

MLCUG APRIL 2013 MEETING

GOOGLE HANGOUTS

This is a presentation about video conferencing. You can think of video conferencing as the more typical one-on-one video chat with extended functionality to accommodate multiple users. Or you can think of it as a conference phone call with video functionality.

Why might one take an interest? With the proper resources it is as easy or easier to setup as either a conference phone call or a one on one video chat using Skype (Microsoft's replacement for Windows Instant Messenger), AIM (AOL's Instant Messenger), and other similar products. Google Hangouts are FREE, cross platform, and integrate well with other services in the Google ecosystem like Calendar, Gmail, Contacts, Google Drive / Docs, Youtube, and Google Plus. A Hangout can even accommodate one phone call participant.

Video conferencing is a time and money saver for certain types of meetings depending on the type and content of the meeting since a virtual meeting avoids travel time and cost. Disabled persons can take advantage of video conferencing as an alternative to actual travel. Businesses, clubs, classmates, and families may find video conferencing useful as a substitute for actual meetings during inclement weather and as a way to hold a virtual family reunion. Conventional meeting participation can be extended to include virtual participants, people who would not otherwise participate due to distance, health issues, or weather conditions.

John D will introduce us to the details of setting up and using Google Hangouts. He'll present an outline and demo covering the service requirements, restrictions, and features of the service. So come to the meeting to ask questions and see what Google Hangouts can do for you.

SOME ALTERNATIVES

Here are some video conferencing alternatives to Google Hangouts.

1. **ooVoo** (<http://www.oovoo.com>) - Use ooVoo's group video to video chat with up to 12 people at one time on a call. Simply start a call and then add contacts from your contact list. Software and plug-ins for platforms including PC, Mac* (*Mac users can only see 6 videos but can hear all call participants), Facebook, Android and iOS currently support the group video chat experience. ooVoo's group video feature is the only service that lets you have 12 video windows for **FREE**.
2. **Meetings.io** (<https://meetings.io>) - Hangout with up to 5 people at a time and see them all at once. You can have people drop in and out of your hangout at any time. **You don't have to signup to use Meetings.io.** Just visit our front page and create a meeting room and you're done. No signups, no social network integration. Call mobiles, landlines and international destinations from within your meeting room. All calls are treated as another participant in your meeting room so all others in the room can also communicate with the person on the other end of the phone line. Meetings.io works completely within your web browser so you don't have to install any software. Using the latest technologies including HTML5, jQuery, CSS3, Flash 11 and pure Javascript, Meetings.io will work seamlessly within your web browser such that you and your meeting guests don't need to worry about installing special software to make it work. Meetings.io has been built to work on the widest possible platforms and browser combinations including Windows, Mac, Linux operating system and Chrome, Firefox, Explorer (8+), Opera and Safari web browsers.
3. **Skype** (<http://www.skype.com>) - No matter where they are, get up to 10 people together on the same group video call. It's great for regular family catch ups or to hold business meetings with anyone worldwide. To use group video calls, at least one person on the call will need to have a **Premium account (~\$5/mo)**. We recommend calls with up to 5 people. A fair usage policy applies. Skype software is available for and on a wide variety of devices and OS platforms.

HOW TO SETUP FOR A GOOGLE HANGOUT CONNECTION

It is now possible to "attend" the Round Table portion of the monthly MLCUG Meeting via Video Conferencing using Google+ Hangout. Below in outline form are the requirements & instructions for doing so.

You will need the following for a computer based connection. The alternative is a tablet or cell phone with a Google Plus app, but these instructions do not cover those instances.

- a **computer with a web cam and a microphone** (AFAIK, every laptop has these)
 - most any browser - Chrome, Firefox, IE, Safari recommended
 - **NOTE:** third party pop-up blockers and other browser extensions may interfere
- an **Internet connection** with a 1Mbps up & down connection or greater recommended
 - **more details about bandwidth**
 - https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1216376?hl=en&ref_topic=3008151
 - The bandwidth used by Hangouts is adaptive and will vary to provide the best experience for the given conditions of the participants' network. Here is a guide for the minimum and maximum bandwidth requirements and expectations:...
 - **Minimum bandwidth required:**
 - Outbound from the participant: 256 kbps
 - Inbound to the participant: 512 kbps
 - **Ideal bandwidth for the best experience:**
 - Outbound from the participant: 1 mbps
 - Inbound to the participant: 2.5 mbps
 - **With group Hangouts of more than 2 people you can expect bandwidth usage in ideal situations to be:**
 - Outbound from the participant in all situations: 900kbps
 - Inbound to the participant with 5 participants: 2mbps
 - Inbound to the participant with 10 participants: 3mbps
 - if you don't know your Internet connection speed, you can test it at:

- <http://www.speedtest.net/>
- a **Google account**, either with a Gmail UID or "foreign" email (Verizon, Comcast, etc) UID.
 - if you have an account, but have forgotten the password, you should first try to get your PWD reset
 - <https://www.google.com/accounts/recovery>
 - otherwise if you don't have a working Google acct UID, you can create one using one of these 2 methods:
 - <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp> <<< sign up form to create a Gmail acct
 - <https://accounts.google.com/NewAccount> <<< sign up form using a "foreign" email (Verizon, Comcast, etc) UID
- install **Google's video chat plug-in** software
 - <https://www.google.com/talk/> <<< install software from left side of page (restart browser is required if browser is open during install)
 - requires Windows XP +, Mac OS X 10.4 +, Linux
- sign your browser into Google Plus & **test your web cam & microphone settings**
 - since Google changes their websites from time to time, these instructions may need updating. They are current as of 3/9/2013.
 - go to: <https://plus.google.com/hangouts>
 - click "Start a hangout" & a window should open
 - click the gear shaped settings icon to view or change your web cam video & associated audio settings
 - make sure your specific web cam & microphone are selected
 - do not leave these set for "default" device
 - make sure all 3 settings - video, audio in, audio out - work properly
 - save your settings
- **NOTE:** you may also be able to access these chat settings to additionally control echo cancellation
 - <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#settings/chat>
- wait for an invitation to join a hangout and click on the included link
 - you need to make sure the inviter knows your Google UID & that you are interested or you may not receive the invitation

HELP

<https://support.google.com/plus/topic/1257349?hl=en>

Hangouts

- [About Hangouts](#)
- [Start, Join, or Invite to a Hangout](#)
- [Apps and Extras](#)
- [Hangouts On Air](#)
- [Settings, Safety, and Security](#)

FEATURES & CONTROLS

Bandwidth

<https://support.google.com/plus/answer/2979333?p=bandwidth&hl=en&rd=1>

The bandwidth setting

If you're experiencing issues with the video or sound quality of your Hangout it could be because of a poor internet connection or because your computer's speed may be a little slow. The bandwidth setting can help in these situations.

When to use the bandwidth setting

The bandwidth setting is most useful when:

- The video quality in the Hangout isn't clear or if the video freezes at times.

- The sound in the Hangout pauses or breaks up.
- Your internet connection is slow or you want to conserve your connection.
- You want to conserve your laptop's battery.
- Your computer seems to run slowly while you're in a Hangout, or it gets very hot with a noisy fan.

How to use the bandwidth setting

The default bandwidth setting is “Auto-detect connection speed” and this setting works best for most people. However, if you need to change your setting, simply drag the slider to the next lowest bandwidth setting. If you're Hangout quality doesn't improve you may want to continue adjusting until you find the bandwidth setting that works best for you.

Your Bandwidth selection will be remembered for future Hangouts on the same network. For example, if the internet connection at your favorite coffee shop is a bit slower, the next time you use Hangouts from that coffee shop, we'll remember the bandwidth setting you used.

APPS & EXTRAS

https://support.google.com/plus/topic/3008152?hl=en&ref_topic=1257349

Apps and Extras

- [About apps in Hangouts](#)
- [Add or remove an app in a Hangout](#)
- [Keyboard Shortcuts](#)
- [Share your screen with others in a Hangout](#)
- [YouTube App](#)
- [Hangouts Ringback](#)
- [Google Drive App](#)
- [Sign Language Interpreter app](#)

PRIVACY ISSUES

Google Hangouts is part of the Google+ social network. Since it is, you should review and confirm your Google+ settings before using Hangouts or any other feature of Google+. You should do this for at least 2 reasons:

1. Privacy – who sees your activity and postings
2. Turn-Off Annoying Notifications – to your email and cell phone

You can review and change your Google+ and other Google account settings by going to:

<https://www.google.com/settings/plus>

Here's a potentially useful general guide from ZoneAlarm:

<http://www.zonealarm.com/blog/index.php/2011/07/privacy-concerns-around-google-plus>

KNOWN ISSUES & PROBLEMS

<https://support.google.com/plus/known-issues/1238859?rd=1>

Chrome & Youtube app - use `[*.]googleusercontent.com` exception if 3rd party cookies blocked

EXTRANEOUS

Tracking friends and contacts availability

“Chat for Google” extension for Chrome

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/chat-for-google/nckgahadagoaajjgafhacjanaoiihapd>