

# MPLAT USB FlashPhone

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Skype, the free peer-to-peer VoIP desktop application, has reached monumental heights in just two years. With more than 150 million downloads it's been a success by any definition. Skype, however, is a computer bound service unless you can afford a Windows Mobile device. For the rest of us, what happens when you're away from your primary computer? For under \$50, the MPLAT USB FlashPhone lets you Skype with any Windows-based computer you encounter.

The FlashPhone is no bigger than most USB flash storage device, but inside there's a built-in sound card along with 128 MB of storage. The Skype application consumes 20 MB, so technically you'll only have 108 MB for storing data. Simply plug in the FlashPhone into any USB port, connect the included handsfree kit and you're ready to roll.

In highly secure environments that restrict access to USB ports and executing foreign applications, you'll be out of luck. Other than that, it's simply plug and play. The FlashPhone doesn't write any logs on the host computer and a deregister script clears out any traces Skype might leave behind.

Yes, the FlashPhone works and sounds as good as any typical Skype experience. Upgrades to fix bugs and add features, however, are a pain and require a third party application to do properly. The FlashPhone simply stores the Windows version of Skype and the third party application creates the autorun and to embed items in the right-click menu. There's nothing really sophisticated especially when you see the series of DOS based batch files used to deregister Skype activity.

As neat as the FlashPhone is, I still wonder why you would need it. I travel with a notebook whether it's for business or not. On those occasions that I'm notebook free, is there really a reason to Skype? We live in a cell phone world and there's no reason I can come up with to hunt for a computer to Skype when I have a phone in my pocket. Are you really going to stop at an Internet café during your vacation to Skype? That's not much of a vacation in my book.