

Slack API Exploratory Research

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ABOUT SLACK API

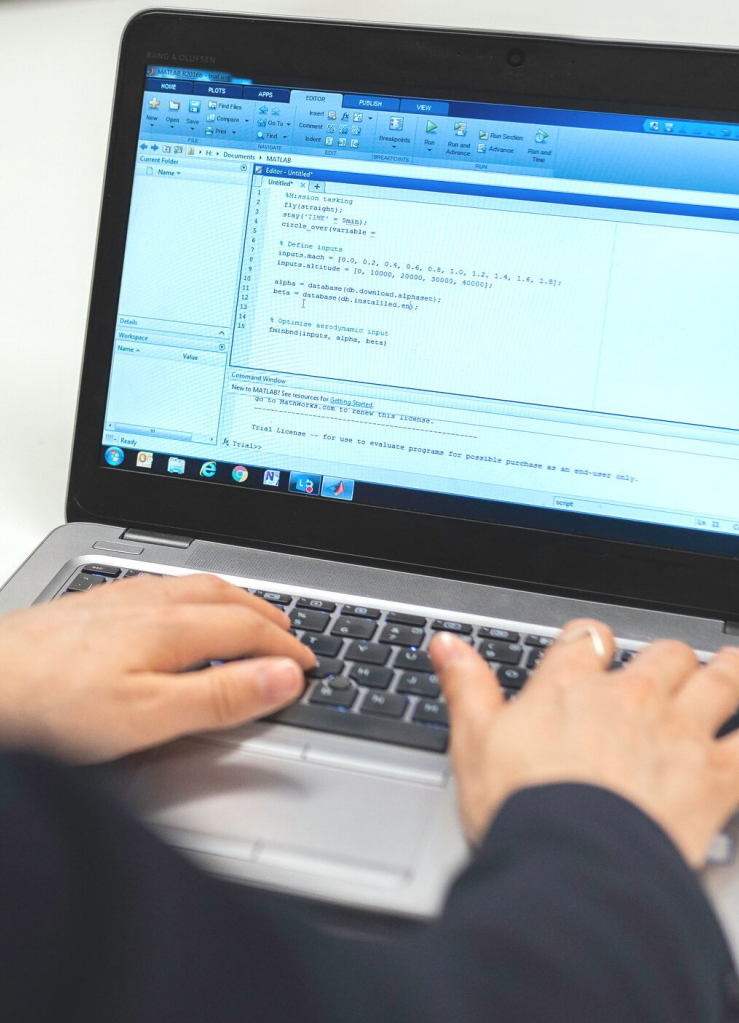
Slack is a messaging app designed to build a robust, streamlined communication system for organizations. Its founders Steward Butterfield, Cal Henderson, and their team were initially focused on the MMORPG (multiplayer online role-playing game) market. However, after seeing the potential that one of their collaborative team workspace application had for the workplace, the founders changed markets and officially launched Slack in 2013.

Since its release, Slack has become a place of communication that incorporates third-party apps and a variety of features. Users can use Slack workspaces to create various channels. Within these channels, users can create threads, send documents and files from third-party applications, and incorporate Slack API into their day-to-day work.

API stands for "application programming interface," and it is a "software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other." Slack has created a robust API that allows tasks to be "automated workflows" and for users to both download external apps or create their own applications to use in Slack.

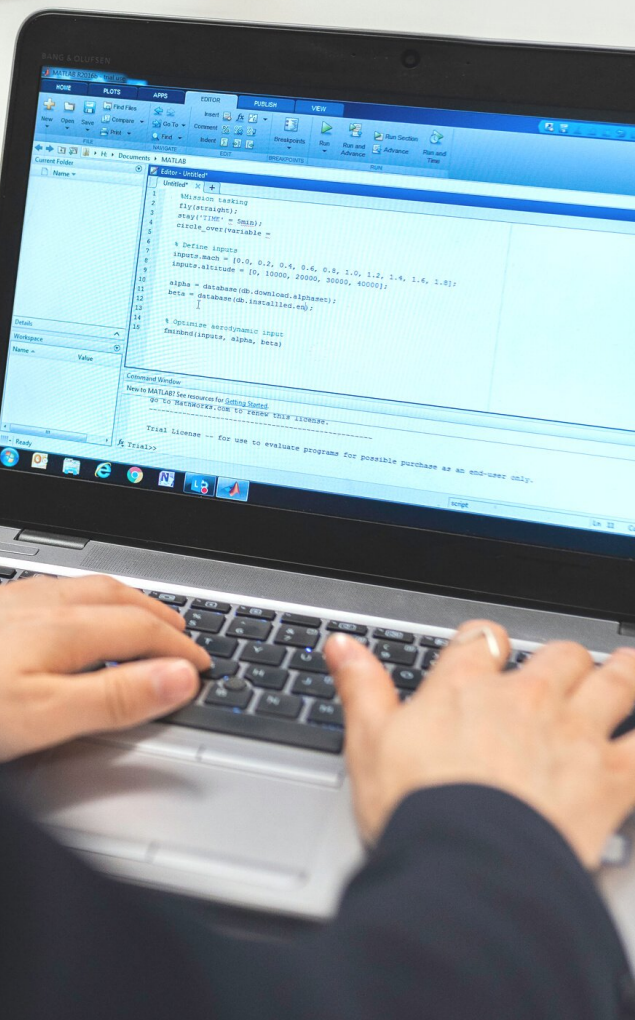
Our Approach To Slack

Our group was tasked with exploring Slack's API and creating an application for any purpose. When we first received this topic, we were new to the subject of APIs in general, especially in relation to Slack. Because we aspired to tap into a gap in the Slack space, we decided to look into any flaws or cons that Slack may present. Through both external research and our own experimentation, we found that the platform still presents many areas of improvement, specifically in its application in the classroom.



Criticisms of Slack

Laurence Hart from CMSWire brought up two points that many organizations need to tackle when integrating Slack into their work: finding a clear balance between Slack and Email and keeping records of important information within the app. Unless users pay for a certain plan for Slack, there is a limited amount of messages that can be kept within the app. If a Slack workplace passes a certain threshold of messages, previous messages will be deleted, which could cause valuable information to disappear. According to Time Is Ltd, "employees are sending an average of 200 messages per week." When applied to a classroom setting, such as our NMI Slack workspace, the amount of crucial information for various projects that could be deleted because of this possible occurrence is detrimental. This made us wonder if we could introduce a different format to some tasks that had otherwise been sent out as messages. One of the first tasks we thought of was the action of taking attendance. Currently, our NMI Capstone class takes attendance with students reacting to a message by our instructors. Since that method affects the number of free messages left to send in the workspace, our group decided to create another way to take attendance by creating an app within Slack API.





Simple Poll

#1 SLACK APP FOR POLLING.

USERS CAN POSE A QUESTION TO OTHERS IN A CHANNEL AND CAN PRESENT UP TO 5 CHOICES FOR PEOPLE TO CHOOSE FROM

PROS:

-EASY TO SET UP POLL

CONS:

-POLLS WERE SENT OUT AS MESSAGES (COULD CONTRIBUTE TO MESSAGE OVERFLOW)

-LAYOUT WAS COMPLICATED/NOT AESTHETICALLY PLEASING

AttendanceBot

MAIN SOURCE OF COMPARISON FOR ATTENDANCE TRACKING APPS

PROS:

-HAD A BOT THAT QUICKLY RESPONDED TO COMMANDS

-SHOWED DETAILED VIEW OF WHEN CHANNEL MEMBERS CLOCKED IN AND CLOCKED OUT

CONS:

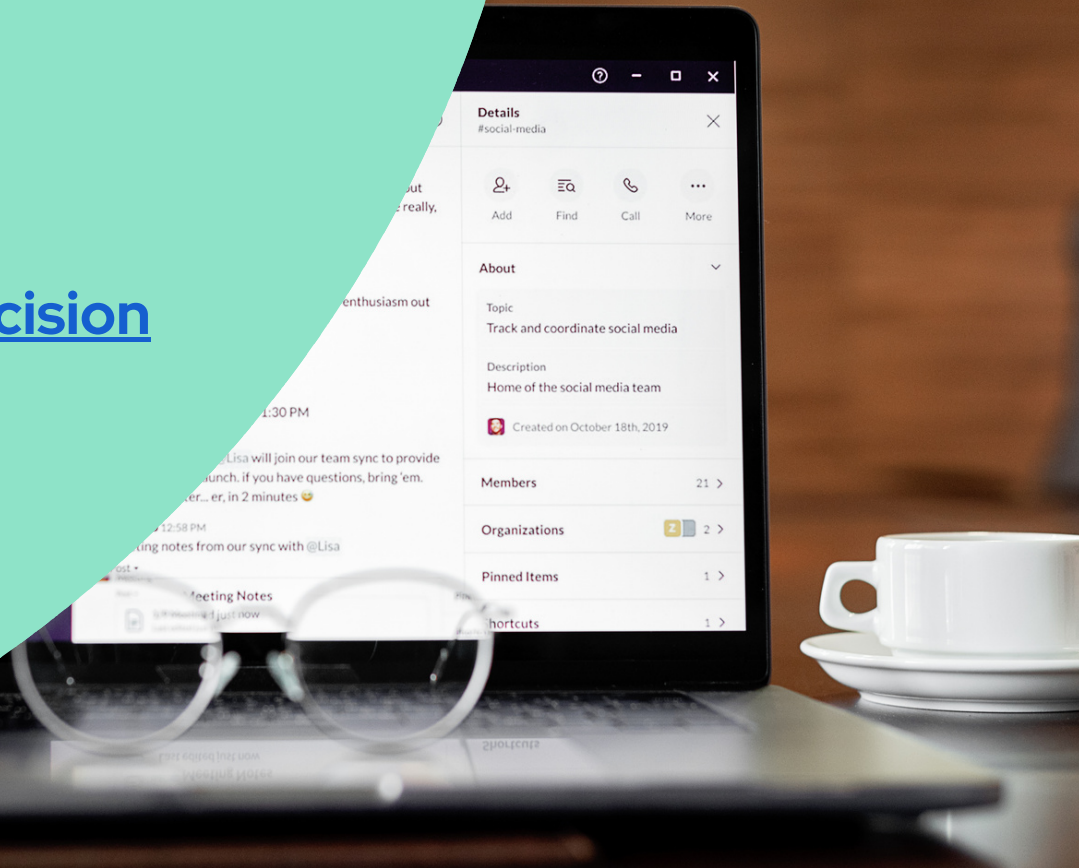
-DISORGANIZED

-UNCLEAR USAGE INSTRUCTIONS

-NO WAY TO SIMPLY TAKE ATTENDANCE

-WAY TOO MANY THINGS POPPING UP AT ONCE

Our Final Decision



● App Creation:

Create a modal that takes attendance with a simple push of a button within Slack API (front-end)
Find a way to export data out to third-party apps (back-end)

● Future plans for app development:

Add a time restriction for attendance
Add a geotag to detect user's location(s)

● Target Audience:

Instructors using Slack for educational purposes
Organizations who need to keep track of worker attendance
Anyone who may need it in general!

Sources



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