Slack is custom-built for enterprise companies

Our chief product officer explains what that means and why it matters now

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, we've heard from Slack customers worldwide about a two-wave response. First, business leaders took action to protect the health and safety of their employees and customers. Second, they adopted business systems to support new ways of working.

A **recent report by advisory firm Gartner*** provides some insight into the latter. Among other recommendations, the report suggests that companies can rebound more quickly by sourcing "interim digital collaboration tools to enable employees to work remotely, ensuring security controls and network support are in place."

Long term, Gartner recommends that technology leaders "develop a digital workplace strategy that includes collaboration applications, security controls, bring-your-own-device (BYOD) programs and network support."

In times of crisis, building a new digital workplace strategy that ticks all the boxes for security, reliability and bring-your-own-device support can be challenging. Our intent with Slack is to make those requirements a given. We developed our product with enterprise companies in mind; their needs for security, reliability and compliance are reflected in the product.

During a **virtual keynote address for Enterprise Connect**, a conference for communication and collaboration business leaders, **Tamar Yehoshua**, Slack's chief product officer, shared how Slack was developed as a **channel-based messaging platform for the enterprise**.

We captured key insights from her talk for you here. Looking for more? **Slack's full Enterprise Connect keynote** is available on demand.

SLACK WAS BUILT WITH ENTERPRISE CUSTOMERS IN MIND

Slack, as users know it today, is the product of a six-year journey of co-creation with enterprise companies, including IBM. Not long after we launched, a handful of IBM employees started using the product. Word about how Slack improved collaboration spread quickly and fueled its adoption throughout the company.

IBM pushed the limits of our original architecture, and so we invested in our road map to support its scale. We redeveloped our service so that IBM could have the agility

and flexibility it needed with **channels** (virtual spaces to share messages, files and tools) and **workspaces** (shared hubs of channels).

As a result of that partnership, Slack architecture now allows customers to spin up organization-wide channels to keep all of their employees informed; this has proved critical during times of crisis like the coronavirus pandemic. Today 360,000 IBM employees globally depend on Slack for collaboration and communication.

A 99.99% UPTIME COMMITMENT

Whether facing ordinary or extraordinary conditions, most businesses can't afford downtime, especially for tools their employees depend on. **Slack is committed to 99.99% uptime**, or no more than 4.3 minutes of downtime per month.

Of course, we always strive to do better, and our aggregated availability over the past six months is 99.998%. Slack's systems are designed to automatically accommodate surges in traffic, and they're highly distributed around the world to

ensure redundancy. If one region fails, traffic will seamlessly flow to the next-closest region.

With global companies such as IBM relying on Slack for collaboration across their organizations, we're committed to providing the **reliability customers need and expect**. This is especially true today, when **new customers are turning to Slack** to keep teams connected and productive during the coronavirus pandemic.

ENTERPRISE-GRADE SECURITY DEVELOPED TO MEET CUSTOMER NEEDS

Security is a fundamental part of our organization and platform. We take it seriously, and keeping customers' data safe is a top priority. By default, Slack encrypts data at rest and in transit for all of our customers.

As organizations scale, we aim to ensure that we're also meeting their **security and compliance requirements**. Many of our large customers wanted more control over sensitive data shared in Slack, without sacrificing the user experience. That's why we built **Enterprise Key Management**, or EKM, a feature that allows customers to bring their own keys to encrypt data. We partnered with a handful of organizations, including a global financial services firm, to develop EKM. The feature launched for general availability in March 2019; a year later, nearly 80 companies are using it.

Organizations increasingly rely on distributed and remote teams; in response, Slack has doubled down on security investments in our mobile app. New mobile security features co-developed with HSBC are available for our **Enterprise Grid** customers, including the ability to automatically log out users if a device is lost or stolen, block file downloads and message copying, detect devices that are jail broken or rooted, and set a default browser for sign-in and link opening on unmanaged and managed devices.

Jamie Newham, the digital collaboration tooling lead at HSBC, says these features enabled workplace mobility. "As our workforce becomes more distributed, we needed to give our employees more flexibility by allowing them

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> **Jamie Newham,**
> *HSBC, Digital Collaboration Tooling Lead*

to collaborate using their mobile devices," he says. "We partnered closely with Slack to build mobile security features that protect our critical data while bringing our people together to do their best work."

Features such as these have taken on added importance during the coronavirus pandemic, which has forced millions of U.S. employees to work remotely. Large companies are able to keep their customers' data secure while employees work from home or elsewhere on mobile devices.

FROM FEDRAMP TO FINRA: MEETING COMPLIANCE STANDARDS

Along with security, compliance is important for Slack customers in regulated industries. To ensure that financial services firms, such as PIMCO, can get work done in Slack, we've developed solutions to help them maintain FINRA compliance.

We've also built out platform functionality so that health-care organizations, such as One Medical, can maintain HIPAA compliance while using Slack. Today nearly 50 health-care companies rely on Slack as their channel-based messaging platform. For many of these customers, Slack has

played a critical role in the rapid transition to telemedicine and other virtual services during the pandemic.

Our platform meets some of the most stringent security standards set by FedRAMP, widely considered the gold standard for cloud security. Currently more than a dozen federal government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, use Slack. Our growing list of **compliance certifications and attestations** ensures that companies from any sector or industry can leverage Slack to help their teams collaborate securely.

KEEPING USERS ENGAGED

If people don't use a product, they don't get value out of it. We're committed to continually raising the bar on the quality of the user experience. Recently we released a **simpler, more organized version of Slack**. The update makes it easier for users to navigate between channels, organize their conversations, and search for important messages, files and apps.

User data tells us that people are using our product—a lot. We found that users spend, on average, more than nine hours per workday in Slack. What does this active usage look like? It adds up to more than 5 billion actions weekly, including reading and writing messages, uploading files, performing searches and interacting with apps.

EXPANDING COMMUNICATION NETWORKS WITH SLACK CONNECT

Collaboration isn't confined to the walls of an organization. Often the most fruitful partnerships occur with clients and external partners. To help customers securely collaborate outside their companies, we developed Slack Connect.

Slack Connect is a secure communications environment that lets you move all the conversations with your external partners, clients, vendors and others into Slack, replacing email and taking business collaboration to the next level. Now, up to 20 organizations can come together in a single Slack channel.

Customers have been using Slack Connect to:

- Manage their supply chain, share critical updates, and optimize operations
- Work with partners to iterate on plans and sign off on deliverables
- Quickly triage issues and provide first-class support for their largest customers

Slack's enterprise-grade security features and compliance standards extend to Slack Connect: data loss prevention, retention and e-discovery. Slack also provides Enterprise Key Management (an add-on feature to Enterprise Grid) via Amazon Web Services, giving organizations increased control over their data and who can see it.

COLLABORATING IN UNUSUAL AND UNCERTAIN TIMES

Over the past few months, we've all been challenged to rethink how our teams work together. We've had to find new ways to maintain organizational agility, while making sure employees stay engaged.

But those adaptations alone simply aren't enough. Business and technology leaders still need to meet high standards for reliability, security, compliance and user engagement. Our

goal is to help organizations of all sizes and industries fulfill these requirements so they can collaborate during periods of business as usual and exceptional times like today.

Get the most out of Slack

Maximize your team's productivity and keep everyone connected with powerful features and integrations in our paid plans.

Contact Sales

*Gartner, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: Short- and Long-Term Actions for CIOs, 4 March 2020, Sandy Shen, Owen Chen, Julian Sun, Lily Mok, Arnold Gao, Deacon D.K Wan