

Amazon Chime vs. Skype for Business: Which Is Best for Your Company?

By Charell Star JUNE 8, 2017 3:00 AM

Amazon Chime is the new video conferencing service on the block, but can it take the Skype titan?



Amazon has come out swinging with its new voice and video conference service, [Amazon Chime](#), but does it offer enough user-friendly features to take on industry titan Microsoft's Skype?

Both applications check most of the major boxes: they are secure, work on mobile and desktop platforms, offer good call quality, allow screen and document sharing and provide multiple plan options. Each, however, have distinct features that may make one a better solution for your company over the other.

So, if you're wrestling between the two, here's a guide on how to choose.

Basics, but Not Boring

Skype and Amazon Chime both offer a free plan. Features available with "Amazon Chime Basic" include 1:1 voice calling, video calling for up to two people, screen sharing, and access to use its chat feature with 30 days of history for messages. Chime also auto-calls all participants when a meeting starts, eliminating the need for memorizing complicated log-in pins and providing a visual roster of everyone on the call. It also provides the ability for everyone to see who is talking and to mute a participant if there is loud background noise on their line.

Skype's free plan offers a bit more latitude with group video calling for up to 20 people, Skype-to-Skype chat and voice calling, group voice calls for up to 25 people, screen sharing as well as file sharing.

The Upsell

Chime's two higher tier plans – Plus and Pro – offer some very helpful user management tools for businesses, in addition to all the features of the Basic plan. Plus costs \$2.50 per user, per month and includes the ability to manage an entire e-mail domain and disable accounts. It also upgrades the chat message retrieval to 1GB per user instead of the 30-day limit.

Amazon Chime Pro – the highest tier available – steps up the advanced features with screen sharing capabilities, custom meeting URLs, and the ability to schedule and host meetings for up to 100 attendees. Pro costs \$15 per user, per month includes all the features of the Plus and Basic plan tiers. It also allows users to record meetings.

Skype for Business has four higher tier plans: Online Plan 1, Online Plan 2, Office 365 Business Essentials and Office 365 Business Premium. What the plans lack in naming creativity they make up for in available features.

Online Plan 1 offers HD video and voice conferencing for up to 250 attendees, peer-to-peer VoIP and instant messaging for \$2 per month, per user. Online Plan 2 adds to those features with the ability to host scheduled and impromptu meetings, record video and audio calls, screen-share and transfer controls to other participants, and schedule meetings in Outlook. Skype Online Plan 2 costs \$5.50 per user, per month.

As the name implies, Skypes's Office 365 Business Essentials plan comes with access to the Microsoft Office cloud suite with email. It also offers file sharing with 1TB of storage and a 50GB mailbox per user, in addition to all the features of the Online Plans and chat-based team workspace. Office 365 Essentials costs \$5 per user, per month.

Skype's highest tiered plan – Office 365 Business Premium – comes with desktop access to the Microsoft Office suite – Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Outlook, Publisher and OneNote – in addition to all the other tiers' features. Applications can also be installed on up to 15 devices (tablets, computers and smartphones) per user. Skype Office 365 Premium costs \$12.50 per user per month.

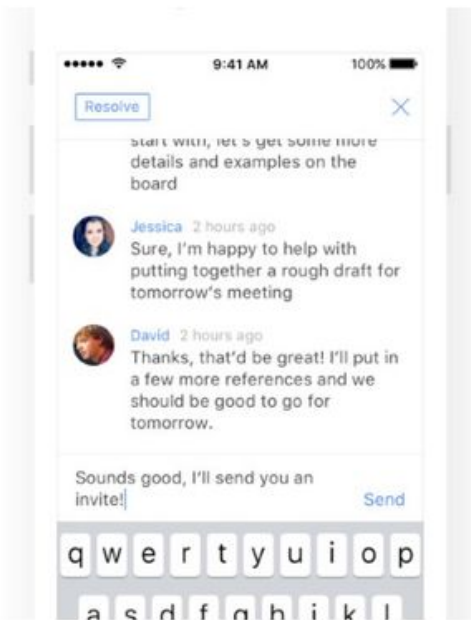
The Verdict

In the end, choosing between Amazon Chime and Skype for Business comes down to the specific needs of your team. If you host video and/or audio meetings for more than 100 attendees or are avid users of the Microsoft Office Suite and want to streamline your applications, then Skype may be the service to consider.

If your organization uses a cloud-based office suite other than Microsoft Office and wants a service that is user-friendly, slick and simple to integrate, then Amazon Chime may be the better option. Amazon Chime Pro is also [free](#) for 30 days with no credit card required, so you can take the new kid on the block for a spin before committing to either service.

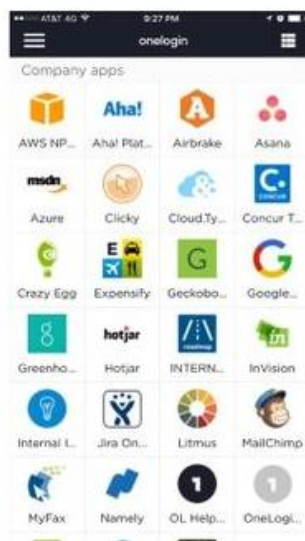
Realtime Board

Bouncing ideas around is one of the huge perks of having a team. [RealtimeBoard](#) is designed to keep that creativity flowing even in a virtual space. The app (iOS and Android) is essentially a digital visual planning space that can be used for real-time collaboration. Think of it as a whiteboard for capturing ideas: mapping out projects and creating mockups or sketches quickly and easily. The standard plan is free, but the \$40 per month team plan, which includes video chatting and screen sharing between users, is probably the right entry option for remote users.



OneLogin

We've all had that moment when a site locks us out because we couldn't remember the 17th permutation of our password. It costs time in our personal lives, but it costs money for a telecommuting workforce. [OneLogin](#) (iOS and Android) helps makes the process a little less painful by eliminating the need for multiple passwords, providing one-click access on desktop or mobile for each remote worker. The identity management system is firewall protected and reduces the risk of passwords being forgotten or shared. Companies can also set different authorization levels for different remote workers and set restrictions on password reuse. The starter plan is \$2 per month and requires a minimum of 25 users.



Google Suite

Distributed teams need to be able to share and make updates to documents as easily as possible. [Google Suite](#) – Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides, Calendar, Hangout and more – is web based, secure and allows users to collaborate as needed or in real time. The basic suite of apps is \$5 per user per month and includes 30GB of storage. Given how popular Google products have become, it's likely your team already has familiarity, reducing training costs.