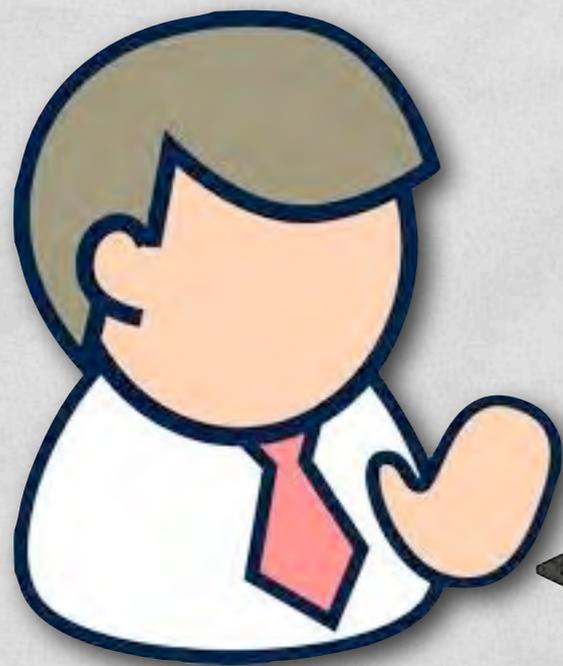# ONLINE COLLABORATION

KEITH BRADNAM

A talk for the Davis Community Network, 10th April 2012

OVERVIEW

Bob

Cool stuff

Cool stuff
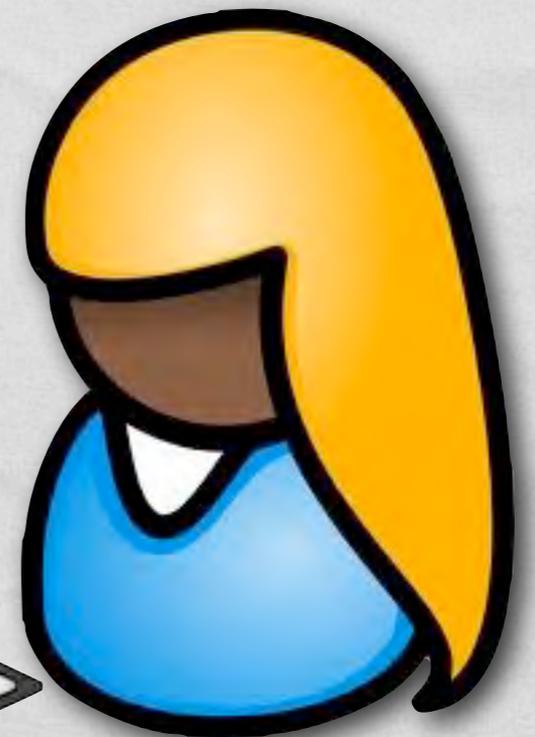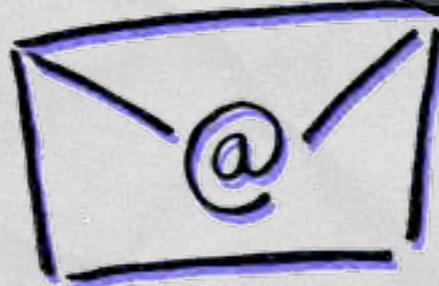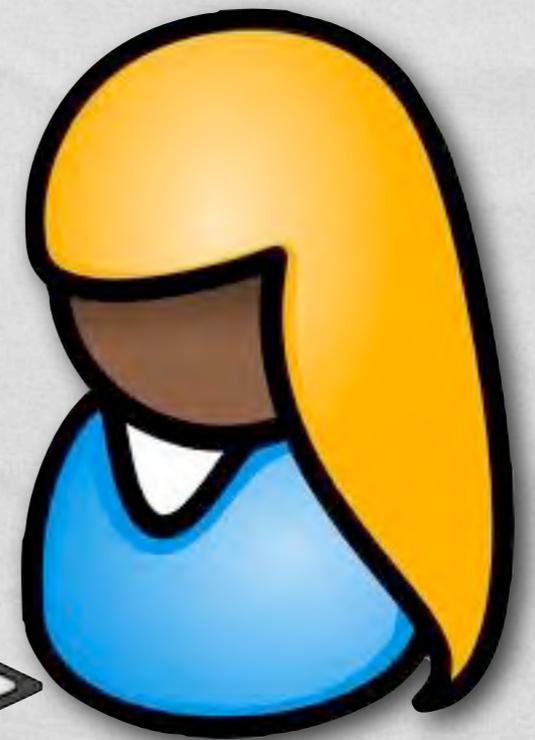
Alice

We often end up using email to share stuff with collaborators. Email is often not the best tool.

OVERVIEW

Bob

Cool stuff

Cool stuff

Alice

OVERVIEW

Bob

Cool stuff ↔ Cool stuff

Alice
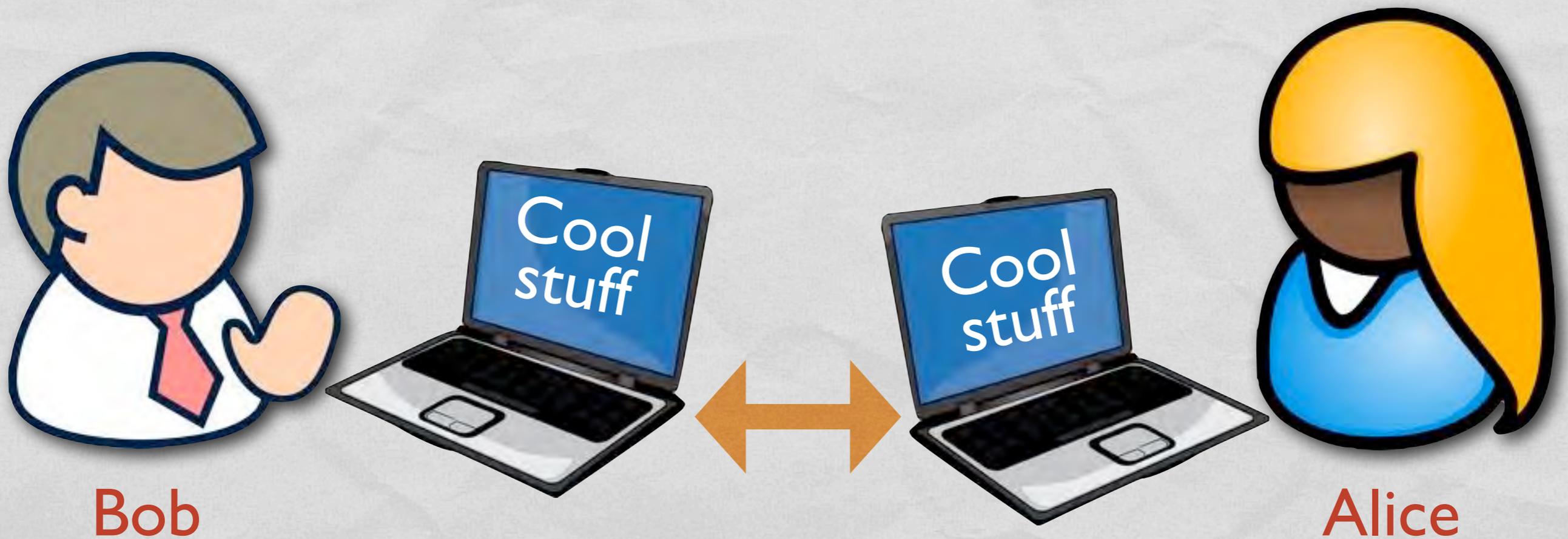
Ideally we want things to data to magically sync between computers

THIS IS NOT ABOUT...
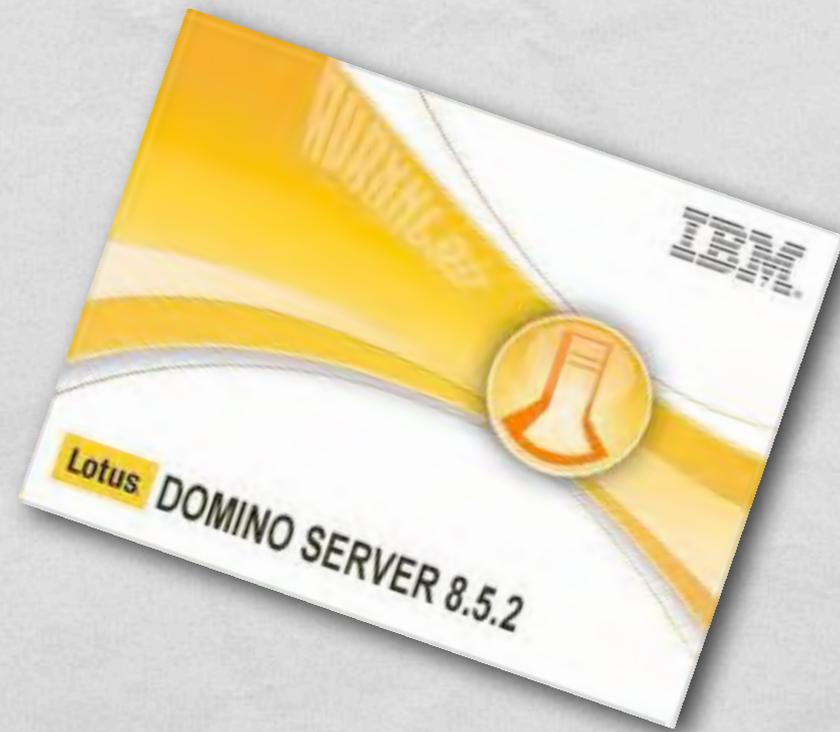
Microsoft Project Server & Lotus Domino Server are big project management tools that allow you to collaborate online...not the subject of this talk.

THIS IS ABOUT...

- Relatively simple software that:

    - enables you to do 'stuff' collaboratively

    - is (mostly) free

    - is (mostly) web based

    - helps you avoid using email to share stuff

5 CAVEATS

1) CHOICE

- There is a LOT of free software out there!

- I haven't used most of it!

- These are *suggestions* of *some* popular tools

2) SUSTAINABILITY

- Some free software tools have a short shelf life:

  - vanish because they weren't making money

  - get wiped out by competitor

  - get bought out by bigger company

SUSTAINABILITY

Grand Central +   Google   = Google Voice

Writely +   Google   = Google Docs

Lala +   Apple   = RIP

Instagram +   facebook   = ???

It can be dangerous to make long term plans!

Small — and often useful — companies often get bought out by bigger companies, who may not want to keep them in their current state.

3) PRICE

- Not all free software remains free

- Some applications keep *basic* functionality for free

- Some software is free on the web but you pay for smartphone apps

4) PLATFORMS

- Are you a Mac or Windows user?

- Will you *always* be a Mac or Windows user?

- Collaboration software is often web-based, but...

  - some companies also release desktop apps

  - some companies release phone/tablet apps...

  - ...but not always for all platforms

5) PRIVACY

- Do you trust another company to handle your data?

- Check privacy policy from companies

SOME TOOLS TO CONSIDER

BLOGGING

BLOGS

- A great way to share text, pictures, audio, and movies

- Blogs can (usually) be made private:

  - Can create a blog as an internal online newsletter

  - Use to share page layout ideas between colleagues

  - Wedding planning

BLOGS

- Most have similar set of features:

  - use Email to create blog posts

  - iPhone/Android apps

  - scheduled posting

  - allow multiple authors

BLOGGER

- Part of Google

- Free

- Can make money by adding ads

http://blogger.com

Most blogs allow you to let multiple people contribute to a site.

The Molluskan Zodiac · Settings › Basic

New post

Overview

Posts

Pages

Comments

Stats

Earnings

Layout

Template

Settings

Basic

Posts and comments

Mobile and email

Language and
formatting

Other

Basic

Title   The Molluskan Zodiac   Edit

Description   Divining the future from the mysterious marine life of the world's oceans. The
                        molluskan horoscope is the only horoscope that is based on marine invertebrates
                        and has been scientifically calculated to be 1.6x more accurate that traditional
                        western astrology, and 2.4x more accurate than Chinese astrology.   Edit

Privacy   Listed on Blogger. Visible to search engines.   Edit

Publishing

Blog Address   zodiac.keithbradnam.com   Edit   ✕

                        molluskanzodiac.blogspot.com   redirects

Blog Readers   ⦿ Anybody
                           Your blog is open to all readers by default.

                        ○ Only these readers
                           You can restrict your blog to only readers you choose. However, these readers will
                           need to log in before reading your blog, adding an extra step.
                           We'll save your readers list for you, so you can switch back at any time.

                        ○ Only blog authors
                           Your blog is restricted so that only blog authors can read it.
                           Other visitors to this blog will not be able to read any posts; instead they will get a
                           message stating that this is a private blog.

                        Save changes   Cancel

Also, most blogs allow you to make a blog private to a selected group of authors.

TUMBLR

- Free

- More options for groups

- Can allow 'submissions'

- Can call a number to record audio post

tumblr.

WORDPRESS

- Free (with ads)

- Can pay to remove ads

- Can add 'pages' as well as blog posts

- Other paid upgrades available

POSTEROUS

- Free

- No ads

- Can add 'pages' as well as blog posts

posterous™

Recently purchased by twitter. Long-term future is uncertain.

Blogs like Posterous allow you to make fully-formed websites, with multiple pages. Posterous even allows you to register a web domain when you create your blog.

Posterous Demo

FILE TRANSFER

DEALING WITH BIG FILES

- Email usually has a limit for attachments (~10–50 MB)

- Photos from digital cameras are large

- Videos are even larger

- Email is not the best tool to transfer large files!

WEBSITE ALTERNATIVES

- There are a LOT of website that will allow you to upload large files for free

- Really LARGE files

- Others can then download them

- Privacy concerns?

WETRANSFER.COM

- Free

- Upload files up to 2GB

- Files stored for 2 weeks

- No account needed

GE.TT

- Free

- Upload files up to 2GB

- Files stored for 3 months

- Provides web links to files

SENDUIT.COM

- Free

- Upload files up to 1GB

- Files stored for 30 minutes to 1 week

- No account needed

- Provides web links to files

senduit

Sometimes you only want to share files for a limited period of time.

FILEDROPPER.COM

- Free

- Upload files up to 5GB!!!

- No account needed

- Provides web links to files

File Transfer Demo

ONLINE FILE STORAGE

The cloud is the internet. It acts as the intermediary in syncing files (and other data) between multiple computers (and other devices such as smartphones and tablets).
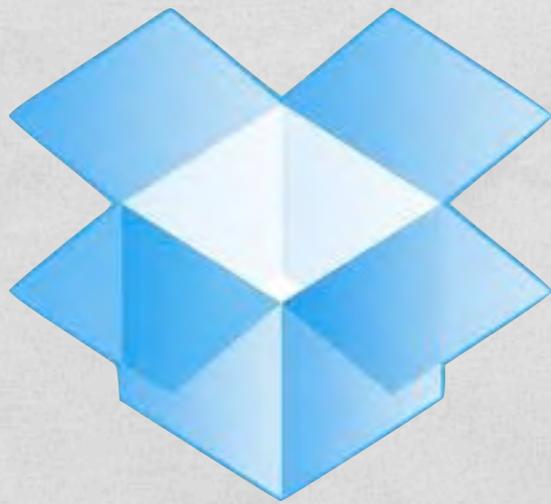
Access to your data 'in the cloud' is often provided through a web browser.

WHY STORE FILES ONLINE?

- Sync between all of your computers & devices

- Online access to files

- Provides a form of backup

- Can *easily share* files with collaborators

3 MAJOR PLAYERS

Dropbox   box.net   SugarSync

All have slightly different features!

BACKUP	SugarSync	Dropbox	MobileMe	Box.net	Carbonite	Mozy
File backup with recovery	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Backup any folder on your computer	✔	NO	NO	NO	✔	✔
Real-time upload of changes	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO
Versioning with ability to restore	✔	✔	NO	✔	✔	✔

SYNC WITH MULTIPLE COMPUTERS

	SugarSync	Dropbox	MobileMe	Box.net	Carbonite	Mozy
Sync files on multiple computers	✔	✔	Limited	Limited	NO	NO
Select any folder on your computer to sync	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Select which folders to sync across computers	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO
Sync shared folders between people	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO
Upload / Sync via email	✔	NO	NO	✔	NO	NO
Sync folders to mobile devices (iPhone/iPad and Android)	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

REMOTE ACCESS

	SugarSync	Dropbox	MobileMe	Box.net	Carbonite	Mozy
Access all files from web browser	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	NO
Simple editing of files through the web (auto download and upload)	✔	NO	NO	✔	NO	NO

SHARING / COLLABORATION

	SugarSync	Dropbox	MobileMe	Box.net	Carbonite	Mozy
Send files of any size	✔	NO	✔	✔	NO	NO
Share folders	✔	✔	NO	✔	NO	NO
Share folders with permissions and password	✔	NO	NO	✔	NO	NO
Publishing to Facebook Photos	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

From SugarSync website

MEDIA

Auto-creation of photo albums	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO
Share photo albums	✔	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO
Stream music to web browser	✔	Limited	NO	✔	NO	NO
Stream music to iPhone	✔	Limited	✔	NO	NO	NO
Stream music to BlackBerry	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Stream music to Android	✔	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO

MOBILE

iPad	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	NO
iPhone	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	NO
BlackBerry	✔	✔	NO	NO	✔	NO
Windows Mobile	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Android	✔	✔	NO	✔	NO	NO
Symbian	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Mobile website (optimized for the mobile experience)	✔	✔	NO	✔	NO	NO

PLATFORMS

XP, Vista and 7 support	✔	✔	NO	NO	✔	✔
Mac OSX support	✔	✔	✔	NO	✔	✔
Linux support	NO	✔	NO	NO	NO	NO
Platform API	✔	✔	NO	✔	NO	NO
Mobile API	✔	✔	NO	Limited	NO	NO

Compare Plan Features	Personal	Business	Enterprise
Users	1 User	3 to 500	Unlimited ℹ
Web-Storage	5 to 50 GB ℹ	500 GB	Unlimited ℹ
File size limit	25 MB to 1GB ℹ	2 GB	2 GB
File sharing links	✓	✓	✓
Mobile app access	✓	✓	✓
Password protected sharing		✓	✓
Faster uploads		✓	✓
Enhanced collaboration			
Full-text search		✓	✓
Download stats tracking		✓	✓
Sync desktop files		✓	✓
User administrative console		✓	✓
Role-based access		✓	✓
Document version history		✓	✓
Google Apps integration		✓	✓
Advanced admin & security controls			
Encrypted storage & transfer			✓
Full custom branding			✓
Group-based access			✓
Add / edit user accounts in bulk			✓
Salesforce.com integration			✓
Dedicated support			✓
ECM Cloud Connect ℹ			✓
Single Sign-On Support ℹ			✓
Price	5 GB Free	$15 per user per month	Call 1-877-729-4269

box

From box.net website. You want more features, you must pay.

WHY I LIKE DROPBOX

- 2 GB free online storage

- Relatively easy to get more free storage

- Keeps 30 days of history for any file

- Can *view* most file types on my phone

- Very easy to share folders with other Dropbox users

POTENTIAL ISSUES

- Collaborators may have more online space than you

- Not all data synced to smartphones automatically

- If you become reliant on it, you might end up paying for more storage

- Privacy

Dropbox Demo

I love Dropbox, find it incredibly useful for collaborating with work colleagues

ONLINE WRITING

ONLINE WRITING

- Many tools to let you write collaboratively

- Also let you make presentations, use spreadsheets, produce feedback forms

- Most tools track all changes made to a document, and let you collaborate in *real time*

- Most tools can import from Microsoft documents

NOT GOOGLE

- Writeboard

- Zoho (free for personal use)

- Dabbleboard (online whiteboard)

- Adobe Buzzword

- Microsoft Office

- And several more!

GOOGLE DOCS

- For documents, spreadsheets, presentations, tables, forms, and drawings

- Can also upload *any* filetype and store it on web

- Very mature product

- Great for sharing with others

- Offline access if you use Chrome browser

Tools like Google Docs offer you about 1% of the features provided by software such as Microsoft Word. Fortunately, this is the 1% of features you actually need and use.

Very easy to share content

Untitled document

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format   Tools   Table   Help

Sharing settings

Who has access

🔒   Private - Only the people listed below can access   Change...

[photo]   Keith Bradnam (you)   ...@gmail.com   Is owner

Add people: Choose from contacts

Enter names, email addresses, or groups...   Can edit ▾

✓ Can edit

Can comment

Can view

✓ Notify people via email - Add message

☐ Send a...
☐ Paste...
email

Share & save   Cancel

Can let people edit, view, or just comment on your documents.

Google Forms Demo

If you ever want to quickly get feedback from people on a specific subject, I can highly recommend Google Forms. Make a new form, send people the link, and watch the results appear in a spreadsheet.
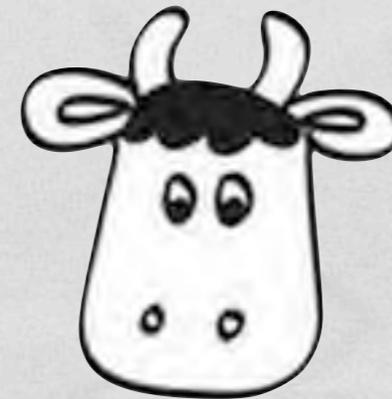
TASK MANAGERS

MANAGING 'TO-DO' ITEMS

- There are 100's of apps/websites that can manage lists of tasks

- Very few of these let you *share* lists

- Not all of them are free

REMEMBER THE MILK

- Free web service

- Paid phone apps

- No desktop app

- Easy to share lists with other users

WUNDERLIST

- Free service

- Web, desktop, and mobile apps

- Desktop apps for Windows, Mac, & Linux

- Can share lists with other users

Relatively new app, available for all platforms, and can share list items.

TRELLO

- A web-based app

- Allows you to make lists

- Fantastic for collaboration

- Free!

My fave app–du-jour. It's hard to explain what this app is doing, so I thoroughly recommend going to trello.com and spending a view minutes watching their excellent overview video. This service has completely changed how our lab works, communicates, and collaborates.

Trello Demo

DIGITAL SCRAPBOOKS

KEEP 'STUFF' IN ONE PLACE

- Some apps act as digital scrapbooks

- Can store: lists, notes, images, bookmarks, audio etc.

- Just use on the web, or sync to desktop/phone etc.

- Can share items/lists with other users

EVERNOTE

- Free web/desktop/mobile service

- Paid upgrade options (no ads)

- Can transcribe text from pictures

- Easy to clip material from webpage

- Store entire webpages

- Well supported service

Free version of Evernote only allows you to sync so much data per month. Collected notes are placed in 'Notebooks' which can optionally be shared with other Evernote users.

SPRINGPAD

- Free service

- Web and mobile, *no* desktop app

- Slightly different focus to Evernote

- Has web clipper tool like Evernote

- Sharing is all or nothing

- Adds 'value' to your data

Not so relevant for collaborating with others, but still a great web-based app.

ICLOUD

ICLOUD

- Free replacement for Apple's MobileMe service

- For Macs, iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch users

- Can share task lists, calendars, with other iCloud users

- Web apps + desktop + iPhone/iPad

- Can share files between desktop & iPhone/iPad

CALLING

CALLING

- Do you easily want to set up conference calls?

- Video conferencing?

- Distinction between phone/video/instant messaging apps is becoming blurred

SKYPE

- Free desktop app

- Now owned by Microsoft

- Free Skype-to-Skype calls

- Easy to set up voice conference calls

- Skype Premium account needed for video conference calls

GOOGLE VOICE

- Easy voice-conference calls

- Gmail tools:

  - 1-on-1 video chat via Gmail

  - Free PC-to-phone calls in USA

- Google+ tools:

  - Google Hangouts allows up to 10 people to video chat

APPLE ICHAT

- Up to 4 people can video chat

- You must have a Mac

- Can chat to Yahoo

- FaceTime

WHAT ELSE?

WHAT HAVE I MISSED?

- Calendar apps

- Scheduling apps

- Many, many, more!

- Everyone is moving software to the cloud

timetomeet.info is my preferred choice for scheduling meetings.

SUMMARY

FINAL POINTS

- Try before you buy!

- Spend a week playing with software before you commit to using something

- There are nearly always alternatives to consider

- Remember your privacy

Don't just start using the first app you try!