

New Skype Version Ties In Contacts, PayPal

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Skype releases version 3.2 of its software. While the update ties in to neat features like unlimited calling, other aspects are underwhelming.

Don't get me wrong, I still love Skype, but I'm starting to feel the symptoms of Skype-version-release-syndrome (SVRS). The chief symptom is mild irritation when, after checking my inbox, I find yet another brief press release with little meat on its bones.

Today's rollout of version 3.2 is par for the course. I wish they'd just waited to roll this version out once they'd hit the 200 million registered users mark, imminent in the next few days, as the 3.2 press release stated that there are currently 196 million.

Anyway, with today's release you'll find a few interesting new features. Though the thing I found most interesting was something I saw at the main Skype home page (not in this release or one I remember receiving) and that's Skype Unlimited that allows you to make unlimited calls within the U.S. and Canada for \$29.95 a year!

Among today's release fodder the one feature I think most interesting is being able to send money via Skype using your Paypal account (though it is at the bottom of the press release) and a handy dandy wizard is provided from within the Skype interface for those that don't already have one (have your credit card ready).

There are also some less interesting new personalization features including the ability to upload all your contact information from Gmail,

MSN Hotmail, and Yahoo! Mail (in addition to Outlook that was already available). For a few more features and a somewhat smarmy fresh tally of what's available from SkypeFind continue past the jump...

These features of course makes it easier to find who among them your contacts are already Skype users and/or invite those that are not to do so. That's a nice segue to another feature; an improved "Share Skype" email-invitation-ability. Oh, and you can personalize your profile just that much more by more easily being able to snap a photo with your Webcam now too.

Finally, I took the opportunity to check back on something I pooh-pooed in my last Skype post on the arrival of beta 3.1. What exactly has been the uptake on the new feature from that release, SkypeFind? On 21 February when there were 361 listings from 52 countries out of a registered user population of 171 million; that has risen grown (drum roll please) to 102,910 listings from 228 countries (are there 228 countries?) by 86,867 people out of a total of 196 million registered users. 361 to almost 103,000 in a few months is nothing to sneeze at; but out of 196 million users? Maybe it will just take a little longer.

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