Apps and Software

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When you set up your group, you will want to have shared files to allow collaboration between your group council. Additionally, there are a number of productivity tools you may find useful as you run your group. Below you will find some of the more common solutions used by various groups:

Google Products/Workspace

Many groups use Google products for collaboration. There are both standard/free options, as well as their enterprise suite, which they call Workspace.

One benefit of obtaining 501c3 status is that it will allow you to apply for a free Google Workspace Account. If you do not have 501c3 status, you still have access to the standard suite of google products, including gmail and google groups. You can also set up a free google website and set up a custom domain. There are a couple of things that you cannot do without setting up a google workspace account, including having emails or groups that use your custom domain. Additionally, under the standard user account, all files are owned by individuals, which can present potential access issues as leaders move on. Using shared drives within Workspace helps to preserve history and resources as turnover happens within your group.

If you are in an area with a local council, you can set up individual subdomains under one umbrella google workspace account. This can be a great option and allows a good deal of autonomy and access to tools without having to have multiple workspace accounts.

Google Sites

Regardless of whether you are using a free account or a workspace account, you can set up a simple website using the builder at sites.google.com and host it for free with Google. If you purchase a domain (around $10 - $12 per year depending on your registrar), you can have a custom domain for your site. It's simple to use, although not as feature rich as some other web design options.

GMail and Google Groups

When setting up emails and mailing lists for your group, you will want to think carefully about how to organize your accounts for efficiency. If you opt for role-specific emails like many groups do, you might have accounts such as “admin”, “gsm”, “secretary”, “treasurer”, etc. You can also opt to minimize the number of email accounts and just have an admin account that manages your files. It's somewhat dependent on how your group functions and whether your leaders are requesting accounts.

Google Groups is a useful tool for managing mailing lists. If you have Google Workspace, you can have the accounts be under your domain, so emailing “allscouts@yourdomain.com” would send an email to your entire membership. If you are using the free Google Groups tool, you may opt for something like “GroupName@googlegroups.com”. One note on Google Groups is that sometimes messages get flagged as spam and screened, but the moderators are not notified until a day or two later. If you are using Google Workspace you can bypass this screening, but that is not possible within the standard Google Groups. Some ideas of mailing lists you may find useful:

- All Scouts
- Leadership
- Auxiliary Committee
- Otters
- Timberwolves
- Pathfinders
- Rovers (although depending on your group this may be covered by leadership)
- Information Requests (if you use the free Google Groups, you may want to have an info@yourdomain.com that forwards to this group)

If you are using workspace, you can have your emails to the group come from the group email address.

Google Drive

Depending on whether you have a Workspace account or are using the standard Google Drive, your files will be owned by an individual or by an organization. If you are using the standard Google Drive, it's not a bad idea to have the files owned by your group admin account or gsm account. That way if an individual leaves, the files are not tied to their personal gmail account. If you have shared drives under Workspace, all files on them are owned by the organization.

File Structure

It's a good idea to have one folder that is limited to the auxiliary committee, which contains things such as financial records, your website files, and registration forms. Access can be added and removed as roles change. One idea is to have the access granted by group membership rather than by individual email, which allows you to control access just by removing or adding people to the appropriate group.

Your general group folder should contain planning documents, including spreadsheets for tracking badge requirements (if you are doing that through google drive). It's also the place to put sign ups for campouts or other rsvp-required meetings, group-specific resources, logo files, marketing/recruitment materials, etc.

Spreadsheet Badge Tracking

Several groups have developed spreadsheets for tracking badge requirements. OSG is working on creating an official badge tracker spreadsheet that can be used by all groups.

Google Photos

Shared albums in Google Photos are a great way to collect photos taken by your members at campouts and other events. You can create a shared album and send a link to anyone who you'd like to collaborate or add photos.

Troop Track

Troop Track is software that some groups use to track badge progress.

Canva

Canva is another platform that provides free access to 501c3 nonprofits. It's useful for creating marketing flyers and posts for social media.

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