Queens College

Collaboration and Brainstorming Tools

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The Internet is constantly evolving and offers much variety of functions for the users behind the screen. Today, one of the most effective uses of the Internet is the collaborative and brainstorming tools. Created from the early 2000s, these tools were provided through the revolution of Web 2.0 and its developments. Users gained access to interact and communicate with each other and share contents via virtual community. By utilizing these tools, people are no longer limited to their time or location and can work much more conveniently. Furthermore, people are able to share their knowledge and information with more people all around the world.

According to Ryan O’Reilly, the director of UC Global Engineers, the constant change of technological advancement improves our communications with one other. O’Reilly believes these new technology derives from our urge to connect with other people - and share ideas, information and to interact. From cave painting to alphabet, from telegraph to telephone, pager to the fax machine and now, webs to the smartphone- we have enhanced our methods of communications for a faster and accurate delivery.

The online team collaboration company, PB works, suggests that there are three main types of collaboration software- communication, conference, and coordination. The early design of collaborative tools mainly focused on faster communication, through instant messaging and another form of chatting services. Many e-mail websites provided this function to its users, such as AOL, MSN, and Google. Conferencing collaborative tools focused on collaborators to have an up-to-date and fast pace collaboration to discuss the same view or an idea, one of the most effective forms of a conference being used today is video conference between users. Usually created in a form where one controlled presenter and others will provide an input of their own ideas. Coordination is software where people can work interdependently and manage their time and idea. It can be in a form like a board or a calendar. These three characteristics of Collaboration and brainstorming tools are evidently true in software like Skype, Google Doc, and Stormboard and Team Up.

Skype provides different variety of virtual communications, such as instant messaging, calls, video chats and conferences. As long as the program is downloaded and accessed from a device that is equipped with a microphone and, or camera, it is free of use for all users. Skype plays an important role to both business and locals, as it is easily accessible and allows a face-to-face conversation with one another. Furthermore, files can be shared during the sessions and conversations can be recorded for later use. Skype offers high definition quality for the conference calls and can participate up to 250 people during the meeting. You can also privately message one participant to another, and link shared cloud storage to work together during the calls. Many features of Skype are multifunctional, where people are able to converse and work together at the same time.

Google Doc is a famous documentation tool and a collaborative tool. It is able to function both off and online and is free of use with a Google account. Users are able to create a text document, slides presentation, surveys and boards for illustration. Google documents are not limited to their own source, as a Microsoft word is compatible to open the files and can be used between two programs if necessary. All files are instantly saved onto the cloud server and can be accessed in any technological device. Google search is available right on the application- so one can research without having to open another tab or a window to do so. There are other helpful features such as dictionary, spelling and grammar check that can fasten the process of their work. The best part of Google Doc for collaborator is the “real-time” features. Collaborators can work, communicate and comment at the same time, which allows viewing each other’s edits and suggestions. It is very time-efficient, as people no longer have to wait for others to finish their work.

Storm Board is an optimal example of both collaborative and brainstorming tools. It is a type of whiteboard that teams can share their ideas through a virtual sticky note, index cards or sketch. Users can share documents like text and slides and edit each other’s work through the program. It offers users to assign each other in tasks, voting system for decision-making and reports to show the progress of the team’s work. Storm Board is accessible to any technological device with the program installed and can have groups and subgroups for its designation. It is a great program for users to visually see their ideas, collect data, prioritize tasks and organize each other’s though before turning them into actions.

Team Up is an online calendar that can be used for groups of people to share each other’s schedule and manage their resources. To gain access to this program, one does not need to make an account and it can be used online through any device. Within the calendar, users can create sub-calendar to organize events, members and time. It can also assign tasks to participants and can make real-time changes by viewing the edits and errors being made. This will prevent collaborators to see each other’s schedule and prevent miscommunication, such as double booking. Ultimately, the beauty of this group calendar is that one scheduling became much easier as it eliminated scramming through each other’s calendars to make time.

Collaborations and brainstorming tools can be defined as immediacy. Communication can’t be overlooked and is crucial when a group of people is working together. From instant messaging, audio and video conferencing- users are capable of facilitating an interactive conversation. Moreover, productivity is another great offer of these tools, where people can share images, documents and other variety of contents through a shared virtual space. People can work individually in their own space to share their ideas and points or even their schedule without having to be with each other in common space. Ultimately, it allows collaborators to put aside their geographical differences and can intimately work together, conveniently at their own time.

Citation:

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