

Introduction to Skype

ABOUT THIS CLASS

This class is designed to give an introduction to the voice-over-Internet Protocol service **Skype**. During this class, we will learn how to download the software, place video calls, and the steps in between.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will know how to:

- ✓ Download Skype to your computer
- ✓ Set-up an account and username.
- ✓ Find peers and add them to your contact list.
- ✓ Place calls.

We will also briefly discuss some of the other features of Skype, including the mobile application and instant messaging, which you can explore on your own as you become more comfortable using the software.

This booklet will serve as a guide as we progress through the class, but it can also be a valuable tool for when you are working on your own. I encourage you to download Skype on your personal computer (if you have access to one) and set-up your account soon after class. There will be additional computer classes in the near future, and I am available for questions during Tech Times, usually held on Tuesdays from 10am-noon and Thursdays from 3pm-5pm. Feel free to call us at 970-264-2209 to verify possible schedule changes.

Meg Wempe, Adult Services Librarian



What is Skype?

Definition & Background: Skype is a proprietary **voice-over-Internet Protocol** service and software application. The service allows users to communicate with peers by voice, video, and instant messaging over the Internet. Phone calls may be placed to recipients on the traditional telephone networks. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free of charge, while calls to landline telephones and mobile phones are charged via a debit-based user account system. Skype has also become popular for its additional features, including file transfer, and videoconferencing. Skype has 663 million registered users as of September 2011. The network is operated by Microsoft.¹

Voice-Over-Internet Protocol, also known as **VoIP**, is a technology that allows telephone calls to be made over computer networks like the Internet. VoIP converts analog voice signals into digital data packets and supports real-time, two-way transmission of conversations using Internet Protocol (IP). VoIP calls can be made on the Internet using a VoIP service provider and standard computer audio systems.²

Why would I use Skype?

Skype is an easy-to-use program that is free to download and allows free video calls to anywhere in the world when calling another Skype user. You can also call landlines and cell phones for a fee. It's a great way to stay in touch with family, friends, and colleagues around the world!

Getting Started Using Skype

In order to make full use of Skype, you will need an **internet connection** and a computer with a **microphone** and **web camera**. Most new laptops and desktop monitors come with a camera built-in as well as an internal microphone (located on the computer). If your computer is lacking either of these features, they can be reasonably purchased (webcams for less than \$50 and headsets with earphones and a microphone for less than \$30.) Even if your computer has an internal microphone, you may wish to purchase a headset for privacy purposes.

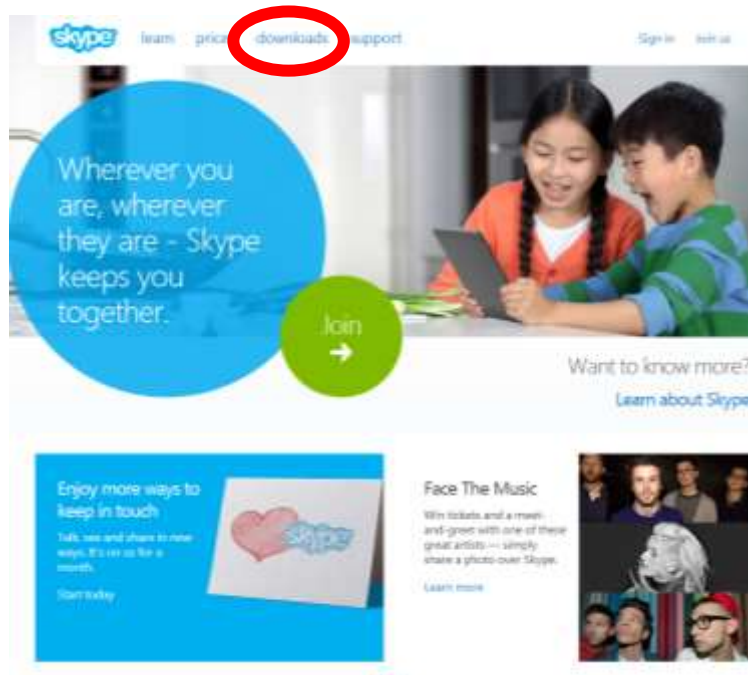
¹ From: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype>

² From: http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/voicefaxoverip/g/bldef_voip.htm

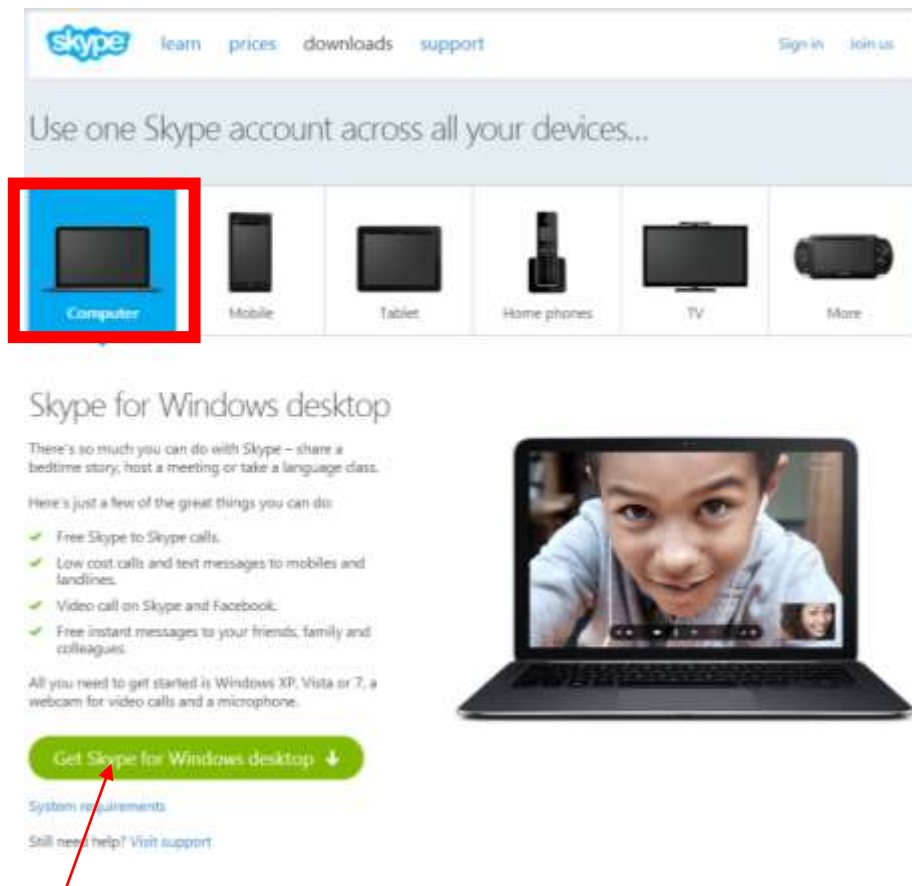


Downloading the software: Before you can use Skype, you will need to download and install the software on your computer. To download Skype:

1. Go to <http://www.skype.com>.
2. Click on **downloads** at the top of the webpage:



3. Select your device:



skype learn prices downloads support Sign in Join us

Use one Skype account across all your devices...

Computer Mobile Tablet Home phones TV More

Skype for Windows desktop

There's so much you can do with Skype – share a bedtime story, host a meeting or take a language class.

Here's just a few of the great things you can do:

- ✓ Free Skype to Skype calls.
- ✓ Low cost calls and text messages to mobiles and landlines.
- ✓ Video call on Skype and Facebook.
- ✓ Free instant messages to your friends, family and colleagues.

All you need to get started is Windows XP, Vista or 7, a webcam for video calls and a microphone.


Get Skype for Windows desktop ↓

System requirements

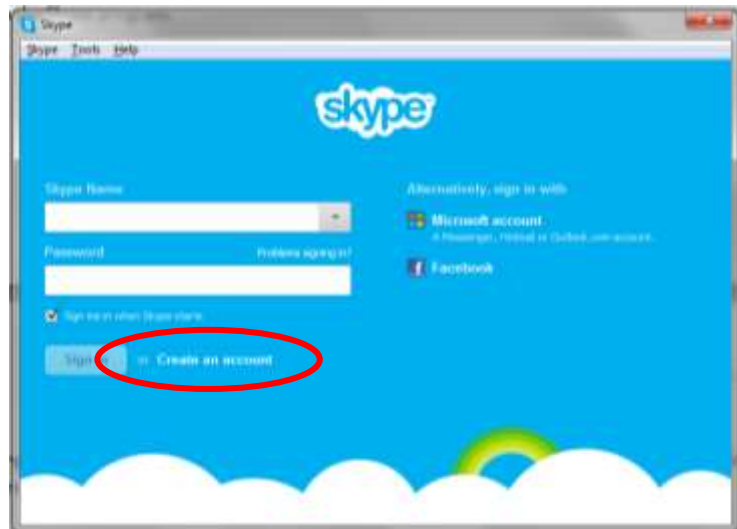
Still need help? Visit support

4. Click **Get Skype**.

5. Once the file has downloaded, open it and follow the instruction prompts to finish installing Skype.

6. Once Skype is installed, you will see this icon on your desktop: . Double-click on the icon to launch the Skype program. (If you do not see a desktop icon, click on the start menu and search for Skype or look in your applications folder).

7. The Skype login screen will then be displayed. If you already have a Skype account, you can sign in now. If you need to register for Skype, click on **Create an Account**:



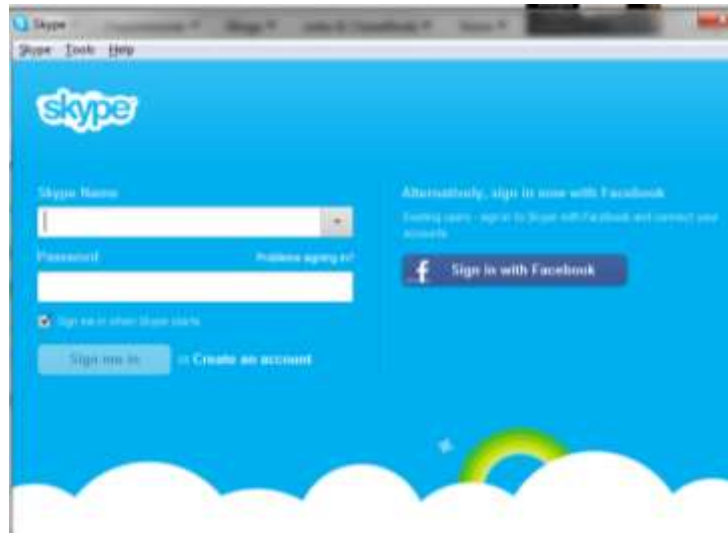
8. If you clicked **Create an Account**, a web browser will open with a registration form. Fill out the form to create your **Skype Name** (username) and **password**:

A screenshot of the 'Create an account or sign in' registration form. The form is titled 'Create an account or sign in' and includes a sub-header: 'It only takes a minute or two - then you'll be ready to call your friends for free once you've downloaded and installed Skype.' Below the title are 'Sign in' and 'Create an account' buttons. A yellow banner offers to 'Register for Skype using your Facebook account' with a 'Connect with Facebook' button. The form fields are organized into sections: 'Personal information' with fields for 'First name', 'Last name', 'Your email address', and 'Repeat email'; 'Profile information' with fields for 'Birth date' (Day, Month, Year), 'Gender', 'Country' (United States), 'City', 'Language' (English), and 'Mobile phone number' (Country: United States, Area Code: +1, and Phone Number).

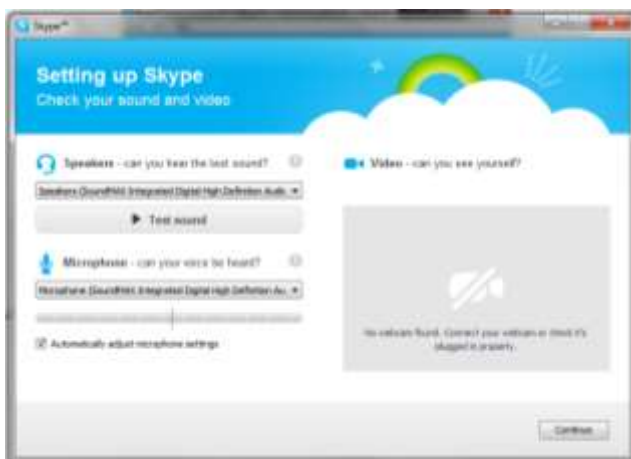
After you have filled out your form, click:

I agree - Continue

9. Now that Skype is installed and you have created an account, sign in using your **Skype Name** (username) and **Password** that you selected when you created your account:

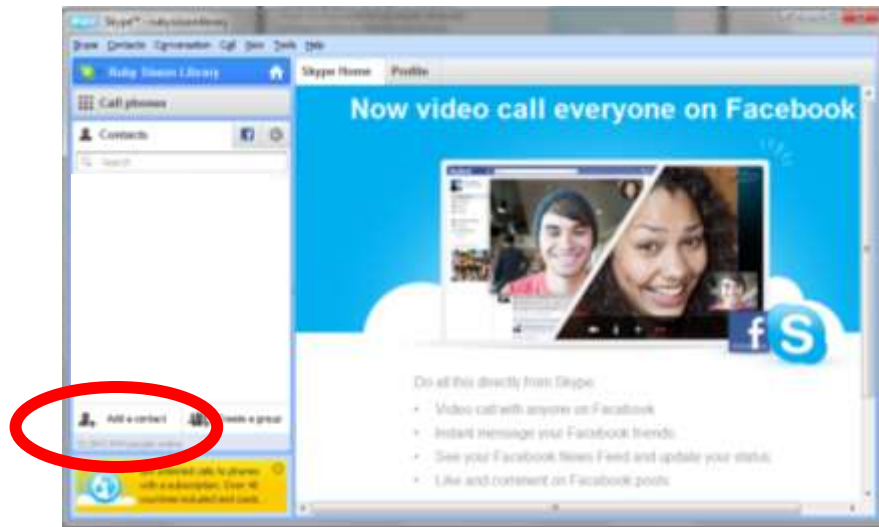


10. You will then be prompted to check the sound and video quality of your computer as well as add a profile photo, so that others can locate you on Skype. Follow the instructions provided by Skype:

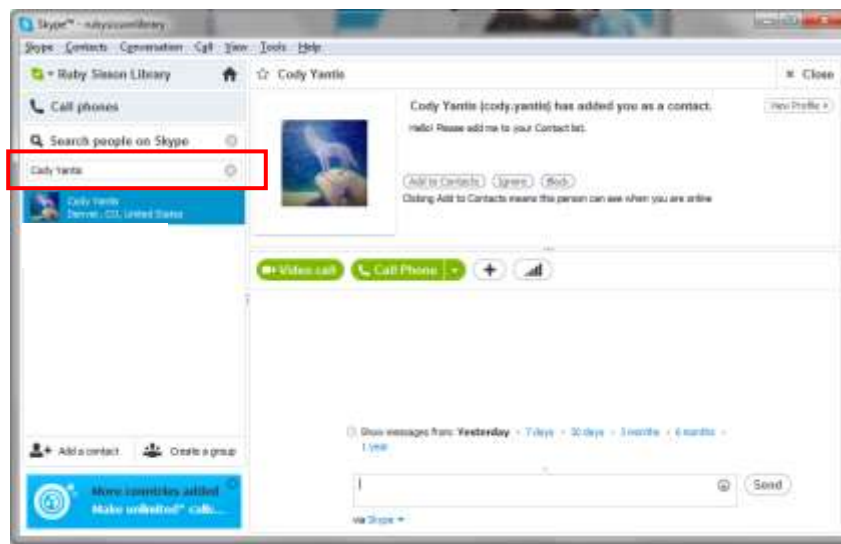


Finding People on Skype

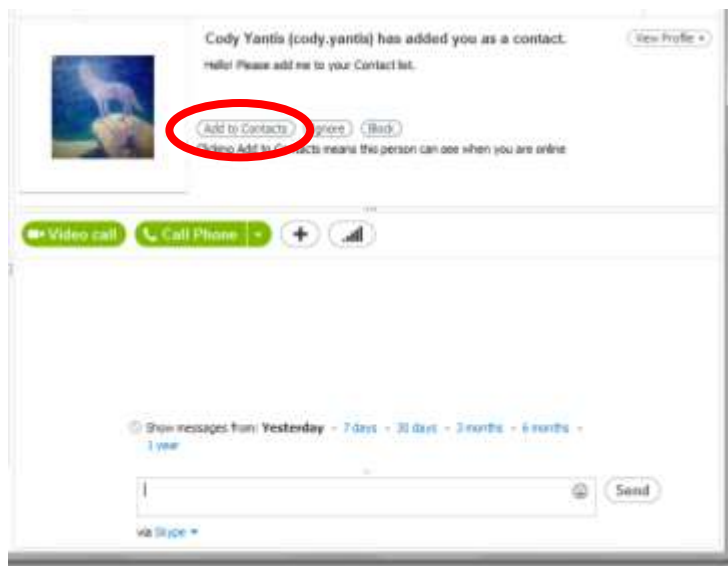
Before you can place a video call, you'll need to add people to your contacts. To get started, click **Add a Contact**:



The easiest way to locate another Skype user is to search using their **Skype Name** or **email address**, as those are unique. If you don't know their Skype Name or email, there are a variety of other ways to locate users. Below we'll search by name:





Once you've found the correct contact, click **Add to Contacts**:



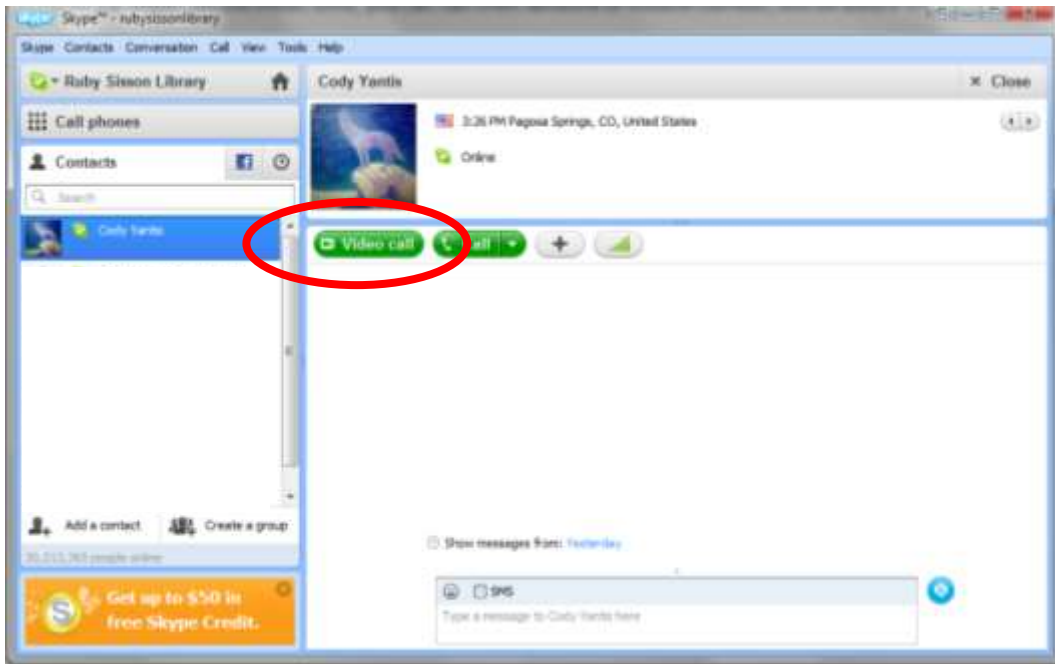
Your contact will then receive a message that you would like to connect with them, which they can approve or ignore. Once the contact has approved your request, they will appear in your contacts list and you can call them for free via Skype. (In the meantime, you can call their landline or mobile number, but be aware that this costs.)

Placing a Video Call via Skype

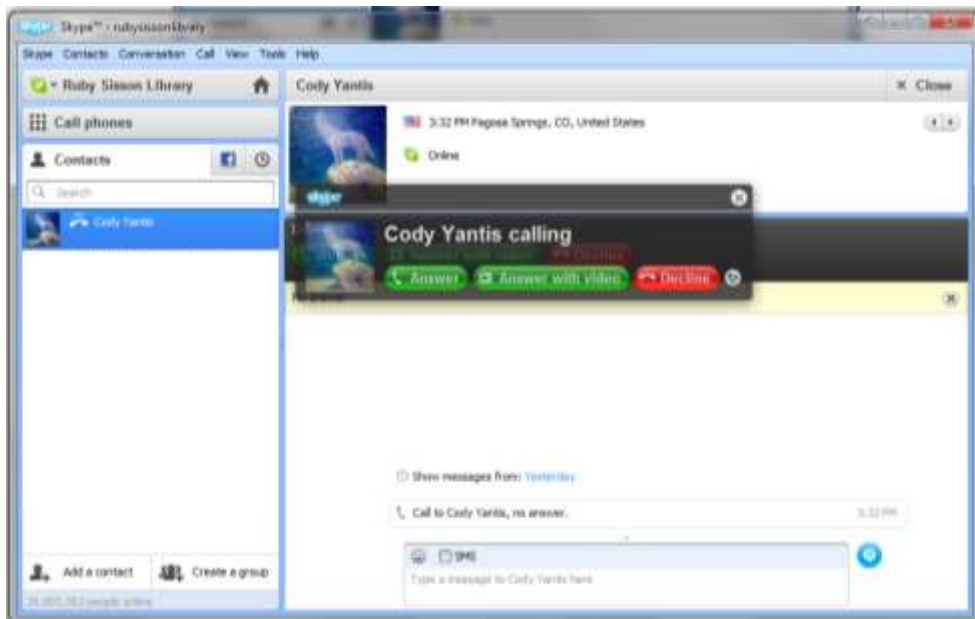
Before you try to video call someone, check to make sure that they are **Online**. If the green logo next to their contact name looks like this: , then they are **Offline** (a.k.a. unavailable for a video call). If their logo looks like this: , then they are **Online** and ready to chat!



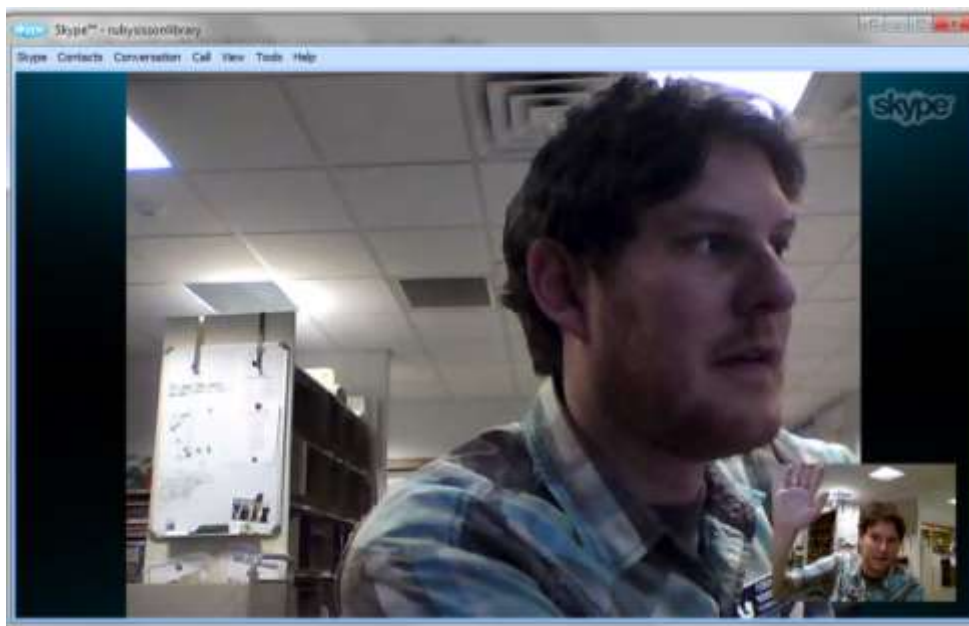
To place a video call, click on your contact, and then click on **Video Call**:



Here's how it will look to the person you are calling:



Once they answer, you will see and hear them! It should look something like this (the larger image will be of the person you are talking to, and you can see how you look to them by checking the smaller picture in the lower right):



Hover your mouse over the bottom of the screen, and a number of buttons will appear. Here's what they do:



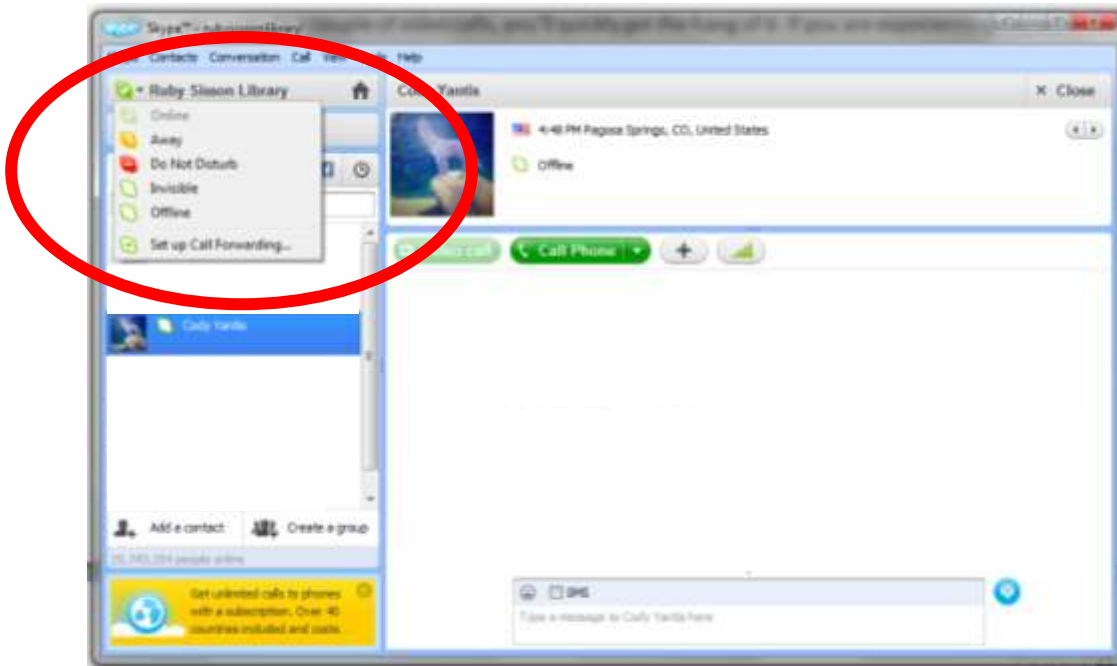
Show Contacts Show IM Turn off your Video Mute your Mic Send a File End Call Call Quality Info Expand to Full Screen

Once you've made a couple of video calls, you'll quickly get the hang of it.

Tip: If you are experiencing any technical issues, check your mic and web cam (make sure they are firmly plugged in) and also your internet connection. If connection problems continue, you can turn off the video (which uses the most bandwidth [internet connection speed]) and just talk via Skype. You may also wish to end your current call and call back—just like phones, sometimes you get a bad connection!

Keep in mind that, when you are logged into Skype, if you list yourself as **Online**, others will assume you are available and ready to chat. You can change your status by clicking on the down-arrow next to your username:





What Else Can I Do on Skype?

You can use Skype on more than just your computer. Skype is available as an iPhone/iPad and Android phone/tablet app. Visit the app store on your device to download the Skype app and sign in with your Skype name and password.

In addition to video calls, you can also use Skype to **call landline and mobile telephones** (for a fee) as well as to **instant message (aka “chat”)**. But that’s not all! Skype also allows you to:

- ✓ Send text (SMS) messages
- ✓ Transfer Files
- ✓ Conference Call (Group Video Call)

And more! If you are curious about any of these additional features, let me know and I’ll show you how they work.

