Summary

In this part of the class you will set up your Slack account, learn about various features of Slack and use it for your first communication. Slack is a team collaboration application that allows users to create channels where discussions take place in public so everyone can participate. Many tech and other companies have started to use Slack to allow for instant communication and to save on time spent writing emails and attending meetings. Customers of Slack include a large number of start-ups, Comcast, Walmart, Blue Bottle Coffee, and several media companies, including The New York Times. Slack has several important features, including automatic archiving of all your communications, creating private groups, a good search engine and the ability to work on just about every device you use. These features have helped turn Slack into one of the fastest-growing business applications in history. After only over a year in operation, Slack now serves over a million users every day as a partial replacement for email, instant messaging and face-to-face meetings, with its base of users doubling every three months.

Set Up Slack Account

1. All of you should have received an email (titled “Janyl Jumadinova has invited you to join bioinformatics2016 on Slack” or something similar) inviting you to join our course’s Slack channel. Click on the link inviting you to join and sign up for the Slack account.
   
   Please note that this channel is for discussions by students in the bioinformatics course. Please do not abuse it, as it may create an unnecessarily large number of notifications, keep the content of the messages relevant to this course only. Also, remember you are bound by the Honor Code, even while using Slack.
   
   We will use the #general channel for communications as a group, that means everyone can see what is posted on the #general channel. You can also send the instructors a direct message by clicking on a name under “Direct Messages”, which only that person will be able to see or you can create a private channel for a small group.
   
2. Now, using the menu on the top left, please ensure that your profile and your preferences are as you desire them to be.
   
3. Finally, at this time, consider downloading a Slack app on your mobile device. Slack app is available for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices, as well as Mac and Windows machines.
Learning about Slack

1. Explore Slack by navigating through various options and clicking on “i” buttons to learn more about particular features, browse through [https://slack.com/is](https://slack.com/is) and make sure you understand the difference between channels, private groups and direct messages.

2. Locate the “Direct Messages” link and send a direct message to both instructors containing your background information. In particular, we’d like to know:
   - how much experience in Computer Science or Biology you have (how many classes in each discipline have you taken so far)
   - do you know how to program in Python, if so, how much experience in Python do you have
   - do you plan to attend a crash course in Biology or Computer Science
   - the reason for you taking this class (what do you hope to learn)
   - any concerns or questions regarding the course at this time

3. If you have a question, observation, or a comment that other students may benefit from, please consider posting your message on the public #general channel.

4. Now, locate the search bar and make sure you are able to search the Slack communications.

5. Using the buttons at the top-right, please explore “Mentions and Reactions” and “Bookmarks” features.