OUR FAVOURITE APPLICATIONS FOR MENTORING ONLINE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

STUDENT LIFE | Mentorship & Peer Programs

DESKTOP FRIENDLY

MOBILE FRIENDLY

ABOUT	PROS	CONS	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	MENTORING
Facebook Messenger Facebook messenger is an instant messaging app and platform built into Facebook that allows users to connect with each other and send messages, emojis, photos and videos.	• While users need a Facebook account to access Messenger, you can access chats without visiting the main social network's site • Available on iOS, Android, and through the website • Can send stickers, emojis, GIFs, videos, photos, reactions and voice messages • Supports voice and video calls • Easily change pronouns through Facebook profile settings	• Not accessible to those without a Facebook account	• Live captions • Screen readers • Keyboard shortcuts • Dark mode • To access you must connect to a VPN which may not be supported in all countries	• Facebook data policy	Facebook Messenger is a widely used platform for informal chats to take place. We have used this platform to create an online community for mentees to connect outside of the formal mentoring session to stay in touch with each other. For the duration of mentoring program a facilitator has been present in the chat and removes themselves after the formal mentoring program ends. Messenger encourages a more engaging conversation with the ability to react, send photos, GIFs, emojis and stickers.

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MS Teams Teams can be considered an all-in-one collaborative solution for teamwork; from scheduling meetings, starting spontaneous chats, and easy syncing with Outlook and OneDrive	• Users can host meetings, share their screens, and use the whiteboard feature • Allows up to 250 people in a meeting and 10 000 viewers in its live presentation feature • Chat history is saved and is easily accessible to team after meeting ends • Easy to log into and syncs with Office365 drive/files	• Can only show a maximum of 9 participants at a time, might not be very engaging for larger meetings • Occasional performance issues during calls such as video/audio freezing, lagging interface response • Difficult to adjust name and pronouns - can't change directly from desktop or phone app, need to change through Microsoft account page	• Please note that MS Teams is classified as a VOIP service so it may not work if you are trying to access it from a country that restricts VOIP platforms • Accessibility overview of Microsoft Teams	• Microsoft Teams Security Guide	Facebook Messenger is a widely used platform for informal chats to take place. We have used this platform to create an online community for mentees to connect outside of the formal mentoring session to stay in touch with each other. For the duration of mentoring program a facilitator has been present in the chat and removes themselves after the formal mentoring program ends. Messenger encourages a more engaging conversation with the ability to react, send photos, GIFs, emojis and stickers.

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Zoom Zoom is a video conferencing service that can be used to virtually connect with others by video and audio. Zoom allows you to conduct live chats, record meetings, share screen, create breakout rooms, share a live transcript in addition to a plethora of other features.	• Supports large audiences that allows up to 10,000 virtual attendees to sign up for webinars • Zoom can be used for free for meetings up to 40 minutes long • Can connect to Google calendar to sync meeting invites • User friendly platform	• A subscription based service with multiple add-ons • Lack of comment control • Zoom bombing	• Customize the font size of chat and closed captioning • Supports keyboard shortcuts • Screen reader support • Automatic transcripts • Third party captioning • Rearrange videos to create your own custom gallery • Multi-spotlight and multi-pinning to spotlight interpreters and speakers • Accessibility Features	• Security Guide	Zoom is a great platform for formal or semi-formal 1:1 mentoring, small group mentoring or large group mentoring. We find Zoom the most user friendly of the virtual mentoring platforms. To join a meeting, there is no sign up required, rather folks can join through a link. Once they enter the have the ability to change their name, background, enable closed captioning and various other features. We regularly use Zoom for our mentor/mentee training and our mentoring programs.
WhatsApp One of the most popular cross-platform messaging and calling platforms. This messaging service can be used across various platforms and countries.	• Host group chats with up to 256 people • automatically import phone contacts • Works seamlessly across multiple mobile platforms (iOS, Android, Windows) with desktop • Easily change display name, can add pronouns to name • Can send videos and photos	• Calling feature not available in all countries • You can't contact someone unless you have their cell phone number • No sign-out option	• WhatsApp is not available in Ukraine (Crimea region), Cuba, Iran, North Korea, China, and Syria unless connected to a VPN.	• WhatsApp privacy	WhatsApp is a widely used platform for informal chats to take place. We have used this platform to create an online community for mentees to connect outside of the formal mentoring session to stay in touch with each other. For the duration of mentoring program a facilitator has been present in the chat and removes themselves after the formal mentoring program ends.

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Gatheround A video conferencing platform that cycles through icebreakers to enhance community engagement online. Gatheround's mission is to strengthen communities by giving people a sense of togetherness online that they typically only feel in person.	• Allows you to plan your gathering prior to meeting • Provides you with various templates to choose from when creating icebreaker questions with the option to write your own icebreaker prompts • Built in matching algorithm and timer • Free for up to 40 participants • Participants can follow up with peers using the chat feature which syncs with their google email account	• Only host can go live in the main room — other participants are limited to the chat • Anyone who has the link can join at any time • Must sign in through Google • Can't change display name • Requires you to join with video	• Requires you to join with video • To access Gatheround you must sign into your Google account which may not be supported in all countries	• Icebreaker private policy	Gatheround is great when being used for a less formal, group mentoring program activity. It works well with a small group of participants (approximately 6-20 people). This app provides different themed icebreaker questions (picked by the host) and allows folks to cycle through questions, choosing to skip if they would like. Gatheround also has the ability to match up participants randomly or be created by the host. There is also a built-in timer function for counting down the amount of time left with your match.
BAND BAND is a mobile community application designed to make group communication easier.	• BAND has an announcement and alert feature, a community board for posts which can be revisited at a later time, a" read by" tracking feature to keep group members accountable, the ability to highlight important posts, a calendar feature to remind members of events and built-in notifications that can be turned off.	• Takes more time to get used to navigating BAND • Notifications are automatically turned on and are plentiful • A lot of self-promotion • Videos prone to freezing	• Activity Policy.	• Privacy Policy.	BAND is a great platform for keeping members of a mentoring group in touch with each other outside of the formal scheduled sessions. This app does not require mentors to share private social media information with their mentees, rather folks can be added to the group with an email address.

Adapted from http://blogs.studentlife.utoronto.ca/digitalconnections/platforms/