Voiceover Artist 0:00
Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17
 And Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney Smith.

Augusto Pinaud 0:21
I am Augusto Pinaud.

Francis Wade 0:23
I'm Francis Wade.

Art Gelwicks 0:25
And I'm Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:26
Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode of ProductivityCast. Today, we have a fun topic, automatic, the company that manages the open source software wordpress.org, which powers if you didn't know about a third of the internet's websites just recently launched p to its version of project collaboration software for the remote work age, timely considering the state of the covid 19 pandemic, but it also provides commentary on the state of project management today. my reading of the tea leaves is that there are still challenges organizations from Small businesses to large enterprises are facing and finding the right principles and tools to manage and collaborate effectively on projects and programs, both internally and externally. So today, I thought what we would do is we discuss the state of project collaboration software in 2020, from Microsoft Teams to slack and Google Chat, to Asana and Trello. And now p two, we have all of these products on the market. And there's a bit of muddy water when we try to understand what they are and how they fit into the schema of both project management proper, but also then our own personal productivity. And so what I thought we would do first is to kind of define the various parts of project management software in the marketplace today. Then have a discussion around what the important characteristics of pm software are and the parts that make project collaboration work, plus, of course, our personal productivity work. And then finally, we can do maybe a light campaign. And contrast of the project collaboration software is on the market today. And that includes automatics p two now that it has entered the fray. So let's start with defining project collaboration software in the context of project management today,

Francis Wade 2:18
I think the software that I longed for is the one that would connect me with other people that I am working with in a seamless fashion. So I've been in my mind hankering after conquering hankering after just a perfect environment that would allow all of us to be able to see the same thing at the same time updated, share the contents of it, have it be somewhat private and separate from the real world or the rest of the world. A kind of a walled off garden that would allow us to focus and get things done without distraction. And and also a lot of Zippy fast communication. That Maybe might be, um, speedier than other channels. I've hoped for something like this forever. And I've never found it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 3:08
Since we're focusing on project collaboration software today, there's an understanding of the various other types of software that are out there. And so in project management, we think of

the various aspects of taking a project from the beginning phases of planning through to the outcome, which is deliverables that are that are being produced on the other side. And so there's planning involved and there is project planning software. So we can think about like Microsoft Project, Gantt charting software, like Tom's planner, and so and so forth. We then kind of move forward into the project collaboration space, which is what we're going to be talking about today, which are software that allows you to be able to communicate while maintaining a connection or an integration With the project tasks, as well as milestones of the project itself, and that really comes into then project tracking software. So we have project tracking software that helps teams basically keep all of their tasks that are related to one another, including, you know, budget and expense reporting and resource allocation all together. And, and then there's project budgeting software as well, which really allows you to be able to handle all of the financial aspects of project management, there is a kind of a higher level, which I hear it being called portfolio management software, and that really is on the enterprise level, where management needs a tool, usually somehow related to their RP or otherwise to really manage on that macro level, goals of the organization and all of the resources that really drive down towards the Other software that it's managing. So there's this hierarchy, as well as integration between all of these software to make a cohesive platform for people to really be productive in amongst the various pieces of the puzzle, moving things forward. And so what I'm really interested in is, why is project collaboration software important in the context of making progress in our organization? How do you answer that question? When people ask it,

Art Gelwicks 5:34
I think you hit the key concept that you have to take into consideration here, which is the spectrum of need of collaboration as compared to project management itself, isolating the collaboration part out of it, because there's a lot of applications that do the project task management portion very well and have added on Collaboration Trello is a good example of that. There are other tools that focus primarily on the collaboration side and have started to add on the project management piece. teams, for example. So thinking about the balance between the two, what's, how do you find the one that's going to be right? For me, the really important thing is you have to look at the projects that you are doing. And identify where is the weakness, you're not going to deploy a tool that necessarily just only caters to the strength of your teams. If you have teams that work together really well. They just have a hard time getting their work organized. deploying a tool that focuses on that, working together really well doesn't really move the needle for you. You've got to be able to offset those weaknesses in your team without creating new ones. For is right there isn't one out there that does both sides of this fence equally well. I mean, there are always pluses and minuses to both of them. Everybody's trying to do the same basic things. They make the argument that, oh, if we put all this stuff in one place, we can kill email. That's one of the things you hear a lot with these things that they're email killers. But you can also simplify finding your files and keep your tasks on task and all all the lovely marketing hype. But it still boils down to one core thing and we're talking about the collaboration piece. Projects are successful when everybody is doing what they're supposed to be doing and knows what that is. And if we're able to use tools like Trello, or like a team's to hit that mark, then the actual features are more gravy than anything else in my book.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 7:55
All I have to do is say here here to the the ridiculousness of people attempting to kill email. First of all, just to soapbox for a moment, email is a strata of the internet, it is not something that you can kill off isn't it is an open protocol that is a part of the internet. So, so so that's a foolhardy perspective to begin with. Second, it's an absolutely brilliant piece of technology when used correctly. And so three means we need to learn how to use email correctly, and not use it for things it's not meant to do. And then we'll all be better off. I think the abuse of email is what you know, not the use, but the abuse of email is what has caused many of the ails that we feel from it. But those things are not a reason to kill email and what slack and other folks who

talk about being email killers as art noted, what they're really saying is that we need different flavors of project collaboration and team collaboration. And email is not right for everything. And it's actually not right for most things when it comes to that type of communication and collaboration, and that's okay. But the notion of killing email is just such a ridiculous notion to me, that I that I just hope people understand the value of email and the ecosystem is is so important. It's vital, but that it's not the end all be all for all project collaboration or team communications. And when we learn how to do it, well, then we're all better off for it.

Art Gelwicks 9:41
I have to agree with you there on the fact that it isn't the email killer, but I think what they're trying to do, they're, they're mistaking their objective. They're trying to kill how email is used. And the first email was sent back in 1971. We've had Since then to figure out how to use it right, and we have yet to do it. So while I agree with you, it's an integral part of the internet. I struggle with the fact that we have yet to figure out how to get this thing to work effectively for the types of work that we're doing. And I go back to I use teams all the time with one of my clients. And trying to get people to transition from their conversations in email to their conversations in a team's channel is a big step. But it's not a tech step. It's not a technology that's preventing them from doing it. Because the mechanism is basically the same. It's like a reply every time. I mean, you eliminate the addressing part and it's very simple, very straightforward. It's a thought process, though. When I'm trying to get somebody to think about project collaboration, using a tool like a team's or like a slack or something, I say. You have to change your thinking, to having conversations out loud, because that's what you're doing. You're having those conversations in a public channel. When you send an email, you are selectively choosing the audience that sees that email, that you may choose a distribution list and you don't know who's on that list, but you're still making that choice. If you're putting a post into a project channel, well, anybody who has access to that project can read that post. So whatever you say, is out in the public forum. For some reason, professionally, people have a real hard time doing that. Personally, they're more than happy to go post on Twitter or Facebook or Instagram. But yet when it comes to the workplace, they freak out. I don't want to do that. I don't want my stuff to how do I delete that when it goes out there? Can I edit it after the fact? Can you edit it? The email that you've sent after the fact, no. Well, then why is it such a big deal for this thing? And that's where I think this challenge of being an email killer is. It's not the platform. It's the bad behaviors around using the platform that need to die with these kinds of tools.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:23
Oh, I would absolutely agree. I just think that the the use of the semantics of it really irritates me.

Art Gelwicks 12:30
I don't blame you there. I don't blame you at all there.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:33
Okay, so steering steering back off track from from my little soapbox moment. When we when we talk about project collaboration software, there are some benefits to using project collaboration software and I just wanted to note them before we move on to what we should really be looking for in them as it relates to choosing pm software project management software that includes project collaboration or not And how that really impacts our personal productivity and how we navigate between those two, because I think that can be sometimes a sticking point. And I'll talk a little bit about my own experience with that when we get there. But what I what I wanted to note was that project collaboration software, or features within a project management suite that allow for project collaboration, it speeds up time to delivery. And the ways it does that is by allowing for really at every stage of the process from the initial planning, maybe there's some ideation that goes on and other kinds of initial inputs to all of the

communications that happen along the pathway. The project pathway gets us to the end result, the deliverable, whatever that is the project outcome faster if we utilize something that doesn't require constant interruption and project collaboration software, good project collaboration software. Hopefully Reduces that friction, which is the constant distraction and interruption happening throughout the throughout that process. agree, disagree. And then let's talk about what are the best features of project collaboration software or pm software that includes project collaboration.

Francis Wade 14:18
I think it comes back down to what art said about. He was talking about professional behaviors. And I think that the no matter how well the software is designed, if you're sending messages that are intended for a, an audience that's narrower than the one that you are actually sending it to. So in other words, you send a message to two people, but because of your poor email habits like copying 50 other people, or you send a message on slack to two people, but because it's on Slack, 50 people can see it in action. case, you're actually retarding the productivity of the entire group. Because you're no compelling or you're at least hinting to everyone that they need to pay attention to something that they may not need to pay attention to. So sending someone a message that they absolutely don't need to read, can slow a project down and actually kill project. It just takes a couple of bad actors. I don't mean bad in the malicious sense, a couple of unwitting actors who like to send lots of messages and who like to have an audience, reading lots of messages and then getting into capitals if you're an email, and then lots of people involved that becomes a noisy channel on slack. There's a personal discipline that I think art is pointing to that. If you don't exercise that discipline. Neither slack nor email is going to help you and slack makes it worse, because now you're speaking it makes it easier to speak to a bigger audience. I think There's something personal and individual that has got to be a discipline that's got to be trained in, that people don't naturally pick up that they don't get just because they know how to use email. I think it actually has to be taught and enforced. And even even pointed out when people are generating too much stuff that they need to be told, there needs to be some feedback mechanism. So they can see that they're causing the project a problem. I mean, these things are way off in the future right now. But if that feedback loop doesn't happen, any couple of people can kill any project. I kind of disagree what you said about it necessarily making deliverables go faster, it could kill projects if it goes the other way.

Art Gelwicks 16:46
See, but I don't think what you're talking about is a technology issue. That's the responsibility in my book of the project manager. They're the ones who are basically balancing the operation of this project with its resources. And requirements and commitments. And if you had somebody who was acting up on a public on an email thread, you'd pull them off to the side, or you'd send them a personal email and say, Look, knock it off. Well, it's the same thing here. It just happens to be a slightly different technology. For some reason. We think that things like slack and teams and these posted channels, these threaded conversations are fair game. And we feel like we have no control of what we do. As project managers. And as team leaders, we have the same level control over these that we do over anything else. It's how we're able to make our team understand the best use of those tools. Yes, you will always have people who abuse the privilege of team communication. It's going to happen and you have to have policies and ways to deal with that as a project administrator or as a team leader. But the challenge of that should not offset the fact that it is by far simpler to be able to go in and have threaded topic conversations that you can go back and reference outside of this 700 other items that are sitting in your email and be able to go back from a project standpoint, dig into a task, go into something like a Trello card, and go into the collaborative conversation on that card focused on that topic. And know that at any time, if you need to reference you can go back and pull that information out. There's a huge value to that for projects. I use planner from the Microsoft world just because it happens to be part of the office 365 suite. And I'll tell you when I can't

use the ability to have discussions around the topic in planner. It really hampers the execution at times of getting things accomplished. Because you don't have that focused connection. You're always trying to find the right email for the right conversation. It's just, it's burdensome. And I got enough stuff to do wrangling my email and wrangling conversations is not something I have any interest in doing.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:20
So this brings me to my my thoughts on the way in which we navigate both project management in a professional sense, which leads to project collaboration in the particular features of a software, but also in our own personal productivity, which navigates both the team moving something forward and our personal lives and our personal projects to move things forward. Usually in Confluence with family or, or friends or people, you know, in our personal life generally. So how do you manage your projects in your project management software, which of course leads to the project collaboration. Do you? Do you keep your task management separately? And or do you manage work and personal projects in the same software? And then your tasks and collaboration happen inside of that same system? And I'm really curious, how do you navigate project collaboration and personal life? How do you communicate to a spouse or children or other family members and friends, hey, we're working on this together. We want to make sure that we keep these things moving forward. And here goes information. Here goes resources on the way to an outcome.

Art Gelwicks 20:39
I'd love to know how many people actually use a project collaboration tool with their family. I mean, seriously, Microsoft is pushing the fact that you can now use teams for home use. Yeah, I would get laughed at by the rest of my family. If I propose doing that. I have a hard enough time getting them all use the same text messaging to Much less use a collaborative solution to try and coordinate I don't know, a trip. I don't know that it's reasonable in the in the personal space because you're not dealing with the same type of engagement. There's nice features. Yes, it would be. It would be wonderfully beneficial. I just don't think the scales right, to be honest with you.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:25
So I think there's a bit of a myopic view here. And I just want to make it apparent, which is that I know a lot of people on Pinterest, predominantly, you know, female users of Pinterest, who create private Pinterest boards, and do a lot of planning in those private Pinterest boards. And so they're collaborating and they're moving forward on various projects. You know, they they envision an outcome for something, they put up their various pins, they share them with friends, and they are collaborative. in that space, and it's outside of the view of, of public, so we perceive that it's not happening. And I feel like there's a lot of that that happens. I also probably argue that a lot of that happens via email. A lot of it happens via Facebook messages or text message or group chats. I know that in my own family, we have two different places where we communicate. One is we have a private social network that, you know, platform that we've created. And, you know, because I'm a geek, and so I've I, my brother and I are both fairly geeky people. And so you know, he's a, he's a programmer by profession. And, and I work in technology. So it just makes sense that we, you know, we make made our family do this, including our less tech savvy family members. And so in that social networking platform We are able to bring all of the things together. You know, for family, it's typically an event based thing, someone's birthdays, upcoming holiday gathering, vacation planning those kinds of pieces. And once we create an event for it, then everybody can put their thoughts into that space. We can add resources, hey, check out this link to this particular, you know, cruise line. And I know this seems so like, you know, pre pandemic, but, you know, someday it'll come back. And we'll all think about vacation planning on that level again, and you know, like we can put resources into that space. So my family is then able to collect together all of those pieces and drive forward a project in a clear centralized space. Now, we can't do that for birthdays.

For the most part when we're when we're thinking about birthday presents, because there's always an individual in that group. Who we're planning the birthday present for. And so then that gets taken out of that context and is usually done in either group me, which is a, you know, a chat application that's owned by Skype, which is owned by Microsoft. And so group me is how I've just worked with my siblings to be able to communicate for many years. And, and so it ends up being either a group chat or just an group, you know, text messaging, string, MMS group chat, and that allows us to be able to have a private conversation to work through those pieces. And really, it's lightweight, it's not that big of a deal, and it allows us to be able to navigate those waters. Now in my own personal productivity system. I am manifesting that as a project and I am tracking against what they have been adding into the stream, for example of my brother says, hey, my youngest brother's birthday was upcoming recently and he sent a whole bunch have examples of things that he might like for, you know, to purchase for my brother, and we're all buying a communal gift. So I would take those items and put that into my system in the project as an action that I that I am going to research. So research gift ideas from my brother for my youngest brother. And that would go into my system, and I would manage that separately. So there's this navigation between the system that is project collaboration and my own personal task management, and driving forward the main project by virtue of that, and so I just, I just want to bring to awareness, the fact that there is multiple systems sometimes in place for us to be able to move projects forward because personal productivity doesn't always match up with Project Management in the, in the group space, right when we're working in teams are in any type of grouping. We have to be able to navigate between those pieces and i'm i'm curious from your You all how you do that how you in either a personal or professional environment, navigate between those strata those different groupings.

Francis Wade 26:09
I have a I have a friend who is who she lives in a compound and she has an it's an older older house. And she has two sets of Pierrot. But her parents, her parents and her husband's parents, and her kids all live in this single house. And they're building a an annex another building. And and so there's construction going on. So if I were in her world, I would be using probably Trello I'll be using Microsoft Project. For me that the choice of what tool to use has to do with the level of complexity, rather than personal choice or professional choice. It's, it's the thing is complex enough and that's what she's undertaking is ridiculously complex. And if you don't have objective way of looking at all the moving parts and all the people who need to be shifting position and moving from here to there. And furniture and storage from several families. And if you're not managing all of that, and that is smooth way, a complex little mini home project, but it's not a little, then you're you're, you're gonna cause it to fail even those. If you don't use the right tools, I think it's more a matter of, for me matching the right tool to the right circumstance. I don't care if it's personal or professional. I don't care where my tasks are. I keep all my tasks in one place because I don't care if they're personal or professional as long as the thing takes time and effort and energy. And as long as I need to keep track of it. Then it's fair game for every every tool and I keep them all together. That's the principle I use because the distinction between personal and personal Little for me. And I'm able to do this because I have my own business. But if I work with somebody else, and they forced me to do something different, I'd probably have a problem. But because I can manage them all together, that's the principle I use.

Art Gelwicks 28:14
I think the important thing that we're calling out here, and this is what I've been hearing across the board, this is all driven by the project leader. And in a personal standpoint, Ray, you have defined yourself as the project lead for that activity that you were talking about, because I doubt it would be as successful. If it weren't you wrangling the cats to get to that end goal. And I think that's the key for any of these platforms. When I work with with a tool and I'm a project lead. One of the things I'm always doing is reinforcing to people the importance of putting files in common areas so that everybody has access to them. posting to the Common

group when things change and things that people need to be aware of the classic FYI emails that everybody hates, are perfect things to be put into a public channel for reference, to be able to have discussions about problems and topics in a public area in a chat discussion, rather than just picking one person and sending them an email, and having that bounce back and forth. Because you're not leveraging the collective intelligence of the team. You're just leveraging the intelligence of one member of it. But that all becomes a reinforcement piece. And it's a perpetual reinforcement. It's not like you kick off a project and you say, okay, we're all going to use this and everybody does. It doesn't happen. You're constantly resetting those expectations, and reinforcing to people the the importance of leveraging this stuff to get that benefit. If they don't do that, they Don't see the benefit. And unfortunately, what happens is they blame the tool. They say, Oh, well, that doesn't that doesn't collaborate? Well, it's not really the tools fault. Because in theory, we should be able to do all of this with pretty much any tool. If you were to use Google Docs, and use the comments in Google Docs, you should be able to accomplish a lot of the same things that we're just talking about. So to go back to your question, right, how do I do it? For me, it's, you choose a platform that's going to work for the project team, and it's not always the same platform. Find one that resonates with how they're going to work if you have the option to do that. In many cases, you don't have the option. This is the tool you get. This is the tool you use. And then figure out the ways that that tool can offset the weaknesses in your team's collaboration and enhance their strengths.

Augusto Pinaud 31:01
And I think you made a really important point in there where, what is the tools and the tools will change team to team I. And you also need to understand where you are, you know, I currently have a client who they are moving platforms. And they want to to improve their project planning and the project managing and all this, but they're moving from Google base to Microsoft based. And they want to do this on the whole midst of this. And I'm been trying to say, Well, where do you want to do this? Well, doesn't matter. No, it matters, because you're going to make all this effort to create your own platform he or platform a to move it to platform B in three months. So why you don't build it in platform B. And one of the things I found was this and when we were discussing about families is the knowledge and the understanding. This and the project management per se is so limited in many cases that they don't understand the implications or having this you know and and how much this can things can help I think raise families an exception of this and I'm going to side with art in how many families really have this i i will say many families don't even share the grocery list and they buy that thing every week forget about more complex projects usually there is one person in the family or none that really do that part. So, are we need to a much basic understanding all these things I at least on the personal side, and and i will even argue on the professional side. You know, project management in many organizations are pushed to okay that person he is a project manager on the rest of FOSS can roam freely freely around instead of thinking No, no, no, no. Everybody in this project needs to be an active part of this. It's not one person who is going to be the director trying to herding cats is everybody needs to do what we are all together doing is hurting the project. And I don't think it's often as it been seen, it is more seen as this person will hardboiled the cats and the rest of us can freely roam around this project.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 33:31
I wanted for us to have a conversation about the various features that we want our project management software to do in in furtherance of project collaboration or for using project collaboration software. Specifically, what are the features? What's the the ultimate features one or two features that you believe it needs to do in order to be exceptional? And I'll start while you guys give it some thought. So my two are that it needs to have notification management. And like on it inside the software as well as on the OS level, but it needs to be able to provide and reduce communication friction, that is appropriate friction for allowing or disallowing messages to one or many individuals based on some teaching of the software. So for example, I am not a huge fan of project collaboration software. I'm actually rather bearish on the whole

notion of it. I've been an anti slack in my personal and professional life. I don't, I don't like them. I don't join them if I don't have to. And the reason for that is that the loudest person, the most loquacious individual becomes the dominant person in many of these environments. Going back to Art's point about this really being a human centered problem, which is if you have the right principles in place, then you You can have the right project collaboration. And many times companies get slack or they get teams. And then the person who can just verbally vomit all day becomes the most important person in the team's channels, the team's conversations and slack channels. So that's just inappropriate. It's inappropriate use of resources, it's inappropriate project management, it's just not going to be productive for anyone. And so you have to have the right teaching of both the people and the software. But the software itself if we're just sticking to that I really feel like has to have some functionality to say, Okay, if someone sends a message, who sees this message, and is it allowed or disallowed to one or many individuals, and so for example, in my client side, when I'm building out boards for them, we use Butler with Trello. And what we do is we make sure that key words indicate whether or not people are added or removed from various cards added to lists. And that helps to control some of the ongoing spew of movement. You know, if you're going to use Trello for both project management, and then do collaboration, all that communication inside of Trello. inside those boards, you have to have some level of control on who's seeing what, when, and where and how. And so with Butler, which is the automation platform inside of Trello, we can actually do some of that control of being able to teach the software. My second ask of any project collaboration is it'd be available on all platforms you're working on. And while some people don't want their project management software on, say their phone, when they're at home or those kinds of things, that's totally fine, you have the choice, but I want to make sure that everybody on the team can work with the tool. However they want where they want to And that means that the software needs to be available on all the platforms that the team uses.

Francis Wade 37:05
I love what you said about the economy of communication, that if there is a way to not just allow anybody to speak to anyone else, okay, so that's email gives you that and sort of slack. I would take away the ability for anyone to interrupt anyone else at any time. So that means turning off notifications in slack or turning off notifications email, I would add that as a reality or at least give the user the ability to turn off notification. Next thing I would add is a low the mute that allow the user to go mute, which means turn off all downloads. So be able to block block new content from entering their message messaging software, and allow them to focus on what they're working on for an hour or two hours so they can go into the flow state and not even be tempted To go look at their slack board or to look at their inbox. So if I could give if I could add that, then I would add that in I know that's physically possible in Outlook, but I've met few people who actually use it or who actually have that feature turned on on a regular basis. And then I would I would penalize people somehow, by I, we've talked about this idea in other episodes, but penalize people who over communicate, so allow the create some kind of AI I guess, for the system to notify people who are sending potentially too many messages. And we're engaged in too much chatter. In other words, I wouldn't leave it to the project manager only, as art mentioned, because you know, the social impact of telling people not to send emails and not to be so chatty and not to dominate the space. If our project my address, like it's a bit hard to sometimes hard for some people to have that kind of conversation. I put it In the software, and I would say, Okay, here are some rules that trigger feedback to the person who's sending emails that saying, dude, it's your 10th email for the day to 15 people is this really of value, and then I would allow the users the receivers of the messages to read the messages that they're getting from the person who's sending them. So if they're getting too much, too much non essential email, they could give the person anonymous feedback, just by rating, the quality of the email and the quantity that they're getting from the person actually worked in an organization that had a verbal, a verbal version of what I'm talking about, where they gave very fast and furious feedback. And it was a bit harsh, but it kept the channels very, very clear.

Art Gelwicks 39:48
Yeah, I'll say there's probably two, the two things that I'm looking for one collaboration at the task level. So not only having generalized top Channel discussions, but on a specific task that you're working on, being able to collaborate at that specific task level, because if you can't do that, everything you might as well just go ahead and use email because it's all going to get thrown in the same bucket anyway. The second thing, though, and this is probably equally as important in my mind, is the ability to search conversations, threads, that sort, because very quickly, you become at the wrong end of the firehose, when it comes to all of this information coming at you. multiple conversations, multiple projects, multiple threads, and now you can't find what's going on where the ability to search through those quickly and efficiently and tag those items that you need to reference later on, is what makes the difference between making these kinds of collaboration tools truly useful, and making them just another initiative.

Augusto Pinaud 41:01
That the channels and the granularity of those channels is what make the tool different and useful. So that way you can come in, in and out and activate notifications or deactivate notifications asked your different projects go. The second thing that is important is that the tool that is used have the same features. Regardless the device you use that way, whichever is their main device for the member of the team, they can come and access the same features. In the tool, there is nothing more annoying that grab your phone to participate on things and discover Oh, I cannot do x in the device because that can only be done on the computer that can only be done in other platforms. So that part is something That it was fine and dandy 10 years ago when you know mobiles were really on their power today it is really something that it's a bad habit from developers, you need to figure it out. Quoting Neil ragman Okay, who is Herbie Who is your smallest, your slowest thing and then that's need to define what are the features that you offer? Because in any organization, the multitude of devices now on operating systems on a screen sizes on everything else, it should not be a detriment to what people have access inside of the software or not. And if that is the case, then you are having a problem with that tool.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 42:49
They opened us up with the fact that the reason this topic even came to surface was because automatic launched p two, which is their version of slack. In essence there, they've basically put this out there. Now, what most people maybe know or don't know about WordPress, is that it's an open source software. Automatic owns a hosting company that of course hosts WordPress websites. So that's how they make money. And this is where they want people to quote unquote, share, discuss, review and collaborate with your team in one place without interruptions and quote, and so automatic is a fully remote company, they're globally distributed. And they use p two, internally for all of this project collaboration, sharing documents, you know, communicating with team members, and so on and so forth. And what I'm interested in is what you all are seeing in terms of the differences between the platform's, so what makes slack different From teams different from say Google Hangouts chat, I'm in the G Suite world. So there's Google Chat. And now p two, like, What? What makes them different from each other? What are the features that you feel like really work? Well, at each of them?

Art Gelwicks 44:15
Well, for teams, for teams, its integration with the office environment. I mean, if you're, if you're a Microsoft shop teams is the way to fly. Because it integrates so tightly with Outlook and with Word and with everything else that you've got within that space. And that's a huge differentiator. You're not trying to integrate in disparate systems, even though they might work. They don't work quite as well tied together.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 44:39

And I would make that same argument with G Suite if you are in the Google business ecosystem. Google Chat provides you this integrated space. I think all of them do a pretty good job of integrating with other tools. Microsoft the least but that's a I think that's an enterprise security. thing I'm not sure. But an art you can probably argue better on that point.

Art Gelwicks 45:06
No, it's it's definitely a security thing.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 45:08
Yeah. And so like slack integrates with many, many tools and allows you to be able to really, you know, connect to all of these pieces and create some level of automation there. Google Chat does the same thing. So for example, I can just send a message to Google Google Chat to my to the one of the bots, and it will add an event to zoom and add it to my Google Calendar. So there are these ways in which you're interacting and engaging with the chat software that allows you to be able to create this productivity workflow that is, is beyond just the normal project collaboration with others, you're actually collaborating with other software in the process of it. So that's what I like about some of these things, is that I'm not using Google For project collaboration with my team, I'm actually using it with myself because it can automate these things in a natural language perspective, I could just type in, I need a new meeting, created for Tuesday at 10am. With my assistant, and it knows how to read it, and then it will just do that thing. So it's providing this level of additional feature that I really like about it without it being actually a place where we're all communicating because we have that built into our project management software. In both Trello and Asana, I was

Francis Wade 46:37
gonna facetiously answer, not enough. I don't think they're different enough to say that anyone has done a rethink because actually, that's what I think is necessary is a rethink from purse first principles of project and other kinds of communication. I think we know what bad communication looks like. So we know that by Communication occurs when some primary principle is being violated. But we don't know what a collection of good principles look like in collaborative software. So, back to what I said in the beginning, I think I'm looking for somebody to completely rethink the problem from the bottom up. Give them what we know No, today, I'm not just simply copy. I think it's mostly copycat stuff that's going on right now, when we

Art Gelwicks 47:25
look at these tools, and I agree, there's a lot of duplication of form and functionality across them part partially by design, to shorten the learning curve. But I think in the bigger perspective of things, they help us understand how little we understand about how we collaborate, and that's where our energy has to go. We have to look at these methodologies. We approach whether it's an agile methodology, whether it's waterfall, whether whatever we're starting to do, and we have to look at the team that's involved in the project. And understand how they most effectively communicate, and then either use the tools we've been given to meet those needs, or go out and find the tools that will help us do that. Looking at something like a p two, there's an audience for that. But it's a specific audience the same way Trello cards are the same way notion is the same way. OneNote notebooks? Are there specific ways to apply to those audiences. And if we're going to be that responsible leader, to help drive that adoption, we have to take the time to understand where does this worked? Well, where does it not work? Well, and then look critically at our team and say, You know what, I may think that this tool, this P two is the bee's knees, but it's not going to work for my team and here's why. and accept that fact. When you go back to the corporate space, many times you don't get that option. Well, I don't care if they're gonna like it or not. This is the tool. You have this is the one you will use. And you wind up hampering productivity because of that. But I think if we're able to, from a personal standpoint, look at our circles, look at our tribes look at our families and decide

what's the most effective way to coordinate and communicate around things that have to be accomplished. That's a successful tool, not necessarily the one that's getting the most press as of late.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 49:26
And with that we are at the end of our conversation. But the conversation doesn't have to stop here in the audio because it can continue in and on our website. So if you have a question or comment about what we discussed during this cast, head over to ProductivityCast dotnet. And at the bottom of the page, you can leave a comment or a question, and we read and respond to those. So feel free to head over there. If this is your first time with us on ProductivityCast Welcome. But you can also follow us by quote unquote subscribing. So if you go to ProductivityCast dotnet, click on the subscribe tab. There, you'll see instructions to follow us, it's free to subscribe to a podcast, at least to our podcast, and get the episodes downloaded. Every time a new one comes out. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, visit ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact there, you can actually voice record a message, click on the little speaker button and it'll ask you for microphone access. And you can do that directly from your phone or desktop or laptop or otherwise, and and record it or you can type us a message just type it right there into the field. And maybe we'll feature your question or comment on a future episode. I want to express my thanks to a goose to put out Francis Wade and our guests for joining me here on ProductivityCast. This week, and every week, you can learn more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net. And with that, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith and on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast Here's to your productive life. Take care everybody.

Voiceover Artist 51:03
And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.