

FaceTime Free Video Chat

The iPhone 4 features a neat video chat function that Apple calls *FaceTime*. With *FaceTime* one *iPhone 4* user can video (and/or voice) chat with any other *iPhone 4* user for free, as much as they like, provided that both are connected through a WIFI network.

OK. That's sounds a little complex, but it is much simpler to set up (virtually nothing needs to be done) and use than any other cell phone video chat system. Even *Skype* (the best alternative) is more demanding.

Cool. We can video chat if we have an iPhone 4. But, what about the rest of us? Now, we can.

FaceTime is now available for our Macs. And, it's still free. You can download it here:

<http://www.apple.com/mac/facetime>

You'll need your Mac to be running Mac OS X 10.6.4: *Snow Leopard* or newer and a camera, if you want video. Virtually all Macs that can run *Snow Leopard* have a camera built in just above the screen.

This is how it works. Install *FaceTime* on your Mac. Find a victim, er... friend and have them install *FaceTime* on their Mac. The friend can also use their *iPhone 4*, if they have one. You're ready.

Launch *FaceTime*. The *FaceTime* window will open showing your camera's view and your contacts list from the Apple *Address Book*. Scroll down the list and find your friend's name. Click on the name and you will see their information. If you want to *FaceTime* (so now it's a verb!) your friend on their Mac, click on their email address. If you want to *FaceTime* your friend on their *iPhone 4*, click on their phone number.

You'll hear a faint ringing and your friend will see a dialog box requesting them to join you on the call. If they agree, you will see their lovely face and they will see yours. Start jabbering and go on as long as you like; nobody has figured out a way to charge you!



Then...



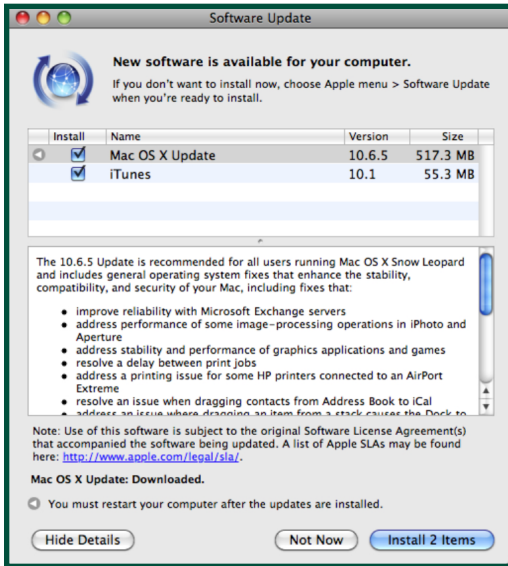
Now...

Things to keep in mind:

- 1) Even though *FaceTime* is Beta software and minor glitches may occur; I haven't had any problems at all.
- 2) When you install *FaceTime* you will be prompted for your Apple ID. This is the email address and password that you use to buy things at the *iTunes Store*. If you do not have an Apple ID, you will be able to create one. No payment or credit card information is requested. Your Apple ID becomes your *FaceTime* "phone number."
- 3) Video and audio quality will be as good as your camera and microphone are able. If you *FaceTime* frequently, a good headset microphone will provide a big quality improvement. Of course, then, you'll look like a dork. The blessings of video calls.

Software Update—

You've probably seen *Software Update* pop up, unbidden, and suggest that you install some new software that Apple has just released. Look familiar?



Software Update is *NOT* your friend! *Software Update* is a source of very real concern. In the rush to fix problems or add attractive features, many bugs and errors creep in. *Software Update* makes these buggy versions instantly available to everyone. In the past, the leading edge geeks got the new software first. They are the people best equipped to deal with the technical chaos that results. Now, everybody gets bug bitten by innocently following what appear to be benign instructions required by Apple.

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This is not malicious. You see, computers are like us. Every Mac is unique. It has different software and added-on hardware (printers, scanners, iPods, *et cetera*). And, so, behaves differently. Software makers can't possibly test their software on every possible combination (though I wish they'd be a bit more thorough). What are we to do?

You have three choices:

- 1) **Ignore it.** When *Software Update* nags you, just *Quit* it and ignore its messages. Don't worry, if something really important comes up, I'll warn you about it and make sure that you are updated.
- 2) **Prevent it.** You can stop *Software Update* from nagging by opening its *System Preference* and unchecking the box next to: *Automatically check for updates when you have a network connection*. Once done, *Software Update* will nag you no more.
- 3) **Contact me.** I'm always happy to consult with you about good, bad and ugly updates. To make it easy, take a picture of the *Software Update* window and email the picture to me. This will let me see exactly what software is being offered and the version being offered (this will be different depending on your Mac's situation. Like Lamont Cranston, *Software Update* knows. Spooky, ain't it?). To learn how to take a picture of your Mac's screen, check out the *November Tip* shown at right.

November Tip—

Have you ever wanted to record the way your Mac's screen looks? It's easy to do and is built into every Macintosh ever made.

Here's how:

- 1) On your keyboard, hold down the Command key (the one with the Apple logo or four-leaf clover thingie) and the Shift key.
- 2) With your other hand, type the number 3 key (use the 3 that is above the W key). You'll hear a clicky sound like a camera shutter.
- 3) Go to your Mac's *Desktop* and look for an icon called "Picture 1" or, perhaps "Screen Shot Date & Time." Double click on it and there's your screen snap shot.

You can make as many as you like. A great way to record what you see.