Slack Tutorial
for the DRS Users’ Forum

This brief overview of some of Slack’s most useful features to help DRS Users connect effectively over this platform. The below sections address:

- Platform Layout and General Terms
- Sending Messages
- Sharing Documents
- Getting Notifications
- More Help!
This is what a user should see when they open the Slack group.

a) Here you will find a list of the channels that have been created for the group. Channels are basically conversation threads with themes. So under #documentation, you may find users sharing files they have created, or under #template_configs, you may find people discussing how they are doing configurations for a certain kind of deposit. Users can also post in the #general or #discussion_group channels for random questions to other users – or they can recommend that additional channels be created if there is a need for a lot of conversation around a specific topic. The DRS Users team is configured to automatically subscribe all users to all the channels.

b) Direct Messages is where you will find a list of participating and currently active users. If you want to address someone privately without it being posted to the entire group, you can Direct Message them here, as well.

c) On any given channel, this is where you enter the text you want to send. You must have clicked on the channel (in the sidebar) to message within that channel. It will tell you above which channel you are currently in.
d) In the upper, right-hand corner is a search bar that enables you to search conversations across any channel. If someone has previously discussed a question you intended to ask, it will tell you under what channel that conversation previously happened, and you can navigate there.
Sending Messages
As a platform, Slack mimics popular social media platforms in its norms, such as notifying people using @ or referring to something specific using a hashtag. Below, you can see some of these conventions modeled.

Public messages
Above, user vanessa uses a hashtag, #template_configs, to reference a channel where she had posted a question, and tricia_p makes sure everyone is notified by using @everyone when she posts a comment in the #general channel. It is always most useful to direct a comment/question to:

- **@everyone** – which can only be used on the #general channel, to ensure you get the attention of everyone in the group
- **@channel** – which can be used within any of the other channels and notifies everyone subscribed to that channel, so it is like using @everyone, just not on the #general channel
- **@ someone specifically** (e.g. @tricia_p), especially if users are not constantly monitoring the group and you have a question or answer directed at someone particular
Without specifying a message is to someone, or everyone, they may not be notified that you have asked them a question or followed up to their comment. On the next page, you can see an example of notifying everyone subscribed to the #discussion_group channel, by using @channel.

Private messages
Direct messages can be used if you have a private question to one other user that you do not think the rest of the community will care about necessarily.
Sharing Documents

A beneficial feature of this platform is that it is fairly easy to share documents. So if you have specific template configurations or you have created your own simplified deposit document that you want to share with other users, you can share it easily.

Users can share files from their computer, Google Drive, Dropbox, or other sources. The easiest way is to drag and drop the file right into the message area. You can also select the plus sign next to the message area.
Getting Notifications
There is, of course, a balancing act involved in not having time to monitor yet another communication platform yet wanting to maintain the ability to connect when necessary. To this end, there are several levels of engagement you can choose with Slack.

To begin with, there is both a mobile application and a web application, but for ease of explanation and for the sake of some brevity, I will outline notifications for the standard web application and the option for getting emails.

Desktop notifications
1. Click your team name (DRS Users) to open the Team Menu
2. Choose Preferences
3. Click the Notifications link
4. Under “Notify me about...” select the amount of notifications you would like to receive.
   - All new messages: you will be notified for every new Slack message
   - Direct messages, mentions & keywords: you will be notified when you receive a direct message or when another person mentions you with an @
   - Nothing: you will not receive desktop notifications!

It is also worth noting that when you have the web application open, if you see a channel bolded, it means there is a new conversation happening that you may want to explore.
Email notifications

1. Visit the Notifications page: my.slack.com/account/notifications
2. Under Additional Settings, expand the Email Preferences section
3. Select an option to receive emails about missed messages:
   - Once every 15 minutes
   - Once an hour at most
   - Never

This should not mean that if you choose “once an hour at the most,” you will necessarily receive notifications every hour. It should mean that you receive – at the most – one email notification an hour if there are direct messages or mentions at you. If not, you would not receive these at all.
More Questions?
In the interest of keeping this document from being overwhelming, I have stuck to what I see as some of the most basic features to help DRS users utilize the forum effectively. If you have issues with any of the above directions or there is something I have not covered that you want to know about, Slack has an easily navigable Help Center. Go to the upper-right-hand corner, click the three vertical dots, and select “Help.”