

There are many perceived and actual risks when collaboration tools are introduced within organisations. This table lists some of the key risks, and outlines options for mitigating or eliminating them. (Thanks to the participants of our ‘Succeeding at collaboration’ workshops for their input on this list.)

Risk	Options for mitigating the risk
Inappropriate use by staff	Define a clear purpose and boundaries; create a code of conduct, or draw upon an existing organisational code; disallow anonymous posting; establish appropriate moderation; define online etiquette; establish a social contract amongst participants
Tools run rampant and unmanaged	Establish strong governance, including overall policies, guidelines for use; help staff to choose appropriate solutions; monitor usage and ‘garden’ as required
Infrastructure or performance issues	Conduct up-front planning; size platforms to meet expected usage; avoid unmanaged move from pilot to production; build good product knowledge in IT areas; ensure sufficient in-house skills
Wanted but not needed or used	Establish good governance; define process for establishing new collaboration spaces; create educational resources for staff; build awareness of collaboration tools, including strengths and weaknesses
Partial or patchy uptake across organisation	Conduct communications campaign; promote the benefits of collaboration tools; provide good education; target to the right groups; monitor usage; ensure usability of collaboration tools; reduce barriers to entry for staff
Compliance issues	Gain executive buy-in from the outset; create a clear business case; establish appropriate policies; involve compliance groups; integrate with compliance tools
Freedom of information	Follow standard organisational practices regarding freedom of information requests
No standards, inconsistencies in usage	Establish standard collaboration configuration; eliminate unnecessary functionality following 80/20 rules; create clear standards
Overwhelms resources	Conduct up-front planning; establish a team to manage collaboration; build a business case for resources
Lack of commitment or support	Establish a clear plan from the outset; set expectations and outline outcomes; build executive buy-in; demonstrate benefits early; build a business case; ensure sufficient in-house skills and resources
Creates information silos	Establish good governance; define appropriate use for each type of tool; differentiate between ‘inward-facing’ and ‘outward-facing’ information; provide simple mechanisms to promote information into public spaces; ensure collaboration spaces are open by default; evaluate search options