

BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

SELECTING THE RIGHT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

PURPOSE

There are many kinds of tools that enable your collaboration partners to work together and communicate more efficiently and effectively. The right ones can help you share information at various levels (around the collaborative table, within partner organizations, and with external stakeholders); facilitate effective and timely decision making; sustain and build relationships by enhancing transparency in communication; use budgets and resources most effectively given constraints. Nonprofits use various technology tools, many in combination, to achieve their goals.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

- Review the key functions you'll need to address in the chart. Add others not listed.
- Consider the sample technologies to kick start your research. This is not an exhaustive list and is not meant to endorse one tool over another. Collaboration tools are constantly being upgraded and/or designed for greater effectiveness. The list below will start you thinking about how you might adopt or adapt them to serve your purposes.
- Compare the functionalities of these and other tools to find ones that best fit your needs and budget.
- Include the most appropriate tools in the development of a communication plan and other plans (e.g. evaluation) for your collaboration.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TOOLS:

Key Function	Examples of Tools	Capabilities to look for
Polling and planning meeting dates and times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doodle• Calliflower• MeetingWizard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low cost or free and easy to administer and use• Tools for setting meeting times with large or small groups of partners• Can also include meeting reminders and RSVP
Surveying collaborative members or stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey Monkey• Zoomerang• Fluid Surveys (Canadian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low cost or no cost for small surveys• Capacity to analyze and download data• Summarize and produce tables, graphs and charts

Key Function	Examples of Tools	Capabilities to look for
Convening meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Conferencing • Adobe Connect • Calliflower • GotoMeeting • SKYPE • Gaboogle • Video Conferencing • Elluminate • WebEx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to post agendas, RSVP, view and revise documents together, meeting dashboard • Chat functions • Some provide video capabilities or webcam options • Can bring groups in different communities together in real time • Audio recording of meetings • Participant interaction – polling and group working
Filesharing (including shared calendars) and project management/joint planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropbox • G Docs (now Google Drive) • Huddle • Basecamp • Central Desktop • Sharepoint • BigTent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repository for important project files • Ability to share and organize files • Ability to access files from anywhere and from any computer • Capacity to select and share with different working groups • Capacity to enable sharing of large files without sending through e mail • Some are low or no cost; look out for free licenses for nonprofits
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar technologies such as Gotomeeting, Webex, Adobe Connect • Video Conferencing • Member only website areas • Elluminate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for workshopping or training on key topics or to prompt discussion with distributed working groups • Password protected areas on websites can give partners access to key resources for learning or sharing with own constituencies • Access to internet and quality of connections make some tools more practical to use than others

Key Function	Examples of Tools	Capabilities to look for
Information sharing with/ marketing to broad audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Blogs e.g. Blogspot, Wordpress • E mail newsletters e.g. Mailchimp, Constant Contact, AWeber, Elite Email • You Tube • Social media/Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for tracking and feedback capabilities to analyze uptake • Integration across tools e.g. e mail newsletters and Facebook
Network mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gephi (free open source) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to analyze relationship-based information and networks
Other		



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