

Google Talk - Basics



You can send and receive immediate communications with Google Talk, the messaging feature of Google Apps. This allows you to get and share information with no delay, which makes it a great complement to Gmail.

Getting Started

When you log in to Gmail, you'll see a **Chat** section on the far left column toward the bottom. This section shows a list of contacts with colored circles, as seen on the right. This is your friends list in Google Talk.

Ball icons in different colors and with different symbols indicate the person's availability. Green is available (they are logged in to Gmail), Orange is idle, Gray is offline, and Red is busy/unavailable. If they have set a **status message**, it appears in lighter text below their name.

This is different from the area titled **Chats** in the same area on the left bar. Chats is where all the previous conversations you have had using Google Talk are saved so that you can use them for reference.

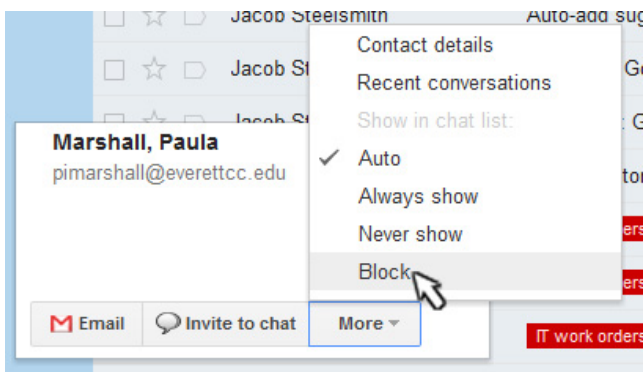
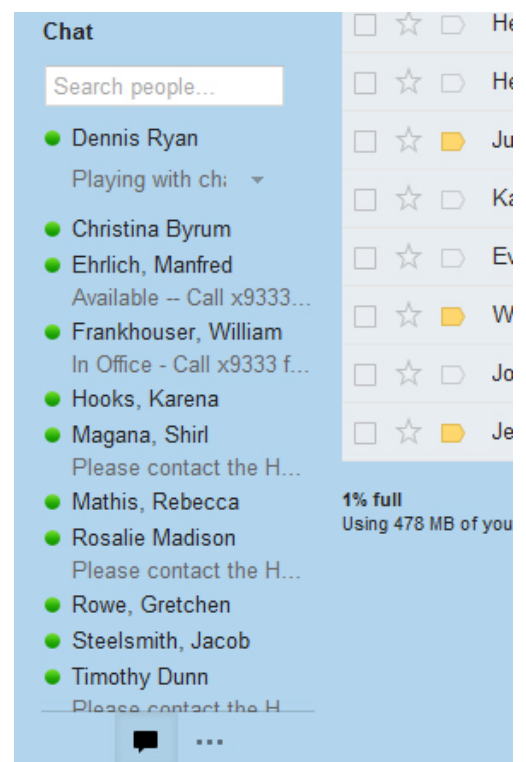
You can show or hide the friends list by clicking on the Talk icon



at the bottom of your left side column.

Who shows up in the list

By default, Talk automatically displays the people you communicate with most often, sorted by availability status and then alphabetically. These may or may not include people outside your department.



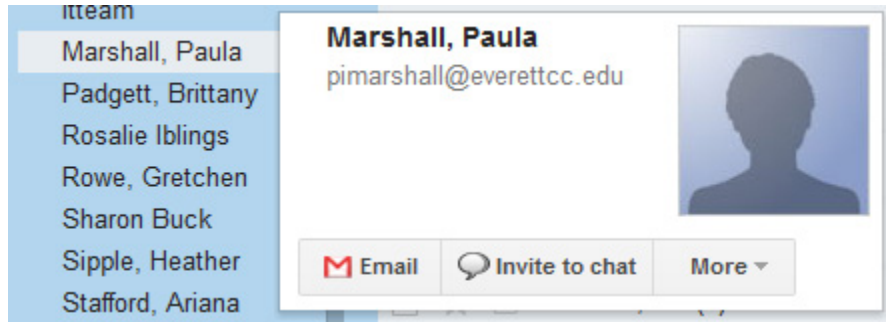
You can take these people off the list by placing your cursor on their name, which brings up the window shown on the right. Click on **more** and choose **never show**. This will hide the person from your list.

When you remove a person from your list using Never Show, that person will still be able to see your status (the information in lighter text below your name). The only way to keep someone from seeing your status is to **block** them completely using the More menu. A person who has been blocked cannot chat with you, and cannot request to chat with you. Your status

message will not be available to the blocked individual.


All other people that are not automatically placed in your friends list to start have to invite you to chat, and you must accept, before that person can see your online status or your status message.

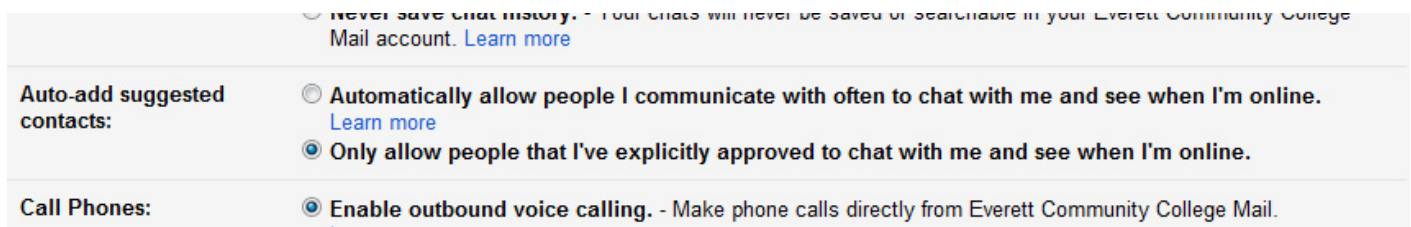
To invite someone to be added to your chat list, you can click on their name and in the window that pops up, select **Invite to Chat** as shown on the right.



Automatic adding of frequent contacts

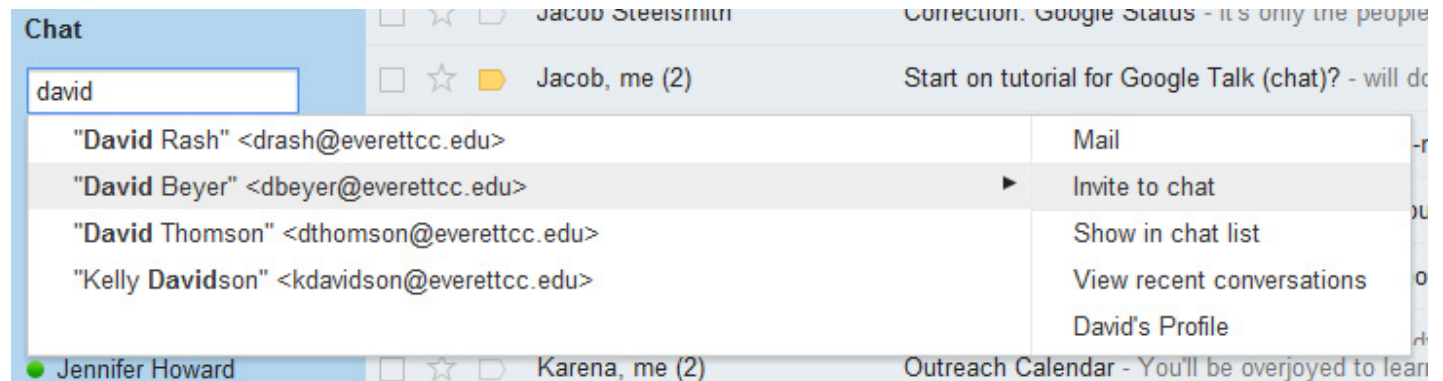
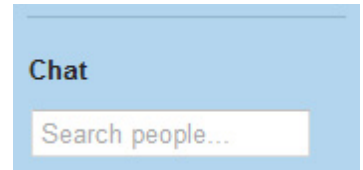
Google Talk will automatically add frequent contacts to your chat window as time goes on. These contacts will be able to see your online status and status message.

To disable this, click on the options symbol  by the Chat heading in Gmail, or click on the gear in the upper right hand corner, select mail settings, then click on the chat tab. In the chat options window that comes up, select **only allow people that I've explicitly approved to chat with me and see when I'm online** as the setting under **auto-add suggested contacts**.



Adding new contacts

To add a new contact, type in the name or email address of the contact into the box labeled search people (as shown on the right) under the Chat heading in Gmail. You will get name suggestions just like you do in Gmail searches. Hover over the person's name, and you will see a list of options as shown below.



Go ahead and click **invite to chat**. This will send the invitation to their mailbox, and they will have to accept it before you can chat. Once the invitation is accepted you will be able to see the contact's online status and status message, and that person will be able to see yours. Once a contact is added, the only way to hide your online status and status message from them is to block that contact.

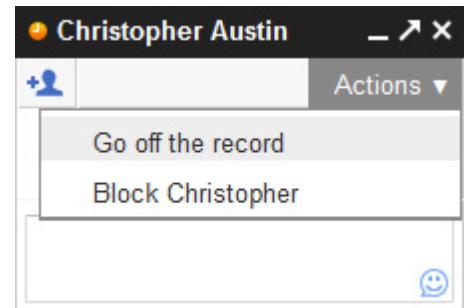
Saving / Not Saving Chats

Your previous chats are saved by default in the **Chats** heading in the left hand menu in Gmail. You can then refer to them just like you would with emails.

You can also choose to not have chats recorded with a particular user by using the **Off The Record** feature. Chats that have been taken off the record aren't stored in your chat history. You and the person you're talking to can both see when a chat is taken off the record, and you'll be notified if off the record mode is disabled. Your off the record settings will apply whenever you chat with this person, until one of you makes a change.

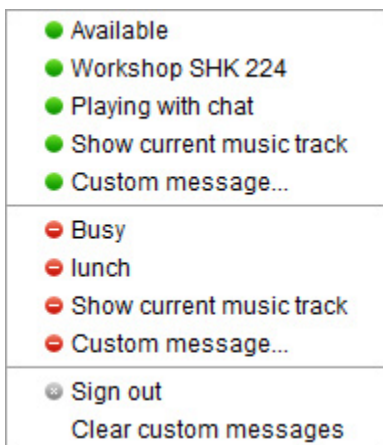
To take a chat **off the record**, click on a contact's name in the friends list and then click on **Actions**, as shown on the right, and select Go Off the Record.

Like email, chats could be subject to a public records request, including conversations that are off the record.



Setting Your Status Message

You'll appear as Available in other people's Friends lists by default, but if you aren't available, you can set your status to Busy. Underneath your name at the top of the Friends list is a title **Set Status Here** and arrow.



To change your status and/or your message, click on the arrow next to the title to get the menu shown on the left.

You can choose one of your saved status messages or create a new one. You can also click on one of the options to change your status from available to busy, indicated by the red ball. The red ball will then appear next to your name so people will know you aren't available to talk at the moment.

You can change your status message while still keeping your overall status as available by clicking on the title and typing a new message. This is the same as clicking on Custom Message.

If your computer is idle for 10 minutes, your online status will change to idle and the status symbol will turn orange to let others know you're away.

Alert That You Have a Message

You'll see a text message that flashes up in the title bar of your browser when you get a message.