

How Quip uses Quip

When I started working at Quip four months ago, one of the first things I noticed is that my email inbox was empty.

I don't use Quip email notifications so the only internal emails I got in the first month were about how to get my paycheck online and setting up my 401k. Initially, it was pretty unnerving — I was sure that there was a hidden email list that I wasn't on. Eventually I realized that I was experiencing one of the best parts of our product: because we use Quip so heavily, we generate almost no internal email.

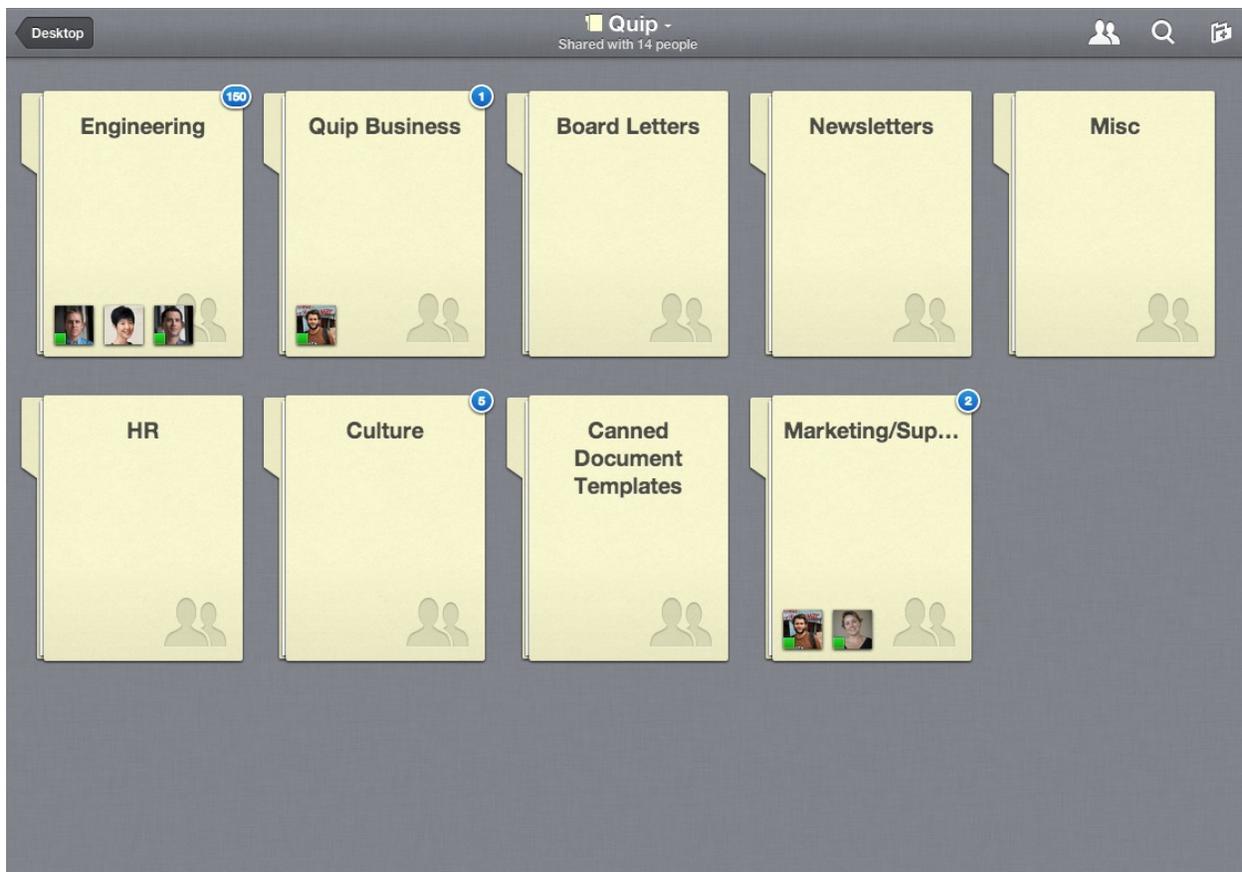
Since we've launched, a number of companies have asked about best practices for using Quip as a team. We always respond with some of the ways we use Quip as a company, so I thought I'd take a moment to share that more broadly. It's important to keep in mind that the Quip team is 13 people, and while some companies are our size, our usage is probably more relevant to a team inside a company.

We use Quip as our Intranet

Every team needs a place where employees go to find answers: Who does what? What's our launch roadmap? What are my benefits? What does the support team do?

Intranets or wikis are places where you can store information to answer the what, how, when, why, and who questions that other people on your team might have, particularly when they're just starting out.

We use Quip. We have a shared folder for everyone on the team with sub-folders that map to relevant areas of information: Engineering, HR, Quip Business, Lunch, Marketing, Support, etc.



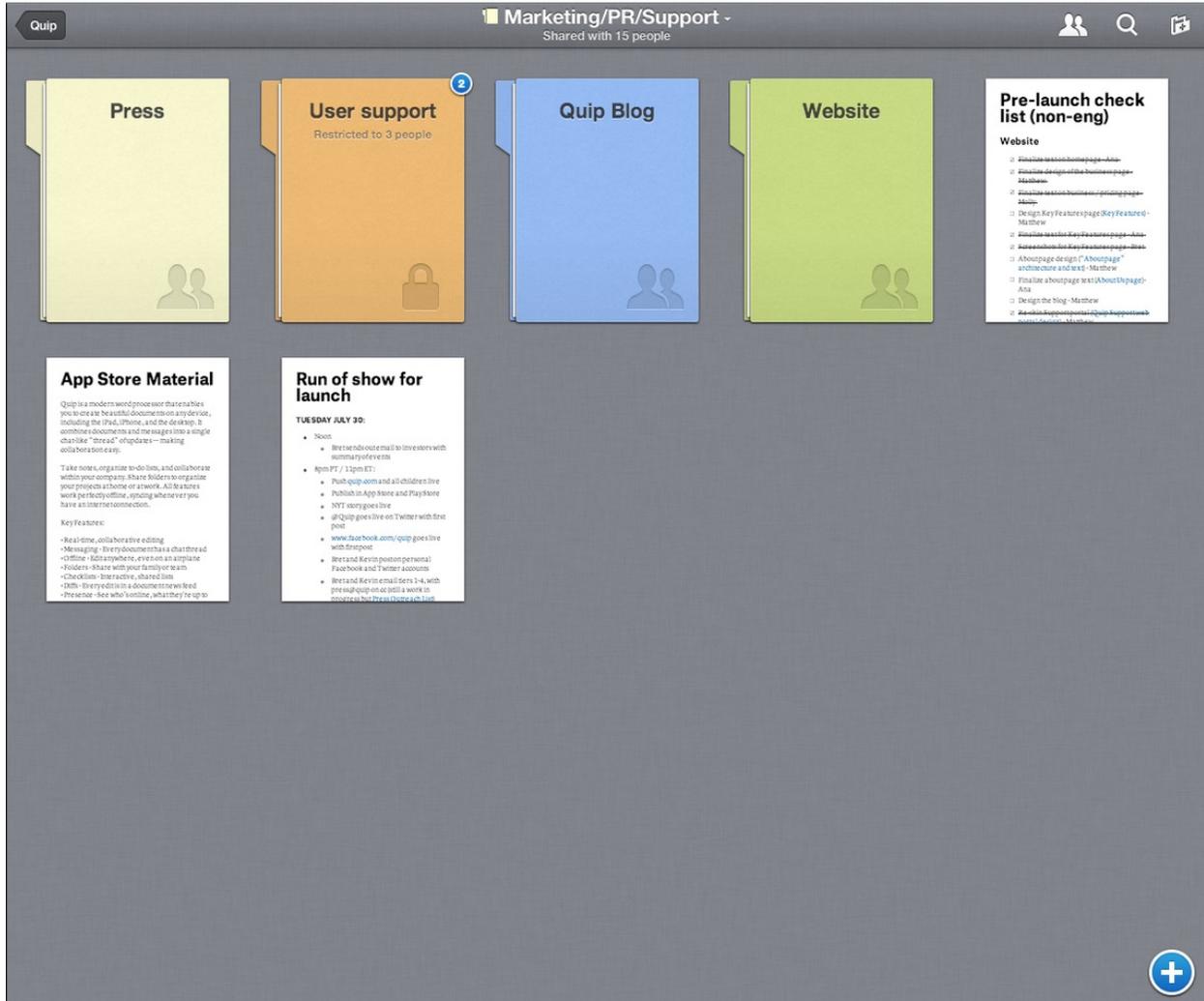
The three best things about using Quip this way are:

- 1) Unread indicators on every folder will quickly show you what's new in the company and what's been updated recently. It's an incredibly fast way to get a snapshot of where work is happening.
- 2) At any given moment, you can also see what people in the company are doing via presence indicators (on the screenshot, the faces on the Engineering folder show that a bunch of our engineers are viewing or editing documents in that folder).
- 3) It's always a struggle to keep an intranet up-to-date, but with the document thread in Quip, you can see exactly when something was last updated and who updated it. Threads also become the history of a document over months, and someone new can actually get ramped up by reading back in time.

Everything in a shared folder is shared with everyone including the order of documents and folders. We let the most organized person in our company — usually Ana — decide what folders we have and rearrange them. There is usually one naturally organized person on every team who gets frustrated when things aren't cleaned up, and for everyone else, they can always find the document they're looking for via search.

Most of our folders are open so everyone can see what everyone is doing, but you can also [create a restricted folder](#) inside a shared folder and limit the contents to a smaller set of people. In the screenshot below, you can see that the Marketing/PR/Support folder is shared with 15 people (because it is part of the Quip folder

which has 15 people in it) but the User Support folder is restricted to only three people.



We manage all our projects and task lists in Quip

We use lots of more structured tools like [Github](#) to track tasks and bugs, but we organize our highest level roadmaps and task lists in Quip.

Below is an example: our iOS task list from a couple weeks ago. Bret and Kevin tend to organize or rearrange the task list about once a week.

The screenshot shows a Quip document titled "iOS Task List" with a chat thread on the left. The document content includes:

- 8/12 Release (8/9 Code Freeze)**
- BLOCKING BUGS**
 - Links from doc mentions in the editor (i.e. Document body) no longer work—they go to the web browser, rather than the app. - Casey
- HIGH LEVEL FEATURES (FOR APP STORE UPDATE MESSAGE)**
 - Move documents into and out of folders more easily
 - Remove people from documents and folders
 - @mention people and documents in messages
 - Send messages to people who aren't yet using Quip
 - Copy and delete the messages you've sent
 - Bugs fixes and stability improvements
- TASK LIST**
 - App stalls when coming back from idle for Kevin and Bret—appears to be CPU-related (not completely done, but enough for this release)—Bret
 - Report back to the server with a metric when the checksums match so we can keep track of aggregate checksum metrics—Bret
 - Support addressing local contacts in message sending - Casey
 - Message lost when you swipe the document back and forth on iPad - Bret
 - In loading state, title of document is in the wrong place on the document - Bret
 - Support deleting messages in addition to copy—Bret (Already done, let me know if you're seeing an issue... it's only your own messages—Casey)
 - Long folder name overflows title bar area - Rooz
- CRASHES - TOP PRIORITY**
 - AddressBookUI (big one) - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/51f88c1a4be911b8e97e7c6f>
 - AddressBookUI (less important) - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/51f1768ee32e43548405aa2a>
 - UIAlertView (Block) - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/51f89ad14be911b8e97e8118>
 - Fix crash Molly got on search - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/org.backchannel.docs/issues/520302a3f62a89406f15259b> Prod: <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/520302baf62a89406f1525a3>
 - UICollectionViewController - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/51e984324be911b8e97a3a56>
 - UITextInteractionAssistant - <https://www.crashlytics.com/quip/ios/apps/com.quip.quip/issues/51e9713e4be911b8e97a3430>

The chat thread on the left shows messages from Kevin Gibbs, Mihai Parparita, and Casey Maloney Rosales Muller, discussing the task list items and providing context for the changes.

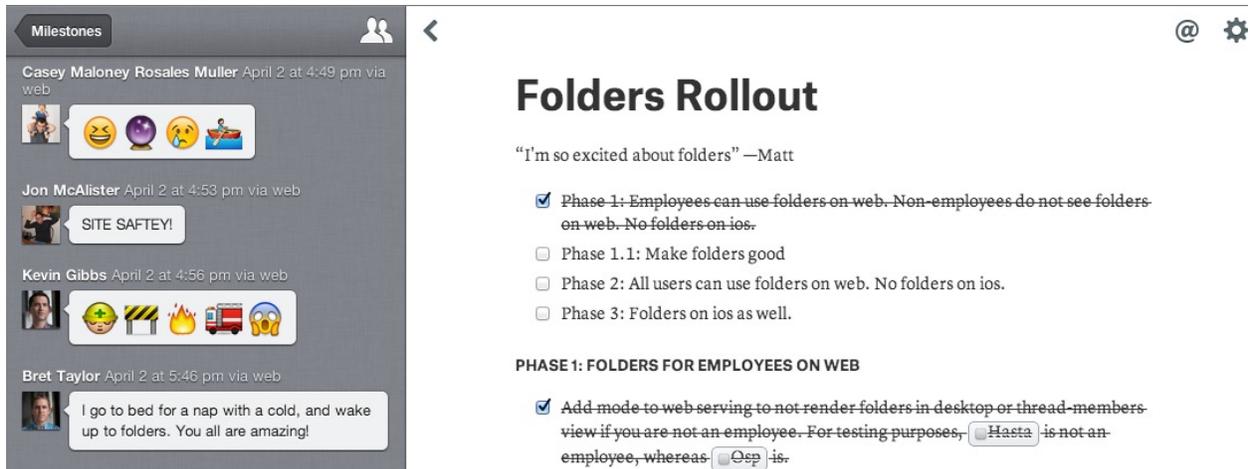
The cool thing about using Quip this way is that the thread becomes a log of everything that's getting done, everything that's being added (bugs, etc), and conversations that contextualize the changes. The current state is on the right — in the main document — and the thread shows the most recent work that's been done, any discussions, and, if you scroll back, the history of the list.

We edit everything in Quip (which makes it easy to on-board new people)

From our blurb in the Apple App Store to our introductory blog post to our board letters to our lunch-ordering document, we use Quip for everything.

One of the great side benefits of this is easy on-boarding for new hires.

When I joined, I spent a little time reading through everything. Because we've kept our roadmaps and project task lists in Quip since the beginning of 2013, I was able to read back and watch, for example, as the team worked on and rolled out folders to our alpha users in April.



I was able to understand why they made certain decisions about how to structure the product and also learn about features that they planned to add in the future. I also discovered that we had launched emoji shortly before launching folders...

As a new member of a team, you always have questions: why certain decisions were made? what's happening in the next month? etc. One of the most magical things about shared documents and folders in Quip is that when you add someone new, they get all the context with the document and can read back through the history before they start asking questions.

We use Quip to make decisions

We do all of our communicating through Quip. We have an all-company thread (again, this works because we're only 13 people) that allows us to tell everyone when something is going on (or sneak in a joke here and there), and we use 1:1 threads and small group threads as instant messaging / email.

Things that would typically be a long email thread with multiple versions of a document traveling back and forth are rapid Quip documents and conversations for us. For example, every new part of the product we design starts with a design document. This is pretty standard in product development, but using Quip allows someone to post a design document, which quickly generates a discussion that leads to revisions and a finalized product spec.

Design Docs

Mihai Parparita edited the document February 19 at 3:26 pm via web

 The hierarchy for checkbox lists is a bit different. For checkboxes, since we want need to store the checked state at the list-item text section level (as opposed to within an inline checkbox figure inside the text section), so that the whole item text section can be rendered as strikethrough. We will therefore add an "attributes" field to sections allowing properties like "checked" to be stored. This also means that checked state can be preserved when moving a text section out of a checkbox list and back in strikethrough (vs. doing the checkbox as an inline figure inside the text section). This field will also be used for storing indentation level of a section.

Mihai Parparita added Bret Taylor, Casey Maloney Rosales Muller, Jon McAlister, Matthew Cahill and Patrick Linehan to the thread

Mihai Parparita January 21 at 1:28 pm via web

 Design sketch of how I'm planning on implementing container sections.

Casey Maloney Rosales Muller January 21 at 1:44 pm via web

 Quick clarification about position- if a section has a parent, its position attribute is relative only to other sections with the same parent, not globally?



Container Se

In order to support generic content Interactive Document Components, we need a "parents" field, which lists one or more parents when rendering the document, it lists themselves as appropriate.

Data Storage

POSITION

All children of a given container are inside containers, but formally, if they have the container as an ancestor,

Note that the parent itself can be a child too.

An example valid ordering:

- List1
- Table1
- Text1 in row2, col1
- Row2 in table1
- Text2 in row1, col1
- Col1 in table1
- Row1 in table1
- Text1 in list1
- Text2 in list1

LISTS

- list
 - id
 - style: l1, l2 or l3

These documents also leave a history in the document thread that someone can read back through if they're wondering why a certain decision was made.

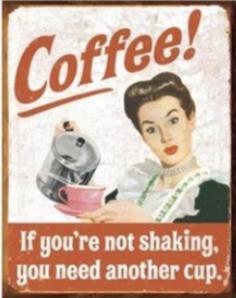
We've fallen in love with Quip as a team because it acts as our whiteboard — a collaborative space that is flexible enough to adjust to what we need in the moment.

Sometimes, our whiteboard is full of funny, useless puns:



Coffee Talk

The coffee thread you've always dreamed of.



And sometimes, a thread turns in to a decision, which turns in to a document, which turns in to a delicious lunch, as was the case when we were deciding what to do for Bret's birthday:



Wednesday 7/10 lunch order

- http://maxsworld.com/locpdfs/Opr_Lunch11x17_03042013123156.pdf
- Bret: Pastrami Reuben
- Pat: Corned Beef Reuben
- Matt: *Caesar Chicken Wrap*
- Jon: *beef brisket on rye*
- Casey: Pastrami Reuben on Sourdough
- Ryan: *Pastrami on Rye + Muenster cheese, cole slaw on side*
- Rooz: *Beef brisket on rye*
- Josh: *Beef brisket on rye*
- Molly: Grilled Salmon Salad (which I will pretend is a Reuben), *potato latkes* to share!

I've personally fallen in love with Quip because my email inbox is no longer a problem. Something like Ryan's note, which might have generated 25 emails, just ended up creating a Quip document with an associated thread and a great lunch for Bret's birthday.

Quip is my home at work: it's my to-do list and my inbox; it's the first thing I open in the morning and the last thing I close at night.

If you're interested in using Quip with your team, [sign up for Quip Business](#) — it's free to try! If you're already using Quip with your team, [we're excited to hear from you](#) — How do you and your team use Quip? What do you love? What do you want us to add?