Team Chat
A Technology for Learning

Join the conversation in Mattermost: https://bit.ly/openetc

Follow along with my presentation: https://bit.ly/teamchatfol
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Faculty of Education at UBC
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Join the conversation in Mattermost:

Follow along with my presentation:
UBC Faculty of Education Since 2011...

- 1000 fully online course sections
- Cohort-based Masters programs
- Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education MOOC (20k students, 80% Canadian, 15% completion rate)
- Bringing Mental Health to Schools self-paced course (1000+ registrants)

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Team Chat!

Join the conversation in the OpenETC Mattermost community: https://bit.ly/openetc

The OpenETC is a community of educators, technologists, and designers sharing their expertise to foster and support open infrastructure for the BC post-secondary sector.

Learn more about OpenETC: https://opened.ca/
What's Team Chat?

Anybody heard of Slack?

Or **Mattermost**?

Or Microsoft Teams?

Or G(oogle) Suite Hangouts Chat?

Or Workplace by Facebook?

Or Rocket.Chat?

Or HipChat?
So what's Mattermost?

Mattermost is an open source communication tool that facilitates collaboration in a chat-type environment.
- Public Channels
- Private Channels
- Direct Messages

Anyone can create a channel!
Beginning of LLED 481 Presentation

This is the start of the LLED 481 Presentation channel, created by Ian Linkletter (Tech Support) on July 10, 2017. Any member can join and read this channel. This channel's purpose is: This channel is a space for Ian to demonstrate some different kinds of posts.

- Search
- @ mentions
- File/image upload
- Typing status
- Timestamps
Not "just chat"

- Asynchronous and synchronous
- Persistent history
- Threaded replies
- Mobile apps
- Custom notifications
- Extensible
- emoji picker 😎
- SLACK IMPORT FEATURE
That's not all

+ Open Source
+ Hosted at UBC on EduCloud

FIPPA Compliant
Team Chat at UBC:

A short history

As told by somebody who doesn't know what he doesn't know

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UBC Learning Technology User Group

- Founded in 2014 using Slack

The initial mission was to reset an adversarial relationship between IT and instructional support staff through the creation of a shared community.
Governance

- Members only
- Set agenda
- One representative
- Monthly meetings
- Decision making

Community

- All are welcome
- Inclusive space
- Diverse voices
- Constant conversation
- Knowledge sharing

Both of these are important
Needs to be communication both ways
Slack, one month later.

**Linkletter, Ian**

To: Connect ISS Liaison Team [connect-iss-liaison-team@interchange.ubc.ca]

Hi everyone,

It’s hard to believe, but it’s been one month since I suggested we use Slack for improved communication sharing between our various units.

Just in case you missed my original email and don’t know about Slack, allow me to quickly summarize. Slack is a platform that combines synchronous and asynchronous communication in a polished way. Anyone can create different channels for different topics, you choose which channels to join, and everything is searchable. There’s an excellent mobile app, and integrations with other technologies make for many interesting possibilities.

I’d call the experiment a success so far. We have 33 members in our learning technologies group, and over 1000 messages have been posted in channels, groups, and DMs. We have members from IT, CTLT, Arts, Sauder, Education, Land and Food Systems, Library, and Applied Science. If you haven’t joined yet I would encourage you to check it out. If you joined and didn’t immediately see the use, I’d encourage you to give it another look now that it’s become more active.

I’d also like to encourage you to to think about anyone you know who might be interested in joining our open conversation. Everyone is welcome, so if you can think of a user of learning technologies that might like to discuss them with our bright group, please encourage them to sign up at http://thug.slack.com with their UBC email address. The only thing I ask is that you let them know that Slack is not an official support channel and is hosted in the United States (so no personal data can be posted).

Finally, if you are a Mac user using Slack in other teams, you may wish to try the Mac Slack Client Beta. This beta version supports multiple teams, meaning no logging in and out to switch. I’ve been using it and it is stable.

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. The best way to reach me is in Slack :)

Thanks,

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I felt something I'd never felt before.
On July 29th, 2014, this was jaw-dropping to me.

Now: 218 members and 192,123 messages.

1000 years of collective experience
BB IM (formerly Wimba Pronto)
2010-2015
BB IM was “extremely helpful for [students] and it made the course run smoother for me.” “If I can answer a quick question... it makes my life and their life so much easier and they feel as if they are in a face to face class.”

Dr. Marianne McTavish
Used effectively, chat can:

- Provide efficient and timely instructor-student communication option
- Create opportunities for students to collaborate, provide encouragement, and support each other
- Build and foster a sense of community

All important! See Chickering and Gamson's *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*
• high cost (5 figures)
• low usage (2 digits)
• passionate instructors
• big opportunity
Never start with the technology...

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But feel free to start where the previous technology left off.

"The technological landscape has changed significantly since the implementation of BB IM... We may find something more than “just chat” during the course of this project, and that is a very good thing."

- February 2016 Pilot Kickoff Document
• Faculty of Education collaborated with instructors on case studies
• Worked with LT Hub to generate primary and secondary requirements
• Adapted Tony Bates' SECTIONS framework into an evaluation rubric
• Environmental scan, test installation of two finalist candidates, user testing
• Final choice: Mattermost
• Pilot began April 2016
• Pilot instructors agreed to be interviewed and distribute survey

Did that sound straightforward?🚀
Develop, Implement, and/or Operationalize Learning Tool Process Map

- The process has simplified, but we're still not done.
- We're not alone - too many pilots stuck in purgatory
- This is the drawback of piloting a pilot process.
- We wouldn't be here at all without an open source tool.
Evaluation Phase Complete

10 courses (2017W1 + W2)
8 Instructor/TA interviews
202 student survey responses

Request the UBC Mattermost Evaluation Report (hopefully available by end of June)

Couldn't have done it without the LT Hub: IT and CTLT
How did students rate their experience with Mattermost?

How did students rate the overall experience across all 8 courses responding?

- Neutral (43%)
- Somewhat positive (23%)
- Very positive (21%)
- Very negative (4%)
- Somewhat negative (8%)
- Neutral (43%)
- Somewhat positive (23%)

From Mattermost evaluation report, prepared by Letitia Englund with assistance from myself and Joe Zerdin
What do you think of when you think of chat?

- distracting or focused
- interruptive or just-in-time
- real-time or anytime
- inclusive or intimidating
- a rising flood or a flowing river
- casual or intimate
- meaningful or shallow
- never-ending or always-there
Of students who commented in other courses, what top things did they LIKE about Mattermost?

- good usability: 21.9%
- connection with instructor(s): 18.8%
- connection with students: 14.1%
- immediacy of interaction: 6.3%
- answers to questions: 4.7%
- better discussions: 3.1%
Of students who commented in other courses, what top things did they NOT like about Mattermost?

- Poor usability: 21.9%
- Unwelcome extra technology: 21.9%
- Communication overload: 10.9%
- Missed instructor connection: 6.3%
- Missed student connection: 6.3%
- Too much content: 6.3%
Pilot Evaluation Report Made
7 Recommendations

How could Mattermost be implemented to maximize perceived benefits and minimize perceived shortcomings?

Request the UBC Mattermost Evaluation Report (hopefully available by end of June)

Recommendation #1

Set up for smaller groups of students at once

Starting students off in smaller groups may help reduce feelings of being left out or overwhelmed by a large number of posts. It could also help develop community and connection.

Request the UBC Mattermost Evaluation Report (hopefully available by end of June)

Recommendation #2

Organize content into clear channels and guide shared organization

Chat isn't intuitive to everyone. Some guidance about the purpose of each channel and which ones are most important to check is helpful. A "getting started" guide would also be beneficial.
Recommendation #3

Set expectations around instructional team availability

One of the most personalized ways people can engage with Mattermost is through notifications and apps. Everyone has a different preference - students should know whether to expect an answer in 2 minutes, 2 days, or longer. It's entirely up to you to decide this and communicate it.
Recommendation #4

Integrate or regularly prompt to promote use

The courses with the least activity were the ones where an instructor created the space without committing to using it. Students are sensitive to extra platforms (especially when they require another account) and quickly stop checking if they detect it is not a good use of time.
Recommendation #5

Set loose guidelines for student participation

Students didn't always know what was expected of them. Did they need to read every post? Was perfect grammar a requirement? Must they reply right away before a conversation changes course? Setting expectations (but being open to surprises) is a good idea.
Recommendation #6

Emphasize private communication options, especially for fully online

If the purpose of Mattermost is to enable students to contact their instructor privately, showing them how to do this and encouraging them to do it is important.
Recommendation #7

Explain why Mattermost over other more established chat tools

Students are already using chat. Whether it is Slack or WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, there is no shortage of options. This is an opportunity to have a conversation about how privacy and academic freedom are linked. Do we want to contribute to the feeling that Facebook is too important to delete?
"Open-source educational technologies are not often considered as viable institutional options in highered as advocates face challenges competing with commercial vendors responding to standard IT procurement practices. RFP processes typically favour commercial applications and limit open-source involvement in the educational technology space at most institutions."

^ This.
Pilot Timeline

- Pilot started April 2016
- Evaluation delayed until September 2017
- Surveys and interviews completed April 2018
- Evaluation report completed April 2018
- Evaluation report released June 2018 (😢)
- Enterprise team chat operational September 2018 (??? 🙏 ???)
Yesterday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Users</th>
<th>Total Teams</th>
<th>Total Channels</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
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<td>68</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>120521</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Active Users</th>
<th>Monthly Active Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>163</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Mattermost

There is huge demand for FIPPA-compliant team chat, and I fielded all of it. Credit courses in Faculty of Education and Arts participated in the pilot evaluation, but in the meantime many non-credit teams were created.
Non-credit teams

Master of Educational Technology Social Lab
Staff teams (Sauder, ETS)
Teaching teams (Education)
Dissertation research project (Education)
Research teams (Education, Science)
Mental health supports
Student advising (Education)
Anybody see the size of this thing?
How do you catch a wave that won't stop growing?

- Don't try to stop it
- Scale up your pilot (and respect it)
- Any costs must be commensurate with demand
- Don't push for a site-wide license
- Combination of Team Edition and Enterprise Edition is the way to go
For the first time ever, I'm comfortable saying...

TEAM CHAT IS OUT OF PILOT AT UBC!

... but what's next? And Mattermost?
A competitor emerges

- Mattermost and MSFT Teams
- Teams is included with Office 365
- A chat layer would make Office 365 the stickiest software at UBC
- Teams integrates with everything: email, voicemail, calendar, web conferencing, SharePoint...
- But how is that important for students?
Space for two techs: Mattermost

- Self-hosted at UBC
- 100% Canadian jurisdiction
- Nobody can have our data without our consent - it's ours
- Our **policies**, our wording, our decisions
- Inclusive space for guests
- Integrations are distracting
- Could fork the project
- Preserve capacity to self-host
Challenges of US cloud products

1) Vulnerability to sanctions

- Canvas is blocked in Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Crimea
- Refugee education is compromised

Not Authorized

You are not authorized to access this site because you are located in a country subject to U.S. trade restrictions.
Challenges of US cloud products

2) Access to data

- We have to pay for access
- We don't get the full picture
- Canvas has Google Analytics on every page but we don't get to see them
Challenges of US cloud products

3) True academic freedom

- US law enforcement can target students (CLOUD Act)
- This has a chilling effect
- Spaces must be safe
- Is this part of our digital tattoo?
Challenges of US cloud products

4) Hierarchical in nature

- Instructor as administrator
- Student permissions limited
- It is powerful to share ownership
Limitless potential

- Can this project inform yours?
- Could this be a shared service?
Continue the conversation in Mattermost:  

Dive in to my presentation:  