

Collaboration Tools

Computer science education requires real-time collaboration and interaction with other students and instructors. Collaboration also fosters a sense of community.

To supplement Blackboard, instructors sought out additional communication tools.

- One-to-one real-time communication
 - Google chat: One-to-one communication with a specific person.
 - IRC (Internet Relay Chat): Found to be more useful than Google Chat because each class can set up a shared space for chatting, so students could more easily find someone to help at the time they needed it. There is also a mechanism to store chat sessions.

- Group real-time communication
 - Adobe Connect: Tools, such as screen sharing, are valuable for presenting to a group. Instructors or TAs use this for office hours where students can ask questions and the instructor can write out the solution for everyone logged in to see.
 - Google Hangout: Allows text, voice and video communication for groups of up to 10. Sessions are easily archived on YouTube.

- Topic discussions
 - Piazza: A forum for posting questions and answers that is not in real-time. Students can post deeper questions about broader topics to engage thoughtful discussion.