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Examples of Digital Knowledge-Sharing Platforms for Universities

Sustainable Entrepreneurship for Universities

MMS, Ireland

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Choosing the Right Tool



Here's a comparison of the platforms mentioned, specifically from the perspective of a university setting focusing on inter-departmental and inter-stakeholder knowledge sharing (faculty, students, external partners). Learn what platform is best for what and compare before deciding.

Platform	Key Strengths	Limitations	Best For
Discourse https://www.discourse.org/	Structured, forum-style discussions; Open-source and self-hosted option; Searchable knowledge base; Supports long-form, in-depth discussions	Less real-time chat feel; Might feel "formal" for some users	Long-term knowledge repositories, academic communities, research collaboration
Tribe (now Bettermode) https://www.tribe.so/	Customizable, community-focused; Strong branding and modular layout; Good for user-generated content and social learning	More business/customer-centric; Could be overkill for simple university needs	Student-led innovation hubs, entrepreneurship communities, alumni platforms
Circle.so https://circle.so/	Simple, community-focused; Integrates well with existing content platforms; Modern interface, built-in events and live streams	Limited custom workflows; Less robust for long-term knowledge storage	Faculty-student discussion spaces, online courses, private groups for projects
Slack https://slack.com/	Real-time communication; Channels for departments/teams; Integrates with many university tools (Google, Microsoft, Zoom, etc.)	Can get noisy; Difficult to manage long-term knowledge storage; Free version has message limits	Quick updates, project teams, interdepartmental communication, student clubs
Mighty Networks https://www.mightynetworks.com/	Combines community + courses + events; Peer learning focus; Good for student/alumni networks; Custom branding	Subscription costs; Overlap with LMS may cause confusion	Topic-specific, co-creation or innovation hubs, knowledge exchange, innovation labs

Platform	Key Strengths	Limitations	Best For
Moodle Discussion https://moodle.com/news/online-discussions-moodle-forums/	<p>Enables structured, topic-based discussions. Keeps a clear record of contributions for transparency and follow-up. Supports asynchronous collaboration across departments or partners. Useful for sharing insights, resources, and peer feedback.</p>	<p>Not ideal for fast-paced or dynamic conversations. Threads can become cluttered or hard to follow without moderation. Limited engagement compared to modern chat apps (e.g. Teams, Slack).</p>	<p>Knowledge exchange on teaching methods, project updates, or curriculum design. Cross-partner communication in Erasmus+ or joint programmes like START DSP. Supporting reflective practice or collecting staff feedback.</p>
Linked In Groups https://www.linkedin.com/groups	<p>Access to a global network of professionals. Promotes cross-sector dialogue and thought leadership. Easy to join, moderate, and share relevant updates or resources. Builds visibility and credibility for individuals and institutions.</p>	<p>Limited structure for threaded discussions or deep collaboration. Not ideal for internal planning or sensitive conversations. Engagement can vary; requires active moderation to stay relevant.</p>	<p>Sharing insights, research, and best practices in public forums. Building professional communities around topics like sustainability, digital innovation, or entrepreneurship. Promoting university initiatives, Erasmus+ projects, or events.</p>

Recommended Use	Platform
Knowledge Repository (e.g., Research, Policy, SDG Discussions)	Discourse
Real-time Communication & Collaboration (e.g., Project teams, quick updates)	Slack
Moodle's discussion platform is a structured, asynchronous forum designed for professional collaboration, resource sharing, and academic dialogue.	Moodle Discussion Board
Community Engagement & Innovation Hubs (e.g., Entrepreneurship, SDG Startups, Alumni)	Mighty Networks or Tribe
Community Engagement & Innovation Hubs (e.g., Entrepreneurship, SDG Startups, Alumni)	Circle.so
A professional networking forum that fosters discussion, idea exchange, and community building among peers in a shared field.	Linked In Groups

Best Overall Combination for Universities

For day-to-day real-time collaboration and long-term knowledge archiving and structured discussions.	Slack + Discourse
If you need to implement a community-driven initiative, community building or a university hub or innovation ecosystem.	Mighty Networks OR Tribe
A good fit as it enables organised, trackable, and collaborative knowledge sharing across teams and departments.	Moodle
Ideal for expanding professional networks, staying updated on sector trends, and engaging in peer-to-peer learning beyond the institution. It allows educators and staff to connect across institutions, share project outcomes and showcase expertise on a global stage.	Linked In Groups



This section compares
each of the top 4
Platforms



Choosing the Right Tool



Advantages &
Disadvantages of
Platforms for
Universities



Advantages for Universities



Slack can be a useful communication and collaboration tool for universities, but it also has some drawbacks. Here's a breakdown of its **advantages** and **disadvantages**:

- 1. Enhanced Communication** – Slack allows real-time messaging, reducing email clutter and making communication more efficient for students, faculty, and staff.
- 2. Collaboration & Teamwork** – Channels can be created for different classes, research groups, or administrative teams, promoting structured discussions and collaboration.
- 3. Integration with Other Tools** – Slack integrates with Google Drive, Zoom, Dropbox, and other education-related tools, making workflow management easier.



Advantages for Universities

4. **File Sharing & Organization** – Users can share documents, slides, and other resources quickly while keeping conversations organized.
5. **Flexibility & Accessibility** – Slack is available on desktop and mobile, allowing students and staff to stay connected from anywhere.
6. **Encourages Informal Learning & Engagement** – Discussion channels can encourage peer-to-peer learning, knowledge sharing, and networking among students and faculty.
7. **Notification Control** – Users can customize notifications to minimize distractions and improve focus.



Disadvantages for Universities

- 1. Information Overload** – Too many messages or channels can become overwhelming, making it hard to track important discussions.
- 2. Distraction & Productivity Issues** – Slack's instant messaging format can be distracting, especially if students or staff are engaged in multiple conversations.
- 3. Limited Free Plan** – The free version has a message history limit (only the last 90 days of messages are accessible), which can be a problem for long-term academic projects.
- 4. Not Ideal for Structured Learning** – Unlike Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle or Blackboard, Slack lacks features for assignments, grading, or formal course structures.
- 5. Security & Privacy Concerns** – Sensitive information might be at risk if security settings aren't properly configured, especially when integrating third-party apps.

- 6. User Adaptation** – Some students and faculty may struggle to adapt to Slack's workflow, requiring training and onboarding.
- 7. Potential for Off-Topic Conversations** – Without moderation, Slack channels can become cluttered with unrelated discussions, reducing effectiveness.
- 8. Final Verdict**

Slack is a great tool for universities seeking to improve communication and collaboration, but it should be used alongside a Learning Management System (LMS) for structured learning. Proper guidelines and training can help mitigate its disadvantages.

Slack Review: Features, Pros And Cons – [Forbes Advisor](#): This article provides an in-depth analysis of Slack's functionalities, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages

Your guide to Slack for higher education – [Slack](#): This resource discusses how over 3,000 higher education institutions use Slack to facilitate classes and manage campus affairs online.

Choosing the Right Tool



moodle Discussion

Advantages &
Disadvantages of
Platforms for
Universities

Advantages for Universities

Moodle-Based Discussion Boards

- 1. Structured Learning Environment:** Moodle's discussion boards are integrated within the Learning Management System (LMS), providing a centralized platform for course-related discussions.
- 2. Asynchronous Communication:** Students can participate at their convenience, allowing time for thoughtful responses and accommodating different time zones.
- 3. Resource Sharing:** Facilitates the sharing of course materials, links, and other resources within discussion threads.
- 4. Assessment Integration:** Instructors can grade and provide feedback directly through the discussion board, streamlining the evaluation process.
- 5. Community Building:** Encourages interaction among students, fostering a sense of community and collaborative learning.



Disadvantages for Universities



Discussion

1. **Limited Real-Time Interaction:** The asynchronous nature may lack the immediacy of real-time discussions, potentially slowing down the exchange of ideas.
2. **User Engagement:** Some students may be less inclined to participate actively, leading to uneven contributions.
3. **Navigation Challenges:** Depending on the Moodle setup, discussion boards can become cluttered, making it difficult to follow threads.
4. **Technical Barriers:** Users unfamiliar with Moodle may face a learning curve, potentially hindering effective participation.
5. **Over-Reliance on Text:** Primarily text-based interactions may not cater to diverse learning preferences.

Pros and Cons of Moodle as an LMS Platform – Course Orbit: This article explores the benefits and drawbacks of using Moodle as a Learning Management System.

Choosing the Right Tool



mighty networks

Advantages &
Disadvantages of
Platforms for
Universities



Advantages for Universities



- 1. Community Building.** Enables engagement and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among students, faculty, alumni, and external stakeholders. Supports the development of interdisciplinary communities.
- 2. Custom Branding.** Allows universities to create a branded, central platform that reflects their identity and serves as a hub for various academic and extracurricular activities.
- 3. Diverse Content Formats.** Supports articles, discussions, events, online courses, and group spaces. Offers flexibility for different types of knowledge sharing, event management, and blended learning.
- 4. Event & Networking Features.** Includes integrated event management and networking tools that facilitate seminars, workshops, and professional connections among users.
- 5. Long-Term Engagement.** Helps maintain connections with students and alumni after graduation, encouraging ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- 6. Reduced Distractions.** Offers a focused, community-oriented environment compared to platforms like Slack or social media, which can overwhelm users with constant notifications.

Disadvantages for Universities



- 1. Cost.** Premium features, such as branded networks and advanced analytics, can be expensive, especially when scaling usage across large student and staff populations.
- 2. Limited Real-Time Communication.** Lacks instant messaging or fast-paced chat capabilities like Slack. It is better suited for asynchronous discussions and community-building.
- 3. Learning Curve.** Faculty and students unfamiliar with community platforms may need training. Resistance to adopting new platforms can also be a challenge.
- 4. Integration Challenges.** If not integrated with existing university systems (e.g., learning management systems, email platforms), it can function as a standalone tool, leading to potential fragmentation.
- 5. Not Suitable for Document Collaboration.** Does not replace platforms like Google Workspace or Microsoft Teams for real-time collaborative document editing. It is better suited for discussions and resource sharing.
- 6. Privacy and Data Security.** Universities must ensure that the platform complies with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR), as it is a third-party system handling personal information.

Choosing the Right Tool



LinkedIn Groups

Advantages &
Disadvantages of
Platforms for
Universities

Advantages for Universities



- 1. Professional Networking:** Provides access to a broad network of professionals, facilitating industry connections and knowledge sharing.
- 2. Diverse Perspectives:** Members from various backgrounds contribute to discussions, enriching the learning experience.
- 3. Resource Availability:** A platform for sharing articles, job postings, and other professional resources relevant to group members.
- 4. Engagement Opportunities:** Encourages active participation through comments, likes, and shares, promoting dynamic discussions.
- 5. Visibility and Exposure:** Active involvement can enhance personal branding and professional visibility within one's industry.

Disadvantages for Universities



1. **Information Overload:** The vast amount of content can be overwhelming, making it challenging to filter valuable information.
2. **Quality Control:** The open nature may lead to spam or low-quality posts, requiring active moderation.
3. **Privacy Concerns:** Discussions are often visible to all group members, which may deter sharing of sensitive information.
4. **Commercialisation:** Some groups may be dominated by promotional content, reducing the focus on genuine discussion.
5. **Engagement Variability:** The level of interaction can vary, with some groups experiencing low participation rates.

LinkedIn Review: Features, Pros & Cons – [Forbes Advisor](#): This review provides an in-depth look at LinkedIn's functionalities, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses.

Thank you

Any questions?

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