
Re: Groups?



Samuel Thomas

Oct 28, 6:50 AM

Hi,

I would like this message to be forwarded to the UX team lead.

Great. Now that I've got you, let me tell you why I am so angry. You have changed something. Before it was different, now it is the way it is, and I am unhappy. Change frustrates me, especially when the people behind change insist that they're making things better when, in my opinion, and in the opinion of the millions (or hundreds of millions) like me, things were better the way they were before.

Do you practice similar methods with your children, UX lead? Are they 'Bobby' for two years, and then you change their name to 'John'? If 'John' objects, do you insist, as only a designer can, that 'John' should just stop complaining, that he will get used to it, and that overall it makes for a better childhood experience?

I am sure you do, you monster, you filth. Constantly iterating over your children's names, looking for the next competitive edge, that last change that will push them to go to Harvard.

And so you will feel the same way you do towards your own children as you feel towards me. 'Having no groups simplifies things', you'll say. 'Better UX! Simpler! Better! More simple!'.

Well, some of us like to call things by what they are. In America, land of the free, we have roads, and we have highways, and we have lanes and trails and all manner of thoroughfare. If someday, someone unilaterally decided that alleys were now called roads, and highways were now called roads, and that they are all the same, basically, they allow for the transportation of goods and persons, and that if they are all called the same things that's a UX improvement blah blah blah', I would say that the dream of America had died, without having ever been realized.

And so it is with the removal of groups from Slack. Now my group for going to see movies is a channel, which it decidedly is not. And so too is my NYC siblings group, and my Pluckers group, and my philphilphil group where we just type the word phil over and over.

These were groups to me, not channels. A channel is open to anyone who should be in it. Groups get to be more exclusive. A channel is centered around a topic, a group can be centered around anything. A channel is a road, while a group could be an alley, a highway, a lane, etc.

So go ahead, Mr or Mrs or Ms UX lead, go ahead and shout me down. Shout me down with the voice that cries the death knell of freedom, of expression, the voice that silences the celebration of diversity, the voice that crushes society into one main stream, the voice of blandness.

You can talk over me, and design-splane me all you like. And you are on the side of evil. And I am on the side of good. So, while I may loose this battle, and perhaps even the war, you can't destroy what makes me me; you can't destroy the human spirit. Try as you might, as you do every day, you can't destroy that.

And so, one day, far in the future, when the Slackbots rule over a desolate wasteland, the earth a cider, there will come a man or woman who will dream again. A man or woman who says, 'No! Not all animals should be called animals! There are different types! And we can call them different things!'

On that day, humanity shall rise again. On that day, you will have been defeated. On that day, with that barbaric yarp of some distant progeny, I will have won.

Until that day,

Cordially yours,

Sam Thomas



Slack Support (Slack)

Oct 28, 11:38 AM

Dear Samuel

I'm a UI Developer at Slack. I didn't work on the feature in question, though I was involved in the decision-making process a bit. I volunteered to answer your eloquent note because, man, I feel you.

- When Facebook moved messages into a separate app so I have to switch all the time
- When the power button on the iPhone 6 moved to the right so I turn my phone off when taking a photo
- When my banking app moved the Signin button and replaced it with the Forgot password button so I accidentally tap it all the time

And so on. Believe me, the internal discussions on this change are long and ongoing. Let me explain the thinking, hopefully avoiding designsplanation and without being patronizing. Let me know how I do.

We had:

- channels, which anyone can join

- private groups, which require an invite
- direct messages, which are 1:1 between team members

With the changes released yesterday, we have:

- channels, which anyone can join
- private channels, which require an invite and behave *exactly* as private groups did. They have been renamed and now appear alphabetically in the channel list, but are still private.
- direct messages, 1:1 between team members
- group messages, between up to 9 team members, including yourself

With the addition of group messages we had a difficult set of considerations to balance. Primarily, how can we avoid having 4 different types of conversations in Slack that you have to learn about? Our solution, to have Channels (public or private) and Direct Messages (1:1 or many) was where we landed after lots of exploration. It seems like the right information architecture to support where we are going with the product, and that matches the many ways that people like to collaborate and communicate.

It *sounds* like your “going to see movies” and “NYC siblings” private channels are (now) better suited to the group message format. Pluckers (banjo enthusiasts?) should hopefully work for you as a private channel. philphilphil...now that seems something everyone should have access to, but keep it to yourself if you must.

The biggest complaint we’ve heard is that private and public channels are now mixed in the channel list. Word backstage is that this will very soon be pref’d to optionally have them separated again.

I hope that helps explain where we are coming from, even if it fails to salve the existential angst of living in a precarious and volatile universe.

Let your barbaric yawp be heard over the interfaces of the world. I’m thinking of renaming my son Sam.

Sincerely,
<name withheld>