



Web 2.0 for Communication

SVEA TRAINING MODULES

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Introduction

This module is designed to introduce and develop an understanding and use of Web 2.0 communications on the Internet. It is aimed at teachers with little or no experience in using Web 2.0 communications tools and will demonstrate the key features of each and how they can benefit both teaching and learning.

There are five sessions in the module:

Session 1 – An Introduction to Web 2.0 Communications

This session provides an overview of commonly used Web 2.0 communication tools: Skype, Chat, Instant Messaging and Forums. The session will also give some typical examples of the use of these technologies, including their use in education.

Session 2 – Voice and Video Communications

This session provides guidance on the use of Skype, one of the most popular web 2.0 voice and video communications services. It will enable you to set up a Skype account, set up and test your sound and video equipment, and gain experience in their use in an educational context.

Session 3 - Chat & Instant Messaging

This session examines two further methods of communications using web 2.0 tools. It follows on from the previous session on voice and video communications and looks at real-time text communications. The methods to be considered here are intended for 'synchronous' communications where the sender and receiver are online and participating at the same time. You will be invited to try out these methods of communications.

Session 4 - Discussion Forums

This session will introduce the general features of discussion forums and will demonstrate how you can set up your own discussion groups. It will concentrate on the use of Google Groups, one of the most popular Web 2.0 collaboration tools, and will enable you to gain experience of its use.

Session 5 – The Use of Web 2.0 Communications in Education

This session looks at some suggested activities for the educational use of Web 2.0 communications tools. It introduces you to websites set up by organisations like Google and Skype specifically to support the use of their services by educational institutions and invites you to explore the resources they provide.

Session 1 - An Introduction to Web 2.0 Communications

Introduction

This session is designed to raise your awareness of the different types of Web 2.0 communication available and how they are being used across the Internet. The session will also provide examples of how these communications tools have been used in the support of teaching and learning.

Before computing developed in the second half of the 20th century, personal distance communications was mainly limited to the telephone and postal services. With the advent of computing and the Internet came communications by Fax, email and, for government, business and education, the first generation of videoconference services.

Online communications became widely available with the development of Web 2.0 services. Voice and video communications, chat rooms, instant messaging and discussion forums are now available to anyone. A key feature is that many of the services are free to use.

A rich variety of communications tools offers significant benefits to teachers and learners in the way education is supported. This session will introduce some of the most popular and effective online services.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, you will be aware of:

- Voice and Video communications;
- Instant Messaging and Chat tools;
- Discussion Forums;
- The use of Web 2.0 communications in education.

What you have to do

This is an awareness raising session, so most of the resources are sources of information which you will be using in the following sessions to gain practical experience. The task, then, is to view the resources and gain an understanding of the variety and scope of online communications available.

1.1 Voice and Video Communications

The Internet is a global computer communications network. All modern computers are Internet enabled, often with a wireless connection, and hence the users can communicate with each other using the services available.

The most widely used voice and video communications service currently available is Skype. It is this service that will be described here and you will be shown how to set it up and use it in Session 2.

Have a look at [this video](#) to get a good overview of what Skype has to offer.



In Summary

- Skype is free software you can download to your computer;
- You can use Skype to talk direct, at no cost, from anywhere in the world;
- Skype also offers a free HD video conferencing facility;
- Skype also has Chat and Instant Messaging services

The [Skype website](#) has excellent guides, videos and tutorials to help you set up a Skype account. The site also has tutorials on the more advanced features such as videos calling and group conferences. It really is worth spending some time looking through the resources on offer. We will be looking in detail at this in Session 2.

For this new application there is a [video tutorial](#) on how to use Skype for those new to the application.

The main communication features of Skype are voice and video communications. However, it also has the ability to send instant messages and provides a chat facility. These functions will be described in the next section.

1.2 Chat & Instant Messaging

Online chat can refer to any kind of communication over the Internet, but primarily refers to direct text-based one-on-one chat or group chat using a tool such as instant messenger. The term chat implies informal communication, this really is the essence of chat / instant messaging.

Instant Messaging and Chat are forms of real-time direct text-based communication between two or more people using personal computers or other devices through a shared client such as Google or MSN Messenger. A Chat tool is an online service that allows two or more people to communicate through text messages that appear in sequence in a chat window. The interchange of messages typically takes place between the participants when they are online at the same time.

[The website of E-language](#) gives a good explanation of how Chat tools work.

Instant messaging

Instant messages are typically used for individual message communications rather than the synchronous dialogue of a Chat session.

There are many instant messaging applications you can download from the Internet, one of the most popular being MSN. However, many applications you are already using will have instant messaging built in. For example, Facebook, Gmail, Beebo and Skype all have instant messaging capabilities that allow you to chat with your friends.

The practicalities of both Instant Messaging and Chat will be covered later in the module.

[The website of E-language](#) gives a good explanation of instant messaging while [a video](#) explains how Instant Messaging works in practice.

**To Summarise:**

- Instant messaging is an almost instant way to send a text message, talk on the internet and transfer files
- To use instant messaging you will need to choose an Instant messaging client like MSN
- When you login your Instant Messaging client you will see all your friends who are online.
- Instant messaging will show you the status of your friends. For example, if they are online, offline, busy, asleep etc.

The next section in this session looks at Discussion Groups and Forums.

1.3 Discussion Groups & Forums

An Internet forum is another way of communicating on the Internet through text-based communication. Discussion forums differ from Chat sessions in that entries are archived and can be accessed after the conversation has finished. Forums allow people to post discussions about topics of interest.

Unlike instant messaging or chat, forums give time to the user for thought and reflection and thus produces much more considered responses. Because a forum sets up asynchronous discussion over a specified time period, forums can handle more complicated areas of discussion including the development of ideas. The asynchronous nature of forums allows participants to post contributions to a discussion and see other participants' comments without having to be online simultaneously.

Forums enable you to access peoples' expertise in a particular subject area. For example, it is common for people to find solution to a computer problems or electrical hardware problems on Internet forum. Forums allow people to share their expertise and experiences so that people can not only access them but also add to and comment on them. However, it is worth bearing in mind that anyone can set up a forum on the Internet and that what you're accessing isn't always necessarily expert or informed information or opinion.

[A video](#) describes what Internet forums are and how they're used. The video also goes on to explain what Internet communities are and how forums facilitate them.

To summarize:**Forums**

- Forums are places on the internet where people can trade ideas and information;
- Forums allow many people to talk about what they know and their experiences;
- Forums are online communication across many users, usually through text and sometimes graphics and videos.

Internet Community

- An internet community is a group of people with common interests communicating using the internet;
- Many community forums are maintained by special interest groups who are keen to share information on subjects of mutual interest;
- An internet community breaks down geographical limitations and allows like-minded people to talk about like-minded topics across the world.

Discussion Forums in practice

Guidance on setting up and using discussion forums will be given in Session 4 of this module. To conclude this introductory session you are invited to share your views in the forum set up for the module.

1.4 Session Outcomes and Discussion

This session has introduced you to some of the most commonly used Web 2.0 communication tools: Skype, Instant Messaging and Forums. All the communication tools explored offer the support the development of groups and facilitate opportunities for interactive exchange and collaboration. Each of the tools enables online communications in a different way and no doubt you will already be thinking about how they can be used in the support of learners.

Skype allows communications across geographic boundaries that can be used to enhance a sense of multiculturalism within students. Skype can facilitate global partnerships between groups and provide access to experts, practitioners and other learners.

Instant messaging offers immediate communication between people and has been shown to foster closer relationships between students and instructor and help students work to deadlines. Instant messaging achieves this by facilitating more flexible working and allowing students to approach staff more easily and ask questions that they were unable to ask in a classroom setting.

Forums offer an opportunity for student to work together on projects in groups and participate in on-going discussions that are independent of the students' locations. Forums allow all students to actively engage with their learning through interaction with their peers and the construction of knowledge through a shared experience. A forum creates equality for opportunity and accessibility to discussion that the classroom setting sometimes doesn't allow. Students, who many not respond quickly to classroom question, have time for reflective thought.

Some questions to consider:

- What do you think about Web 2.0 applications and the issues raised in this session?
- Do you agree with the statements made about potential benefits and application in teaching?
- Are there any views that you particularly disagree with?
- What impact would the implementation of Web 2.0 communication tools have on your institution?



- What are the key benefits that you think it can offer, both for you as a practitioner and for your learners?

You are invited to share your view on these issues in the [discussion blog](#).

It is hoped that this session has raised your awareness of Web 2.0 communications. The following sessions will introduce you to some of the most popular web communications tools.

Session 2 – Voice & Video Communications

Introduction

Having been introduced to a range of web 2.0 communications tools in the first session of this module, the following sessions will cover the practicalities of setting up and using these communications tools. The final session 5 will provide an overview of how they are being used in education.

This session will cover the first area of communications that was introduced: voice and video. There are a number of options available, but the session will concentrate on Skype, one of the most widely used online services.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session you will have:

- Set up your own Skype account;
- Set up and tested your sound and video equipment;
- Communicated with colleagues using voice and video;
- Communicated using the Skype IM/Chat service;

What you have to do

You will be given guidance on the setting up and use of a Skype account. You will also be expected to set up appropriate sound and video equipment so you can communicate in this way. Such equipment is inexpensive and often comes as part of the computer itself. You will then have exercises to complete that will give you experience in the use of voice and video communications.

2.1 Creating a Skype Account

This section will guide you through setting up a Skype account. Once you have created a Skype account you will be able to start communicating, at no cost, with people over the Internet. Once you have gained experience and confidence using Skype you can start implementing classroom activities that suit your learners. Setting up a Skype account is really very easy, and the Skype website offers you all the information and support you will need.

To create a Skype account you will need to go to the [Skype](#) website. From the home page click on the Join Skype button at the top of the page

Buy Credit Sign In

Join Skype

From here, fill in the Create an Account screen with your details and an account will be created for you.

How do you intend to use Skype?

Skype Name*

Suggestions
☐ new.user296
☐ new.user813
☐ new.user7596

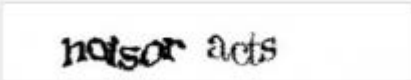
Note: only choose a name you have a right to use.

Password* Repeat password*

Between 6-20 characters, include Latin letters and numbers. Note: no-one else can see your password.

Send me Skype news and promotions about new features, products and other Skype-related information.

☒ By email



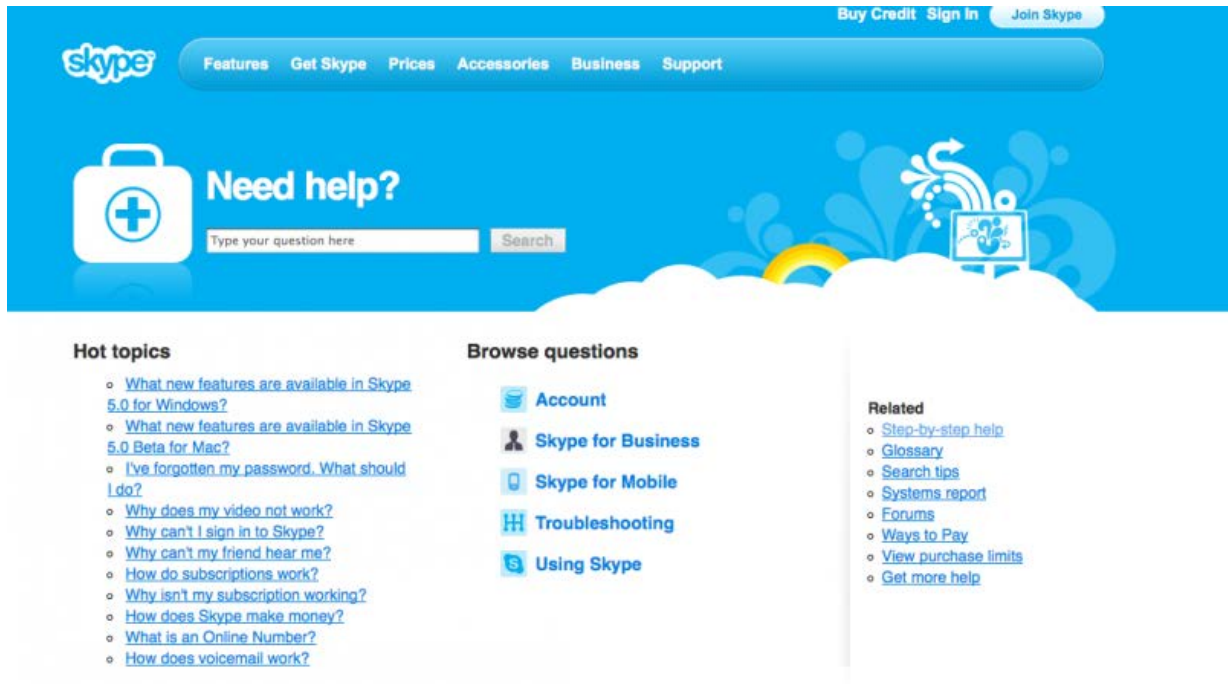
Can't read the text in the box?

Type the text above here*

Yes, I have read and I accept the [Skype End User License Agreement](#), the [Skype Terms of Services](#) and the [Skype Privacy Statement](#)

When you have set up an account you will be prompted to download the Skype application onto your computer. Once you have completed this you will be able to add contacts to your Skype account and begin communicating with them.

Skype has a wide range of supporting materials and videos on the website to help new users. These are worth looking at as you develop your experience Skype functionality.



Guidance video

You can find a video [here](#) explains how to setup a Skype account and should help to underpin the information you have gained from the Skype website.

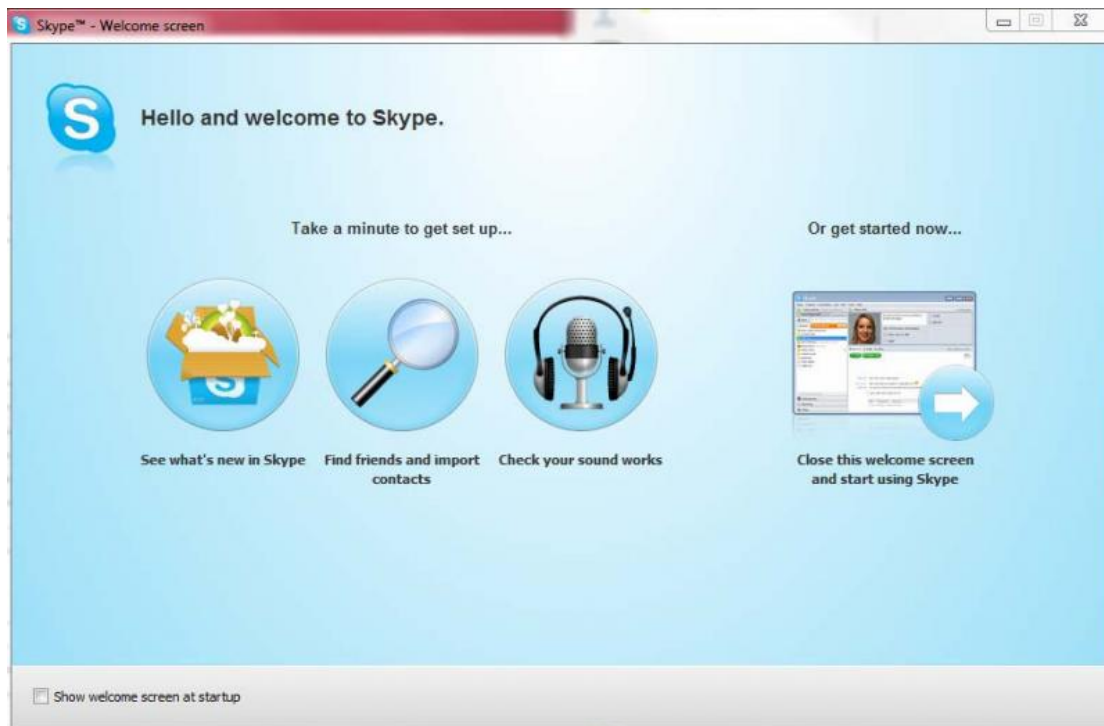
In Summary

- Choose your operating system, e.g. Windows
- Click the Download button
- Save the file. Saving in a download folder makes finding the file later much easier
- Once downloaded, double click on the saved file and the installation will begin
- Once installed you will be prompted to choose a user name and password
- Using your real name as a user name is a good idea when using Skype if you want people to be able to find you.

The next section explains how to use Skype for voice and video communications.

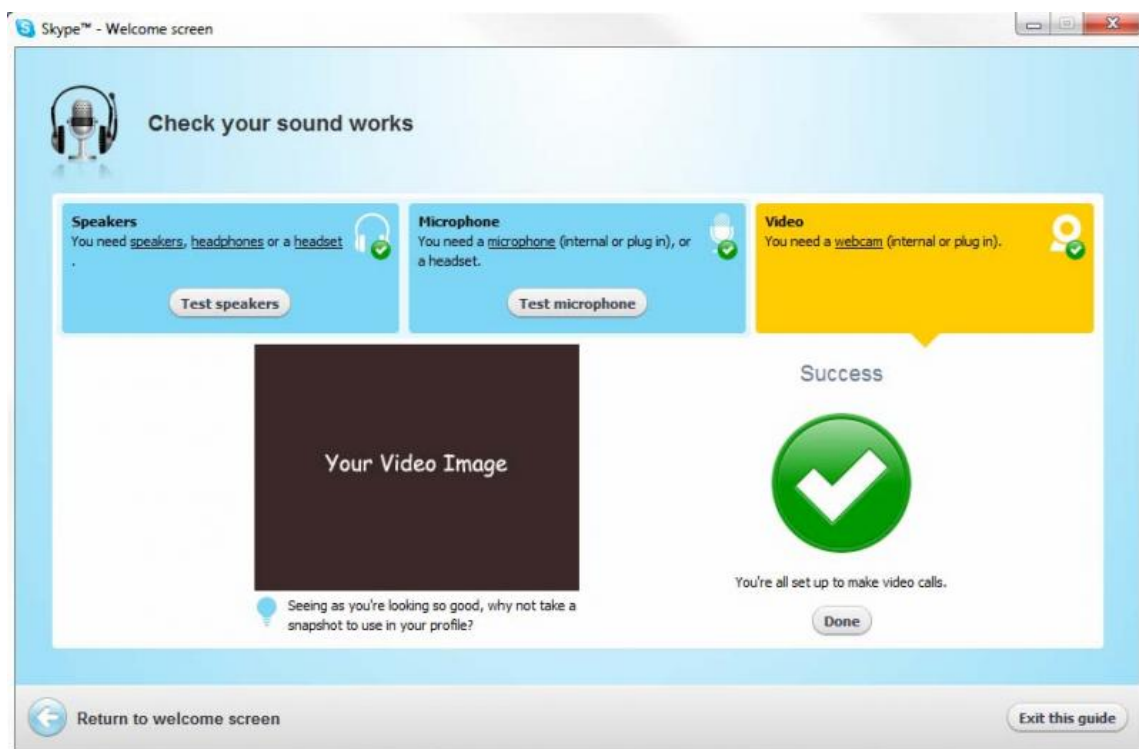
2.2 Getting Started with Skype

When you have created your Skype account and downloaded the application to your computer, you will see a welcome screen that will help you get started in its use:

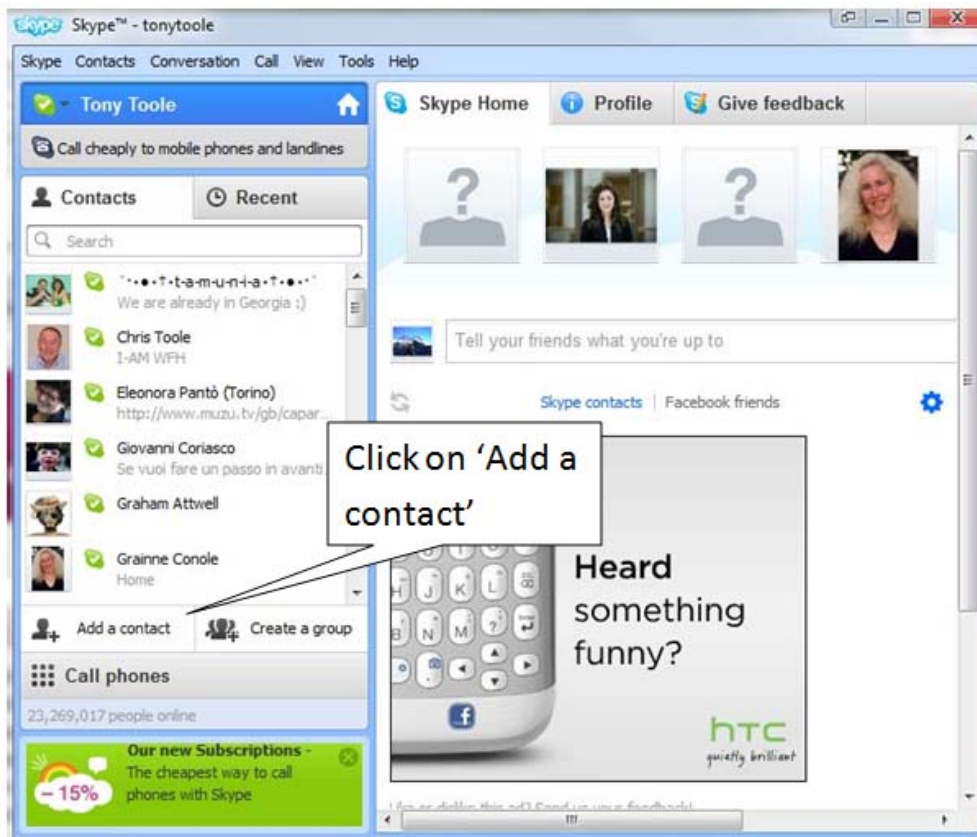


In order to make voice and video calls you will need a microphone, speakers or headset, and a webcam. Many people find it most convenient to use a headset that includes both headphones and a microphone. These are inexpensive, as are webcams that typically plug into a USB port and sit on the top of the computer screen.

With both headset and webcam connected, you can then 'Check your sound works' by clicking on the button. The window below will appear which invites you to test your speakers/headphones by playing a sound, your microphone by indicating a sound level when you speak, and your video by displaying your webcam picture.



The final thing to do when getting started with Skype is to add contacts to your contact list so you can communicate with them. They need to have Skype accounts as well, of course. The easiest way to do this is to open the Skype application you downloaded and click on 'Add a contact'.

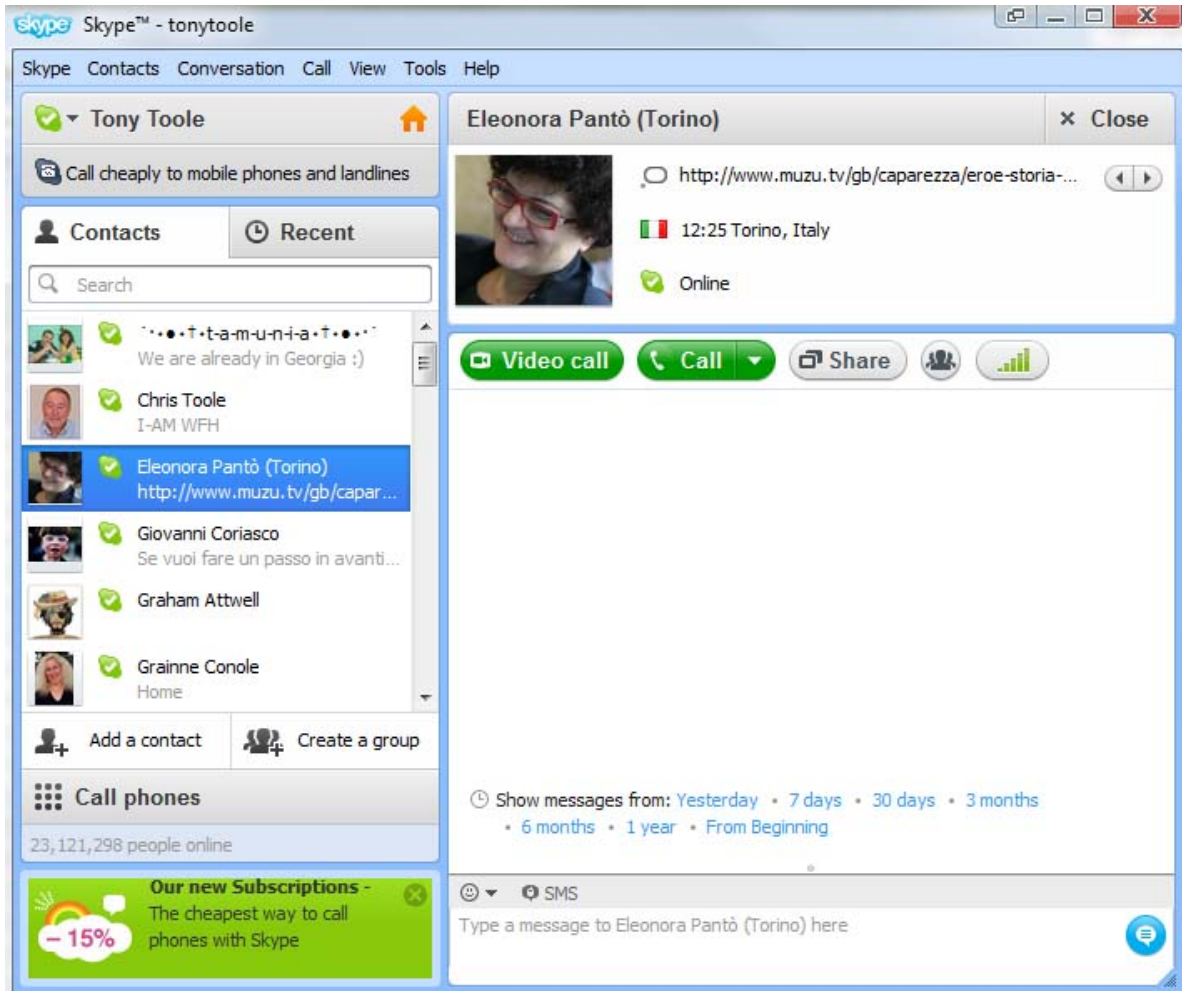


A new window will open that will invite you to enter the name, email address or Skype name of someone you would like to add as a contact. Skype will then search for that person, and, if they have an account, will allow you to send them an invitation to become a contact. When they accept, you will then be able to call them.

A screenshot of the 'Add a contact' dialog box in Skype. The dialog box has a blue background with a white border. It contains the following fields and buttons:

- Add a contact** (Title)
- If they're on Skype too, calls are free.** (Text)
- Enter all the details you know:** (Text)
- Email** (Text input field)
- Phone number** (Text input field with a dropdown menu showing '+44')
- Full name** (Text input field)
- Skype Name** (Text input field)
- + Add** (Green button)

When you have the contacts in your contact list you can call them. Click on their name in the list and then select either 'Call' for just voice communications or 'Video call' for voice and video.



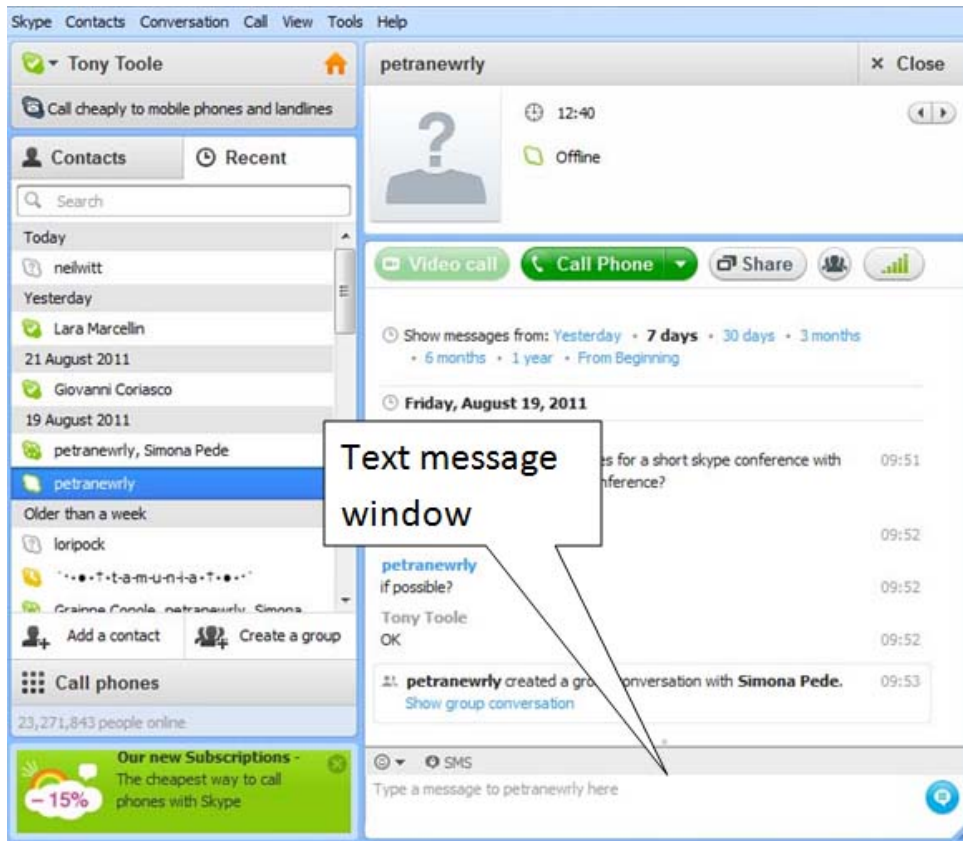
You are now able to practice using Skype for your voice and video calls. It is suggested that you continue to populate your contacts list with colleagues and friends and experience how convenient (and inexpensive) it is to communicate anywhere in the world.

The next session will introduce you to the Skype Chat and Instant Messaging functions.

2.3 Chat & Instant Messaging with Skype

The next session in this module will introduce a number of popular web 2.0 Chat and Instant Messaging services. However, as noted in the previous session, applications such as Skype also have similar functionality. We will conclude this session by describing the Skype Chat tool as an introduction to that type of online communications.

When you select a contact in your contacts list, in the bottom of the main Skype window there will be a text box displayed where messages can be entered.



When you enter a text message in this box and press the Enter key, the message will be sent to the contact you selected. If they are online at the time, they will be instantly alerted to your incoming message. If they are not online, then they will see the message the next time they open Skype on their computer.

As well as sending individual messages like this, it is possible to use the same facility as a chat tool. When you are online at the same time as one of your contacts (this will be indicated by the green button to the left of the contact name) you can engage in a real time online text-based chat. This can be a very quick and convenient way of sharing information as an alternative to an email exchange of text messages. It is also a way of communicating in real time on Skype when you don't have sound or video equipment available.

To conclude this session you are now invited to share your experience and views on the discussion forum.

2.4 Conclusions and Discussion

You have been introduced to Skype in this session as one of the most widely used Web 2.0 applications for voice and video communications. You have been shown how to register an account and set up Skype for use on your computer. You have also been encouraged to experiment with the use of Skype and gain experience in its use.

What are your impressions of its use and value? Is it something that you are likely to use, both socially and at work? What do you think of its potential as a tool for supporting learners? Are there likely to be benefits for work-based learning programmes?

Share your views in the [discussion forum](#).

Session 3 – Chat & Instant Messaging

Introduction

This session examines two further methods of communications using web 2.0 tools. It follows on from the previous session on voice and video communications and looks at real-time text communications. You will probably be very familiar with the use of email for day-to-day text-based communications, both at work and socially, and may well be an experienced Facebook user for sharing text-based social information. However, both of these methods are what is referred to as 'asynchronous' in that the times when the messages are sent and received are different.

The methods to be considered here are intended for more 'synchronous' communications where the sender and receiver are online and participating at the same time. You will be invited to try out these methods of communications and reflect on their value in the support of learners.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session you will have:

- Been introduced to a number of Chat and Instant Messaging tools;
- Gained practical experience in their use;
- Have had the opportunity to reflect on their value in education.

What you have to do

You are invited to read through all the resources and to set up accounts for each of the communications services covered. Having experimented with each of the web 2.0 tools, you will then be invited to comment on your views of their value in your area of teaching.

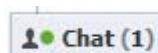
3.1 Facebook Chat & Messaging

If you use the Facebook social networking site, or have already completed the Facebook module in this series of Web 2.0 Tools for Teachers guides, you will be aware that it is designed for social communications. As well as posting messages that are shared with your Facebook friends, you also have the ability to have real-time chats with friends who are online.

You can find a video [here](#) that summarises how this is done.

In Summary

- When you're in Facebook, you will see who is available for a chat in the list of friends on the left of the screen. You can also find the same information by clicking on the



button at the bottom right hand corner of the screen;

- By clicking on a name, the chat window will open and you are able to type messages and view the responses;
- This is illustrated in the following screen shot:



- Messages are entered by typing in the text box at the bottom of the Chat window.

The messaging services of Facebook and similar social networking sites are also made available by other popular web 2.0 applications. The Windows Live Messenger service, for example, uses the Facebook Chat service, as shown in the following section.

3.2 Chat and Messaging with Windows Live Messenger

One of the most popular Instant Messaging services is Windows Live Messenger. This includes the widely used MSN Messenger service and automatically provides connectivity to your friends and contacts in other social network applications. It is provided by Microsoft and is available to be downloaded from their [website](#).

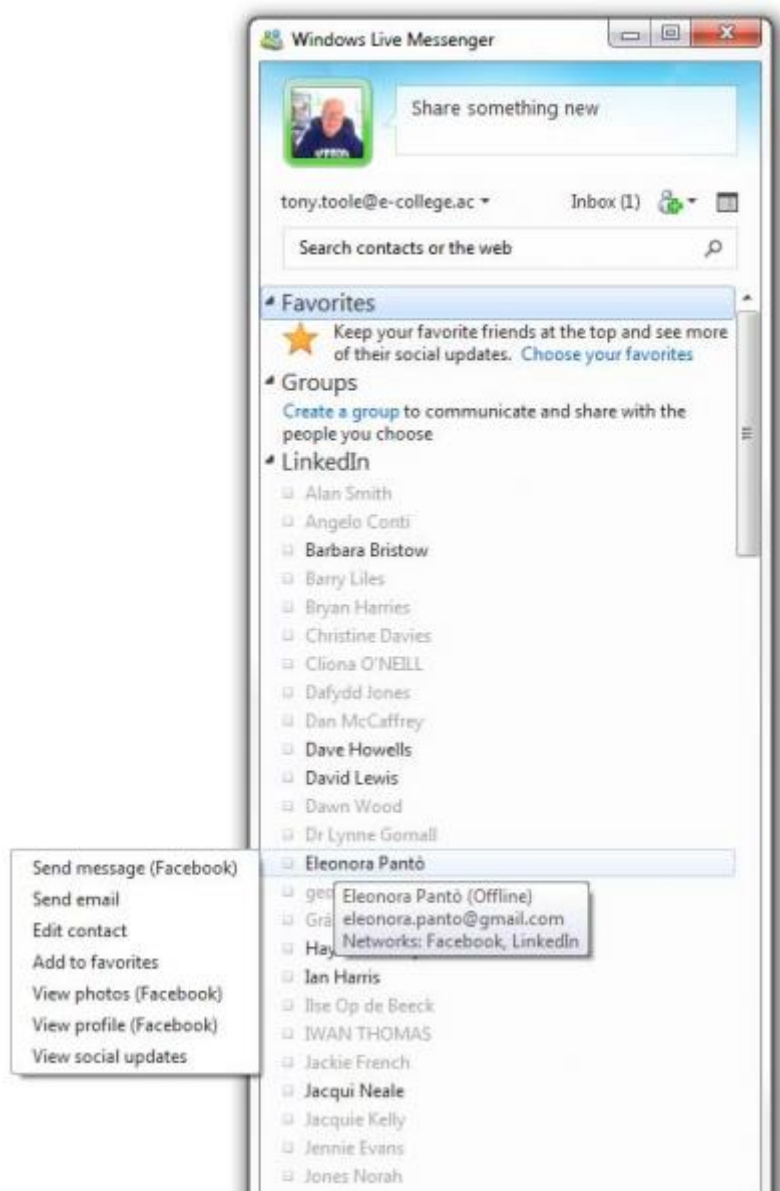
Windows Live Messenger 2011



When downloaded and installed, the program can then be launched. You will be invited to sign in:

The image shows the Windows Live Messenger sign-in window. It has a light blue background with a gradient. The title "Sign in to Windows Live Messenger" is at the top. Below the title is a placeholder for a user's profile picture. To the right of the picture are input fields for the email address (containing "tony.toole@e-college.ac") and the password (masked with dots). Below the password field is a "Forgot your password?" link. Underneath is a "Sign in as:" section with a green square icon and the text "Available". Below that are two checked checkboxes: "Remember my ID and password" with a "Forget me" link, and "Sign me in automatically" with an "Options" link. At the bottom of the sign-in section are "Sign in" and "Cancel" buttons. Below the buttons is a link for "Don't have a Windows Live ID? Sign up". At the very bottom of the window are links for "Privacy statement", "Terms of use", "Server status", and "About".

If you don't have a Windows Live ID, then click on the link and follow the instructions to create one, then log in. When displayed in 'Compact Mode' the window will show all your friends and contacts from the networks you are signed up to. You can click on any of the names to send a message:



By clicking on 'Send a Message with Facebook' the Facebook message window will open and you will be able to send your communication.

Internet Messenger can also be used for chatting. You can find a video [here](#) that gives a good basic overview of how to use MSN for this purpose:

In Summary

- Firstly, you need to sign up for an Instant Messenger account
- Any offline instant messages you send or receive will be available the next time you or the recipient signs in
- Any message that you are send will have the sender names before the message they have sent
- You can invite friends to join in on a current conversation you are having

The final application to be covered in this session is Google Chat.

3.3 Google Chat and Messaging

Google's email, Gmail, also has a facility for chat and as Google mail is one of the most prolific email providers, it's worth looking at this facility. Google mail allows you to invite people from your contact list to chat and therefore engage in synchronous communication. You have the option of talking to people directly via chat or emailing.

You can find a video [here](#) that shows you how to invite someone to chat through Gmail

In Summary

To invite someone to chat in Gmail:

- Type the person's username in the search, add or invite box.
- If the person you are typing to contact is not in your contact list, type in their full email address.
- Click the Invite to Chat button to contact them.
- Your contact email will appear in a new window.
- Click Send Invites to invite the person to chat
- They will then receive an invitation from you in above their chat list.
- They will then click Yes to accept your invitation
- For the chat to continue they will click on your name to chat.

As has been seen in this session, most social networking applications have the ability for you to chat and send messages to friends and colleagues. To conclude the session, share your experience and views on the use of such communications in the discussion forum.

3.4 Conclusions and Discussion

This session has looked at a number of different web 2.0 Chat and Messaging services. It will have become obvious that these, together with the Skype functionality in the previous session, that such services are typically integrated within multi-functional social network applications.

It can be assumed that this trend for multi-functional communications integration will continue in the future and that the choice of use will be a matter of preference and the context on which it is used. As we have seen, Facebook, Skype and Google all have messaging and chat facilities. However, each also has a distinct functional focus: Facebook on social networking; Skype on voice and video communications; Google on information and application sharing.

All of these applications offer benefits in the delivery of education and support of learners. Chat and messaging services can bring added capacity to educational administration as well as teaching by providing flexible and easily accessible information distribution.

What do you think about the use of such services in your area of teaching? Do you have any experience in their use that you can share? Post your views on the [discussion forum](#).

The next session looks at the use of discussion forums for teaching.



Session 4 – Discussion Forums

Introduction

You will already be familiar with the use of discussion forums if you have completed any of the modules in this online programme. In each module and session you will have seen links to discussions about the subject being covered and will have been invited to contribute your own thoughts and opinions. These discussions are good examples of what forums are, what their purpose is and how they work. Discussion forums are online spaces where people with common interests can share information and opinions about specific subjects and gain mutual benefit from that activity.

This session will introduce the general features of discussion forums and will demonstrate how you can set up your own discussion groups. It will consider how this can be of value in vocational education and will give examples of educational discussion forums.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session you will have:

- Been introduced to the use and format of online discussion forums;
- Set up your own web 2.0 discussion forums;
- Considered their use in vocational education and training.

What you have to do

Following the introductory information in the first section you will be shown how to set up your own forums using two different web 2.0 services. You will be invited to gain experience in their use, explore how others have used them, and to share your thoughts using the module discussion forum.

4.1 Introduction to Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are online spaces where people can share information and opinions about subjects of common interest. There are many thousands of such online forums covering work, social and leisure issues where participants can find information, ask questions, share experiences and engage in discussion. It is not difficult to see how this could make a positive contribution to a programme of learning.

Forum structure and management

Typically a discussion forum will be structured around one main topic, under which there will be sub-topics (often called threads) which are concerned with specific detail. Participants respond to particular sub-topics and the discussion proceeds in an organic way that can have varying levels of control.

It is normal for a discussion forum to have a *Moderator/Administrator* who set the forum up in the first place and specified the subject of discussion. Groups can be closed or open and

participants can have rights of participation varying from read-only rights through to the posting of new topics and sub-topics. Participants can be invited or can self-register depending on the conditions of the forum.

The forum moderator, particularly in an educational context, would monitor postings and would ensure that all content was appropriate. Inappropriate postings would be deleted and, where necessary, participants suspended or banned. Any educational forum moderator would have a duty of care for younger learners, and would be responsible for the legal compliance of postings.

Posts, threads and comments

A post on a discussion forum normally introduces a new topic or sub-topic related to the overall forum subject area. Other participants who wish to respond with comments or further information would post these as comments, and the original post, together with all related comments, would form a thread.

The threads develop chronologically in a tree structure with other threads from the same main topic. In a loosely managed forum, threads may be allowed to conclude by themselves. In a more managed forum (particularly in education) threads may be time limited and closed by the moderator in a planned way.

Web 2.0 Discussion Forums

There are many different web 2.0 discussion forum applications available, both commercial and free. In the next section, Google Groups will be described as one of the leading forum providers. You will be shown how to set up forums and will gain experience of their use.

4.2 Google Groups

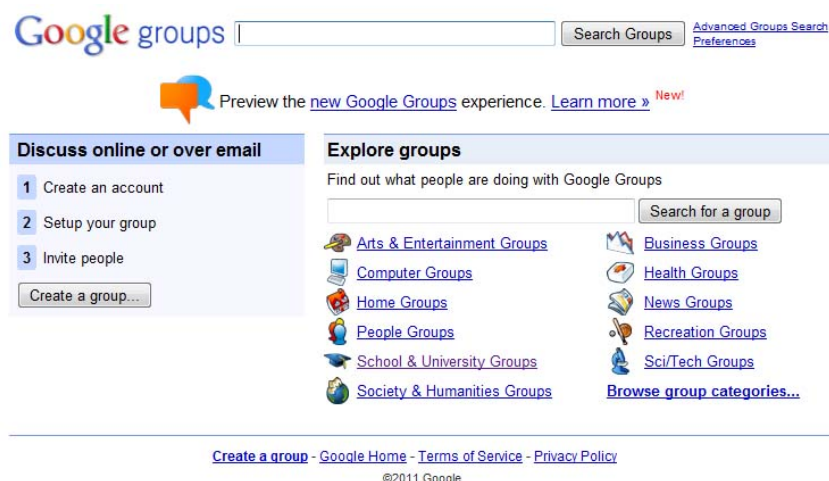


is a Web 2.0 service made available by Google for anyone to set up discussion forums on any subject and invite colleagues or friends to participate. To access the service and set up a

discussion:

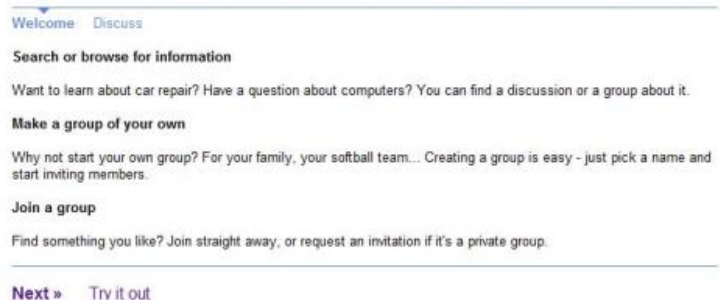
- Enter <http://groups.google.com/> in your browser

The Google Groups main window will appear




- Click on 'Create a Group'
- To find out more about the service click on 'Take a Tour'

Google Groups Tour: What can you do with Google Groups?



- If you don't have a Google account, then click on 'Create an Account' and follow the instructions
- Sign in to your account
- In the 'Create a Group' window, name your group and click 'Create my group'



Create a group

1 Set up group

2 Add members

Name your group

Create a group email address
@googlegroups.com

Group web address: <http://groups.google.com/group/>

Write a group description

Letters remaining: 300

☐ This group may contain adult content, nudity, or sexually explicit material. Before entering this group you will need to verify that you're 18 years of age or over.

Choose an Access level

☐ Public - Anyone can read the archives. Anyone can join, but only members can post messages.

☐ Announcement-only - Anyone can read the archives. Anyone can join, but only managers can post messages.

- In 'Add members' enter email addresses to invite people to the discussion
- Click on 'Start a new discussion topic'



- Enter a name for your discussion and a message to start the discussion
- Click on 'Post message'

Your message will be posted and all members of the group will be notified and invited to respond. It is suggested that you now experiment with Google Groups, setting up your own discussions and generally getting a feel for the way discussion forums work. When you are ready, share your experience and views in the discussion forum for this session.

4.3 Conclusions and Discussion

This session has invited you to consider the use of discussion forums in the context of your teaching, and has provided experience in the setting up and using discussion forums. If you have completed any of the other modules and sessions in these online modules, you will already be familiar with the discussion forums on this website, where you will have been sharing your views and experience.

What conclusions have you drawn about their use and value in education? Summarise your views in the forum for this session [in the discussion forum](#).

Session 5 – The Use of Web 2.0 Communications in Education

Introduction

Communications and Collaboration Tools

This module has introduced a number of communications and collaboration tools that can be used to support learners. You will have seen that companies like Google have made resources available for this purpose. [The website of Google Apps](#) takes this further. You are encouraged to explore the site to develop your ideas about how such services are developing and what use may be made of them in your area of teaching.

Global Collaboration with Skype

Like Google, Skype has also recognised its value in education and has created web resources to support collaboration between educators. [The website of Skype](#) provides a gateway to a wide range of activities that will help develop ideas how Skype can be used to enhance educational delivery and support.

Exploring Web 2.0 Communications

There are many more websites that will allow you to develop your knowledge of how web 2.0 communications tools are being used in education. [This website](#) is an excellent source of information and links.

To conclude this module on Web 2.0 communications, you are now invited to post your final comments on the discussion forum.

5.1 Web 2.0 Communications Discussion

In this module you have been introduced to a range of online communications tools and been encouraged to try them out. They included text, voice and video communications and, for the most part, were freely available services that anyone can use.

Many educational practitioners have seen the potential value these communications methods can bring to their support of learners. They offer additional and more flexible ways for students to request and receive help and advice when engaged with their learning outside the classroom. They also have great potential for collaborative and group work between students.

This can be of significant benefit for work-based learners who are developing their skills in the workplace and need flexibility to fit their learning activities around the demands of their job. The ability to go online to request and receive information and advice at the time it is needed rather than have to wait for the next scheduled face-to-face session would be a significant additional service in support of vocational education.

In vocational education, training advisors will typically visit the learners in their workplace for training and assessment activities. The use of online communications can add significant flexibility to this support and has the potential to make it much more cost effective. Of course, all of this would require changes in working practice by teachers, but a focus on improving professional practice through the use of assistive technologies is an expectation of modern education.



What are your thoughts on these issues? How do they map to your teaching and area of vocational education? Would it require a significant change in current practice to integrate online communications into your learner support system? Share your views in the [discussion blog](#).