

CONVERSATIONS WITH SKYPE (WINDOWS)

Skype is a free software application that allows synchronous typed, voice, and video chat. Communication between computers is free. Calling between a computer and a telephone (SkypeIn and SkypeOut) requires payment of a fee.

Not only can Skype be used to communicate with people all over the world but it can also be used between language students to simulate phone calls and practice informal writing. When at least one of the computers is equipped to record Skype conversations, the entire conversation can be easily recorded for later review or to use as a podcast.

The computers in the Multimedia Language Laboratory are equipped with the Skype application. They are also equipped with software that allows Skype conversations to be recorded.

These instructions demonstrate how to get started on the MMLL's PCs.

Note: The Skype application is slightly different on Macs and PCs. The recording software on the Lab's computers is completely different. Please use the appropriate instructions.

Skype on your own computer: Once you have a Skype account, you can download and use the software on any computer. You can certainly use a microphone (or a webcam with a built-in microphone) and computer speakers; however, it is better to have headphones (or use your MP3 player's earbuds) in order to avoid audio feedback. Recording a Skype conversation requires additional software. There are a number of choices; many are listed on the Skype website. The MMLL uses PrettyMay on the PCs; the free version records conversations of 1 – 30 minutes.

What You Need

1. You need to use the headset and microphone attached to each Lab PC. Make sure both plugs are plugged into the appropriate jacks in the front of the computer (red for microphone, black for headset).
2. You need a Skype account. If you don't have one (it's free), create an account when the "Create New Account" box appears.

Logging In

1. Go to Start > All Programs > Language Lab Applications > Skype

2. If an update window opens, click "Skip update."

3. If you already have a Skype account, close the "Create New Account" window that appears. If you don't have a Skype account—and the "Create New Account" window doesn't open automatically—click "Don't have a Skype name?" to open the window and create an account.
4. Click the "Click here to sign in" button.
5. Enter your Skype name and password. *You may want to uncheck the boxes, but the Lab's computers will erase your information when you reboot.* Click the "Sign in" button.
6. Your contacts list will appear.

Making a Call

1. If the person you need to call is not already in your contacts list, you need to add his/her Skype name.
 - a. Click the "Add Contact" button.
 - b. Enter his/her Skype name.
 - c. Click "Search".
 - d. When the contact is found, highlight his/her name and click "Add Selected Contact." *If you're asked to send a message, you can do so or skip it.*
2. In the contact list, highlight the person you wish to call.
3. Click the "Call" button (green).

Troubleshooting Tip: If you're having trouble hearing the person you're calling, use the "Chat" button to begin a typed chat and try to figure out what's wrong. It also helps to hang up and try again—or have the other person call you.

Hanging Up

To end a call, click the "hang up" button (red).

Things to Explore in Skype

Use the Help function to get instructions when needed.

- Conference (multi-party) calls
- Group chats
- Skypecasts (<https://skypecasts.skype.com/skypecasts/home>)

Recording Calls

There are a number of third-party applications that will record Skype calls on Windows machines. The one that tested best on the MMLL's machines is called Pretty May; the unregistered/free version will record up to 30 minutes. You can get more information and download Pretty May at <http://www.prettymay.net/>.

Note: As of 25 September 2007, the Lab's license for Pretty May is not working, so we can't demonstrate its use. This is a problem with the Lab license; individual licenses don't have this issue. Sorry.