Category Chats: Team Communication

- Slack
  - Cloud Based messaging platform
  - Real-time chatting
  - Secure
  - Allows file sharing
  - Integration with 3rd party apps
  - User friendly interface
  - Limited message history
  - Not open source
  - Popular with businesses already using SaaS tools
- Element
  - Open-Source Chat application
  - Encryption: end-to-end
  - Basic Interfacing
  - Lacks user friendly features
  - Optimal Security Option
- Mattermost
  - Open source
  - Self-hosted
  - Designed for DevOps
  - Integrates with Developer tools CI/CD and APIs
  - Designed for strict compliance
- Microsoft Teams
  - Video chatting, group chats
  - Integrates with Microsoft 365
  - Slow processing
  - Enterprise security
  - No encryption
  - Best for large companies
- Notion
  - Just chat
  - Documentation
  - User friendly
  - Notepad style
  - Email Style chat
  - Calendar and AI integration
  - HIPPA Compliant, SOC2-certified
  - Access Multiple accounts

• Discord

- Originally for gamers, now widely adopted by dev & community teams

- Free with optional Nitro premium plan

- Voice, video, and text chat

- Channel-based organization

- Screen sharing and live streaming

- Bot integration and rich API

- Moderation tools and custom roles

- Not ideal for enterprise compliance

- Lacks built-in productivity integrations (like calendar or document editors)

- Limited message history unless boosted

Summary:

Slack

Based on the breakdown of each chat application, we can see pros and cons. Slack is a very well-known chatting app for developers and general business teams. It supports both video and text communication and offers a cloud-based environment for secure and collaborative work. Available on mobile and desktop, its user-friendly interface and wide range of integrations make it appealing to many startups and SaaS teams.

However, Slack is considered expensive compared to alternatives. It has four pricing tiers, and many essential features (like unlimited message history and compliance tools) are locked behind higher-tier plans.

Per-user price:

- Free

- Pro: $8.25/mo

- Business+: $15.50/mo

- Enterprise Grid: $384/yr

HIPAA compliance and advanced security controls are only available with the Enterprise Grid plan.

Element (Matrix)

Element, built on the Matrix protocol, stands out for its privacy-first, open-source architecture. Unlike other proprietary services, it allows self-hosting and federation, meaning you can run your own server and still communicate across other Matrix home servers. It includes end-to-end encryption by default, making it a top choice for privacy-conscious organizations. Element can be integrated with services like Slack, IRC, and Discord through bridges. However, it suffers from a less refined user interface and may not be suitable for non-technical teams without support or setup expertise.

Cost:

- Free and open-source (self-hosted)

- Element Enterprise Hosting: Pricing varies (starts around $2/user/month for business hosting)

Full ownership of data and robust encryption make it an optimal choice for secure and federated communication

Mattermost

Mattermost is a developer-oriented, open-source chat platform often adopted by DevOps teams in compliance-heavy industries. It supports self-hosting, giving complete control over infrastructure, and includes strong integrations with CI/CD tools, Git platforms, and service hooks.
The platform offers role-based access control, fine-grained security policies, and customizability. However, it does require administrative overhead, including setup, server maintenance, and upgrades.

Per-user price:

- Free (self-hosted Team Edition)

- Professional: $10/user/month

- Enterprise: Custom pricing based on compliance and scalability needs

Ideal for regulated industries, defense contractors, and teams that prioritize data sovereignty and DevSecOps alignment.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is an enterprise-grade collaboration suite tightly integrated into the Microsoft 365 ecosystem. It provides comprehensive tools including chat, video conferencing, document collaboration (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), calendar management, and cloud storage. While robust, Teams can be resource-intensive and is known for sluggish performance, especially on older machines. It does not provide end-to-end encryption for chats, though it offers strong compliance and data governance features via Azure Active Directory.
Per-user price (bundled with Microsoft 365):

- Free version available (limited features)

- Microsoft 365 Business Basic: $6/user/month

- Microsoft 365 Business Standard: $12.50/user/month

- Microsoft 365 E5 (Enterprise): $57/user/month

Best suited for large organizations deeply invested in the Microsoft ecosystem with enterprise-level collaboration and compliance needs.

Notion

Notion is more than just a chat platform—it combines documentation, notes, calendar, AI, and simple communication features in one workspace. It offers a clean, notepad-style interface and supports multi-account access. Ideal for teams focused on knowledge sharing rather than high-frequency messaging.
While it supports light messaging, it lacks real-time chat and video call features, making it complementary to, not a replacement for, dedicated chat apps.

Pricing:

- Free for individuals

- Plus: $8/user/month

- Business: $15/user/month

- Enterprise: Custom pricing
  HIPAA compliance and SOC2 certification make it suitable for secure documentation.

Discord

Discord started as a platform for gamers but has evolved into a powerful communication tool for community-focused teams, including open-source contributors, developers, and small startups. It supports real-time voice, video, and text chat in structured channels. Bots and integrations make it flexible, though not tailored for enterprise needs.
It's free to use with generous limits, though boosting and Nitro subscriptions unlock enhanced features like HD video, larger uploads, and more message history.
However, it lacks the compliance features, audit trails, and productivity integrations of tools like Slack or Teams.

Pricing:

- Free

- Discord Nitro: $9.99/month (or $99.99/year)

Best for informal communication, creative teams, and online communities needing dynamic voice/video interaction and customizable channels.