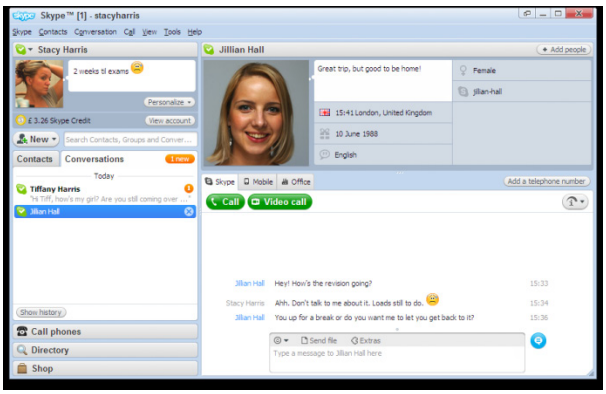
Description

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a general term for a family of transmission technologies for delivery of voice communications over IP. VoIP services convert your voice into a digital signal that travels over the Internet. If you are calling a regular phone number, the signal is converted to a regular telephone signal before it reaches the destination. *VoIP can allow you to make a call directly from a computer,* a special VoIP phone, or a traditional phone connected to a special adapter. In addition, wireless "hot spots" in locations such as airports, parks, and cafes allow you to connect to the Internet and may enable you to use VoIP service wirelessly.



Some VoIP services only allow you to call other people using the same service. *Skype* offers two pricing/calling formats: 1) free between *Skype* "members"; and 2) fee-based to telephone numbers, including local, long distance, mobile, and international numbers, which are similar to "old fashioned by the minute" price schedules. Also, while some VoIP services, including *Skype,* only work over your computer or a special VoIP phone, other services allow you to use a traditional phone connected to a VoIP adapter.

General Strengths & Weaknesses

UMMS users report the general (and often *presumed*) strength that VoIP technology is "*…better than not being there…"* and, that a good use may be "*…as distance learning … to other programs in other places in the country."*

General weaknesses associated with VoIP technology include 1) software requirement and equipment requirements (e.g., headset), 2) internet access and speed, and 3) relatively steep learning curve.

One UMMS user reported success *hosting a guest speaker via Skype in a small group seminar*.

Peer Resources

Sheldon Benjamin
Patricia Franklin
Roy Guharoy

UMMS Information Services Support

User Requirements: Skype registration; installation of free, downloadable Skype software; "headset" microphone; a relatively fast internet connection; and web cam for video broadcasting.

note: ADOBE Connect Meeting and Wimba have "Skype-y" features such that meeting members are able to interact via audio and or video when equipped with headset and webcam; both are supported by UMMS IS Academic and Research Computing Services.

note*: *UMMS does not support Skype currently.

For more information:

FCC website

Voice over Internet Protocol. (2009, December 11). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 16:22, December 14, 2009, from *http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Voice_over_Internet_Protocol&oldid=331048498*