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Topic: VoIP (ex. Skype)

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Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP): Describes a form of voice and multimedia (video) communication that takes place over the Internet. VoIP services use the connectedness of the Internet, as well as specific protocols, to place allow persons to communicate with each other, whether by voice "call" or video "call". There are many services today that provide this technology free, as well as with tiered pricing models.

One of the key advantages to this type of communication services is that costs for "calls" can be drastically reduced when compared to standard rates that are charged by traditional cellular and telephone companies for similar services. It also allows for calls to be made from various types of machines such as computers and tablets that are not traditionally used to place calls between people. Another is the ability to make "video" calls from a variety of different devices with the proper setup in place. In fact, some businesses and libraries have converted their complete phone solutions over to VoIP.

Technical Aspects
The basic requirements to initiate and maintain a VoIP "call" are:
- Computer devices (desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone) that are connected to the Internet
- Microphone for voice communication (built In on phones, as well as some laptops)
- Headphones or speakers to receive audio
- Webcam (only required if making a video call)
- VoIP software (both parties must use the same software/app to hold the call; or software using the same protocol)

Programming
VoiP can provide libraries with a great cost effective way to bring presentations and speakers to the general public. By utilizing VoIP tools, libraries can reduce overhead for travel, meals and other costs traditionally incurred for bringing speakers and presenters to our institutions. Likewise, it can open significant doors to presenters, authors, and others who may not be able to travel, or may be more willing to present to library groups if they can remain close to home (or quite literally in the comfort of their own home).

Services
The service in this respect is the software you will use to initiate and carry out the VoIP call. With most smartphones, the software for conducting these calls is usually integrated into the phone operating system (ex. Facetime for iOS, Google Talk for Android). However, there are also various "apps" that one can download for these devices to initiate VoIP calls. This is also the case for tablet computing devices as well.

Additionally, there is software and browser based tools available for traditional computers and laptops that allow the user to place VoIP calls, with Skype being the most popular. The following page provides a list of some popular VoIP clients available for various computing devices.

Resources
- Skype an Author Network - http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com/
- Skype and Libraries - http://ipl2.cci.fsu.edu/community/wiki/index.php/Skype_and_Libraries
- Using Skype for your next presentation - http://blogs.skype.com/enterprise/2011/03/skype_for_presentations.html
- VoIP (How Stuff Works.com) - http://computer.howstuffworks.com/ip-telephony.htm

VoIP Software/Services

Name	System Compatibility	Access	Price	Website
Skype*	iOS / Android/ Mac / Windows / Linux	App / Client	Free/Paid[1]	http://skype.com
Google Talk*	iOS / Android/ Mac / Windows / Linux	App / Client[2]	Free[1]	http://google.com/talk
Fring	iOS / Android (mobile app only)	App	Free[1]	http://fring,com
Ekiga	Windows / Linux	Client	Free	http://ekiga.org
Facetime	iOS / Mac	App	Free	n/a
ooVoo	iOS / Android / Windows / Mac	App/Client[3]	Free/Paid	http://oovoo.com
RingCentral	Telephone Service Solution	Telephone	Paid	http://ringcentral.com
Vonage	Telephone Service Solution	Telephone	Paid	http://vonage.com

*Have the capability to share screen with other caller(s)

[1] Free calls can be made between two callers using the same service with an account. Separate rates apply for calls made to callers not using the same service, mobile or landline phone numbers, or for international calls. Visit their websites for details

[2] There are also browser hacks available for this service. Also, a connected service via Google+ is Hangouts, allowing video call and/or instant message chat with up to 9 people (Google Voice and Chat are also complementary services associated with Google Talk0

[3] Additionally, you can install ooVoo as a Facebook app for use in a web browser