smarsh®

Checklist

What to Consider for Achieving Compliant Productivity with Slack

Slack is one of the most widely used, fastest-growing workplace collaboration tools today. It centralizes communication into one platform, so workers can send direct and group messages, and share files and other multimedia across multiple teams, projects and devices. Slack's send-and-response immediacy produces millions of electronic records every day. And it's not slowing down.

> "People are connected to Slack, on average, about nine hours a day and they're using Slack actively for almost 90 minutes."[1]
>
> - Jaime DeLanghe, Director of Product Management at Slack

But without the right solution in place to govern high-volume, broad-range usage, Slack opens organizations up to risk. Risks that include potential legal or conduct breaches, data loss and/or non-compliance with regulatory recordkeeping or oversight mandates. Organizations, however, don't have to slow down their pace of business if they have taken the appropriate measures.

If you've already chosen Slack for your collaboration tool, you've taken the first step toward achieving harmonious communication organization-wide. Next up is to put guidelines and technology in place that will increase productivity and address potential risks at the same time. This governance checklist will help you cover all your bases, whether you are:

- Interested in Slack, but still evaluating tools to support your oversight initiatives
- Using a free Slack account but not yet archiving communication records
- A brand-new Slack Enterprise Grid customer and part of the management or technical implementation team
- Held up on deployment of Slack Enterprise Grid because of risk and/or compliance concerns

Find out where you stand and where you need to be to enjoy the benefits of Slack's robust collaboration capabilities. And keep your organization protected.

1 https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/18/slack-introduces-simplified-interface-as-usage-moves-deeper-into-companies/

✓ Slack Checklist

☐ Does your company leverage the Slack Enterprise Grid platform?

Some companies may be tempted to use the free version of Slack. It's also common for employees to start up a free Slack account merely for casual conversation. But if work matters come up, it's a liability and a security risk. As organizations begin to rely more heavily on collaboration tools for workplace business, casual and work conversations will inevitably become intertwined.

Slack's free version is useful for most individuals and some small businesses. But messaging data expires, which is risky if an organization has to quickly review and produce large volumes of historical content for a legal, internal or regulatory investigation. In this case, it may not be sufficient to rely solely on the storage and retrieval mechanisms included with the free version of Slack. Slack's Enterprise Grid—which connects with content capture and archiving solutions—is the best option. The Slack Enterprise Grid also provides an important governance capability: prohibiting users from creating free accounts.

Why did you start using Slack?

When surveyed about why they started using Slack, **18%** of respondents said their organization rolled it out as a corporate tool, but **41%** said they started using Slack because their colleagues or peers were using it.[2]

! As we move forward with the checklist, consider the power and reliability of a centrally managed solution for capturing, archiving, supervising and producing any amount of historical communications content on demand.

☐ Are you capturing all the types of content and metadata that will be produced, directly from the source?

One of Slack's benefits is the diverse range of communication and collaboration it supports. However, many of the subsequent actions—activities like editing or deleting Slack messages, file sharing in private chat, collaboration on a document, etc.—can be material to an investigation. Unfortunately, many tools for capturing message content miss important "event" information, as well as interactive activities. Here's a list of data types that now fall into the category of business communications with the use of Slack:

- One-to-one chats
- Multiparty chats
- Channel messages
- Files in all formats: PDF, document, image, GIF, emoji
- Metadata: network, location, devices
- Transitive data: edits, replies, deleted info

A solution that is capable of capturing this information in its native context, directly from the source, is the most reliable way to mitigate potential risk when the time comes.

2 https://www.businessprocessincubator.com/content/slack-a-communications-lifeline-for-small-teams/

Can you preserve and play back all content in its native conversational context?

Legal and compliance teams need to be able to search, review and understand the context of an expansive, complex and interactive conversation among an organization's participants. And when it does come time to search and retrieve communications content for an investigation, it will need to be delivered promptly and comprehensively. This is a laborious process if the data is hard to access and missing key details.

First, consider your current archiving status:

- [ ] We do not yet have an archive for Slack content
- [ ] We have an archive, but it can't capture Slack content
- [ ] We have multiple archives for all of our different channels

Then decide which of these capabilities are critical:

- [ ] Data security & integrity
- [ ] Ability to capture full, contextual message threads
- [ ] Cloud-hosted solution
- [ ] User-friendly search and review capabilities

Does your organization have regulatory requirements to supervise communication?

Many regulated organizations face dual priorities of 1) performing an ongoing systemic review of content to meet requirements for FINRA, SEC, CFTC, MiFID II, etc., and 2) the need to periodically perform ad-hoc searches against their entire collection of data to investigate policy violations. These dual priorities require a two-pronged solution.

Firms must have:

- Supervisory capabilities to test enforcement of regulatory compliance policies
- A powerful supervision system that allows them to spot other potential infractions and respond to unplanned regulatory inquiries

These requirements can be best provided by a policy engine that enables multiple methods (i.e., lexicon policies, random sampling) to identify risky behavior with precision. Consider these necessary filtering tools:

- Keyword/Lexicon Policy: Designed to scan across all content types for defined set of words or phrases considered to be "red flags"
- Auto-Review Policy: Designed to automatically close messages from senders that typically do not merit your review
- Privileged Policy: Designed to automatically flag and categorize messages sent to or received from legal counsel as "Privileged"
- Retention Policy: Designed to retain messages for a specified amount of time

Policies make the supervision and review process far less arduous and far more effective. They can be fine-tuned to drastically cut out white noise and reduce the number of messages that require review in the first place.

☐ Is your organization concerned about potential data privacy, security, human resources and legal risks that may arise due to wide-scale adoption of Slack?

As we mentioned earlier, in the event of a discovery request or investigation, companies may be required to process and submit large volumes of content from Slack and all other communication channels, and in short order. It can be a disruptive and expensive process. If any of the following are potential occurrences, an archive with advanced preservation and search capabilities is crucial:

- Data privacy investigation
- Code of conduct violations
- Regulatory audit or data request
- Intellectual property loss
- Information security breach
- Internal investigations
- Other litigation

Speaking of data privacy, this is a good time to review applicable and emerging data privacy laws (think GDPR in the European Union, California's CCPA, etc.) and consider those parameters in your data collection strategy. Organizations that operate in multiple geographies must maintain and store data to meet specific regulatory requirements in various regions.

☐ Do you have a training program to address employee use of Slack?

For some, Slack can look like a place to socialize. Training employees on Slack usage policies early and often is a key part of managing comprehensive compliance. We recommend putting together guidelines documenting how employees should conduct themselves on messaging apps. Make sure training is explicit and outlines both acceptable and prohibited terms of communication. Engaging Slack power users to help guide those newer to the platform is also useful to ensure that everyone stays within the appropriate guard rails.

Wherever possible, automate policy enforcement with existing infrastructure and incorporate into onboarding processes. If employees' content is being captured and supervised, make sure they know it at the outset. Require signed attestation that they have gone through training. Stay engaged with employees as the tool and its integrations evolve, and reassess your policies as needed.

Smarsh & Slack

☑ **Capture:** Smarsh directly captures Slack content from the source through an API integration. This includes point-in-time snapshots of joins, leaves, edits, deletes, comments, replies, attachments and other events, which is especially important for collaborative conversations. No matter what type of communications data is produced in Slack, and regardless of a user's device, location or network, Smarsh preserves its chain of custody, context and original format.

☑ **Archive:** Slack communications can be sent seamlessly to the Smarsh Enterprise Archive and Professional Archive—immutable and context-aware data stores—or any other archive, application or data lake. You can perform advanced search for Slack-specific records, which makes the process faster and more accurate. Data can be exported quickly and easily to the required specifications of downstream applications.

☑ **Compliance:** Smarsh provides native compliance and governance for all Slack content. Employees can collaborate seamlessly while meeting strict SEC, FINRA, FFIEC, CFTC, NFA, MiFID II, FCA, IIROC and other records retention and oversight requirements around the world.

☑ **Supervision:** Slack content is processed through high-powered Smarsh policy engines, and conversations are classified as they enter the archive. Important or problematic keywords, phrases or other criteria are flagged on qualifying messages. Policy controls can be applied at a global (or granular) level and fine-tuned to help meet regulatory, legal and corporate obligations.

☑ **Enterprise-level capability and support:** Smarsh has enterprise-specific solutions for global companies with ongoing growth initiatives. Modern, web-scale technologies ingest, search and export content faster than legacy archives. The Enterprise Archive can be hosted on your choice of leading public, hosted or private infrastructures and is fully enabled to feed downstream applications for enhanced analytics, surveillance and business insights.

☑ **E-discovery and risk mitigation:** With Smarsh, users can quickly collect, organize and cull data to enable informed strategic decisions during early case assessment, while managing risk. The combined solution provides a highly secure, defensible and auditable workflow across all electronic communication.

☑ **Training:** Smarsh has a wealth of resources for risk-mitigation and usage policies. Our Implementation Services, Professional Services and support teams are available in varying capacities to get your staff on track and in compliance. In addition, Smarsh University offers training courses for using any of the Smarsh Connected Suite family of tools.

☑ **Empower your team to communicate with confidence. Check regulatory compliance off the list with**

smarsh + slack

smarsh®

Smarsh® helps organizations get ahead — and stay ahead — of the risk within their electronic communications. With innovative capture, archiving and monitoring solutions that extend across the industry's widest breadth of channels, customers can leverage the productivity benefits of email, social media, mobile/text messaging, instant messaging/collaboration, websites and voice while efficiently strengthening their compliance and e-discovery initiatives.

A global client base, including the top 10 banks in the United States and the largest banks in Europe, Canada and Asia, manages billions of conversations each month with the Smarsh Connected Suite. Government agencies in 40 of the 50 U.S. states also rely on Smarsh to help meet their recordkeeping and e-discovery requirements.

Smarsh is headquartered in Portland, Ore. with nine offices worldwide, including locations in Silicon Valley, New York, London and Bangalore, India. For more information, visit www.smarsh.com.

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