

Getting Started

Making Slack work for your team

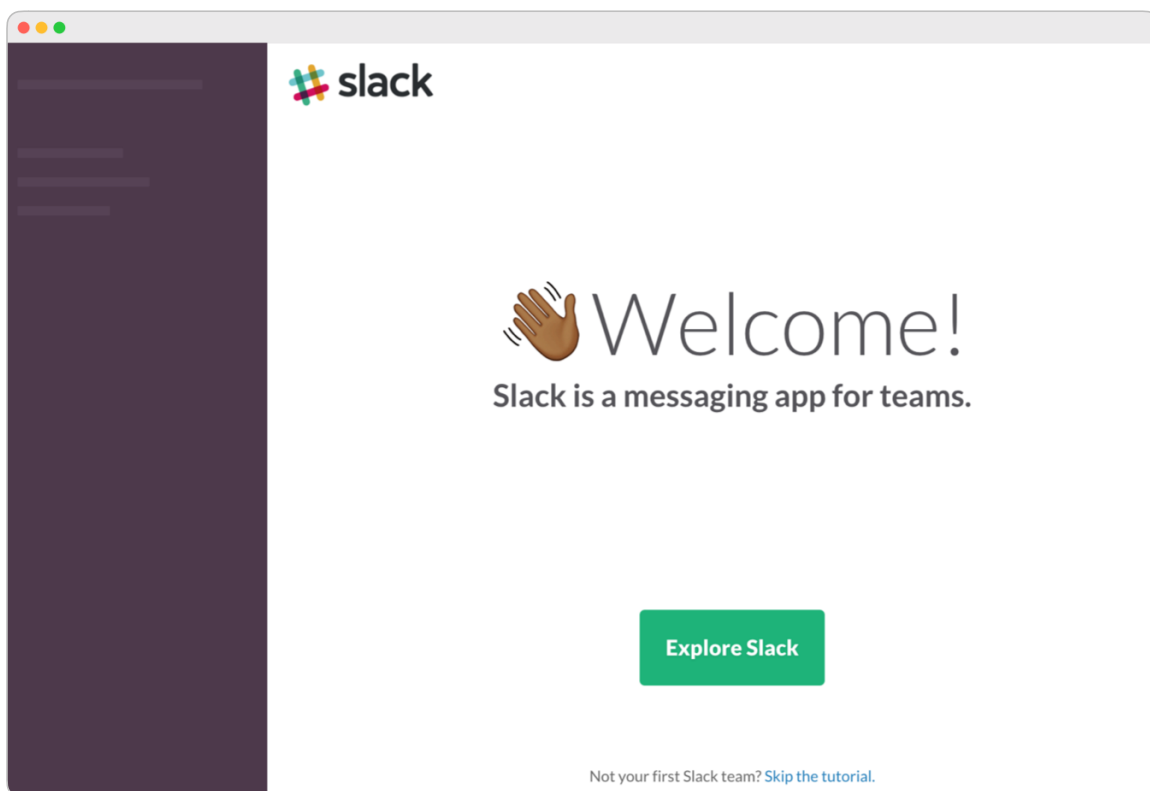


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Welcome to Slack

Slack is an easy-to-use messaging app for teams that brings all your communication into one place and integrates with your existing tools. Whatever it is you do, there are a few simple steps you can take while setting Slack up for your team to help everyone get started as quickly and productively as possible.

Hope this guide helps. We're glad you're here.



Start with a pilot team

Choose a specific week to try Slack with a few team members.

Organize a small group of people you work with closely and, instead of sending emails (or IMs, or Skype messages), try just using Slack. We recommend trying to use Slack exclusively for a day or two, so your team can realize the benefits.

Keep your starting set of channels small.

Don't worry about creating a lot of channels before you get started. We recommend you let conversations happen and create channels as the need arises. When conversations emerge about a certain subject — like discussing a project, or regular topics like #lunch — create a new channel. You'll soon figure out the right channels for your team.

Communicate in public channels whenever possible.

When you do need to have a confidential conversation, create a private channel for long-term discussions that will involve more people in the future. If it's a direct or lightweight conversation, you can send a group or direct message. But by keeping most of your conversations open to all team members, you:

- Build a database of organizational knowledge with zero effort.
- Draw your team into Slack. (No one wants to miss out on critical conversations!)
- Gain visibility into everything happening in your team.

Integrate with as many external tools as you need to get work done.

Bringing updates from external services directly into Slack keeps a finger on the pulse of your team. You'll no longer need email notifications from these services, and best of all, everything will be searchable and in one place. Take a look at a [list of our current integrations](https://slack.com/apps). (<https://slack.com/apps>)

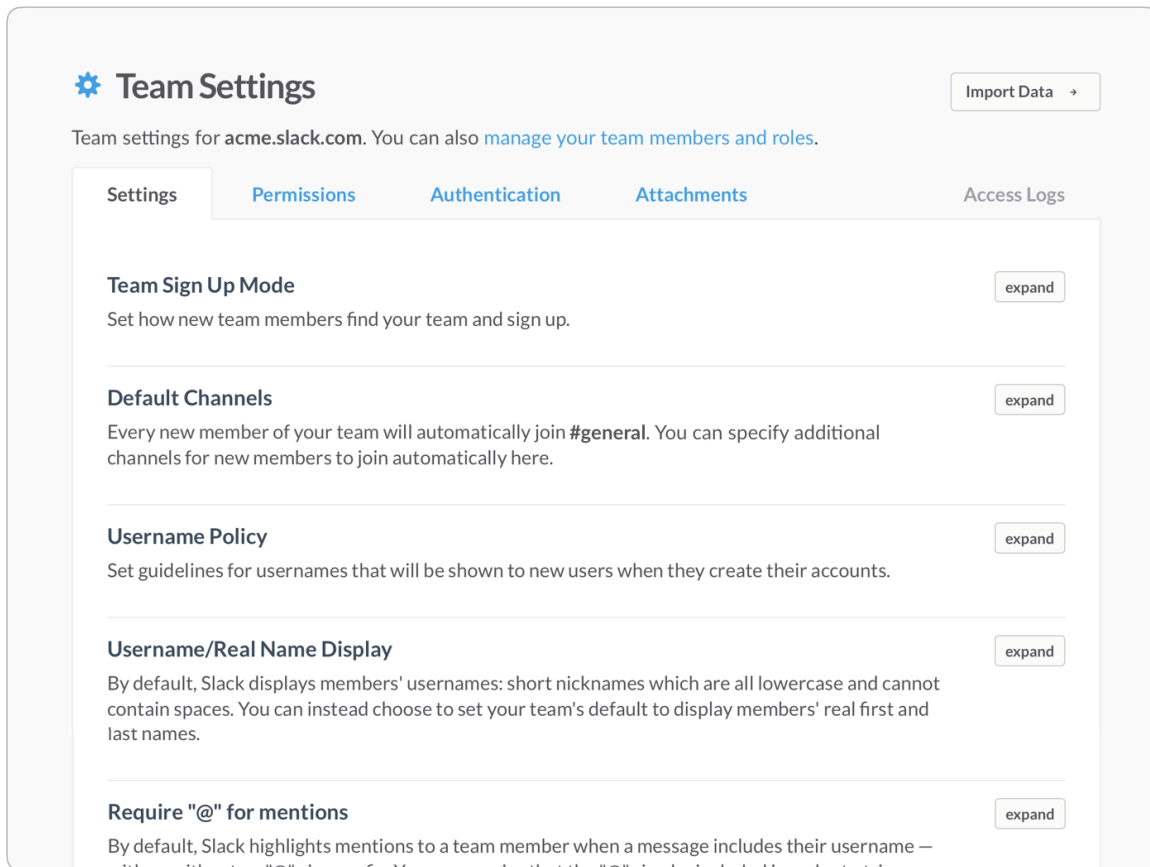
Encourage your team to download our apps.

Using our [apps](https://slack.com/downloads) (<https://slack.com/downloads>) is a much better experience all around, so we recommend you and your team do so.

Once your pilot team is running smoothly, it's time to think ahead for how to set up the rest of your organization for success.

Set up Team Preferences

Choosing the right preferences helps everyone on your team get the best possible experience. We'll go over some of these key preferences below, but more information can also be found in the [Team Settings section of our Help Center](#).



The screenshot shows the Slack 'Team Settings' interface for the team 'acme.slack.com'. At the top, there's a gear icon and the title 'Team Settings', followed by an 'Import Data' button with a right arrow. Below this, a subtitle reads: 'Team settings for acme.slack.com. You can also [manage your team members and roles](#).' A horizontal tab bar contains five tabs: 'Settings' (active), 'Permissions', 'Authentication', 'Attachments', and 'Access Logs'. The main content area lists several settings, each with an 'expand' button on the right:

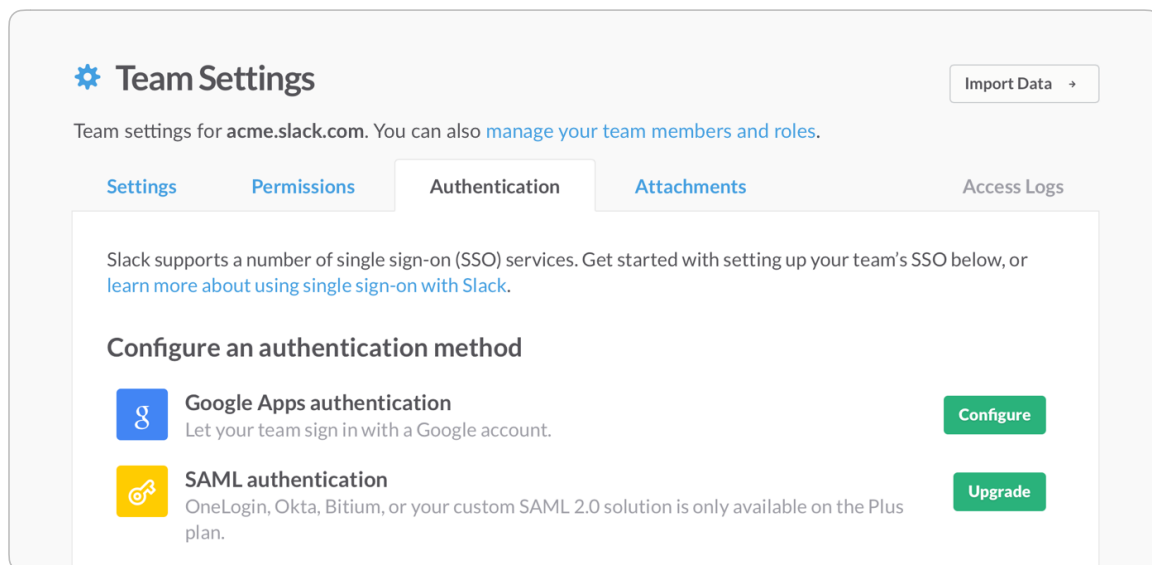
- Team Sign Up Mode**: Set how new team members find your team and sign up.
- Default Channels**: Every new member of your team will automatically join #general. You can specify additional channels for new members to join automatically here.
- Username Policy**: Set guidelines for usernames that will be shown to new users when they create their accounts.
- Username/Real Name Display**: By default, Slack displays members' usernames: short nicknames which are all lowercase and cannot contain spaces. You can instead choose to set your team's default to display members' real first and last names.
- Require "@" for mentions**: By default, Slack highlights mentions to a team member when a message includes their username — with or without an "@" sign prefix. You can require that the "@" sign be included in order to trigger a mention.

Team Signup

SSO — Enabling Single Sign-On (SSO) makes Slack seamless with your other services. We support Google Apps, Okta, OneLogin, and other SSO providers, including custom SAML implementations. SSO is available for all teams on the Standard Plan or above while SAML-based SSO is available for the Plus Plan.

Email signup — If you don't have an SSO solution in place, you can allow team members to sign up using one or more company email domains.

Invitations — Team Admins and Owners can invite new team members to Slack from the Invitations page.

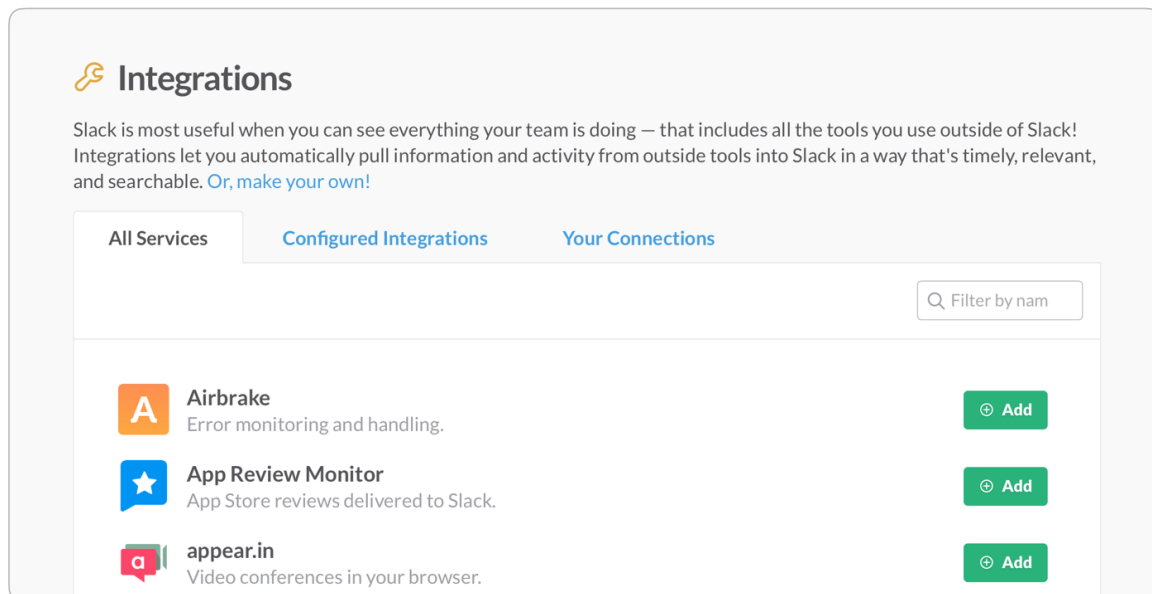


Default channels for new users

To help your team members get started, you can set a list of default channels they will automatically join. And when you invite people, you can also add channels on a per-person basis, so that they'll join channels specific to their role or who they'll be working with.

Encourage channel creation and integrations

While it may be tempting to only let Admins create channels or integrations, we advocate letting all team members help mold Slack into the tool they need to get work done. As a Team Admin, you'll benefit from sharing this work, and before you know it, Slack will meet the needs of everyone on your team.



Require @ for mentions

Any 50+ person team will want to require using an @username to mention others. Otherwise, team members will be notified about any mention of their name, even without the @ — and those who choose common words or names for their usernames may receive unintended mentions. Team Owners can configure this setting.

Restrict who can post in #general

We recommend that teams with 100+ users restrict posting in the #general channel to Admins only. The #general channel is the only one every team member is in, so it's perfect for posting announcements and other information critical to all team members. Since everyone is required to be in #general (members can't leave that channel), it can become distracting to large teams. You can also rename #general to something like #announcements or #all-hands — just follow the steps outlined in our Help Center.

Snooze notifications with Do Not Disturb

By default, we'll withhold all notifications for your team from 10pm - 8am in each team member's local time zone. Team Owners and Admins can change whether Do Not Disturb is automatically On/Off, and also adjust the default snooze time period in their team settings. Keep in mind, individual team members can schedule their own start

and end times, or opt to turn On/Off automatic Do Not Disturb hours altogether. Learn more about Do Not Disturb in the Help Center.

Do Not Disturb

Set default Do Not Disturb hours for your team. When Do Not Disturb is enabled, Slack will not send desktop, mobile, or email notifications. Team members can customize this setting. Changing it here will reset everyone to these defaults.

☒ Automatically disable notifications from:

10:00 PM ▼

 to

8:00 AM ▼

Save Settings

Add more Owners and Admins

It's lonely being the only Admin on a team. Appoint additional Owners and Admins early on — it's good practice for each Slack team to have at least two Owners and Admins, since those roles have access to team-wide preferences and permissions, like invites.

There are five different roles a person can have on a Slack team, each with their own level of permissions:

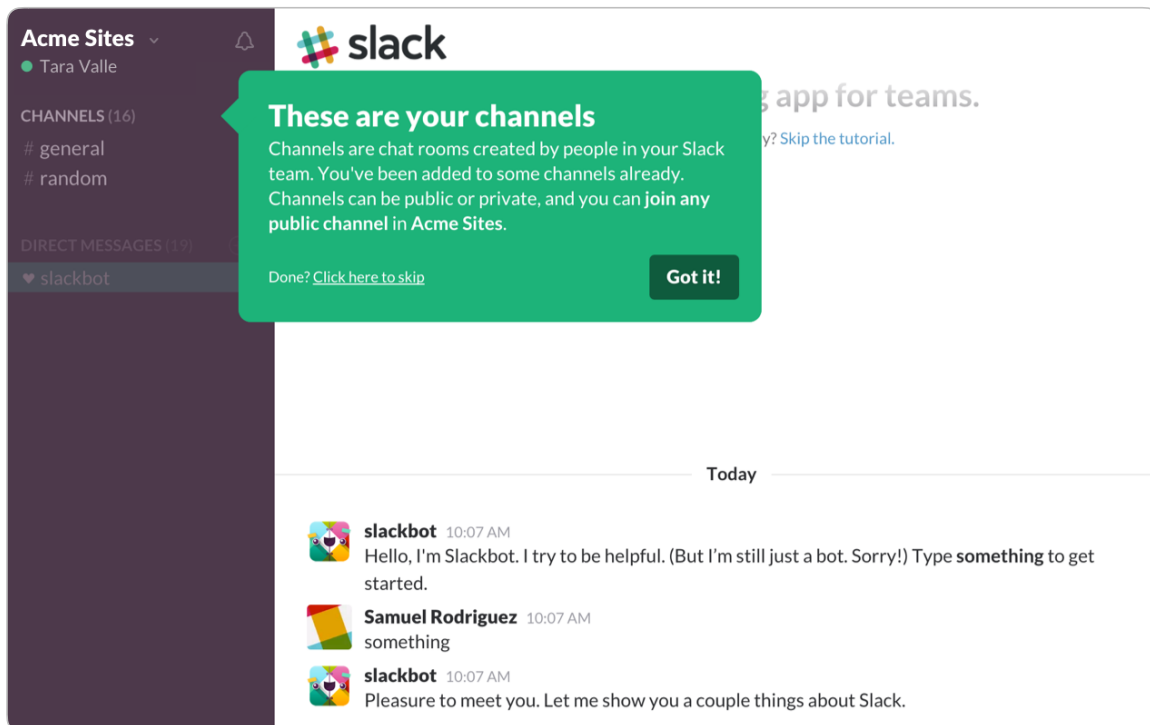
- **Owner** — Team Owners control the highest-level security and administrative settings: payments, team authentication methods, security policies, and so on.

- **Admin** — Administrators are able to manage members, moderate channels, invite users, and handle other tasks. We recommend that every team have several Administrators.
- **Member** — Team members have access to standard features like joining any public channel and uploading files. This is the default for new people added to your team.
- **Multi-Channel Guest** — These accounts can access only a limited set of channels defined by the inviting Admin. Multi-Channel Guests are typically used by teams to loop contractors or interns into appropriate conversations without giving them access to everything else.
- **Single-Channel Guest** — Guests are a type of Restricted Account that are only invited to join a single channel. Single-Channel Guests can direct message other members of that channel. Many teams use Single-Channel Guests to work with outside vendors and services.

For more detail on team roles and what their permissions allow them to do, check out [this article on our Help Center](#).

Establish Channel Conventions

While we don't recommend trying to set up every channel in advance, it can be useful to create a few channels that reflect the structure of your organization.



Here are a few examples that have worked well for other teams:

Team channels

Nearly every company on Slack creates channels for each distinct department within their organization. Often, it's useful to have both a broad channel (e.g. #engineering) and narrow ones (e.g. #eng-security, #eng-support, etc.).

Topical channels

Topical channels are typically social channels - the virtual watercooler. Whether they're for serious topics like #politics or fun topics like #football, these non-work channels allow people to socialize across teams. Social channels are part of the fabric of Slack, and help people feel comfortable.

Project channels

Projects or company initiatives often need their own channels, especially for projects that cross departments. These can bring together interdisciplinary teams and prevent too much confusion from having project conversations in team channels.

Location-based channels

Many of the companies that use Slack are working across different locations. Consider making channels for each company office (e.g. #sf, #nyc, #syd) to help people share local lunches, happy hours, and news.

Integration-based channels

While most channels tend to be dominated by real live actual people, sometimes the focus needs to be on data. Twitter streams, support tickets, bug databases: all those things that are important to keep an eye on (but could overwhelm conversation in a normal channel)

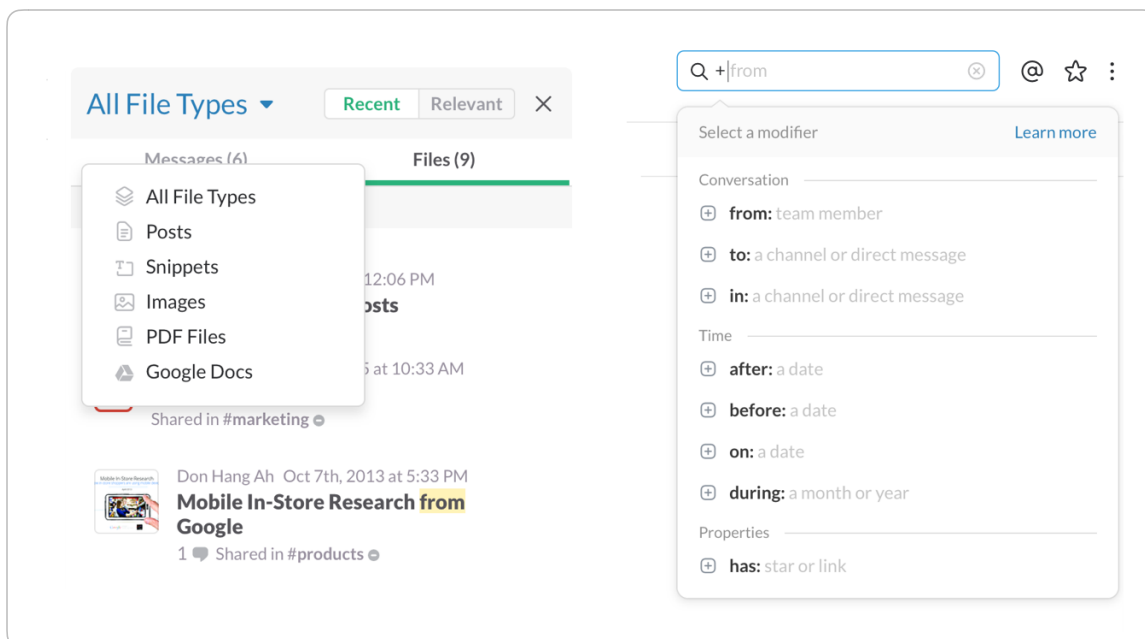
Working Within Slack

Files and Links

It's easy to share a file within Slack - you can drag and drop from your computer, upload a file, or paste links from services like Google Drive or Dropbox. Similarly, we make it easy to share web content like articles, tweets, images, and video. Just paste the link and Slack will automatically expand the link to display an inline preview.

Search

We work hard to ensure that whatever you need to find in Slack can be found in seconds. The advanced search indexes every little bit of the files added, and searches within shared documents and metadata, not just titles.



Narrow your search using special modifiers like:

- **in:** a specific channel
- **from:** a particular person
- **during:** a certain time period

And also filter results by recency, relevancy, and file type to quickly get to what you need.

(We even have file browsing if you need to go wading through the many files you've shared with your team!)

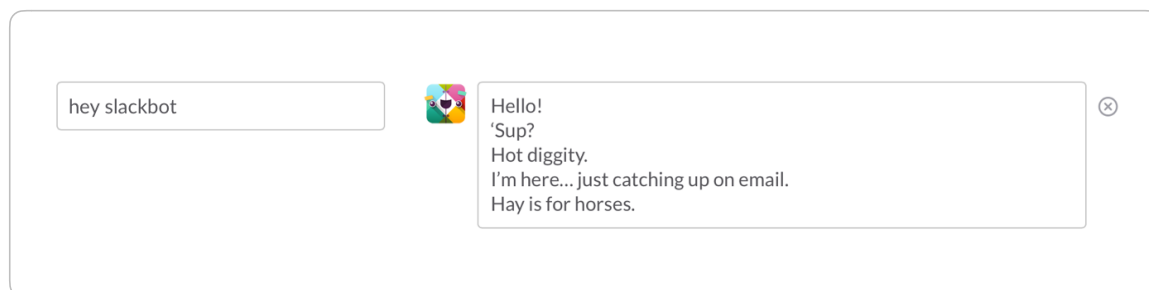
Get To Know Slackbot

Slackbot is Slack's built-in robot. Everyone encounters Slackbot shortly after you starting on Slack — with just a few simple questions, Slackbot will help your team fill out their account profile, and offer them a safe, private space to store notes and links.

But beyond that, Slackbot can also be a useful (and motivational) part of your team. Yes, really.

Automatic responses

You can configure Slackbot to respond to your team members at my.slack.com/customize/slackbot. While there are plenty of work-related uses for this, most teams just use the feature for fun:



Enter a trigger word or phrase, and then Slackbot's response. If you want to make it random, enter more than one response on new lines. Ta-da! Your own personal team robot. Use Slackbot to welcome new team members, assign a random someone for a coffee run, or decide where everyone should have lunch.

*NB: Slackbot responses only occur in channels – not in direct messages
(because that would be so rude!)*

Programming Slackbot

Your team can set up Slackbot to say things programmatically by creating a new Slackbot integration at my.slack.com/services/new/slackbot. This will give your team a unique URL for posting messages as Slackbot via HTTP POST.

Shortcuts

Slack offers you keyboard shortcuts to help you speed right through whatever it is you need to do. You can [see a complete list](#) or type “⌘/” or “Ctrl/” in a message box.

You can also use a variety of Slash Commands directly from the message box. Type “/” to see a full list of those commands. Better still, you can create your own custom Slash Commands at my.slack.com/services/new/slash-commands, for pulling services and sites we don’t already integrate with (they exist!) into Slack.

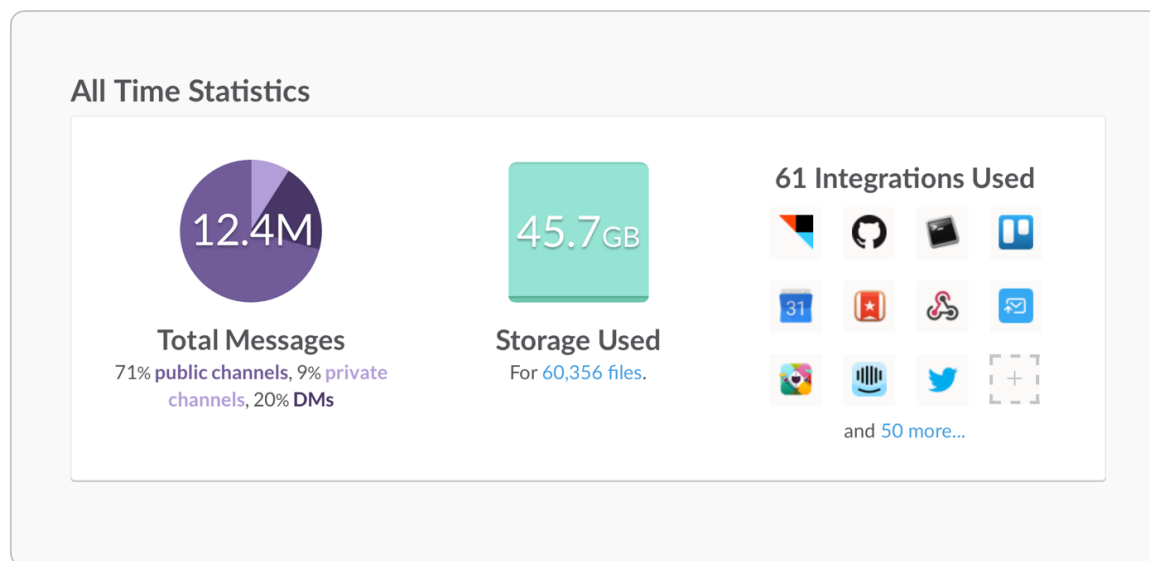
For the very new to all this, don’t be intimidated, you can enable your team with a great beginner’s guide to creating your very first bot — and examples of what can be done with Slash Commands — [available through our blog](#).

Migrate Your Data

Slack supports importing data from a variety of other communication tools, including HipChat, Flowdock, Campfire, and other Slack teams. We'll map imported users to new ones based on their email address, so it's best to do the data import after your team has already signed up. For help on importing data, please see [this helpdesk article](#).

Slack Stats

To help your team develop how you work together, we've built a dashboard that gives a visual summary of how your team is using Slack. Slack Stats are available for all teams on the [Standard plan or above](#).



Other Helpful Resources

Slack Help Center

<https://my.slack.com/help>

Several People are Typing

<https://slackhq.com>

Our Slack Blog

Several People are Reading

<https://flipboard.com/@slackhq>

A collection of posts about Slack, written by teams using Slack

Fair Billing policy

[Read more about our Fair Billing policy](#)