Engaging youth with technology

Engaging youth in the digital age is full of opportunity but can sometimes be difficult. These tools can help you meet youth where they are and offer new ways of supporting youth. These platform recommendations can help you support and connect with youth.

**Video Meetings**

**Zoom**
Zoom provides video conferencing and meetings that are easy to integrate with calendars and allow many to join your meeting for free. Use this platform to host groups, engage in peer support, and meet with staff in your program.

**Google Meet**
Google has an app for everything, which is part of the convenience and ease of Google Meet. If you already have a personal Google account or one through your work or school, you are setup to use Google Meet.

**Chat**

**Slack**
Slack is a chat platform where you can create channels & topics for conversation (as well as directly message members). Great for small groups / programs looking to chat with a lot of people.

**Discord**
Discord is an easy way to communicate over voice, video, and text, whether you’re part of a school club, a nightly gaming group, a worldwide art community, or just a handful of friends that want to hang out.

**WhatsApp**
WhatsApp allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media.

**Houseparty**
Houseparty is a face to face social network, video chat platform that is easy to use and creates a conversational space. With the addition of a few games, Houseparty feels less “meeting-y” than Zoom.

Before choosing a technology platform, check in with youth about access. You may need to resource a tablet or dataplan for young people without access to stable internet at home. This is an added and necessary expense to using technology.

Youth MOVE National is a youth-driven, chapter-based organization dedicated to improving services and systems for youth involved in systems of care.

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Social Apps

*YouTube, Instagram, & SnapChat are the most popular social media platforms with teens age 13-17.

**TikTok**
TikTok is the hottest social media platform used for making shortform videos. Use TikTok to share messages or create social marketing campaigns.

**Instagram**
Instagram (or “Insta”) has become a part of our daily social media culture with entire careers being launched. Use instastories and posts to share what you are doing. Don’t forget to create a hashtag!

**SnapChat**
SnapChat is best utilized to share messages, announcements, and reminders (should always be communicated in another way as well). You can get creative and flashy with how you share content here!

**Tumblr**
Using a blogging platform like Tumblr can allow your program and youth to share stories, creative advocacy opportunities, and respond to current events.

**Reddit**
Reddit is a social news platform and discussion website. Members submit content to the site such as links, text posts, and images, which are then voted up or down by other members. Create a subreddit for your group to share resources and create discussion.

Productivity

**Doodle Poll**
A tool that allows you to set up meetings with multiple people to see when a common time is available. Great to find times to meet with youth in a variety of settings.

**Remind**
Free, safe messaging app that keeps participants up to date with what's happening in youth groups, classrooms, and teams. Youth coordinators and staff can send messages to an entire list or individuals. Use this to keep everyone updated with news and alerts.

Use Apps That Socialize
Give youth a space where they can share what is happening in their lives. Creating spaces to engage with content that is produced and curated by youth. Creating a virtual place to connect with each other outside of 1-on-1 and groups is important. This will help develop group identity in between meetings.

Communicate
On-going dialogue, whether in a peer relationship, a group setting, or an advocacy-building project, the ability to send messages and communicate outside of physical meeting spaces is important.

Engage
Whether its audio integrations (what's your Spotify playlist look like?), podcast suggestions, links to YouTube, or some other medium, audio/visual content is more engaging by participants. Using apps that allow you to experience this together can increase engagement.

Be youth-driven. Let youth generate content.
Be positive. Provide an open-minded space.
Be engaged. Respond to messages/comments.
Be relevant. What’s happening for youth, now?
Be authentic. Communicate in a realistic way.