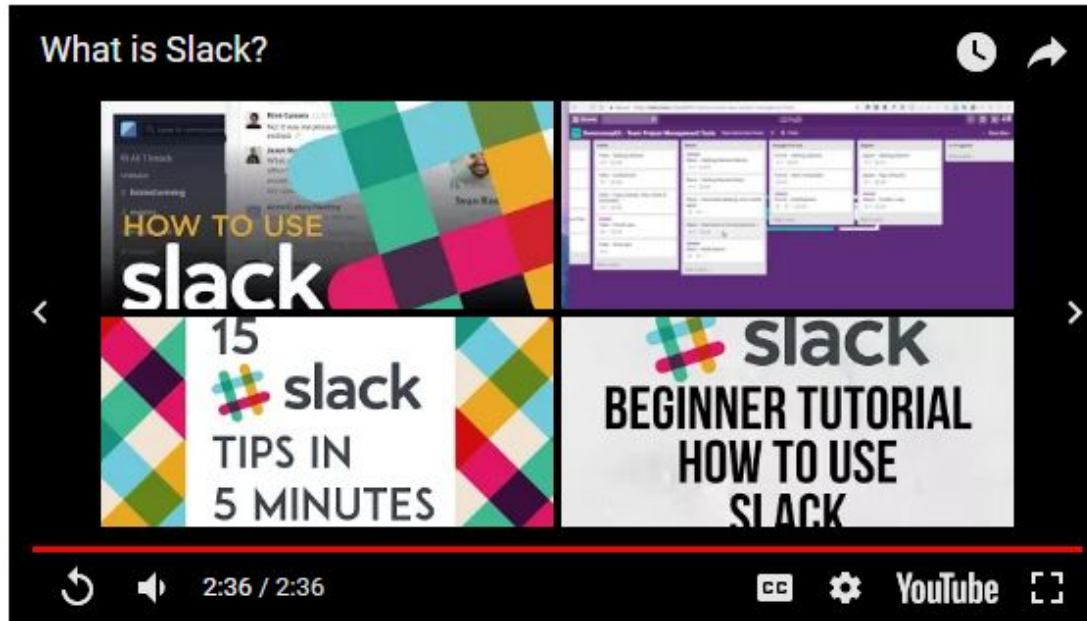


This group has 35 members (Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear and Webelo den leaders) and allows for all to plan logistics.



Slack Basics

[There is a Slack Guide](#) with a short video that can help anyone new to Slack get started.



Authority to Operate

The only two implementations of Slack right now at GSA with ATOs (Authority to Operate) are:

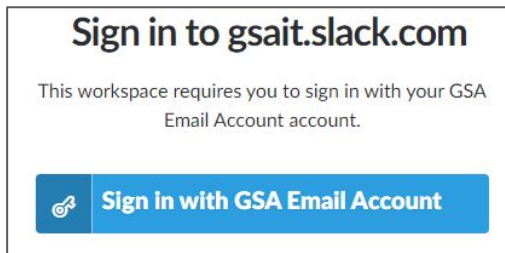
- TTS (18F)
- GSA IT Pilot

No one else in the agency should be using Slack.

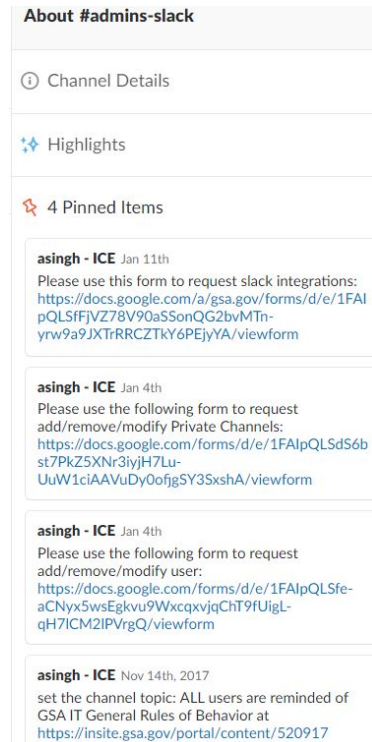
GSA IT's Instance of Slack

1. Once you have been invited to join, you'll log into <https://gsait.slack.com/>

2. You'll authenticate in...

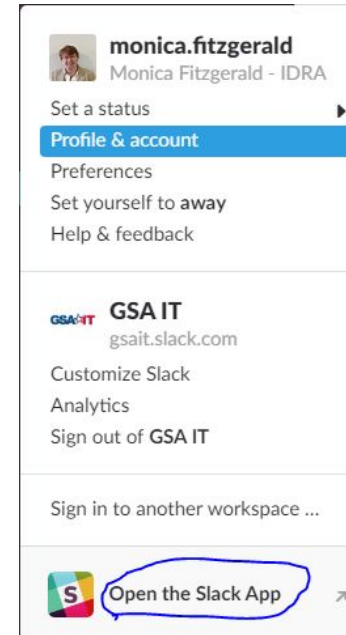


3. And then be able to start forming your groups using the Google Forms that the Admins have set up for this purpose.

A screenshot of a Slack channel page for "#admins-slack". The page has a light gray header with the channel name. Below the header, there are sections for "Channel Details", "Highlights", and "4 Pinned Items". The pinned items are messages from a user named "asingh - ICE". The first pinned message is dated "Jan 11th" and contains a Google Form link for requesting Slack integrations. The second pinned message is dated "Jan 4th" and contains a Google Form link for requesting to add, remove, or modify private channels. The third pinned message is dated "Jan 4th" and contains a Google Form link for requesting to add, remove, or modify a user. The fourth pinned message is dated "Nov 14th, 2017" and contains a link to the GSA IT General Rules of Behavior.

Options for working in Slack

1. Just keep a browser window open (not recommended as it too easy to close.)
2. Open your client up on your desktop.
(click up above your name and you'll see option to "Open the Slack App". It will then open for you whenever you log on.
3. Go to the App Store and download the free app for Slack. Log in one time with your GSA email address and it will always stay open



Channels

GSA IT ▾
monica.fitzgerald

Jump to...

All Threads

Channels

- # admins-slack
- # ask-the-cio
- discuss-idr-comms
- discuss-idra-gear
- discuss-idra-general
- # discuss-idra-idc**
- discuss-idraplanning
- # general
- # whats-the-weather

Direct Messages

- slackbot
- monica.fitzgerald (you)
- akanksha.sharma
- amirah.aziz
- amirah.aziz, bryant.hales
- brendan.longcore
- bryant.hales
- kris.rowley
- lesley.briante
- navin.vembar
- navin.vembar, vanessa....

#discuss-idra-idc

☆ | 👤 3 | 🗨️ 0 | ✎ Add a topic



discuss-idra-idc

[@jonah.hatfield](#) created this channel on December 13th, 2017. This is the very beginning of the **# discuss-idra-idc** channel. Purpose: To discuss tasks and comms related to the PortfolioStat program or the Integrated Data Collection process in particular. ([edit](#))

[+ Add an app](#) [👤 Invite others to this channel](#)

December 13th, 2017



jonah.hatfield 1:46 PM
joined #discuss-idra-idc along with monica.fitzgerald.



jonah.hatfield 1:46 PM
set the channel purpose: To discuss tasks and comms related to the PortfolioStat program or the Integrated Data Collection process in particular.



akanksha.sharma 1:46 PM
joined #discuss-idra-idc by invitation from jonah.hatfield.



jonah.hatfield 1:48 PM
[@monica.fitzgerald](#) David Harity created a DCOI board on Trello to track all of the moving parts. I added you to this Trello board if you'd like to review. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks Monica!



monica.fitzgerald 2:23 PM
Great. And thanks for making this channel [@jonah.hatfield](#)

December 20th, 2017




monica.fitzgerald 9:16 AM
Hi [@jonah.hatfield](#) - interesting to see that the major change from the early December draft (optional to do FITARA self assessment and Feedback) is that the final says that in addition to keeping these two optional, we also now have as optional the Mission Support Benchmarking section (with the note that it is temporarily paused pending PMA decisions.)

Threaded Conversations


Thread ✕

roy.iversen and you


 **roy.iversen** Dec 12th, 2017 at 9:53 AM
in #general



Friendly Slack Protips for new users:
Use **threaded conversations** when you can - responding in a thread keeps the main channel easy to read. (I sometimes forget to use this myself)
Don't forget to @-mention users to get their attention. Don't expect someone to see your question if you didn't do that. And don't @-channel the entire group unless it is truly urgent.
When "reacting" to a Slack message, instead of posting a single emoji in a new message, use "add reaction" to the message you're commenting on. Again, this keeps the channel easy to read.
Use the desktop and phone clients! It saves you from accidentally closing those slack tabs that you meant to keep open... 😊

1 reply

 **monica.fitzgerald** 2 months ago

Regarding starting a thread. If someone asks a question or states something, simply hover over the name of the person who sent the first comment, and off the the right a couple of icons will appear. One of them say start a thread. I just did that here on [@roy.iversen's](#) Friendly Slack Protips for new users!

 1

 Reply... 

Did I forget to mention how helpful the Slackbot is for reminders?

What's Next? (Hint, no Slack until pilot done.)

Step 1: GSA IT Running Slack Pilot

- The CTO named IC as Administrator
- Licenses being obtained

Pilot Members:

- GSA IT Executive Team
- Other groups selected by their leadership
- Slated to end late March 2018

Step 2: Conduct Analysis

- Participant Feedback
- Ease of Use
- Frequency of Use
- Best Practices to develop handbook

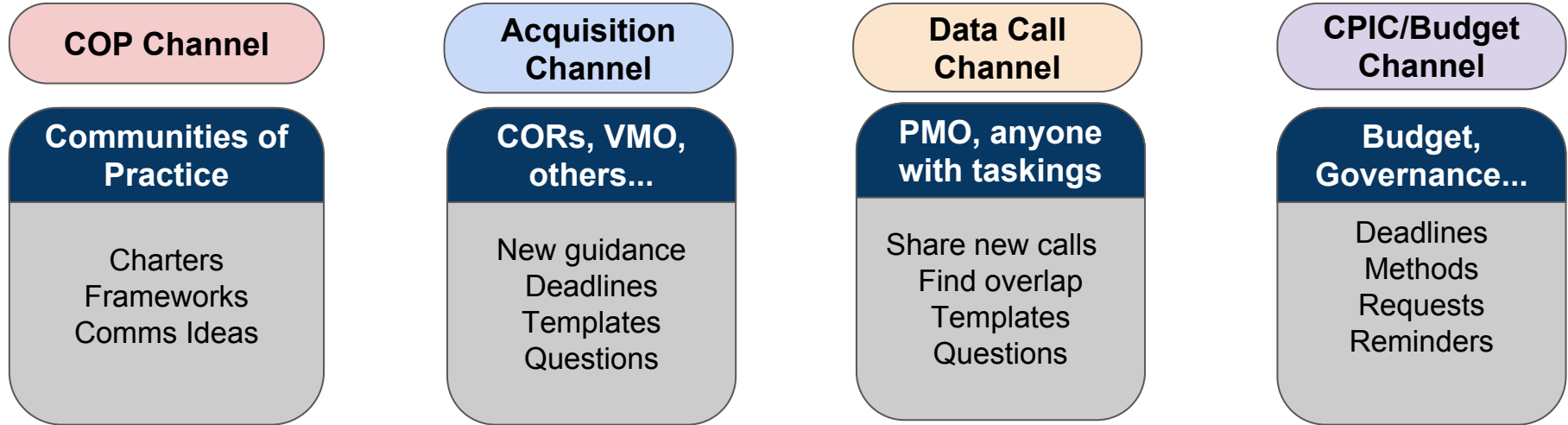
Step 3: Refine Structure

- Structure
 - Administrator Role
 - User Training
 - Mandatory for all?
 - Champions
- Naming Conventions
 - Keywords
 - Common nomenclature
- Develop guidelines
 - How to request
 - Handbook
- Define Team/Individual Accountability

Step 4: Implement

- Assign tasks/identify key players
- Coordination with GSA IT Slack Administrator
- Channel Creation/Population

Start Thinking about How Your Org Might Use Slack...



- 1) Each channel would have in its membership, anyone who touches these buckets.
- 2) Ask questions, share relevant info, @ tag specific people.
- 3) Share templates, best practices, etc...

What else? Strategic Planning? TBM? Personnel Announcements,and more! What are your ideas?

Q&A