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Scoold vs Discourse

TL;DR: Discourse excels in scalability and features (forum ecosystem), while Scoold is simpler to set up and more cost-efficient.

Scoold and Discourse are both open-source platforms for online collaboration, but they serve slightly different use cases. Scoold (by Erudika) is a Stack Overflow-inspired Q&A system focused on structured questions and answers within teams[1]. It is lightweight (Java-based) and deploys on-premises or in the cloud, with a free edition (Apache 2.0) and paid Pro options[2]. Discourse, in contrast, is a modern forum and community platform built for discussion and knowledge sharing across broad use cases (support forums, product feedback, internal communities)[3]. Discourse offers both a managed SaaS (with tiers from free to enterprise) and a free GPLv2 self-hosted version[4][5]. Key differences include Scoold's focus on strict Q&A flows (questions, answers, reputation, spaces) vs. Discourse's emphasis on threaded discussions, trust levels, and broad plugin support.

Both platforms are open source and can be self-hosted (Scoold in any JVM environment; Discourse via Docker/Rails[4]). Scoold also offers a managed cloud service (Scoold Cloud) for €49+/month, and Pro licenses (one-time €499)[2][6]. Discourse's managed hosting ranges from free (\$0) for a basic community up to \$500+/month for enterprise needs[5]. Scoold's core features include full-text search, geolocation filtering, badges, and integrations with Slack/Mattermost/Teams[7][8]. Security-wise, Scoold supports enterprise auth (LDAP, SAML, OAuth2) and 2FA, and all data can reside under the user's control. Discourse provides rich community features: real-time chat, categories and tags, moderation tools, trust levels, email/social logins (Facebook, Google, GitHub, etc.)

out of the box[9][3]. Discourse is highly extensible via hundreds of plugins (e.g. SAML on Enterprise[10]), and includes features like single sign-on (OAuth2, SAML), mobile layouts, and automated trust systems. Overall, Scoold is optimized as a Q&A/knowledge base within teams, while Discourse is suited to larger public forums or knowledge hubs with diverse discussion formats.

Aspect	Scoold (OSS/Pro)	Discourse (Forum)
Features	Structured Q&A (questions, answers, comments, votes) [1]; Spaces (sub-communities); reputation & badges; full-text search (Elasticsearch)[1]; notifications, email digests; MathJax support; geolocation filtering[1].	Discussion forum (long-form posts, threads); categories & tags; real-time chat; trust levels and moderation tools[3]; user mentions; notifications; solution plugin (“Solved”); email/social login out-of-box[9].
Deployment	Self-host on any server/VPS (Java app + Para backend) [11] or use Scoold Cloud SaaS; Docker containers available.	Self-host via Docker (Linux required)[4], or use Discourse.org managed hosting (cloud service)[5].
Hosting Options	Scoold Cloud (Erudika-managed SaaS) or customer’s servers (on-prem/cloud).	Discourse.com SaaS tiers (Free–Enterprise)[5] or fully self-host (GNU GPL license).
Pricing/Licensing	Core is free (Apache 2.0); Scoold Pro license ~€499 one-time[2]; Scoold Cloud ~\$50+/mo[12].	Open-source (GPLv2) – free to self-host[4]. Managed hosting: Free tier (\$0), Starter (\$20/mo), Pro (\$100/mo), Business (\$500/mo), Enterprise (custom)[5].
Target Audience	Engineering teams and businesses needing a private Q&A knowledge base[1]; support forums & internal KB.	Communities and organizations of any size needing discussion forums, support communities, or member

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Integrations	Slack, Mattermost, MS Teams; Zapier; Para REST API; webhooks.	engagement platforms[3]. Email and social logins (Facebook, Google, GitHub, Apple)[9]; OAuth2/SAML (Enterprise); webhooks; DiscourseConnect (SSO); wide plugin ecosystem (chat, code review, analytics, etc.)[10].
Customization	Open-source; supports theming (light/dark), custom badges; backend (Para) can be swapped; REST API for extensions[1].	Highly themable (Bootstrap CSS, site settings); flexible templates; official and community plugins; granular permission settings and SSO options.
Security/ Compliance	Enterprise auth (LDAP, SAML, OAuth2, 2FA)[13]; GDPR-friendly (cookie consent); data resides on your servers by default.	Enterprise-grade on Business/Enterprise (SAML, OAuth2, SSO); Akismet anti-spam; trust-level auto-moderation; GDPR/CCPA compliance offered on managed hosting[10]; open source code for audits.
Support	Community support via GitHub/Gitter and docs; priority support and updates for paid Pro/cloud customers[14].	Community support via Discourse Meta forums; rich documentation. Official support (email/phone) for paid hosting customers (Starter and above)[15][16].

Scoold / Scoold Pro:

- **Pros:** Open-source and lightweight; very StackOverflow-like Q&A experience with fine-grained search and social logins[7][1]; flexible hosting (self or Scoold Cloud).
- **Cons:** Primarily Q&A only (less suited for free-form discussion); requires managing a Para backend; smaller ecosystem than Discourse's plugin community.

Discourse:

- **Pros:** Powerful forum platform with modern UI, trust-levels, and moderation features[3]; extensive plugins (email integration, gamification, security); scalable for large communities.
- **Cons:** Not purpose-built for Q&A (answers aren't as structured without plugins); heavier tech stack (Ruby/Rails, Docker); managed hosting costs for full features.

Sources: Official documentation and pricing pages[2][5][3][4]; community reviews and product comparisons.

[1] [3] Discourse vs. Scoold Comparison

<https://sourceforge.net/software/compare/Discourse-vs-Scoold/>

[2] [7] [8] [11] [13] [14] Scoold | An Open Source Q&A Platform

<https://scoold.com/>

[4] [5] [9] [10] [15] [16] Discourse pricing | Discourse - Civilized Discussion

<https://www.discourse.org/pricing>

[6] [12] Scoold Pricing 2026

<https://www.g2.com/products/scoold/pricing>