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Facebook Will Launch In-Browser Video Chat Next Week In Partnership With Skype

Michael Arrington

Jul 1, 2011

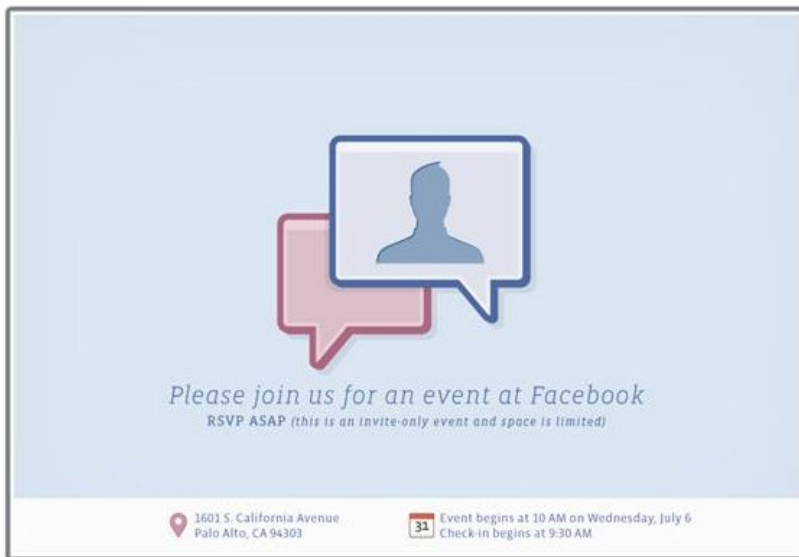
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Earlier this week while visiting Seattle, Facebook CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** tipped off Seattle press that the company would be launching an “**awesome**” new **product** next week that has been built by Facebook’s Seattle team. The press invitations to that event went out today, saying nothing more than “Please join us for an event at Facebook” on July 6.



So what is the new product? MG Siegler [speculates here](#) that it might have a desktop component given all the **desktop software hiring** going on in Seattle.

And he’s right. This isn’t the main project that team is working on, but next week, says a source with knowledge of the partnership, Facebook will launch a new video chat product, powered by Skype, that works in browser. Suddenly those chat icons in the invitation have a lot more meaning.



The product has been built on Skype and will include a desktop component. It’s not clear to me whether that means it will just work if a user has Skype already installed on the computer, or if additional software will need to be downloaded even if the user already uses Skype. But it’s clear that there’s very deep integration between the products, and from the user’s perspective, the product will be an in browser experience.

Facebook and Skype have already been **working together**, including **integration** of various Facebook features into the Skype service.

But this is something else entirely. The partnership could substantially increase Skype usage. Facebook has more than **750 million** active users. Currently Skype has just 170 million. And it

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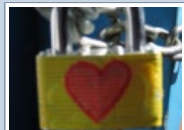
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will certainly help Facebook become even stickier for users as they start to have voice and video chat as an option to communicate.

And this also brings Facebook even closer to Microsoft, which is a Facebook shareholder and has a pending **acquisition of Skype**. The guys in Redmond must be smiling today, something that happens far too infrequently at Microsoft HQ.

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