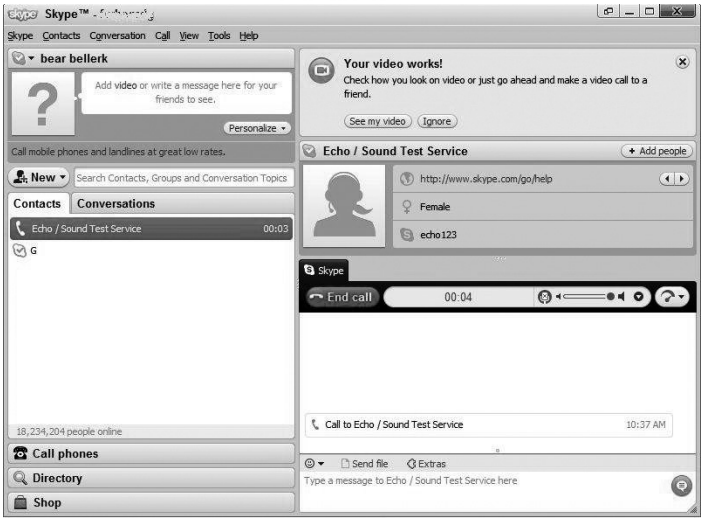
Using Skype to Increase Meeting Efficiency

What is Skype?

- Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet.
- Two users with webcams can also conduct a videoconference.
- The service is available free to users who download the free software.
- Multiple parties (up to 25) can use the service to make an Internet-based (Voice Over Internet Protocol) conference call as well, although video is only available for two users at a time.
- Skype also allows users to do instant messaging and file transfer functions.
- For users who want to do so, a Skype fund can be created, enabling a user to place Skype-to-telephone calls from a computer to a landline or cell phone at a low per-minute fee.
- Skype-to-Skype calls (domestic or international) are free.



Why use Skype?

- Users are able to conduct meetings with little to no expense.
- It's a free way to make audio or video calls of any duration between any two computers in the world with Internet access (Skype-to-Skype calls).
- Conference calls with chat and file transfer functions are free to any user.
- The interface is very user-friendly.
- Combined with an LCD projector and a sound system, Skype is an effective tool to bring distant guest speakers to meetings or conferences.

What do I need to make Skype work?

Users need the following equipment:

- a computer with Internet access, webcam, and headset. (You can use a microphone and speakers, but on most computers, a headset works better.)
- the required free software (available at www.skype.com)
- a personal Skype account (created by users after downloading software)

Skype accounts can only be accessed from computers with the software. After loading it, search for other Skype users by name or e-mail address, and add them to your contacts list. Users who want to call people who don't have Skype accounts (Skype-to-telephone calls) must add money to an account for Skype Credit. Calls in the United States are $0.02 per minute. International calls are slightly higher.

Think about being portable. A wireless notebook computer with Skype installed will allow you to connect wherever you can get a wireless connection. You can also purchase Skype phones and Skype adapters that connect your regular phone to your computer.

Skype Help is available at … www.ksre.ksu.edu/TechWeb

You may not want to use Skype if …

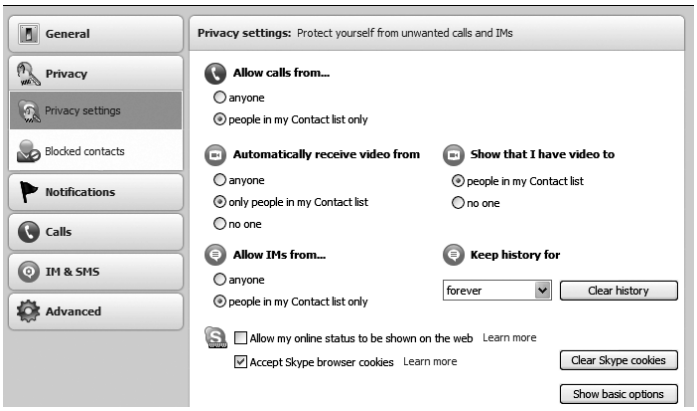
- You don't like downloading software from the Internet.
- You need to conduct a video conference with more than two users able to see video.
- You prefer to pay for telephone calls, conference calls, video conferences, or instant messaging services.
- You have unreliable Internet access.

Skype free features

- Skype-to-Skype calls
- Transfer calls to people on Skype
- Video calls
- Instant messaging and group IMs
- Compute-to-computer conference calls
- Forward calls to people on Skype

Security settings

Check the default settings of any software you install – especially those that communicate information about you to others. Here are some changes to try to guard your privacy and protect your information.



- In Skype, go to Tools > Options > Chat and Tools > Options > Chats & SMS (or Tools > Options > Privacy Settings for both) and accept chats and calls only from those on your contact list. You might have to drop this limitation temporarily to be added to the main Skype chat and Skype conference calls until you build up your contact list. You might want to reject video calls from people you do not know until you have verified the caller's identity.
- Be very cautious about accepting requests to be added to your contact list from people you do not know. If you have doubts, verify first.
- If someone is bothering you, remove the individual from your contact list and block them. (Click on menu in a chat window with them and select "block.")

Additional features … for a price

Check Skype.com for additional features and current pricing. For example, one popular option is Skype Out to call phones from your computer (or any computer with a Skype installed). Current cost is $2.95/month (less with annual subscription).

Competing technology

- MagicJack phone adapter: phone-to-phone calls using your computer's Internet connection.
- Google Voice: free phone-to-phone calls using your computer to dial the number.
- Other messaging programs, such as Yahoo Messenger.
- TinyChat: *tinychat.com* offers simple, ad-hoc video conferencing.

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