

Skype to be pre-installed in new version of Microsoft Windows

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Bloatware is the term given to programs that come pre-installed on computers even though it's unlikely they will be used by every owner. Sometimes they are difficult to get rid of and can consume resources unnecessarily.

Pre-installed anti-virus software has often fit that definition. Now, Skype looks to be joining that list. Microsoft owns the voice, audio and text messaging program and will be making it the default instant communications tool on the newest version of Windows.

"This is fantastic news for both Skype and Windows users," Skype said in a blog post. "Now you don't have to download your favorite app to stay in touch whenever you're apart. With Windows 8.1, simply tap the Skype Live Tile, log in, and you're ready to go."

The new integration is similar to how Apple installs its FaceTime video [chat service](#) on the OSX operating system by default, even though not every user chooses to use it.

Still, the move is significant for Microsoft because it famously settled an [antitrust case](#) with [federal prosecutors](#) involving its bundling of the Internet Explorer Web browser with earlier versions of Windows. Critics said Microsoft's apparent favoritism of Internet Explorer gave it an edge over competing browsers since most [desktop computers](#) run Windows.

Skype says it has more than 300 million users, and its brand name is

often used as a short-hand term for video-chatting. About 5 percent of personal computers are running Windows 8, according to the tracking firm Net Applications. But Skype should still get a boost from the new visibility in the months to come.

Skype calls are free when made to other app users on computer, tablet or smartphone devices. Calling real phone numbers costs money while text chats are also free.

According to SlashGear, these other programs will also be front-and-center in Windows 8.1: Outlook.com, SkyDrive, Internet Explorer, Music, Games, Video, Bing Health & Fitness, Bing Food & Drink, Bing News, Bing Weather, Bing Travel, Bing Finance, Bing Sports, Mail, Calendar, People, Reading List, Camera, Photos, Maps, Alarms, Calculator, Reader, Sound Recorder, Scan.

Windows 8 users can download 8.1 as a free update starting on Oct. 17. The update will be available at retail stores on Oct. 18.

Skype was released in beta 10 years ago this month. Microsoft bought it for \$8.5 billion more than two years ago.

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