# UbuntuNet CONNECT 2019

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# Nurturing the culture of collaborative ecosystems using real-time communication: sharing experiences from three institutions

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Whether we like it or not, the age of digital collaboration using web-based collaboration space is upon us. Through digital collaboration, we can now work across technologies, across channels and across geographic boundaries to promote efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in organisations.

Purpose of study: This study examined the experiences of three institutions in using real-time communication to promote the culture of collaborative ecosystems in education. Methodology: The research was a survey of three institutions in Southern Africa involved in Open and Distance Teaching. These were purposively sampled. The research utilised survey monkey questionnaire to gather real-time feedback. Key messages to be shared: Results pointed out that digital collaboration nurtures the culture of collaborative ecosystems in that it promotes real-time collaboration, strengthens camaraderie, is a hub for teamwork, removes roadblocks to productivity, enables the use of multiple platforms, facilitate the integration of tasks, offer very similar functionalities, empower employees, enable solicitation of end-user feedback among others. Collaboration areas mentioned included using mobile-video tools, video conferencing, multi-author editing, continuous communication and project management among others. Use of appropriate, affordable and compatible collaboration technologies such as Basecamp, Google Hangouts, Skype, SharePoint, HipChat, Microsoft Teams etc were also mentioned. Use of the right platform, platform integration and adoption where management integrates collaboration tools into work processes rather than force work processes to accommodate tools was mentioned as key. This includes technology acceptance from the shop floor. Staff are supported in using new software to increase technology adoption. The supportive environment includes that staff are fully trained, educated and can offer constructive feedback. The research concluded that institutions must keep eyes and ears open, pool their collective skills and resources, foster teamwork and reward digital collaborations to promote productivity. The research recommends that educational institutions must explore collaboration solutions, nurture collaborative culture and integrate digital collaboration into educational operations to promote productivity in the digital era.

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