

Software to Facilitate Collaboration

Software to Facilitate Collaboration Working Group



GOAL:

Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect.



STRATEGY: Research software to facilitate collaboration and ease the burden among teams.



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Introduction

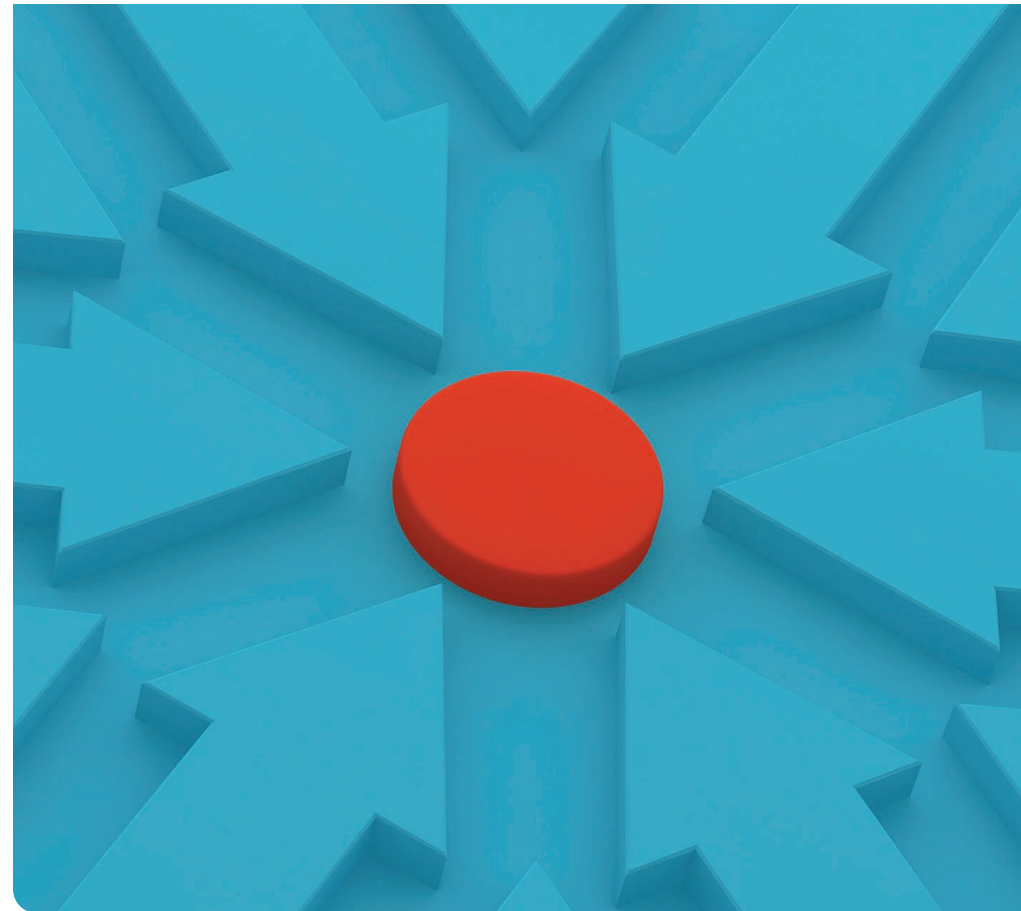
Changes are and have been implemented through The Catholic Women's League of Canada Plans Strategically (2018-2023), based on the core values of faith, service and social justice.

This is a needs analysis report of the working group tasked with the strategy to "Research software to facilitate collaboration and ease the burden among teams." The working group invited input from every member through participation in a survey. The questions on the survey were designed to collect as much information as possible about the current and potential future needs/requirements for provincial, diocesan and parish councils of the League.

Scope & Objectives

The working group set its scope and objectives

- to improve the use of technology/communication methods and tools.
- to identify specific software programs best suited to the needs of the members at various levels in the areas of document sharing, online meetings and project management.



Methodology

Members were invited to complete a 13-question survey to collect information about current and future software needs/requirements. The results were collected, and seven different software products across different platforms were identified by the working group. Focus groups were set up to review the software products.

Research

Survey Results

The survey revealed that

- computer skills for 75% of respondents were rated as average to very advanced.
- forty-three percent were not trained on the software they used.
- fifty-five percent had a resource person they could approach for help with software queries.
- sixty percent stated their software needs for working collaboratively were being met.
- fifty-nine percent were willing to learn more about collaborative software.
- seventy-one percent felt it would be beneficial for all councils to use the same software tools.
- an ageing population was not willing to learn about technology.
- some members had older computers that needed upgrading.
- some councils did not use collaborative software.
- unreliable, poor or unstable internet service was common among rural councils.

Survey Recommendations

1. Members need software training and a point of contact for software help and/or assistance.
2. Councils not using collaborative software could benefit from set up and training, if they are willing.
3. Financial tools/training and/or accounting software were needed by some councils.
4. Basic computer skills training (hardware and software) would be beneficial for many councils.



Focus Group Product Review

Key findings:

1. Document sharing software: 60% preferred Microsoft 365 and 40% preferred Google Drive.
2. Online meeting software: Zoom and Google Meet were equally popular.
3. Project management software: 80% of those surveyed preferred Google Drive .

User preferences:

1. Convenience: The listed software gained traction due to ease of use (see Appendix 1).
2. Quality and cost: Users prioritized both. In terms of cost, most users appreciated that the tools evaluated by the focus groups could easily be used to do their daily tasks with little or no cost.
3. Maintenance: Users' ability to understand how to use these tools with little or no training issues was highly valued.



Trends for these tools:

1. Focus on users: a personalized dashboard (the home screen as a way of displaying several types of data in one place) that provides tailored/individualized workspace experience was important to focus group participants.
1. Advanced security and compliance: promotes robust security features providing a sense of safety from hacking, etc.
2. Seamless mobile experience: workspace application optimized for smaller screens, enabling users to collaborate, create and access information seamlessly regardless of their location.

Document Sharing Software Recommendation

Microsoft 365's collaboration, communication, design and file sharing tools via members' main and other devices, and the mobile app while on the go, offers the potential for time saving and improved productivity. Councils could save costs by avoiding unnecessary licenses, e.g., second-device licenses.

Use of Microsoft OneDrive for multiple tasks to coauthor and share links to files would reduce the amount of time spent reviewing documents individually and then submitting input through multiple email chains. Users could use innovative design tools and share feedback in real time.

Microsoft 365 also enables efficient licensing management, contributing to overall cost savings, i.e., should there be a need for additional features that requires pricing, the cost and price could be customized according to geography and local market economics.

Other Considerations

Security and Risk Mitigation:

Microsoft 365 provides features like single sign on (SSO), multifactor authentication (MFA) and Microsoft Intune.

SSO enables a team to use one set of credentials to conveniently access their apps with the benefits of:

1. streamlined sign-in experiences by reducing or eliminating sign-in prompts.
2. reducing the reuse of usernames and passwords across apps to help minimize the risk of breaches.
3. centralizing users account management and automatically add or remove user access across apps on group membership or roles.

MFA protects users from common identity attacks using texts, biometrics and one-time passcodes. It:

1. encourages the use of stronger security than passwords alone.
2. protects users from credential theft, making sure credentials for high-risk accounts are resistant to phishing and channel jacking

3. secures resources against unauthorized access; every user identity must be verified before accessing digital resources.

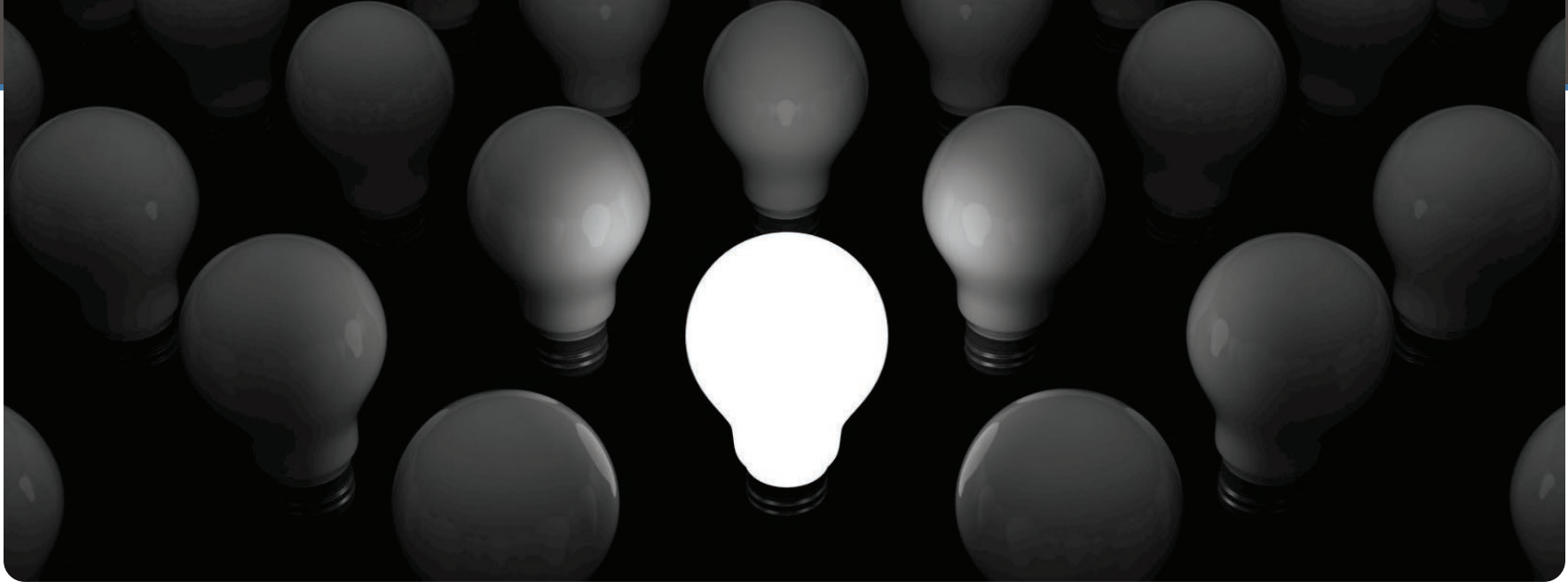
4. reduces friction and simplifies security that empowers users.

Microsoft 365 is easier to use than the previous solutions due to the self-service features and automated fixes for most common issues ensuring that the software is always available to users even if fixes/repairs are being undertaken.

Enhanced Collaboration with Microsoft Teams:

This feature has more functionality than ZOOM. It:

1. facilitates real-time communication, file sharing and editing, videoconferencing, desktop sharing online whiteboards, instant messaging (real-time text), and chat rooms and collaboration.
2. improves participation and knowledge sharing from working together as a team.
3. increases productivity by eliminating multiple versions instead using a single, shared document.
4. streamlines workflow with meetings, conversations and file sharing.



Conclusion

Collaboration refers to the act of individuals or groups working together to achieve a common goal or objective. It involves pooling resources, knowledge and skills to accomplish tasks more effectively and efficiently than if each individual or group were working alone.

Individual members and councils at all levels have identified needs, whether it is acquiring the best software, receiving training/assistance/guidance, or even upgrading hardware.

Based on the research and testing of software options and the users' needs, the working group recommends Microsoft 365 as the preferred

software choice for councils and members at all levels. While Google and ZOOM have features that are needed to either collaborate, conduct meetings and/or perform project management tasks, these products do not provide a complete suite of applications, storage and services at a low or free cost as Microsoft 365 does.

If all councils used the same software for collaboration it would streamline and simplify things immensely. Members could buddy up and teach each other and support each other along the way. Together we can learn and grow!

“Collaboration can lead to numerous benefits, including increased efficiency, enhanced creativity, and innovation, improved problem-solving, better decision-making, and stronger relationships among collaborators. It can also help overcome challenges and obstacles that may be difficult to address individually.”

APPENDIX

Comparison Between Microsoft 365 vs Google Drive *

	MICROSOFT 365	Google
1.	OneDrive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free with a Microsoft 365 license (individuals at \$6.80 per user/month or business at \$17.00 per user/month). Total storage of 1TB plus 10 GB per license for eligible plan. 	Google Drive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range: \$0-\$23:40 per user/monthly 15GB capacity and 2T for business users. 600-member limit, and maximum of 100 members can be groups.
2.	SharePoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available based on having a Microsoft 365 license, an organization has total storage of 1TB plus 10GB. 99 people can use it at the same time. 	Does not come with a feature such as SharePoint.
3.	Teams: Free Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 100 members can meet. 60 minutes maximum per call. 5GB storage allocated for cloud storage. Meetings cannot be recorded. Meeting transcript is not available. Paid Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranges: \$4.00-\$12.50 per month. 300-1,000 participants. 5GB cloud storage is free. Meetings are recorded. Meeting transcripts are available. 	Google Meet: Free Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 100 participants. 60 minute maximum per call. Zero cloud storage. Meetings cannot be recorded. No meeting transcript. Paid Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6.00-\$18.00 per month. 100-500 participants. No free GB for storage. Meetings can be recorded. Meeting transcripts are available.
4.	Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cloud-based price plan range: \$13.00-\$74.60 per month. On premise: \$849.00 for standard, \$1.889.00 for professional. Accommodates 400,000 tasks per project 4GB. 	Does not have a project management feature.
5.	To Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comes with a Microsoft 365 license. 25mb allocated for tasks. 	Google Calendar

* prices as quoted on the date of publication of the report.

NOTES

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