Connecting Virtually to Engage 4-H Youth
~A Resource Tool for Volunteers to Select Appropriate Platforms/Applications~
Developed and Maintained by the Maryland 4-H Volunteers' Association

Platform Logo	Platform Name	Platform Description
	Band	Band is designed to simplify group communication through the use of a mobile application. Users can search for various interest or hobby groups to connect globally, but there is also a feature to connect within smaller groups using the personal invitation feature. The application allows users to send group messages and sort information into strands.
	Email	Email is a great way to continually engage with youth, volunteers, and families to communicate information and updates. Email is a messaging system that does not require users to interact face-to-face or through the use of a video conferencing platform that uses a lot of bandwidth. Email also creates a log of communication back and forth which is great for record-keeping.
	Facebook	Facebook is an online social media and networking application that allows users to post content, videos, share information between pages, and communicate in real-time. All users must have a profile which is free to create with the use of an email address. The Maryland 4-H Program is very active on Facebook and has been sharing a wealth of resources and activities to keep families engaged. The Maryland 4-H Volunteers' Association also has a Facebook page that is continuously updated with resources for volunteers to use themselves or with resources to pass onto 4-H families.
	Facetime	Facetime is an Apple product that allows users to video call one another through their cellphones (iPhones) or computers (Macs). Facetime works through using one's cellphone number instead of requiring that an account be created.

	Free Conference Call	Free Conference Call allows users to request a conference call line and password to be used for voice-to- voice communication, without video. The platform allows all users to dial-in without having a limit of how many people can join. Immediately following the call, the owner receives a summary of the call including the length and number of users, which can be used for record keeping.
	Google Hangouts	Google Hangouts is a communication-based application which allows users to text one person or a group of people, but it also allows users to video conference with 10 or fewer users. With Google Hangout, all users must have a Google-supported email address.
	Google Meets	Google Meets is an online video conferencing application developed by Google which is free to all users. Only those with a Gmail account are able to schedule an online meeting, but anyone who has access to the link is able to participate, regardless of their email address domain association.
	GroupMe	GroupMe is a messaging app owned by Microsoft. Users can send group or private messages from their computer or phone using WiFi. To send group messages, a new group must be created by the owner and other users invited to join. With GroupMe, users are not able to see one another's phone numbers, only the messages sent back and forth.
	Instagram	Instagram is a social media application for uploading photos. Users are able to create a free account and most follow other accounts to see what is being posted. Users are able to comment on posts, but communication is often limited. This platform is a great way to showcase finished products, post step-by-step pictures for creating a project, etc.

	Microsoft Teams	Microsoft Teams is the hub for team collaboration in Microsoft 365 that integrates the people, content, and tools your team needs to be more engaged and effective. Teams allows users to chat through both voice and video platforms.
	Remind	Remind (previously Remind101) is a private mobile messaging platform that aims to help teachers, parents, students, and administrators in K–12 schools to communicate with everyone at once. The platform is now open to individuals outside of schools. With remind, users are not able to see one another's phone numbers.
	Skype	Skype is a free software program that allows individuals to make video and audio calls either individually or in-person. The platform does require users to register, select a username, and add one another to be able to communicate back and forth.
	Slack	Slack teams allow communities, groups, or teams to join a "workspace" via a specific URL or invitation sent by a team admin or owner. It has been adopted as a community platform, replacing message boards or social media groups.
	Snapchat	Snapchat is a mobile app for Android and iOS devices. One of the core concepts of the app is that any picture or video or message you send - by default - is made available to the receiver for only a short time before it becomes inaccessible. Users must add one another or follow group channels in order to see posted content.
	Text Messaging	Text messaging allows users to have conversations with one another through sending composed written messages, pictures, and videos to individuals or groups of people. Text messaging is a great tool for providing critical updates in real-time.

	Twitter	Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets. These are 140 characters of less that can include photos. To use Twitter, individuals must create an account and follow various channels. Many use this platform for up to date, minute- by-minute communication like news updates.
	WebEx	WebEx is another online video conference option for users to choose from. This platform is not associated with any email domains but does require users to download the application or browser extension.
	Zoom	Zoom is also an online video platform; however, for full access there is a monthly or annual subscription system. Users who do not wish to pay are only able to create an online meeting opportunity that lasts 40 minutes in length for less than 100 participants. In addition, users are only able to create a limited number of connection events before being asked to pay for a subscription. Both of these are platforms that your UMD 4-H county office staff can assist you with.