

# Using Skype

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## What is Skype?

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**Skype is a great free program** that allows you to **connect and communicate with other people** all around the world or just across the hall. You can communicate live through **text chat**, **voice chat**, or **video chat**, as well as **transfer files**. The connection can be between just two people or can involve a group of folks from multiple locations.

Skype is **free to use**, although the company does offer some extra features that you can pay for, such as making calls to real phone numbers. Still though, no cost is involved in any of the activities covered in this guide.

## What could I use Skype for?

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Skype has many possible **applications in a school setting** such as:

- Communicate with fellow employees regardless of what building they are in
- Hold meetings without having to meet in person
- Talk to the office in an emergency if you do not have a phone in your room
- Get live interactive tech support from the tech staff
- Bring easy distance learning into your classroom including:
  - Have your students talk to students from some other school, state, or country
  - Have your students talk to people from a different culture
  - Have your students talk to an expert in some field
  - Have your students conduct an experiment/survey/project with students in other locations

## What do I need to use Skype?

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At the least you need:

- A computer (PC running Windows 2000 or XP, or a Mac computer with G4 800 Mhz processor or faster running Mac OS X v10.3.9 Panther or newer)
- Internet connection
- Free Skype program.

If you wish to do voice chat, you need a microphone and speakers (or a headset mic which combines both)

If you wish to do video chat, you need a camera, such as a simple web cam.

## How do you install Skype?

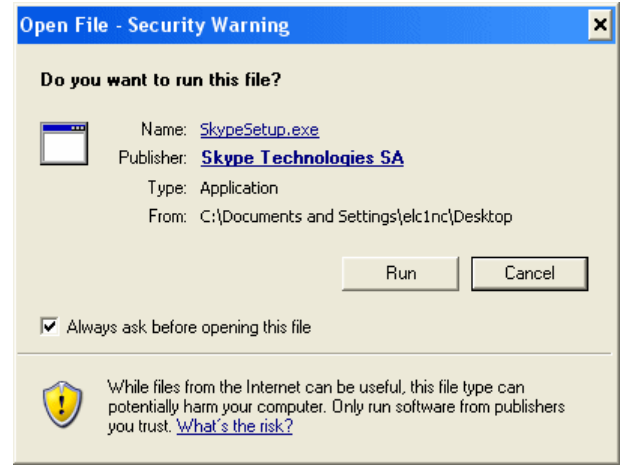
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Skype is easy to setup. First you need to **download the program**:

1. Go to the Skype website at: <http://www.skype.com>
2. Click their “**Download**” link
3. Follow their directions from there to download the program
4. If you choose to run the installer the program will begin to install
5. If you choose to save the installer, then you will need to take note of where you are saving it, and then double-click on that after it has downloaded to begin the install

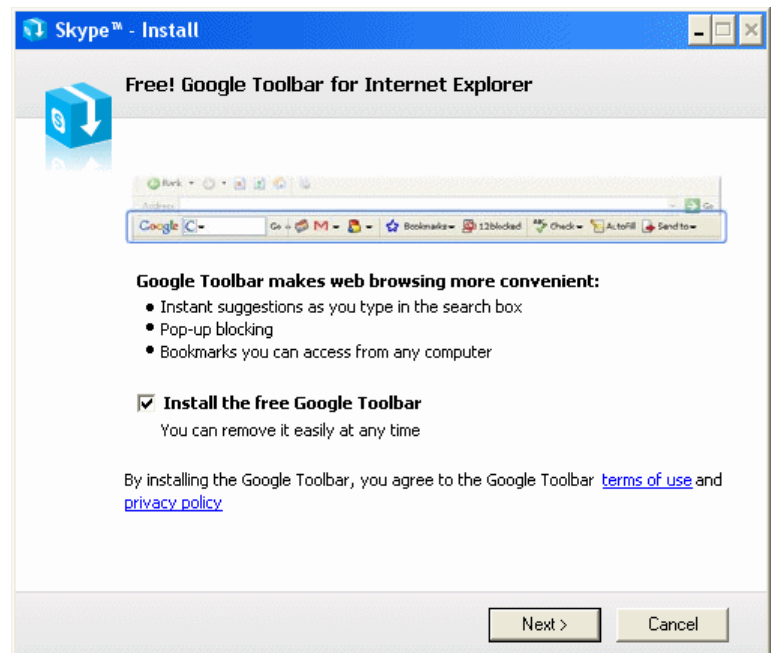
Once the install begins, you will go through the next six steps:

**Step 1** – You will be asked if you want to run the program. Simply click “**Run**” to begin.



**Step 2** – Next you need to choose your **language**, check the box indicating you accept the **license**, and then click the “**Install**” button.

**Step 3** – Next you will be asked if you want to install the **Google toolbar**. This is a good toolbar for browsing the Internet, but is completely optional. This has no impact on the use of Skype.



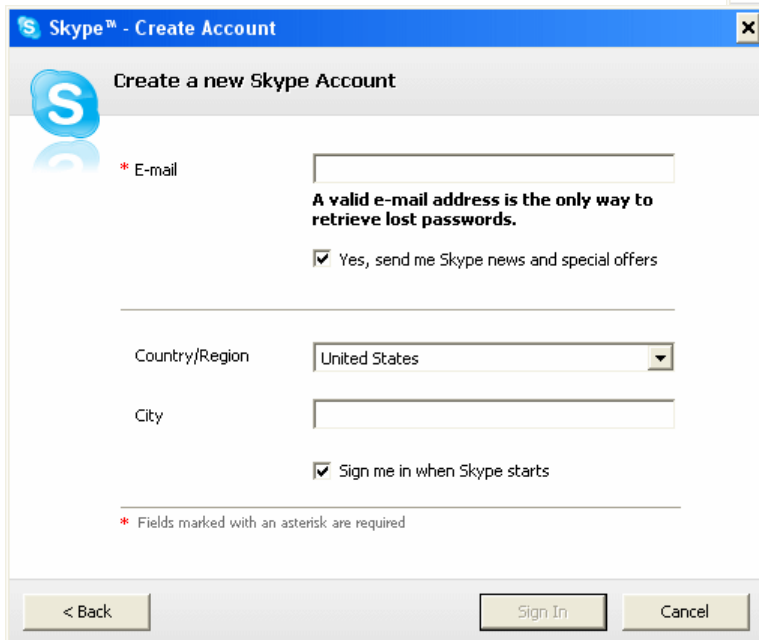
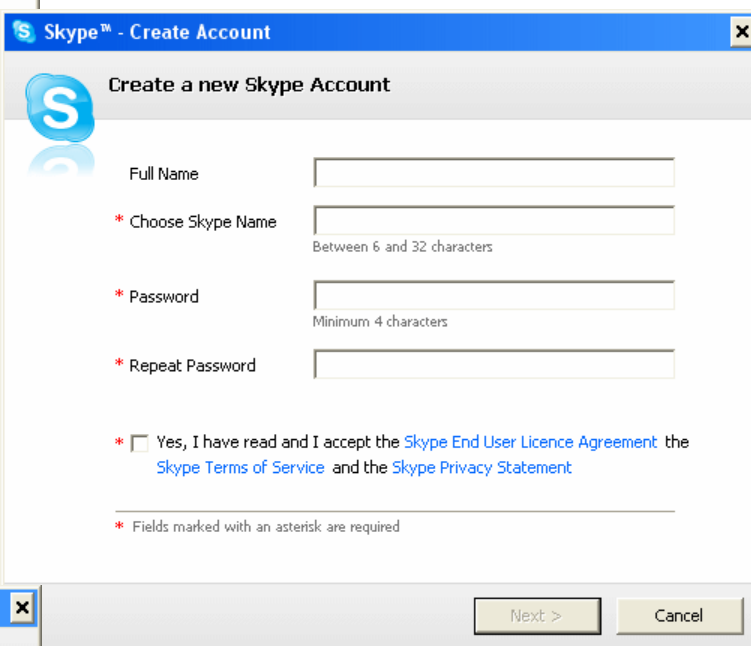


**Step 4** – Next you will be asked if you want to install a special add-on that lets you click on phone numbers in web pages to **automatically make calls** with Skype. Since calls to real phone numbers cost money, you may not ever use this feature, so can feel free to uncheck this option.

Click **“Start Skype”** when ready to move on.

**Step 5** – Now you are to the point in the install where you need to **create your Skype account**. You need to enter:

- Your **full name**
- What you want for your **Skype username**  
*Note: For consistency in the school, we are suggesting people place “nccs\_” in front of their usual Viking username, such as “nccs\_abcInc”*
- What you want for a **password**
- And again, check the **license** box
- Click **“Next”** when done



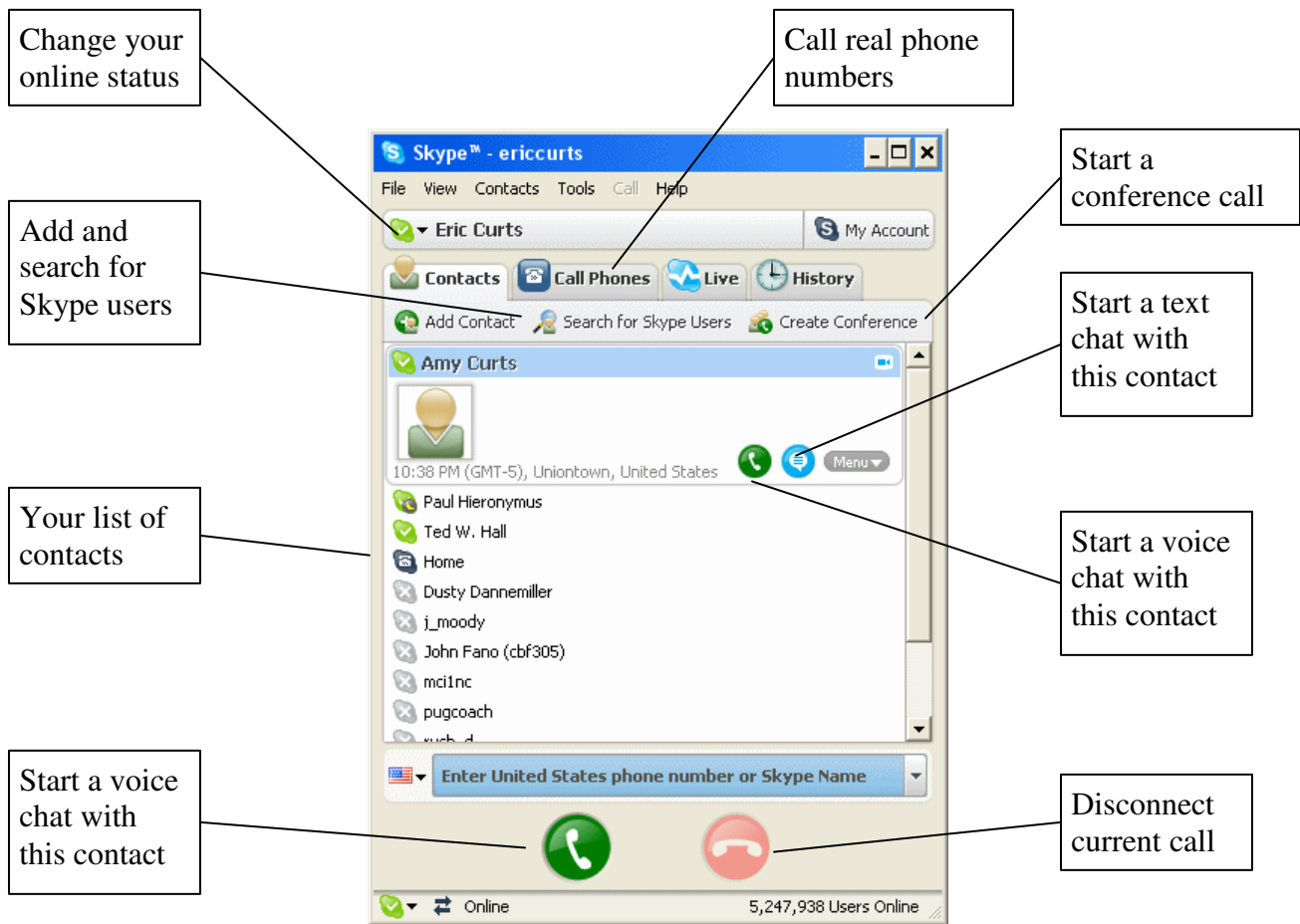
**Step 6** – For your final step you need to enter:

- Your **email address** (can be school or personal)
- Your **country**
- Your **city** (this is optional, but can help people locate other Skype users)
- Then click **“Sign In”** when done.

Skype is now installed and ready to use!

## How to use Skype – The main screen

Once Skype starts up you will get the screen displayed here. The basic features are indicated below:



Most of the features will be explained in more detail throughout the rest of this guide.

## Making a test call

Now that you have Skype up and running, the first thing you should do is **test out your system** to make sure everything is working properly. To do this, Skype has provided an **automated call testing service**:

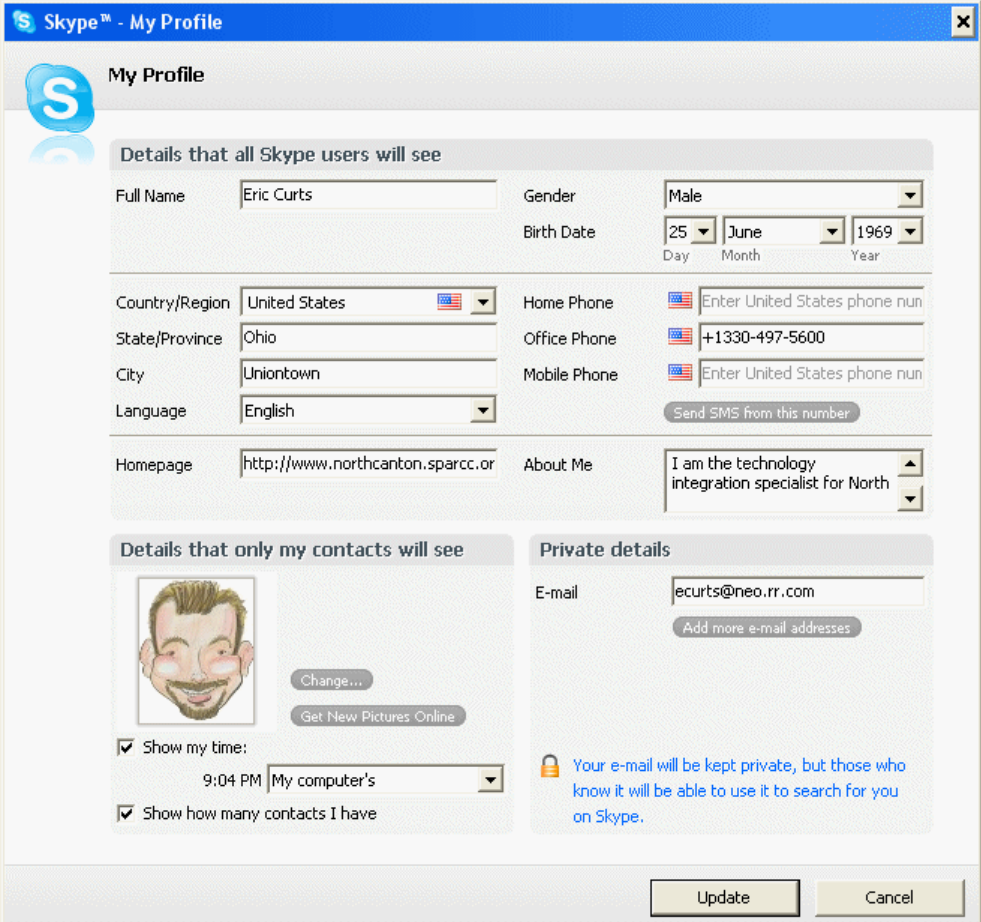
1. In your contact list, select "**Skype Test Call**"
2. Now click the **green call button**
3. Listen to the pre-recorded friendly British woman's voice
4. Then **speak into your mic** when instructed to do so
5. Then **listen to hear your message** played back to you
6. If you hear your own message, then everything is working fine
7. If not, then you will need to double-check all your wires to make sure they are connected properly, and then contact a school tech support person for more help if needed.

## Editing your profile

If Skype is working properly, then the next thing you should do is edit your profile. Your profile contains information about you so that other people can locate you more easily and learn more about you. Of course, it is totally optional for you to include this information. Use your own discretion as to what you wish to disclose.

To edit your profile, do the following:

1. Click **“File”**
2. Click **“Edit my profile”**
3. You will then get this window.
4. You can edit any of the options you wish to change
5. When done, click the **“Update”** button to submit your changes



The screenshot shows the 'Skype™ - My Profile' window. It is divided into several sections:

- Details that all Skype users will see:** Includes fields for Full Name (Eric Curts), Gender (Male), Birth Date (25 June 1969), Country/Region (United States), State/Province (Ohio), City (Uniontown), Language (English), Home Phone, Office Phone (+1330-497-5600), Mobile Phone, and Homepage (http://www.northcanton.sparcc.or). There is also an 'About Me' section with the text 'I am the technology integration specialist for North'.
- Details that only my contacts will see:** Features a profile picture of a man with a beard, a 'Change...' button, and a 'Get New Pictures Online' button. It also has checkboxes for 'Show my time' (set to 9:04 PM My computer's) and 'Show how many contacts I have'.
- Private details:** Includes an E-mail field (ecurts@neo.rr.com) and a note: 'Your e-mail will be kept private, but those who know it will be able to use it to search for you on Skype.'

At the bottom right, there are 'Update' and 'Cancel' buttons.

## How to find and add Skype contacts

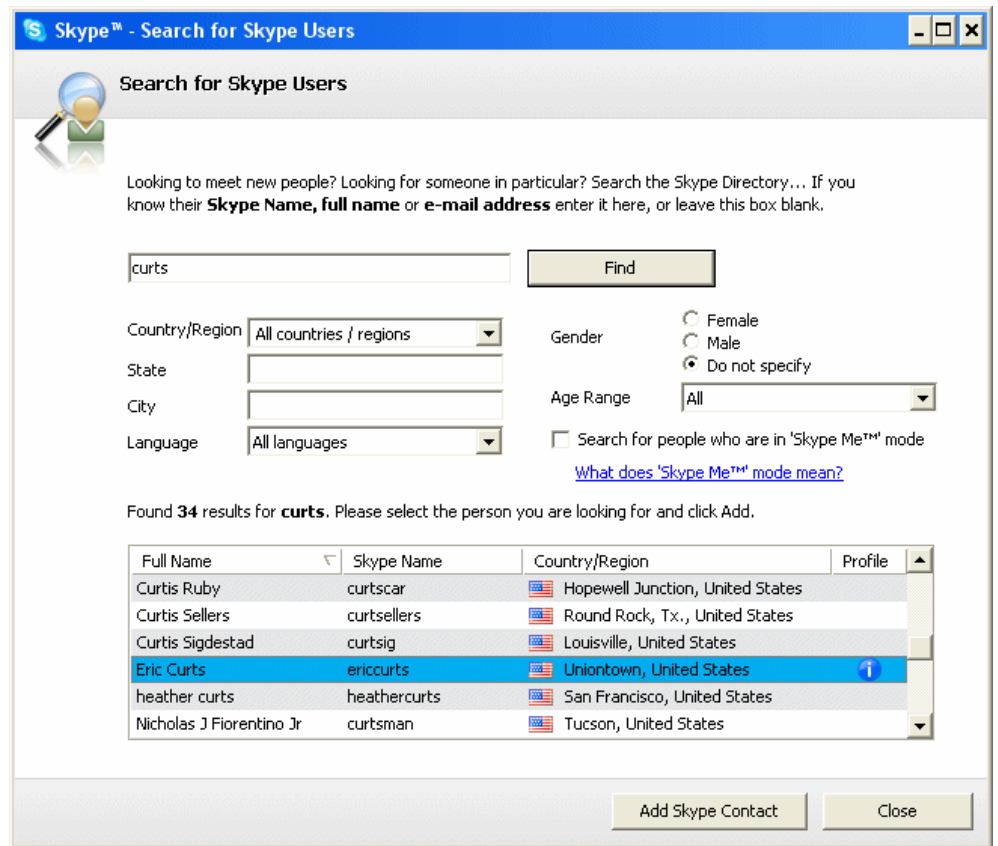
Next you will need to start finding and adding contacts. If you already know a person's Skype username you can enter it easily. For example, my Skype username is **“ericcurts”**. I would encourage all NCCS staff to add me to their list of contacts.

To add a contact you already know, do the following:

1. Click **“Add Contact”** at the top of your **“Contacts”** tab
2. Type in the **Skype username** for that person (such as ericcurts)
3. Click **“Find”**
4. Skype will now search for that person
5. Click on their name when it appears
6. Finally, click **“Add Skype Contact”** to put them in your list.

Of course, you may not always know what a person's Skype username is. In that case you can perform a search to locate their account. To do a search, do the following:

1. Type in their **email address**, their **Skype username**, or their **real name** (part of all of the name)
2. If you want you can then add extra search options such as **country, state, city, language, gender, and age**. *Note: People may choose not to disclose this information, so these options may not always help.*
3. Next click “**Find**”
4. Scroll through the matches to find the person you want.
5. Finally, click “**Add Skype Contact**” to add them to your list.



## How to do a voice chat with a contact

Most people use Skype to speak with other people. To start a voice chat with one of your contacts, do the following:

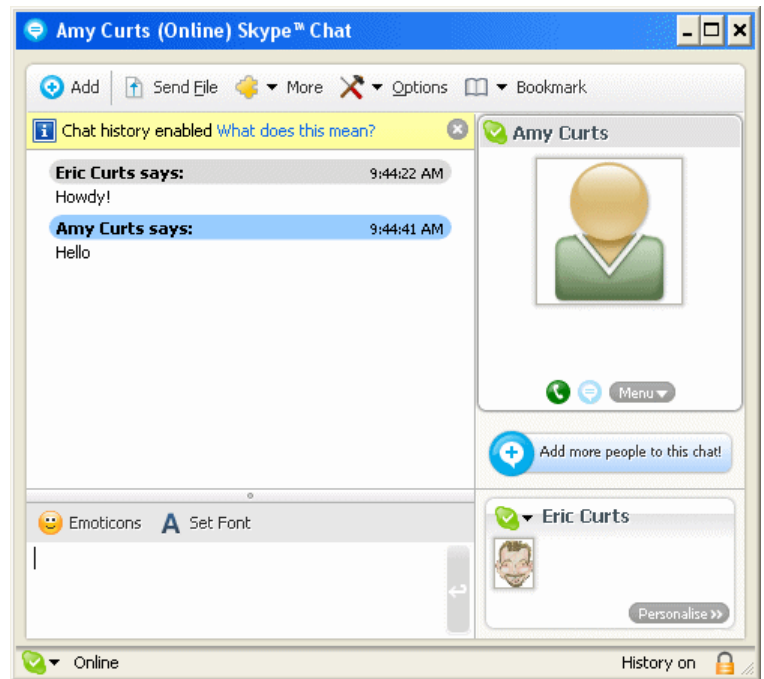
1. In your contact list, find the person you want to call
2. Look at their **online status** to see if they are available. They need to have a green icon with a check mark in it to indicate they are online and available to talk
3. If they are available, select their name and click the **green call button**
4. Skype will now call them
5. If they accept your call you can begin talking
6. When you are finished, click the **red disconnect button** to hang up

## How to do a text chat with a contact

Instead of talking, you can also text chat with a contact. That means to type live back and forth. This option exists for people who do not have a microphone or are in a location where talking out loud would be impractical.

Starting a text chat is pretty much the same as starting a voice chat. The only difference is that you do not click the green call button, but instead you click the blue text chat button. Once you connect the window looks like this:

1. To send your text messages, type them in at the bottom of the window and press the “**Enter**” key on your keyboard
2. All of the text messages will appear in the top of the window
3. To add “**smileys**” to your message, click the “**Emoticons**” icon
4. To send a file to your contact, click the “**Send File**” option
5. To add more people to the text chat, click “**Add more people to this chat**”
6. To exit the text chat, simply **close out** of the window

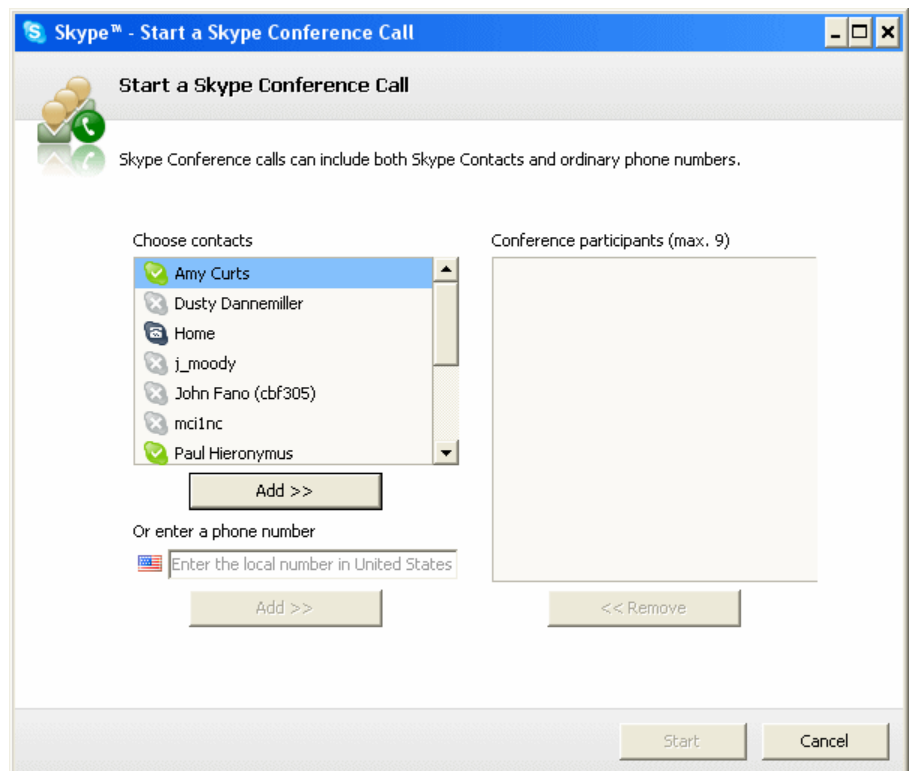


## How to hold a conference call

Skype allows you to have up to 10 people in a conference call at the same time. To start the conference, do the following:

1. Click “**Create Conference**” at the top of your contacts window
2. Now pick the people you wish to include and the conference and click the “**Add>>**” button for each one
3. If needed you can remove a name from the conference with the “**<<Remove**” button
4. When you have all the needed names added, click “**Start**” to begin the conference call.

**Note:** You can also add more people to any call at any time, even if the call did not begin as a conference call. Simply click the “**Add Callers**” button at the top of the call window to invite more people.



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## How to send a file to a contact

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Skype also allows you to send files to the people you are connected to. This is a great way to collaborate on a document you are discussing. You can send a file as follows:

- In **voice chat** mode – Click the “**Menu**” button and choose “**Send File**”
- In **text chat** mode – Simply click the “**Send File**” link at the top of the window

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## How to do a video chat

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If you have a **web camera** plugged into your computer, Skype will automatically detect it and ask if you wish to enable video. If you choose to do so, you will send live video to the people you call.

This is an **excellent way to do distance learning** as it provides both audio and video. You can click on the live video from your contact and **choose how large** you want it to display so that everyone in the classroom can see the video if needed.

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## Using extras

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Skype also allows other companies to create programs that can work right along with Skype. These extras can greatly extend the power of Skype. You can see what extras are available as follows:

1. Click “**Tools**” in the top menu bar
2. Click “**Do More**” in the drop-down menu
3. Then click “**Get Extras**”
4. Now you will see a window with many extras you can **browse**
5. If you find one you like, click the **green play button** to install it and follow its directions from there

Examples of good extras include:

- **Unyte Desktop Sharing** – This lets you show your contact any program open on your computer. This can be helpful to collaborate on a project or get tech help from someone.
- **Sketch Pad** – This is a simple interactive drawing program that you and your contact can use at the same time.
- **Pamela Call Recorder** – This extra can record up to 15 minutes of your Skype call, which would be great for making a podcast.

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## And much, much more

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There are many more features available in Skype, and certainly many more still to be developed. This guide has covered the basics and should give you a solid start. As you learn more things about the program, please share your tips and tricks with others in the school.

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*Questions, comments, concerns? Email me at:  
ecurts@neo.rr.com or tech@northcanton.sparcc.org  
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