



# Skype for Interviews

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# What I'm going to talk about

- Why use Skype for Interviews?
- Installing and Configuring
- Getting the environment right
- Prepare, Test and Practise
- IT Support
- Doing a presentation in the Interview
- Working with a partner school or similar
- Backup plans
- Final tips

# Cheaper than international flights!

- Easy to set up as a user
- Skype avoids having to fly people to the UK
- Can enable a shorter-notice interview
- Don't need a visa to video-visit
- Video
  - Enables you to check you are interviewing the right person
  - Assures you the candidate is alone and not being coached or reading from notes or a book
  - Gives visual clues more useful than just voice
    - But not as much as physical presence

# Some drawbacks

- Online delay can be difficult
  - Try different times of day
- Some colleagues oppose video interviews
- Candidates don't get to visit College or Department
- Sub-prime candidates can be disadvantaged more than first-rate ones if connection not ideal
- You depend on the interviewee's IT equipment
- Risk of favouring candidates you've met in person over Skyped ones

# Simple to download and install

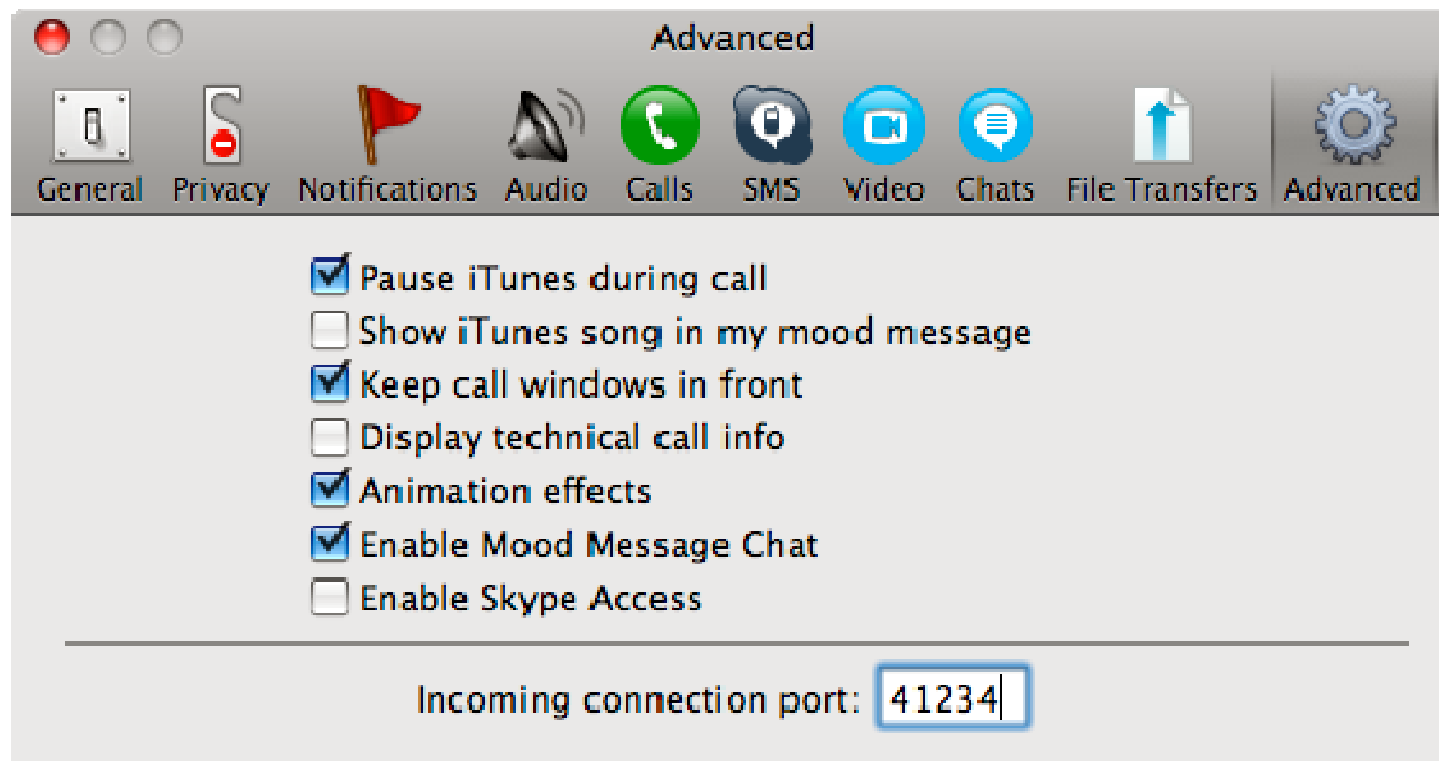
- <http://www.skype.com/intl/en/download/>
- You may well be able to do it yourself
- I urge you to ask local IT Support Staff (ITSS) if you are using a machine they provide and support
- There is now a “business” version for Windows which might be easier for ITSS to install
- Ask for help before you get in a total mess and check your department/college policy on installing software first!

# Peer to peer is forbidden but...

- Many overseas students use Skype to keep in touch with home
- Specific exemption for Skype in OUCS web pages
  - <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/network/voip/skype.xml>
- Must configure correctly so as to minimise risk of antisocial network bandwidth-hogging
- PC and Mac version can both be appropriately configured

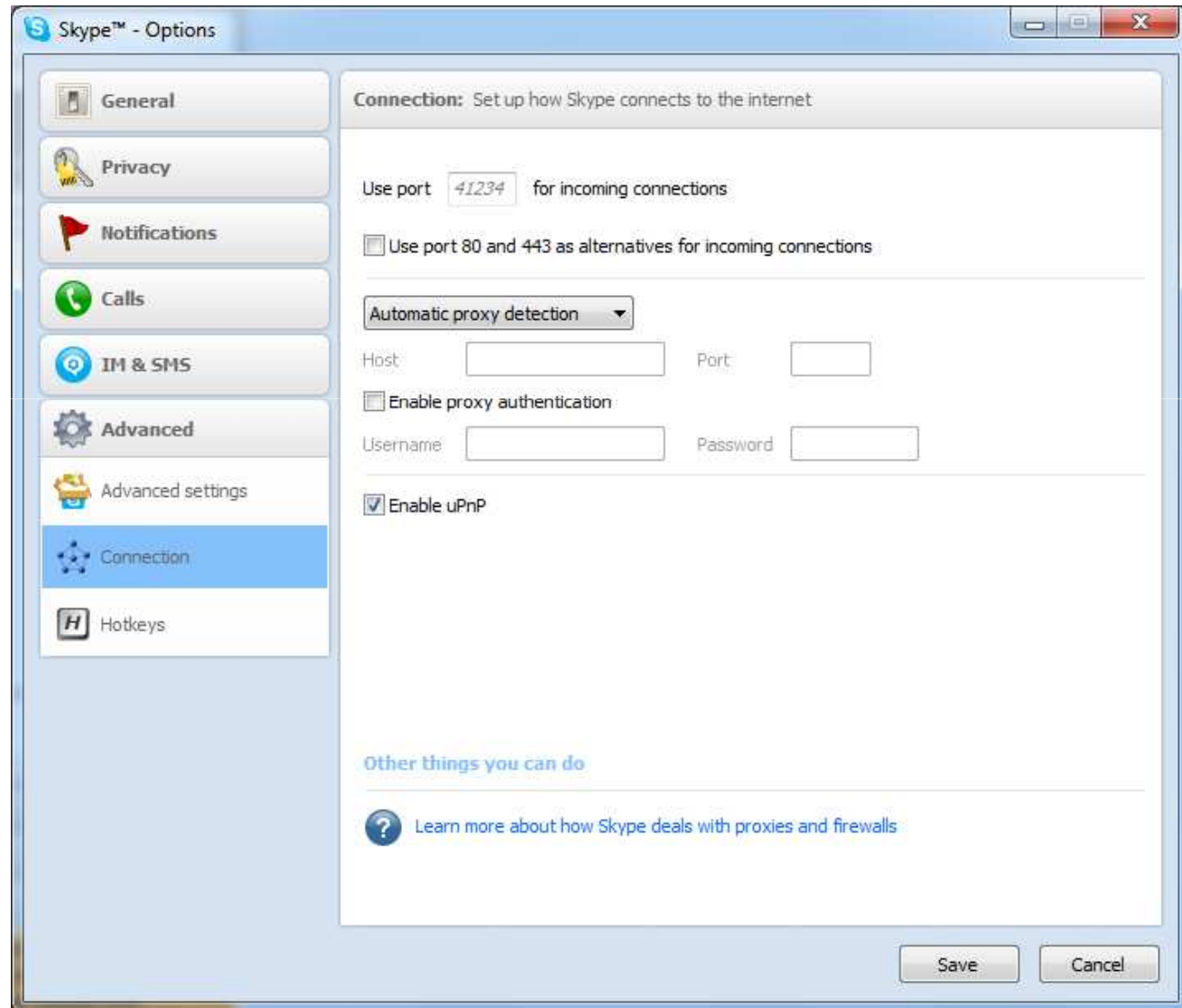
# How to configure on a Mac

- This is version 2.8.0.722



# How to configure on a PC

- Version 4.1.0.179





# Equipment

- Camera should be reasonable quality
  - but you don't need to spend a fortune
- Echo-cancelling Microphones are useful for group situations
- Headset good for echo-cancelling for just one user
- Consider a data projector for a bigger interview panel
- Don't rely on computer speaker and microphone
- Don't run laptops on batteries!

# Your computer needs to have the resources free to do it

- Use wired rather than WiFi network connection if you can
- 100kbits/s each way
  - Not much these days
- Shut down other applications
  - Other apps can have a huge impact on quality
- Avoid Relays, Supernodes, TCP
  - You can see this stuff in technical call info
- Make sure you are using a current or at least recent version of Skype
  - Encoding is better and requires less bandwidth

# Recording interviews

- I do not advise this as it is not what happens in face to face interviews
- You may wish to explicitly ask the interviewee if they are recording and ask them not to!
  - Beware youtube!
- The risk of recording is also there with phone and face-to-face
- If you do record make sure the candidate knows and gives you explicit permission as part of the recording

# Not at 3am in Pyjamas



- Give candidates a choice of times, sensitive to their timezone and yours
- Ask the candidate to be on their own and show you what's around them in the room and on their desk
  - Shared spaces are bad for this
- Candidate should dress appropriately for an interview – creates the right impression
- Make sure nobody else is present and helping

# Environment is important



- Avoid distractions in the background both for you and the candidate
- If you are wondering what is going on out of frame then ask!
- Encourage candidate to use appropriate lighting and do it yourself too
- Be careful with bright sun as cameras are not as contrast-sensitive as human eyes
- Back-lighting creates silhouettes, too much light gives washed-out appearance
- Make sure cameras are at correct height so you and candidate can look directly into them

# Prepare: Get the details

- Set up your own Skype account
- Make sure candidates have done same
- Exchange Skype usernames so you are ready to go
- Agree times for test connections and real interviews
- It should not be one of the panel doing all this

# Test & Practise

- Do a test call with someone you know who is nearby so you can meet them face to face afterwards and compare notes
- All should practise interviewing a willing actor
  - maybe a current student
  - Get feedback from them
  - Moderate your style accordingly
- Have someone not on panel do test calls with the real candidates the day before the interview to test quality and agree interview time
  - Important to do at same time of day as interview to check bandwidth etc.
- Get non-panel person to do another test 10 mins before interview

# Panel must concentrate on interview

- Have IT Support on hand that is not part of the interview panel
- If there are problems it is unfair on the candidate to have to get help from the panel
- Allow extra 10 minutes per interview to allow call setup and any other problems to be ironed out
- If it falls apart don't worry!



# Doing a presentation with slides

- You could have the candidate send you a presentation for you to advance when they say
- Can put it on a projector and candidate on computer screen
- Make sure candidate remembers to tell you to advance slides
- More recent versions of Skype enable screen sharing
- Practise, experiment and AGREE with candidate BEFORE interview how it will be done (with a non-panel member)

# You probably trust schools more than individuals

- You may have a good relationship with a school or teacher in a school
- They may be willing to set up a Skype Room
  - Invigilation possibility
  - Reassure you that there is no cheating
  - Have better AV equipment
  - Maybe a graphics tablet for showing working of problems

# Have a backup plan

- Things can go wrong!
- Get a phone number you can call the candidate on, in advance
  - Polycom good for interview panels
  - Check ability to make international calls
- Be sure to ring candidates if Skype fails and you can't reconnect
  - They will need reassuring!
- Always give candidates opportunity to visit in person if Skype interview falls apart

# Demo

- Mindy Smith in UAS

# Remember...

- It's OK to give this a go
- Don't let the odd problem put you off
  - If it goes wrong you can try again
- It helps us to reach out further in the search of excellent students
- Digital natives are more comfortable with this stuff than you might think
- This isn't the best way to interview and I would always prefer face-to-face
  - But it is better than none at all and better even than just phone

# Thanks to..

- Those who shared their experiences with me
  - Christopher Eddie, Public Affairs
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  - Jon Edwards, Phonetics
  - Sean Faughan, Continuing Education
- For organising today
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# Questions?



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