Local Trust
trusting
local
people

The digital toolkit for communities

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ONLINE RESOURCES



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INTRODUCTION

The world is changing. Working and collaborating remotely using digital tools is becoming much more commonplace. For many, this means developing new skills. However, working online doesn't need to be difficult, and is a great way to bring people together when you can't meet in person. In fact, it can make things easier and remove barriers to participation.

This guide offers quick and easy steps you can take and tools you can use to get the most out of these online resources – all low-cost and high impact.





What you'll need:



- an email account in order to sign up for most of these tools. In some cases, you may be able to use your Facebook account if you have one.



- access to the internet and an IT device, such as a computer, phone or tablet. Most platforms can be downloaded as an app (search your device's app store) or accessed via your internet browser.

If you want to improve your confidence online, Good Things Foundation offers comprehensive and free online training and it's likely you will have a local centre to guide you on your learning journey.

To teach yourself head to:

- Learn my way: learn how to use the internet

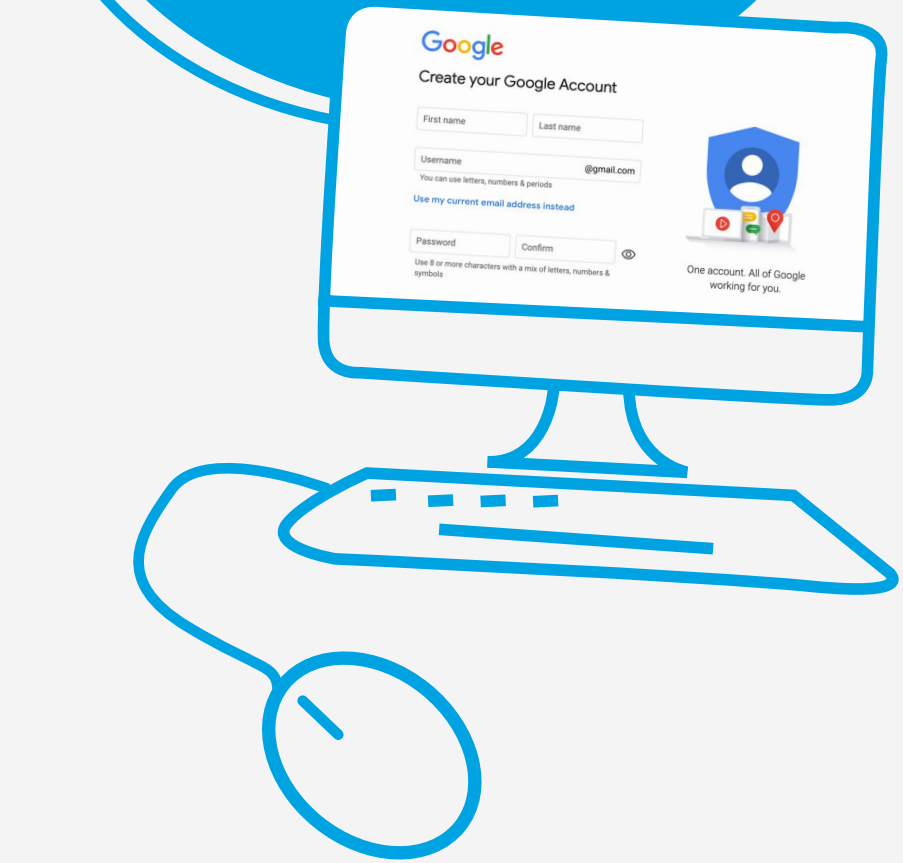
WORKING COLLABORATIVELY ONLINE

Working with people in different locations has become much more common, but that doesn't mean you can't still collaborate with colleagues and community members when you're in different places.

These tools will help you keep track of your team's tasks, work on documents together and keep in touch.



Tool
GOOGLE DRIVE
(documents, spreadsheets, calendar, forms)



Level: Beginner

Cost: Free

About: Google Drive comprises a whole selection of useful tools, similar to Microsoft Office. You can use Google Drive to make word documents, spreadsheets, presentations and surveys and then easily share them with others so they can view or contribute.

To create an account head to https://drive.google.com/, enter your email and create a password.

Google Docs is Google's equivalent to Microsoft Word. It is free and very simple to use. It updates in real time so multiple people can edit a document at once. It's easy to share with others and users can comment and ask questions about aspects of the text.

Google's version of Microsoft Excel is called Google Sheets. It's easy to create spreadsheets and budgets with simple calculations and formulas are available with a click.

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Pros: Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) combines all of Google's online productivity tools. It is reliable, incredibly easy to get started with and will allow you to start collaborating with others in your Big Local area.

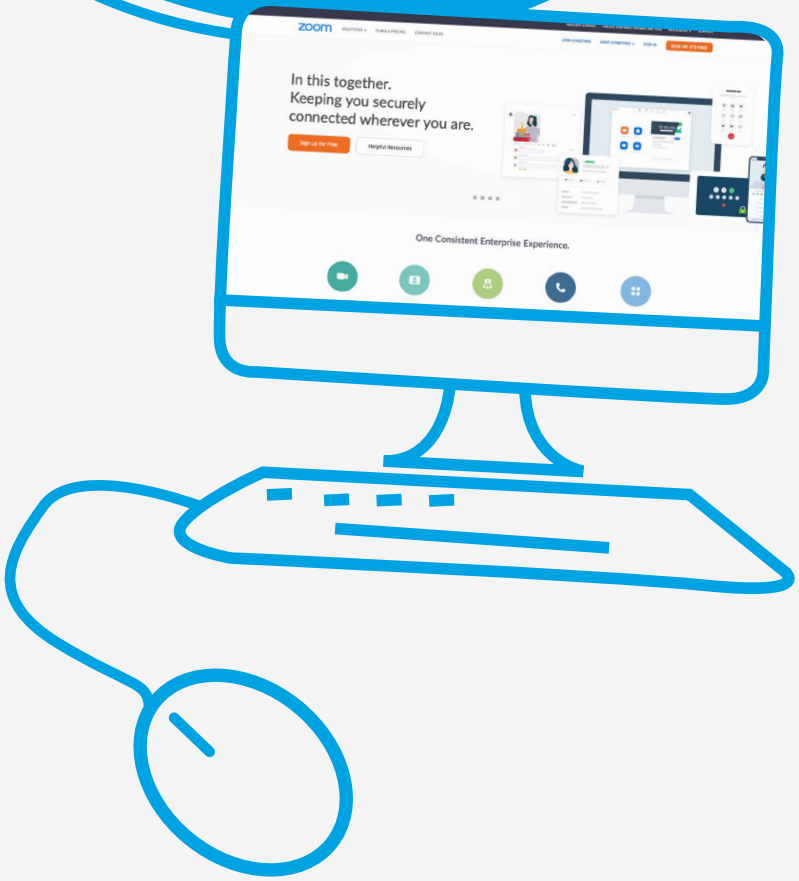
Cons: You'll need an internet connection to be able to work on the most recent version of a document or access a one that you haven't already downloaded to your device.

Tutorials: Getting started with Google Docs, Spreadsheets, Calendar

Tool

ZOOM

Video conferencing



Level: Beginner

Cost: A Basic account is free.

About: Zoom is a platform for running video call meetings, hosting webinars or breakout sessions in conference rooms. No doubt many of you will have used it at some point during lockdown.

Pros: It's user-friendly and is one of the most popular online meeting tools. It's also great for hosting events; from meetings and coffee mornings to yoga classes or crafts sessions.

If you don't have access to the internet, you can call into Zoom meetings but will be charged at your local provider's rate.

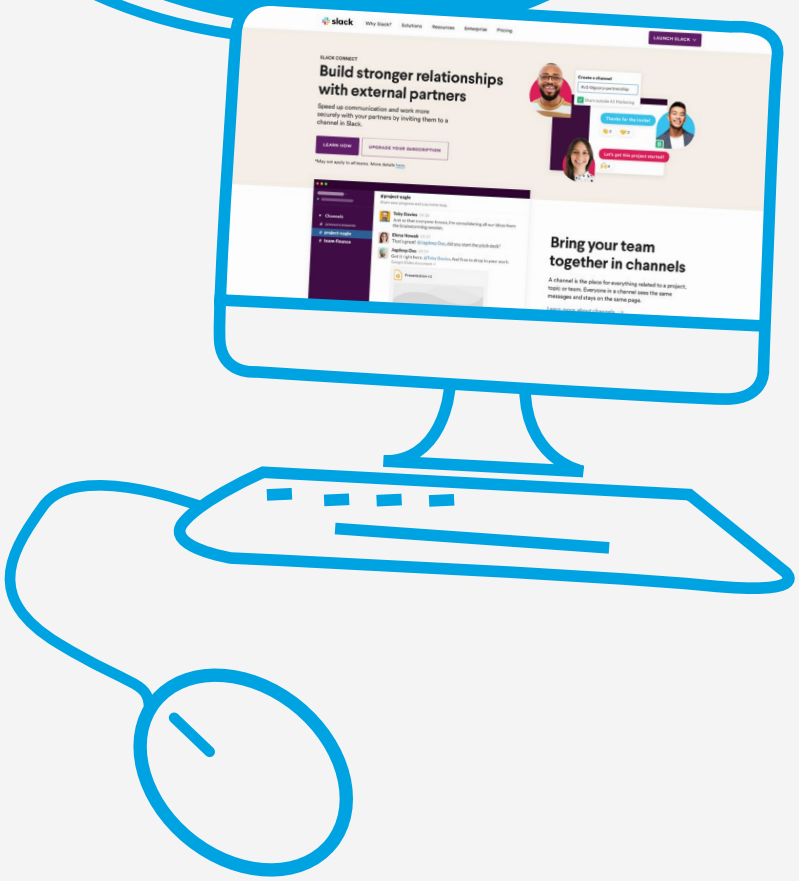
Cons: The free account limits group sessions to 40 mins and 100 participants.

Tutorials: Get started with Zoom's own online guidance

Tool

SLACK

Messaging and chat



Level: Beginner

Cost: A basic account is free. A standard account is £5.25/month.

About: Slack is a messenger app that brings your remote team together and makes communication quick and easy.

You can create channels for topics of discussion, share documents and folders and search conversation threads easily.

Pros: It's excellent for large groups or teams. You can create channels for specific types of discussion, and decide which co-workers have access to which channels.

Sharing and collaborating happens in real time, and it's free and easy to get to grips with.

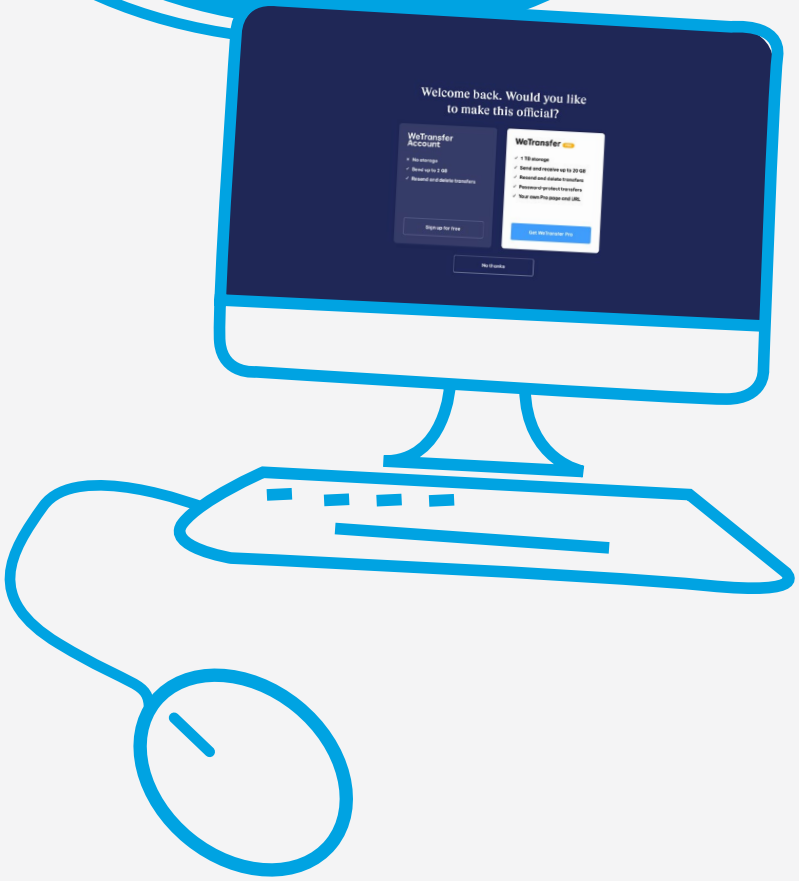
Cons: On the free version, you can only do a video call with one other person.

Tutorials: Take a look at Slack's guidance on YouTube

Tool

WETRANSFER

File sharing



Level: Beginner

Cost: It is free to send files up to 2GB. A Pro account is about £10/month.

About: WeTransfer is a file transfer tool that enables you to send large files like photos or videos to other people. This can be very useful when you want to send files that are too large for email.

To use WeTransfer, simply enter your email address, the recipient's email address, upload the file and hit send – that's all!

Pros: Straightforward to use. Lets you transfer large files for free.

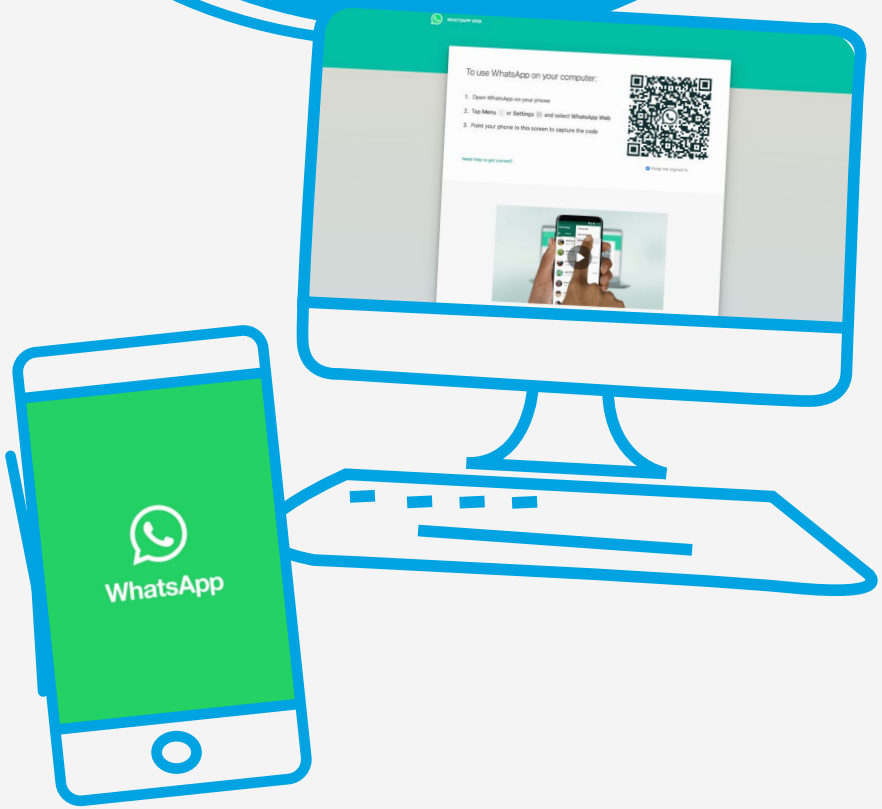
Cons: You need to pay for sending files that are over 2GB. However, this is equivalent to around four hours of standard-definition video, so it's a generous allowance.

Tutorials: Get started with WeTransfer guidance on YouTube

Tool

WHATSAPP

Messaging and chat



Level: Beginner

Cost: Free

About: WhatsApp is a widely used messaging tool, primarily for mobile devices, although it can also be accessed on your web browser via WhatsApp Web.

It's an excellent and very reliable social tool for keeping in touch with others.

Pros: Easy to use. Likely that many people are already using it.

Cons: Can be hard to track back through discussions. Can also be intrusive; most people have their phones with them wherever they go, so using WhatsApp for work as well as personal messaging can make it harder to keep work and personal time separate.

Tutorials: Visit the WhatsApp website to get started

Tool

DOODLE

Scheduling



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: Free

About: A straightforward, easy-to-use scheduling tool that helps organise meeting times. Create a Doodle poll with suggested times, share with your colleagues and immediately find the best time for everyone to meet.

Pros: Very intuitive and easy to use. Online support is available if needed, and it can sync with Google Calendar.

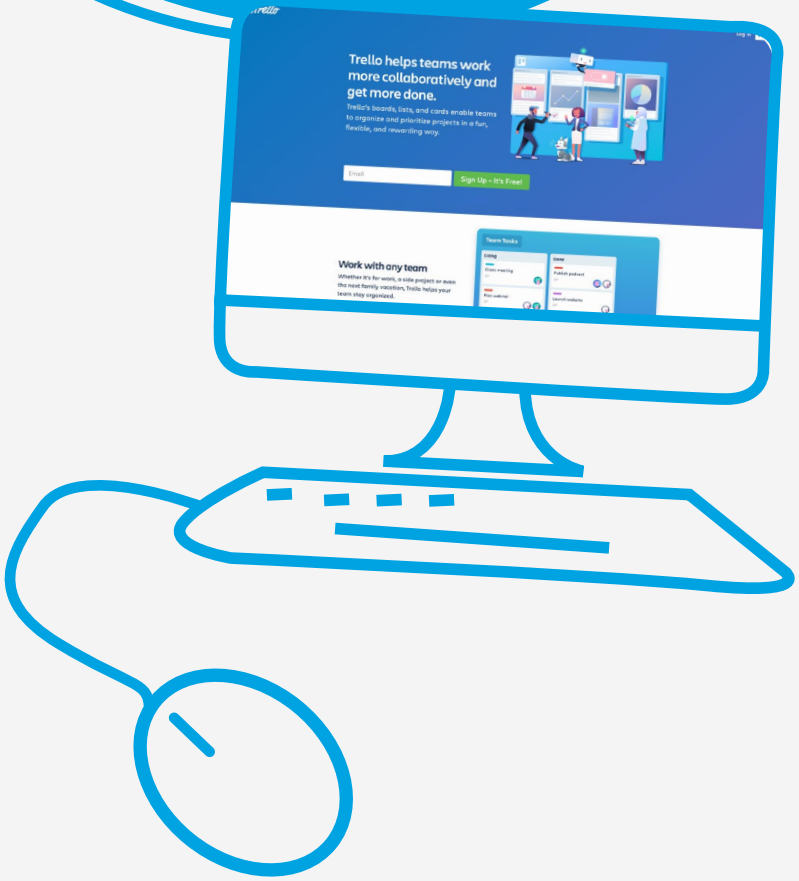
Cons: Not as visually appealing as some other apps.

Tutorials: Get started with Doodle's videos

Tool

TRELLO

Project management



Level: Intermediate

Cost: Free

About: Trello is a project management tool that takes the form of a visual pin-board where you can add tasks on your to-do list. It's useful for setting out projects and tasks and gives a great overview of everything you're working on.

Trello is very collaborative and enables you to see what other people are working on, and assign or add certain people to specific tasks and lists.

Pros: It's visually engaging and user-friendly. It also integrates easily with apps such as Google drive.

Cons: It doesn't have a feature for seeing how your project maps out over time but it does have a content calendar function, so you can still plan ahead.

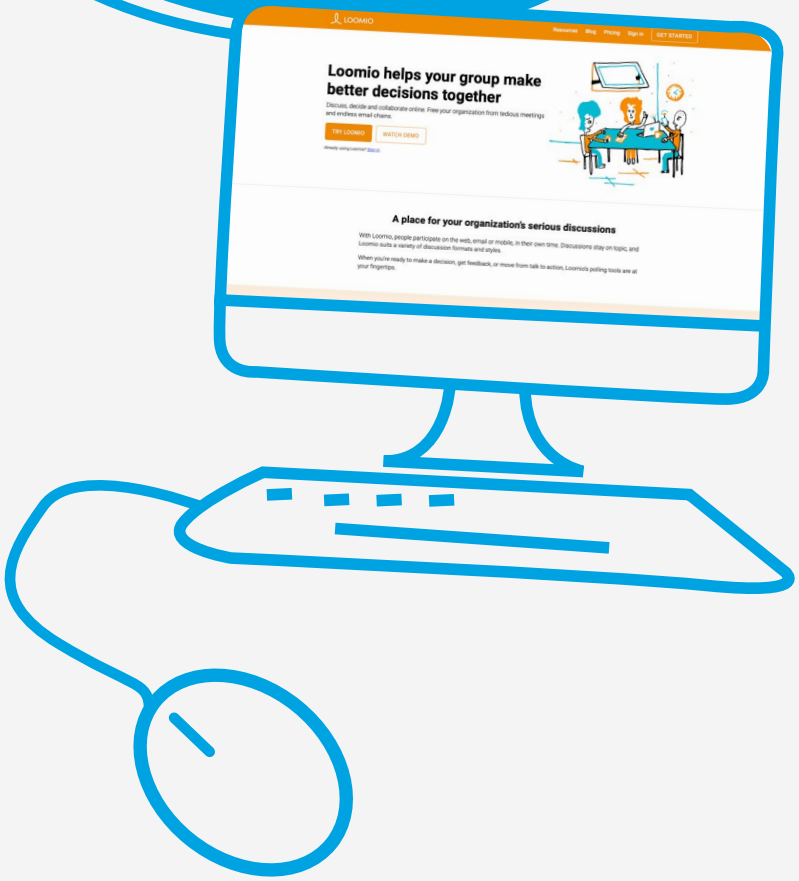
Cards and tasks are limited to only one board. For example, if something came under marketing and event boards you would either need to have them twice or limit them to one board.

Tutorials: Trello have their own YouTube videos to help you get started

Tool

LOOMIO

Decision making



Level: Intermediate

Cost: A free 14-day trial is available, after which the cost is about £23/month

About: Loomio is a decision-making programme that uses a mixture of discussion threads and polls to help make collaborative decision-making easier. You can watch a demonstration of how it works here.

Pros: Loomio aids the process of making well-informed, non-hierarchical, consensus-based decisions.

Great online support is available, which can help you customise the tool to fit your needs. There's also a free 14-day trial users can try before committing.

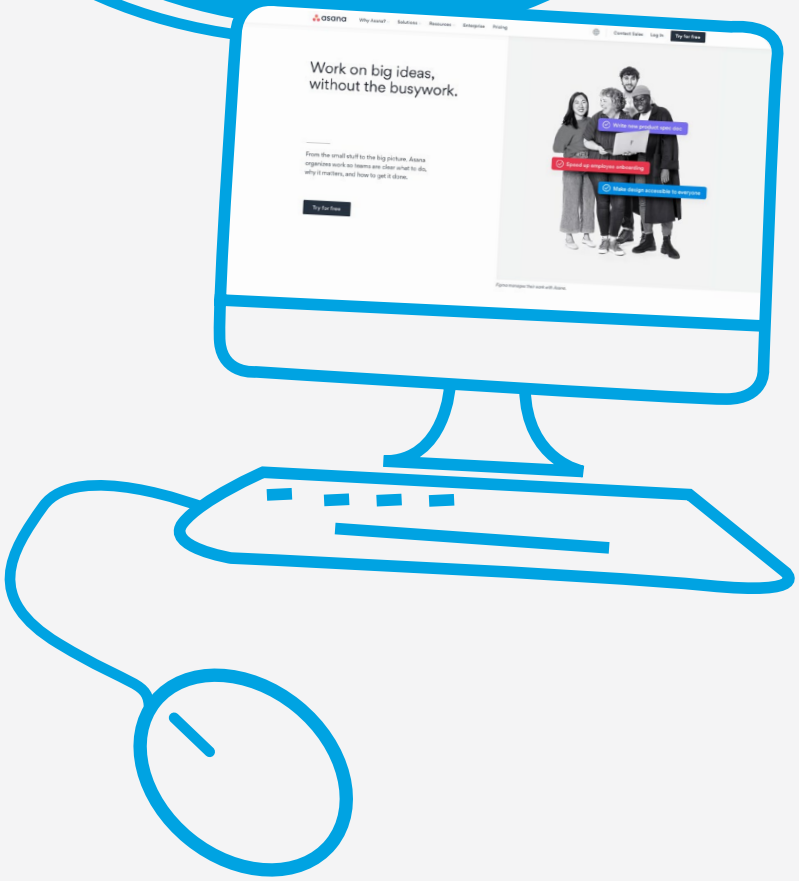
Cons: Not free beyond the 14-day trial.

Tutorials: Loomio have a useful playlist on their YouTube channel to help get you started.

Tool

ASANA

Project management



Level: Intermediate/advanced

Cost: A basic account is free and allows you to assign a maximum of 1,000 tasks per team. A premium account is £9.49/month.

About: Asana is a project management tool. It's useful for creating checklists for tasks, assigning these tasks to different team members and getting updates on projects.

It's quite intuitive to use but can become more complex depending on the project you're managing and the number of people in your team.

Pros: It's great for seeing exactly which tasks make up a project and for assigning those tasks to individuals.

It integrates well with other programs such as Google drive, enabling you to link through to spreadsheets or to synchronise with your Google calendar.

It's good for notetaking in meetings and has useful templates to get you started.

Cons: Although the layout is quite intuitive it can get complex for larger projects.

Tutorials: Asana have their own great YouTube videos showing how to get the best of the software.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY REMOTELY

Using digital tools to communicate with members of your community is a great way to keep everyone updated and involved in events, discussions and activities. The following tools can help you achieve that.

This section covers:

- surveys, forms and polls
- social media management tools
- email updates
- online design tools
- building websites





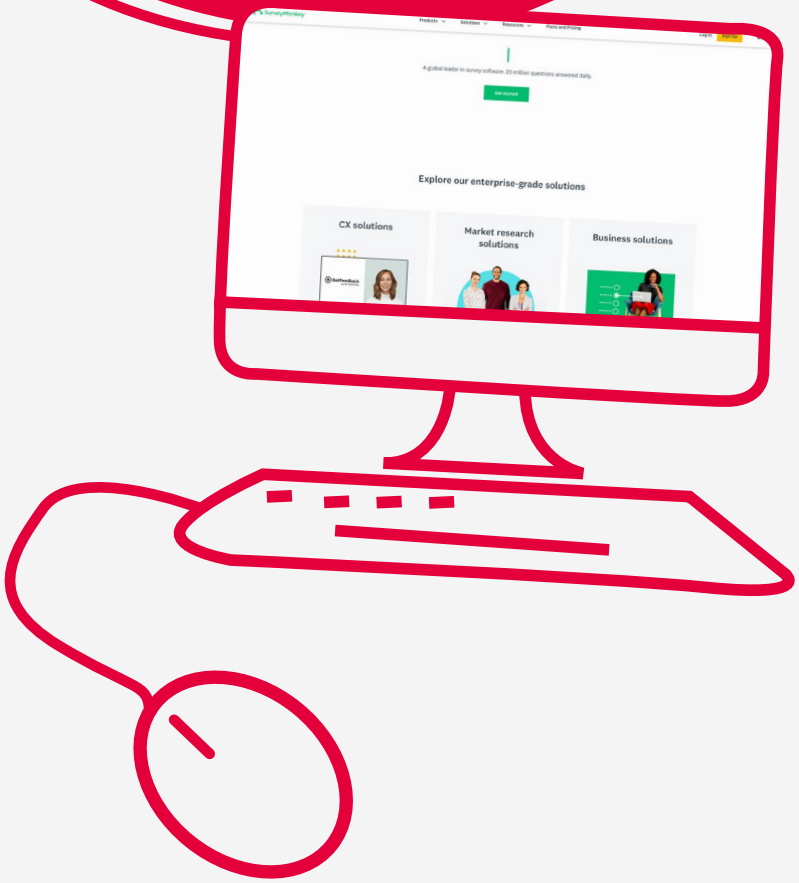




SURVEYS, FORMS AND POLLS

Whether gathering feedback on an event or trying to find the best time for your team to have a meeting, surveys, forms and polls are a brilliant way to get people involved.

Tool
SURVEY MONKEY



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: There is a free version. Paid subscriptions start from £25/month.

About: Survey Monkey is the UK's most popular site for carrying out surveys. It enables you to send out polls and analyse the responses you get. It can be really useful for asking questions in your Big Local Area and finding out what people think about community events or projects.

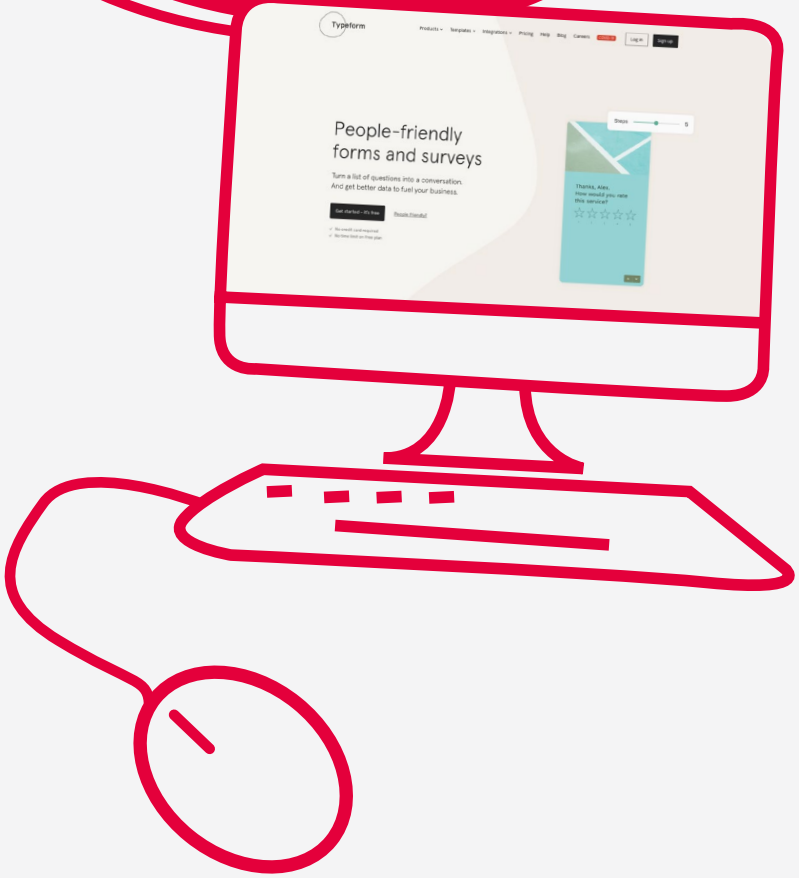
It has a free version and can be downloaded as an app or accessed through the Survey Monkey website.

Pros: There are lots of templates to use, or you can customise the survey as you wish. The programme is very user-friendly, and the survey responses themselves are anonymous.

Cons: The jump from free to paid is quite large.

Tutorials: Survey Monkey has an active YouTube channel with lots of support available.

Tool
TYPEFORM



Level: Intermediate

Cost: A free plan is available. Subscriptions start from £66/month.

About: Typeform creates people-friendly forms and surveys. They're very visual – the app is based on the idea that beautiful, more personal forms and surveys will result in a higher conversion rate (users following through and taking the survey) and better data.

Pros: Simple and intuitive user interface for customers, with a lean and pleasing design making it easy to create simple questionnaires.

Cons: The more you want to include in your form, the more complex it gets.

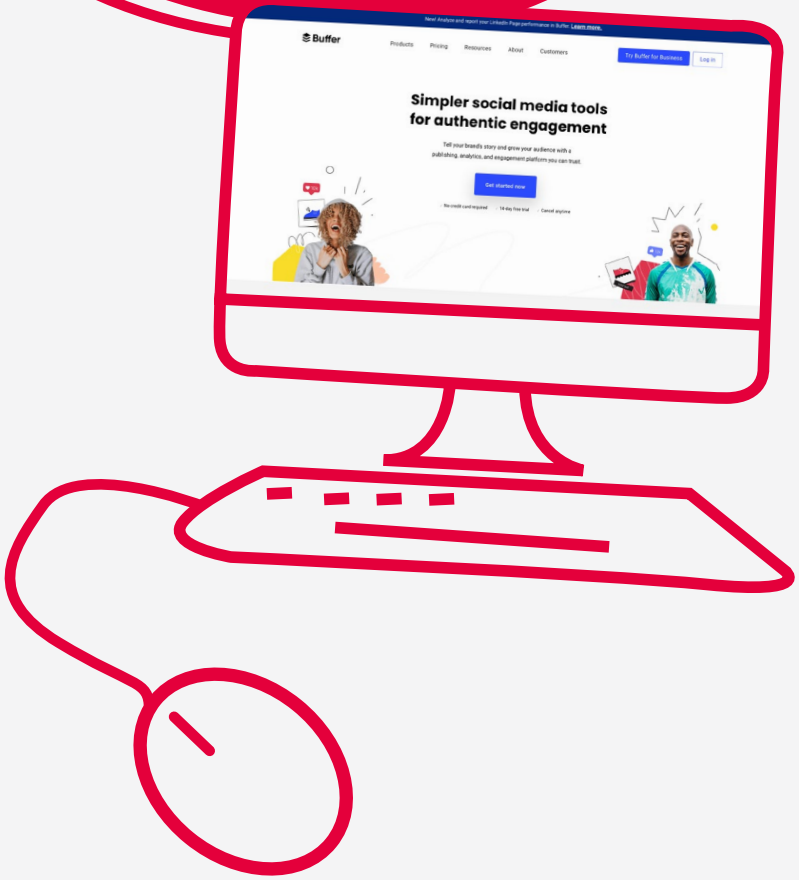
Tutorials: Get started



SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS

This section contains some useful tools to take your social media to the next level. They will enable you to do things like schedule and plan your posts, and help keep your profiles consistent, organised and professional.

Tool
BUFFER



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: A basic free plan is available. Paid subscriptions start from around £12/month.

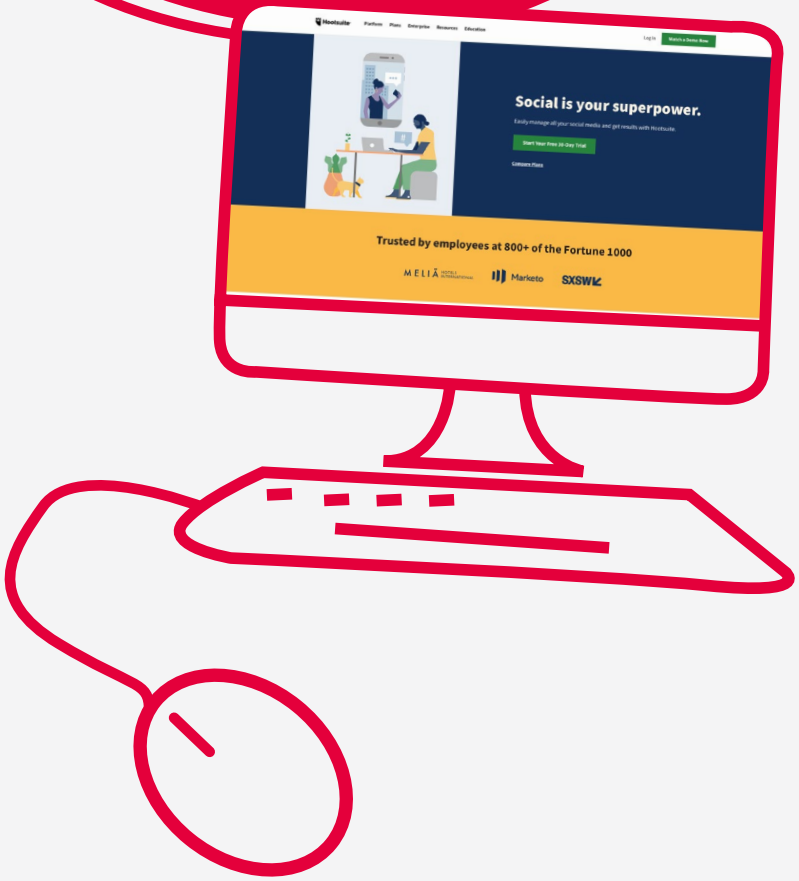
About: Buffer is one of the most simple and easy-to-use tools for managing your social media profiles. Simply connect your social media accounts to Buffer, create a post within it and drag-and-drop it to the date and time you'd like it posted.

Pros: Buffer also offers Pablo, a free image creation software for designing visuals before posting. The Buffer chrome extension also allows you to share anything you've found online, such as an interesting article or event, with your followers.

Cons: You need to pay to access the analytics, which show you how people are engaging with your posts. Built-in analytics are available for free on Facebook and Twitter but include less detail than those on Buffer.

Tutorials: Get started with Buffer's YouTube videos

Tool
HOOTSUITE



Level: Intermediate/advanced

Cost: A limited free plan is available. Paid subscriptions start from £25/month.

About: Hootsuite is a social media management platform for confident social media users. It allows you to schedule posts across multiple platforms and track comments, mentions and hashtags.

Pros: You can manage multiple platforms in one place, monitor your mentions and comments and assign them to the person who needs to reply.

Detailed analytics are also available through Hootsuite, which is helpful for gaining insight into how people engage with your content.

Cons: It can be a bit confusing to begin with, and is best for people who are already familiar with using digital tools and platforms.

Tutorials: Get started and set up



EMAIL UPDATES

Email updates and newsletters are tried-and-tested way to keep people up to date with your latest news.

Tool
MAILCHIMP



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: Free version for up to 200 email subscribers. Paid subscriptions begin at around £8/month.

About: Mailchimp is an all-in-one marketing platform for small businesses, typically used to send email newsletters.

You can customise your newsletter yourself, or use one of their many templates.

Pros: Multiple free templates to use. Very accessible analytics (such as number of opens and who opened it), which are particularly important for effective email updates.

Cons: If you get over 2000 subscribers it can get expensive.

Tutorials: This quick start guide from MailChimp will help you get going

Tool

CAMPAIGN MONITOR



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: Subscriptions begin at £9.00/month.

About: An email marketing platform with drag-and-drop simplicity.

Pros: Campaign Monitor has a lot of professional-looking templates. You can easily create automatic replies (such as thanking people who sign up to your mailing list). Online video training showing how to use their platform is also available.

Cons: It's not free to use.

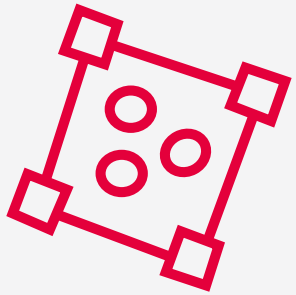
Tutorials: Campaign Monitor has lots of resources to get you started



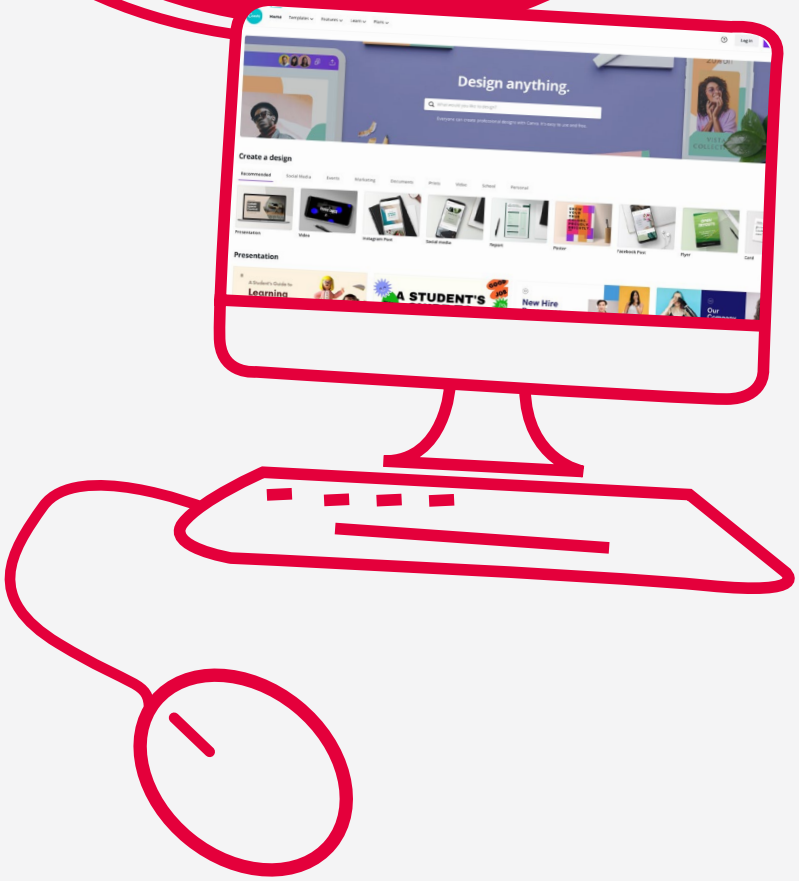
ONLINE DESIGN TOOLS

These tools will help you design and create online and print items to engage and inspire people in your community.





Tool
CANVA



Level: Beginner

Cost: Free

About: Canva is a graphic design platform that enables the user to create social media images, posters, newsletters or any other visual content. It's very simple and intuitive to use, with drag and drop images, different fonts and stock images to draw from. It has a lot of templates to use or get inspiration from. You can also upload your own images to use.

Pros: Simple to use. Lots of templates, stock images and visual resources to access. Professional quality design. You can also create GIFs and short videos.

Cons: You have to pay to use some of the images. You can collaborate with others by sharing a draft of your image, however they are not able to adapt or change it.

Tutorials: There are so many tips and tricks available on YouTube. We'd recommend starting with Canva's own page.

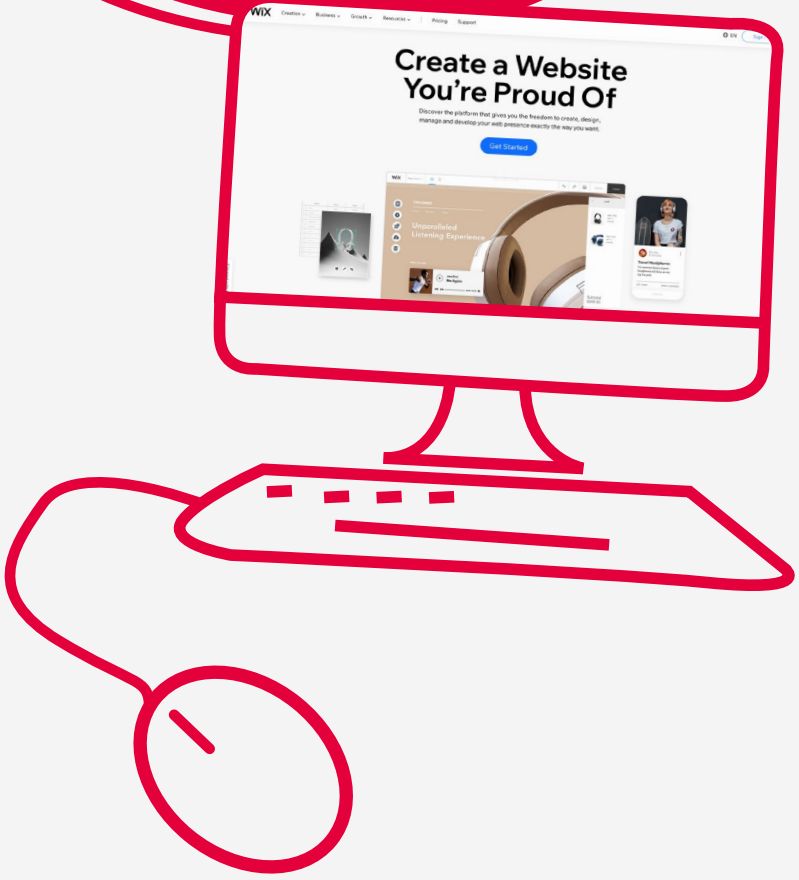


BUILDING WEBSITES

Many community groups choose to create their own website. This can be a great way to showcase what you do, let people know about events and enable people to get in touch with you.



Tool
WIX



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: A free version is available. Paid subscriptions begin from £3/month.

About: A very intuitive all-in-one website builder, famous for its simple drag-and-drop features.

Pros: Highly customisable. You can test out their automatic website builder; simply input information you'd like on your site and allow Wix's AI to build it for you in a matter of minutes.

Cons: The free version has ads. It is also not easy to change templates while the site is live. Wix also does not offer support via live chat.

Tutorials: Wix has lots of online resources to help you in the journey of building your own site

Tool

WORDPRESS



Level: Beginner/intermediate

Cost: Free plan available. Paid subscriptions start at £3/month.

About: WordPress is the largest website builder in the world. It's incredibly diverse in terms of possible applications and flexible in how it can be used, but isn't as easy to pick up as other website builders.

Pros: Wordpress stands out for being highly customisable – once you learn how to use the platform.

There are huge range of plugins (pieces of software that enable a programme to do something it couldn't otherwise do) available, which helps to make your site exactly how you want it to be.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is built in. This helps to give you an idea of how people are finding your website, and what you can do to get more engagement.

Cons: Beginners can use WordPress to build basic sites, but it is not as straightforward to use as a drag-and-drop builder like Wix.

Tutorials: Get started with Wordpress tutorials on YouTube

JUST THE BEGINNING

This toolkit is just a snapshot of some of the tools and applications that are available. We hope it will provide guidance to help you work confidently online with your community to help you collaborate, share and achieve change.





About Local Trust

Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to transform and improve their lives and the places where they live. We believe there is a need to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities, to enable them to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live. We do this by trusting local people. Our aims are to demonstrate the value of long term, unconditional, resident-led funding through our work supporting local communities make their areas better places to live, and to draw on the learning from our work to promote a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and others engage with communities and place.

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