

Introduction to GTalk

Google Talk is an instant messaging service that provides both text and voice communication. The instant messaging service is colloquially known as "gtalk", "gchat", or "gmessage" to its users, although Google does not endorse those names



Google Talk was also the name of the client applications previously offered by Google to use the service. Google Talk applications were available for Microsoft Windows, Android, BlackBerry, and Chrome OS operating systems. A Google Talk mobile web app had also been previously available. In February 2015, the Windows client was discontinued and ceased to work, with Google recommending users to use Google Hangouts instead. Users of Windows client were instructed to migrate to the Google Hangouts app on the Chrome browser platform. It remained possible to connect to Google Talk with compatible third-party apps such as Pidgin and Gajim.

Product integration

Google Talk was integrated into Gmail. Users can send instant messages to other Gmail users. As it works within a browser, the Google Talk client does not need to be downloaded to send instant messages to Gmail users.

Conversation logs are automatically saved to a Chats area in the user's Gmail account. This allows users to search their chat logs and have them centrally stored in their Gmail accounts. For a long time it wasn't possible to directly download chat logs that are not attached to an e-mail conversation, although some workarounds had been found. However, on September 15, 2011, Google announced a new feature of its Google Takeout program that allows users to download chat logs via IMAP.

Google has also integrated Google Talk with Orkut. This enables Google Talk users to interact with registered Orkut users, by sending and receiving 'scraps' within Orkut.

Google Talk Gadget is a web based module that may be embedded in iGoogle and other web pages, allowing text chat with users of Google Talk.[21] Note: this functionality has recently been discontinued without any real announcement, likely in the face of the release of the Google Hangouts services.

Google+ is integrated into Google Talk. In the standalone client and the Google Talk widget embedded into Gmail and Google+, Google+ contacts appear in the contacts list; their respective circles are shown in Google+'s iteration of the widget

Voice and Video

It is possible to place and receive phone calls from within Gmail by using Google Talk. In order to receive calls, however, the user must upgrade to a full Google Voice account. Initially, users outside of the US cannot upgrade to a full Google Voice account and cannot receive phone calls in Gmail.(Outbound calling through Gmail does not require Google Voice and is available in many countries outside the US.) Google Talk allows users to leave a voicemail for a contact whether or not they are signed into Google Talk.Messages can be up to 10 minutes long and are sent to the recipient's email. Messages can be sent with or without first ringing the recipient's phone number.

Google also provides a Voice and Video Chat browser plugin (not to be confused with the standalone Google Talk client) that supports voice and video chat between Gmail users. The plugin is available for Windows (XP, Vista, and 7), Mac OS X (only on Intel-based Macs), and Linux (Debian, Ubuntu, Fedora, and OpenSUSE packages available, but the binaries work on other systems). The plugin must be downloaded and installed, but otherwise seamlessly integrates into the Gmail interface.

Encryption

The connection between the Google Talk client and the Google Talk server is encrypted, except when using Gmail's chat over HTTP, a federated network that doesn't support encryption, or when using a proxy like IMLogic.[citation needed] End-to-end messages are unencrypted. Google plans to add support for chat and call encryption in a future release.[citation needed] Some XMPP clients natively support encryption with Google Talk's servers. It is possible to have end-to-end encryption over the Google Talk network using OTR (off-the-record) encryption using other chat clients like Adium (for Mac) or Pidgin (for Linux and Windows).

Google's version of "Off the Record" is not OTR (off-the-record) encryption. Enabling "Off the record" inside Gmail's Chat turns off logging of messages, but does not enable encryption.

Offline messaging

On October 31, 2006, Google introduced offline messaging to Google Talk. This allows users to send messages to their contacts, even if they are not signed in. They will receive the messages when they next go online even if the user who has sent it is offline. This only works between Gmail-accounts though, and doesn't work between Google Talk servers and other XMPP servers.

Mobile device compatibility

On June 30, 2006, Nokia released new software for their Nokia 770 Internet Tablet, that included Google Talk as one of the compatible VoIP clients, because of the XMPP-based software. Another Google Talk-compatible device is Sony's mylo, released on September 15, 2006. A Google Talk client is also available for BlackBerry devices from the BlackBerry site. Google Talk support is also integrated in Google Android devices, but does not support voice and video calls below Android version 2.3.4. This was released in April 2011 for the Google Nexus S.

However, given that Google Talk provides XMPP protocol, most mobile phones for which a suitable XMPP client exists[33] could also offer Google Talk service, at least theoretically (depending on the handset, the user may encounter security warnings because of unsigned Java ME midlets or limits put in place by the mobile service provider). Mobile clients specially designed for Google Talk exist as well.

Most phones support the IMPS protocol, and there are hybrid XMPP/IMPS networks (through XMPP transports, or specially designed hybrid servers), which can also contact Google Talk users. The Google Talk service itself is unusable from IMPS (that means, one cannot log with their Gmail account, but they can talk with their Gmail friends with their IMPS account from their mobile phone).

For most smartphones, including Symbian-based as well as Android, third-party applications such as Nimbuzz and Fring include support for Google Talk accounts, including VoIP calls.

Text formatting

Google Talk does not provide the user with a menu for text formatting. Nevertheless, Google Talk does support some text formatting features like making text bold and italic. To write message in bold, a user should type the required text between two asterisks (*), for example **this text would be bold in Google Talk**. Similarly for making text italic, one should put text between underscores () and for strike-through in text content one should put text in between dashes (-). This only functions in some of the Google native tools, and does not always function as expected when received from other XMPP clients.