

## Skype Workshop

Skype is a very simple tool that combines the capabilities of messengers like MSN Messenger, AOL, or IChat with those of a phone. Any computer with Skype can call any computer with Skype for free. It runs on Windows, OSX, and Linux. Sound quality and video are excellent even on moderate connections. You can also buy credits to call regular telephone numbers. The fee is usually 2 cents per minute.

### Things to know about Skype

Is uses “peer to peer” networking to connect. P2P has a bad reputation among network people because originally it was used almost exclusively to download illegal copies of music and movies. To make matters worse, the founders of Skype also founded Kazaa. The benefit of P2P and not using a fixed port is that Skype can connect without the user understanding how to configure the network they are on or open their firewall. Computer World does a good job of explaining the differences with Skype, debunking some myths, and compares the security risk to any other application that accesses the internet.

<http://tinyurl.com/2rfmf7>

Skype is a free download from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). You’ll need a microphone and preferably a headset. We already have it installed in the lab. Open it up and create an account.

### The basics

Skype has very easy to follow tutorials online.

<http://www.skype.com/help/guides/>

Make sure you can:

1. Add a contact
2. Text chat the content
3. Call the contact
4. Start a conference call

### Advanced stuff

To call a phone, you’d buy Skype credit. Note you can also get a phone number for your Skype account to receive calls, but there is no 911 service.

<http://www.skype.com/prices/>

Besides contacting your friends and family, you can also host public chats or skypecast (like a radio show for Skype). You can make them public or private and the creator of each has moderating capabilities. Students abroad could host a Skypecast for example that any student interested in studying abroad at that location could join. This has just come out of beta, so I wouldn’t trust it 100%.

<http://www.skype.com/intl/en/allfeatures/publicchats/>

<http://www.skype.com/intl/en/allfeatures/skypecasts/>

Skype's goal is to become the voice communication protocol of the internet, which is why they were so attractive to EBay. They've allowed web developers to have sites that integrate Skype. I use these features to help language learners connect with native speakers for language exchanges.

[www.language-exchanges.org](http://www.language-exchanges.org) (login as [landisb@dickinson.edu](mailto:landisb@dickinson.edu), the password is password)