

# AOL offers video chat with no log-in, download

May 13 2011, By RACHEL METZ , AP Technology Writer

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In a move to become more competitive in the fast-growing field of video chat, the team behind AOL Inc.'s AIM instant messenger rolled out the first version of a free video chat service on Thursday that doesn't require users to log in or download any software.

Called AV, the service was created as a way to have quick, easy video chats, Jason Shellen, a leader of the AIM team, said. Though there are plenty of other voice and video chat offerings available for computers and smartphones, AV is unlike many with its decision to eschew both logins and software downloads.

In order to start a chat, a user gets a unique link from AV and sends it to friends. Once a friend with a webcam clicks on the link, a chat window will pop up on the screen and show live video of the user who started the chat session and any other participants. Up to four people can be involved in a chat at once, Shellen said.

The service has several features, such as the ability to type messages to individual users while video chatting - to send a link to a webpage, for example. The originator of the chat session also has the ability to remove others from that chat. Other features will arrive in the next few weeks, Shellen said, including one called "Group Shot" that allows you to take a photo of everyone participating in the chat at once.

AV, which is located at <http://www.aim.com/av> , uses [Adobe Systems Inc.'s Flash software](#). This means it will not work on an [iPad](#) or [iPhone](#),

but it will work on a PC and may work on some Flash-running smartphones. Shellen said his team is starting to explore making it available for other platforms and as a mobile app.

Initially, there is no plan for AOL make money from AV, Shellen said.

AV's release comes two days after [Microsoft](#) Corp. said it would pay \$8.5 billion for popular [Internet phone service](#) Skype, which allows people to make free and cheap voice and video calls.

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