

TokBox

Here's something that one newcomer to the growing video communication service market offers that no one else does: a simple Internet link that a user can send to a friend to initiate a video chat.

TokBox, a free Web-based service, allows anyone with a Webcam and broadband Internet connection to speak face-to-face online.

TokBox only requires that one party in any conversation sign up for its service. On the first page of its user-friendly Web site, www.tokbox.com, the company posts a link that users may copy and paste into an e-mail or instant message – a far easier way to start a video chat than arranging a meeting ahead of time or asking a friend to stop what they're doing and log onto a mutual service's Web site.

TokBox requires no downloads, and it's capable of delivering a clear picture and crisp sound through a Webcam's microphone, though much of that depends on a user's own hardware.

Some features of the service are unique to TokBox, such as the hyperlink chat-initiation capability, and others – such as multi-party chat rooms and integration with Internet destinations such as Yahoo IM, Google ([News - Alert](#)) Talk, Facebook and MySpace – are common offerings among video communication services now.

Other TokBox features are not so common.

For example, if a user provides his or her instant-messaging account information, TokBox will automatically bring all IM buddies in so that even if the user isn't online, he or she can receive a message saying that a friend is trying to "call."

If a user wants to video-chat with a friend who isn't available, TokBox allows that user to leave a video message up to 15 minutes long. The messages can be sent to any e-mail address.