

# #thebrief

Face to Face

Version 14.05

## Video Messaging

Video messaging has revolutionised online communication. For little more than the cost of an internet connection, anyone with an appropriate device can talk across the world. Video messaging services can be used in a variety of ways, from relatively innocuous calls to friends and family to potentially more risky activities such as talking with strangers. These more dubious activities, combined with the popularity of video messaging among teenagers, have made understanding the good, the bad, and the ugly of video messaging increasingly important. This issue of #thebrief will provide an overview of the most popular video messaging programs.

**Skype** is a text, voice and video service owned by Microsoft with hundreds of millions of users across the world.



Skype enables users to contact others over the internet for free and also place paid calls to landlines and mobile phones. Users of Skype are identified by a unique username, and their user profile may be listed in the Skype directory. Skype chat history can be stored and edited.

Video calling on Skype is particularly popular, one feature of which allows users to create a conference call and see/speak to multiple people at the same time.

**Did you know?** There have been several flaws in Skype's security systems, including one allowing hackers to secretly track any user's IP address.

**FaceTime** is a voice and video software application developed by Apple for own-brand mobile devices.



The video function of FaceTime is supported on any Apple device with a forward-facing camera. On iPad, iPod Touch, and Mac, only persons who have already been added as contacts using the FaceTime or Contacts app can be called because there is no dialler.

**Did you know?** An upgrade in 2013 enabled video calls to be placed without WiFi, instead using a data connection.

We looked at **Snapchat** in our first release of #thebrief, but a recent upgrade to the app has included a whole new feature for users.



A new 'chat' tool allows users to converse with others via text, in addition to photo and video messaging. Snapchat still automatically erases messages when the chat is complete, however it remains possible to screenshot photos and messages. Previously, this alerted the sender that the snap had been saved, but a new feature within the app allows users to save messages without notifying the sender.

**Chatroulette** is a website that pairs random people from around the world together for webcam-based conversations.



Visitors to the website register and can then begin an online chat (text, audio, and video) with another visitor. At any point, either user may leave the current chat by initiating another random connection. Explicit content is monitored to an extent, with image recognition programs identifying excessive amounts of revealed skin and temporarily banning relevant users. Despite this, inappropriate use of the website is not uncommon.

**Did you know?** A study found that one in eight chats on the website show nudity or someone committing a lewd act. Nasty!

**Omegle** is a free online text and video chatting website, similar to Chatroulette, which allows users to communicate with strangers. Omegle can run on both computers and mobile devices. Unlike Chatroulette, Omegle has an unmonitored section for users who confirm they are over the age of 18. Users on the unmonitored section can view, and share with one another, uncensored explicit video streams. Omegle also does not require registration.



**Did you know?** At the end of an Omegle chat, users have the option to save the chat's log and share the link. Conversations are therefore not private, and the contents of the chat, including personal information, can be sent to anyone without your knowledge.

### Speak the Language:

**Camfecting:** hacking into a person's webcam and activating it without the webcam owner's permission.

**Camgirl/Camboy:** an Internet term for people who are featured on webcams.

**Revenge Porn:** publishing private, explicit videos of someone you were dating online as an act of revenge.

**Selfie:** a photo you have taken of yourself, generally with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website/app.