A Guided Tour of Microsoft Teams

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Introduction

Official description:

> Microsoft Teams is a cloud-based team collaboration system that is part of the Office 365 suite of applications. The core capabilities in Microsoft Teams include business messaging, calling, video meetings and file sharing.

Basically … it allows you and your team to work together in one place.

Accessing Microsoft Teams

You can find Microsoft Teams here: https://teams.microsoft.com/. You need to log in with your full email address (like on SharePoint).

You can also download it as a desktop app. Click the download icon at the bottom left of the menu panel. If you continue to use the online version, you'll probably want to turn on notifications.

Teams

The starting point for anything within MS Teams is your team. If there isn't already a team available that suits your needs, you can create a new one. Teams do not have to reflect 'real' teams and can include staff that you work with from any area of the university.

If you're already a member of a team, you'll see your teams displayed on the screen at the start. You can create a new one by clicking on 'Join or create team' at the top right of your screen. You can add members as part of setting up the team, or you can add them later.

Channels

Within your team, you can create multiple 'channels'. Separate channels are useful so that you can keep discussions about different topics in different places. Some teams have many channels, and some may just have the default 'General' channel. In my section we have a Web Applications team and within

that we have a channel for each application we're working on – this can be very useful to keep things organised.

Most channels are open to the whole team, but you can create a channel that is only visible for certain people within the team by setting the Privacy to 'Private – Only accessible to a specific group of people within the team'.

Conversations

You can have conversations in a variety of areas within Teams.

Channel Conversations

Conversations in a channel can be seen by any member of your team who has access to that channel.

You can use @ to flag up a message for a person, channel or team.

Chat

Conversations in Chat can only be seen by the people you have added to the chat.

You can chat with anyone across the university.

If you start a chat with someone you've chatted with before, you'll see the previous conversations showing in the chat window.

If you add a new person to an existing chat that was previously with a single person, the new person will see all the chat history.

If you add a new person to an existing chat that is already a group chat, you will be asked if you want the new person to see the chat history or not.

Document Management

You can use the Files section within Teams to share and collaborate on documents. If you have a SharePoint site already which has a suitable document library within it, you can connect this up to your team instead.

The Files area is actually storing documents in a special Team Site in SharePoint. You can view it through the SharePoint interface by clicking 'Open in SharePoint'.

In this view you can access version history for documents. You can also access the team's recycle bin where you can retrieve deleted documents if required.

You can discuss a document while you are viewing it by using the conversation panel on the right. You can use @ here just like in the channel screen. These conversations will be shown on the channel screen.

You can also leave comments on specific parts of the document by right clicking on part of the document and choosing New Comment. These stay inside the document and aren't shown on the channel screen.

Planner

Planner is a very useful addition to Teams. You can create tasks and plan projects using a simple visual interface. It needs to be added to the channel manually.

It is flexible and easy to use. You can customise your plan according to the needs of your project or team. Tasks are placed in 'buckets' and you can add as many buckets as you like. For example, you might have 3 buckets: Things to Fix, Developments, Wish List.

Planner is useful, but once you are a member of a few teams, it can be hard to keep track of your Planner tasks. Instead of looking in each team, you can view all your tasks together, by going to Planner (under … in the left menu) where you can view all your tasks.

Online Meetings

You can have online meeting through Teams. This is very useful if you are working with people across the university or if team members are not currently on campus. Meetings are similar to Skype calls.

You can also start a meeting from the Channel window, by clicking on the 'Meet now' icon (video camera) beneath the text box.

Or you can start a meeting from the chat window, by clicking on the 'schedule a meeting icon' (calendar with a +) beneath the chat box.