

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

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.