To: Mr. Stewart Butterfield, CEO & Co-founder, Slack Technologies, Inc.

From: Yuji Shimojo

Date: November 15, 2016

Re: Proposal of functional improvements to become the de-facto standard for ChatOps

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Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to request some functional improvements for Slack to become the de-facto standard for ChatOps for team collaboration in projects.

Summary

Slack is a cloud-based team collaboration and messaging tool. Actually, I am using it at work in some projects. Unlike other chat tools such as Skye and Google Hangouts, Slack provides many ChatOps functionalities. ChatOps is a new model for continuous software development and operations called conversation-driven development.

The strongest competitor of Slack as a ChatOps app is HipChat I think. To become the de-facto standard for ChatOps, it needs to provide a better user experience than HipChat does.

However, there are some functionalities which HipChat has but Slack doesn't. Especially, support for self-hosted servers called HipChat Server, video chat, and screen sharing is the biggest differences. Because some large companies usually cannot use cloud-hosted application such as Slack due to corporate security policies, I believe Slack needs its install version for self-hosted servers.

In January, 2015, Slack acquired Screenhero which provides voice chat and screen sharing; nevertheless, it still doesn't integrate those features completely. Slack has to complete to implement this features as the first priority.

Introduction

In addition to improving the lack of functionalities Slack has, I believe it should polish its competitive advantages as a ChatOps app.

For example, we can notify specific team members by using @mention within Slack channels; however, it might disturb them depending on timing. On the other hand, if we don't use @mention, the members might not be aware of our messages. To solve that problem, I recommend it adds a scheduling function, which would be able to make us notify others on a specific schedule.

Also, I recommend Slack should expand its integrations with project management tools to differentiate itself from HipChat. Because HipChat is provided by Atlassian based in Australia, its big advantage is compatibility with Atlassian JIRA which is a popular project management tool in the world. In other words, that means Atlassian would not like to expand HipChat's integrations with other project management tools such as Wrike, Basecamp, and Redmine assertively.

Tasks

In order to improve the lack of functionalities and polish the competitive advantages as a ChatOps app, I am proposing that these tasks be completed:

Task 1: Launch of video chat and screen sharing

Task 2: Addition of a feature to schedule @mention

Task 3: Expanding integrations with Wrike, Basecamp, and Redmine

Task 4: Launch of the install version for self-hosted servers

Schedule: A graph/timeline works well for this

Tasks	Date of Task (by 2 Months)							
Task 1: Launch of video chat and screen sharing	▓							
Task 2: Addition of a feature to schedule @mention		▓						
Task 3: Expanding integrations with other project management tools			▓	▓				
Task 4: Launch of the install version for self-hosted servers					▓	▓	▓	▓

Budget

For Slack raised $200 million recently, this project is worth putting half of this raised money as the cost of development.

Experience

I am an AWS (Amazon Web Services) certified solutions architect. Since Slack app runs on AWS, I can contribute to design and build systems by using AWS.

References

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