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Yahoo! Messenger

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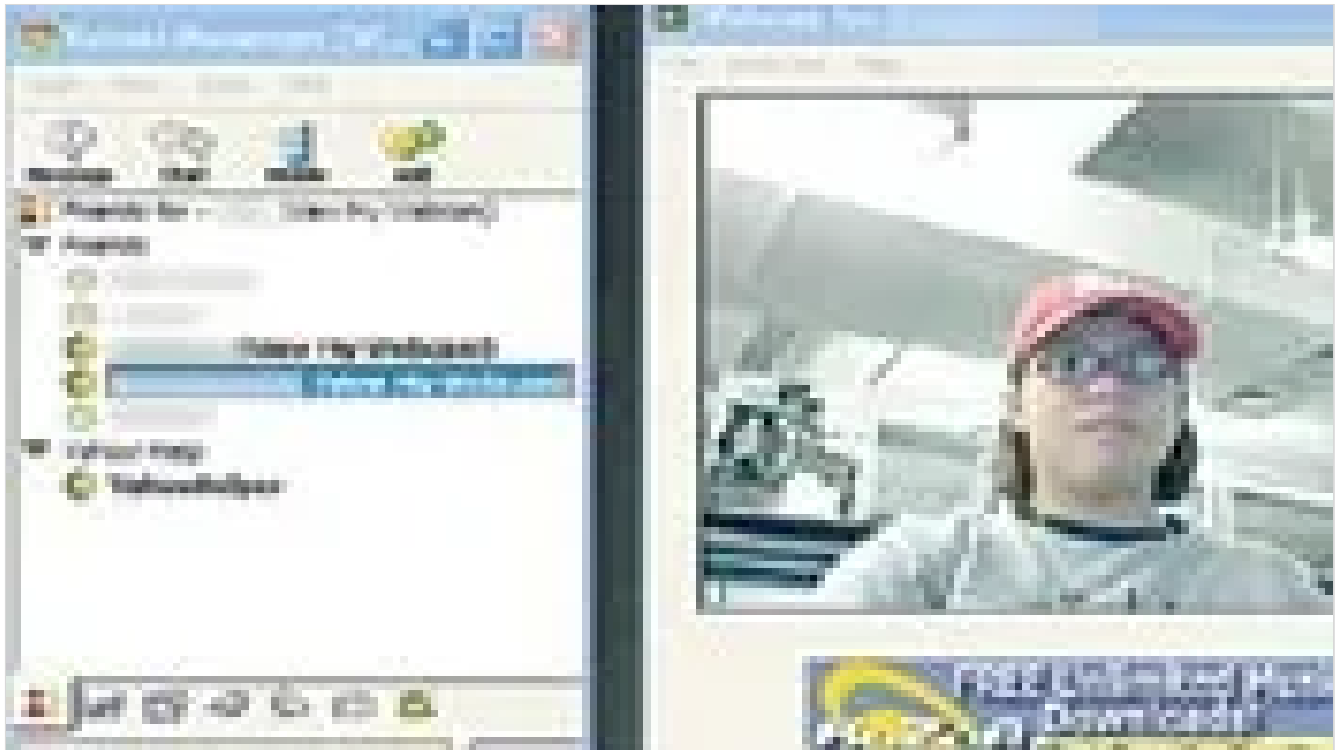
43

YEARS

41,500+

REVIEWS





3.0 Average 

Pros & Cons

Yahoo! Messenger Specs

Free: Yes

Type: Personal

All you need to start using Yahoo! Messenger is a free Yahoo! account. Once you register and download the client, you can start interacting with other Yahoo! members at no cost. But though it



offers the best possible price and a variety of impressive features, Yahoo! Messenger is best suited to personal use because of its firewall limitations and poor video quality when operating in standard mode.

The main interface is the buddy list, from which you can contact your friends and colleagues or check your stocks, calendar, and address book, plus news and weather, all via the tabs at the bottom. Although the service is free, no banner ads appear in the buddy list; other tabs display small banner ads.

To add a name to your buddy list, you can enter a Yahoo! ID or Yahoo! e-mail address. Alternatively, you can perform searches, using keywords, name, and so on. But finding the correct user this way can be difficult, since Yahoo! has so many users, and the personal info listed for individual users is spotty at best.

You can initiate a voice or videoconference connection directly from your buddy list or while you are already in a standard chat session (two-person text messaging) or conference (multiperson text messaging). Unfortunately, Yahoo! Messenger doesn't offer a convenient button for launching a video and audio connection; you must start the two streams separately. When initiating a video connection, you can invite the other party to view your Webcam stream, or the one you're calling can request to see it.

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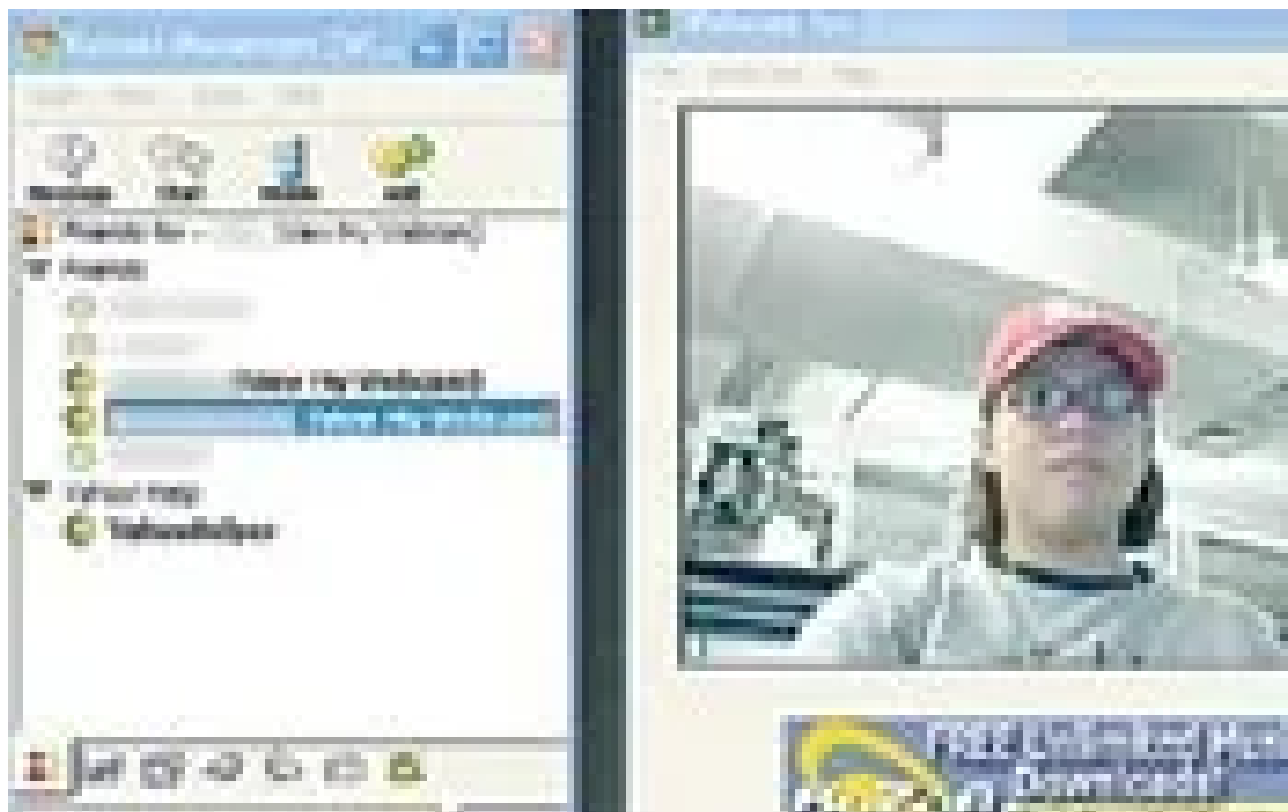
Yahoo! Messenger supports two methods for voice conversation: via the Talk button (as on a walkie-talkie) or using the Hands Free mode, which allows continuous two-way conversation.

Video is handled in one of two ways, depending on your Internet connection. Super Webcam mode creates a peer-to-peer connection between two computers. This method offers good video quality, though it is not on a par with premium services like SightSpeed.

Because Super Webcam requires multiple ports to be open—some of which are typically blocked by corporate firewalls—most business users will be forced to use the standard Webcam mode, which sends data through Yahoo!'s servers. This method is very choppy, and we don't recommend it for videoconferencing unless there is no other option.

Another point to keep in mind is that Yahoo! Messenger is meant to be a social tool for the Yahoo! community. You have to be careful when setting preferences; otherwise you may accidentally create a videoconference that is open to the public, so any stranger can find and view your meeting.

Final Thoughts



Yahoo! Messenger

3.0 Average 

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