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## ASK: Has the meaning of collaboration changed over time?

**ANSWER:** Today, collaboration transcends the boundaries of geography, culture and time. It is much more adaptive, responding to the rapidly changing context of the 21st century. The key drivers for this changing context: globalization and technology.

We see large companies leaning heavily on multination collaboration. To manage these complex collaborations, work culture changed with a flurry of supportive cloud-based applications and technological tools such as Skype and Lync, which allow people to manage collaboration without losing the social aspect.

The changing nature of collaboration has also made people adapt their individual and organizational behavior and skill sets and find new ways of conflict management. Today, people are open to what others bring with a much higher respect and tolerance for cultural differences. People know and accept that for large-scale collaborations to work, there has to be compromise to achieve the bigger good.

I also see collaboration changing in terms of content creation and management. Traditional strict ownership of content has eased, giving way

to newer concepts of crowdsourcing, crowd funding and co-creation. This, in turn, has led to more fluidity with principles of copyright, giving birth to open-source, creative commons and other shared and malleable content models. Consider social media and how it has given rise to fun types of organic collaboration such as Flickr and Wikipedia, where the world is one family.

The new meanings of collaboration are bringing major change to education, too. The rise in popularity of massive open online courses (MOOCs), flipped classrooms (where students are encouraged to do schoolwork at home, tapping various open-source materials, and to use class time for discussion and analysis) and blended learning (where educators are more than teachers in a traditional classroom) are the result of a need to foster a core collaborative spirit in newer contexts.

These combined reasons are why collaboration is being called out as a 21st-century skill that the current generation of learners must work to acquire and apply in their careers and lives. And the exciting part is that this is not the end. Collaboration is a dynamic phenomenon that keeps changing as contexts change and innovations appear over time.

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