Skype broadcast guidelines

Version 1.2

August 15, 2014

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to Skype. These are our guidelines for broadcast and film.

With Skype, you can make free voice and video calls with anyone else on Skype for free, no matter where they are. That means, broadcasters and studios can introduce live face to face video calls to TV and film. Skype can also be used for free Skype to Skype calls during radio programming.

Use Skype for live on-air feeds from remote locations, interviewing viewers in their homes, engaging experts from around the world, and even for connecting with correspondents in the field.

Skype is a great complement to traditional production methods – with free, voice and video calls, you can get rich new content, go places you've never considered and save costs.

Skype can be weaved into feature film and TV drama narratives. This allows characters to use current technology and makes scenes feel true to life.

These guidelines – and the associated resources available on request by emailing media@skype.net – will provide you will the tools you need to brand your calls correctly (and consistently) with the Skype experience.

The Skype brand

When you are creating a Skype call, it needs to look authentic. We want it to be instantly recognizable when seen in a feature film or live TV broadcast.

To allow this authenticity, we have provided a number of resources to help you brand your broadcasts.

Logos
The Skype logo is available in several variations.

UI templates
Vector templates of the most used screens on major devices are available for you to overlay your calls. These templates will be updated regularly with the most up-to-date UI designs.

Sounds
We have a variety of sounds that are instantly recognized as "Skype". Each sound is specific to a Skype feature and should only be used to represent that specific feature.

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for advice.

Logo overview
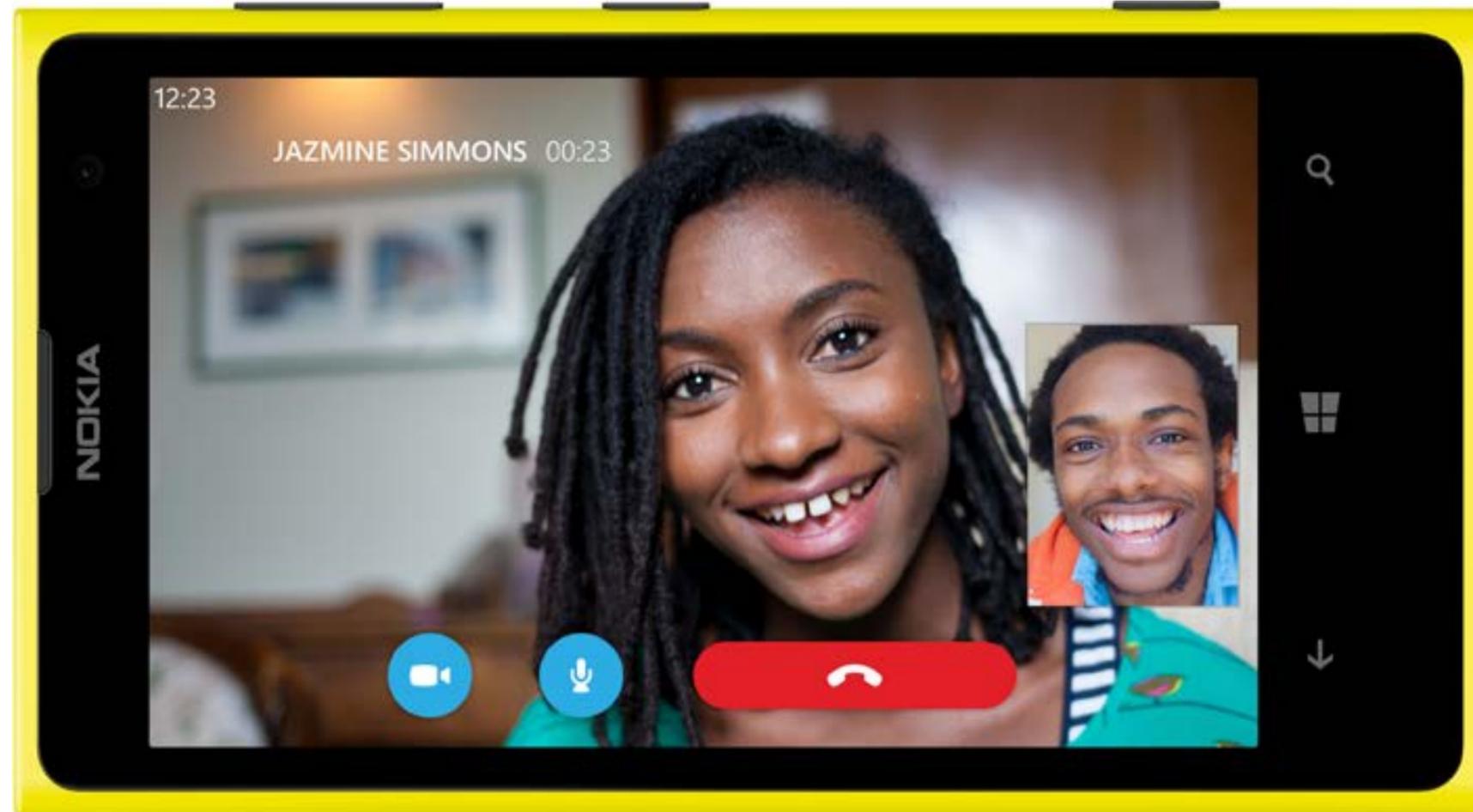
Our logo

These are our logo variations and how they can be applied. They should be used in all instances.

Please don't alter the standard logo's shape, color or proportions in any way other than those outlined here.

When representing the user interface, the **Watermark** logo version should be used. For more details on how to use this logo in a broadcast environment, see Watermark logo.

Please make sure you are using the latest versions of our logos.

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for advice.

Standard logo

Standard logo on imagery
This is our primary logo and is the only logo that should be used over imagery, other than when representing the user interface, where the translucent Watermark should be used.

Reversed logo
Use the reversed logo when the standard logo sits on Skype blue (our preferred background color).

Watermark
The translucent Skype Watermark should only be used when representing the user interface. The Skype Watermark should be placed in the top right (preferred) or top left corner of the screen.

Clear space and minimum sizes

Always ensure our standard logo has room to breathe and be seen.

Clear space guide

It's important to retain sufficient clear space around our standard logo so that it's legible and stands out. The recommended minimum clear space is calculated using 50% of the height of the standard logo on all sides of the standard logo.

Minimum size

For accurate reproduction of the standard logo, the minimum recommended size of use 84 px wide (on-screen).

Watermark logo

The Watermark logo is sized and positioned relative to the size of the screen, or as per a specific device. See Watermark size and position for more details.

Clear space guide

1/2 X

X

1/2 X

1/2 X

1/2 X

Minimum size

On-screen

84 px

Don't do this

There are certain things you can't do with our standard logo.

Please make sure you are using the latest version.
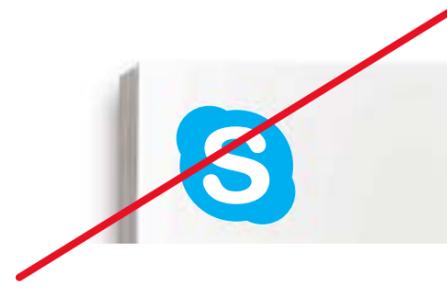

Don't squish or rotate it.

Don't put any version of the standard logo on flat colored backgrounds that clash.

Don't change the color, add drop shadows or effects to our standard logo.

Don't assume you have the right logo, always check the brand site for the latest version.

Don't use the application 'S' icon for anything other than launching applications. Don't modify it.
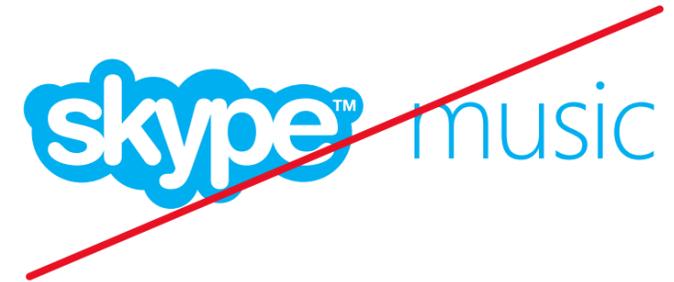
Don't use the Skype standard logo as a window.

Don't separate the Skype standard logo from its bubble.

Don't use the Watermark logo for anything other than representing the user interface.

Never use the Skype standard logo in a lock-up that suggests a new brand without approval by the brand team.

Logo in the lower third

Theses logos are to be used outside the video call, in the lower third portion of the screen, normally in conjunction with a graphical overlay.

The standard logo should be used wherever possible, but when the background color of the graphical overlay clashes with the blue in the standard logo, the reversed logo is acceptable.

Always adhere to the guidelines on pages 6, 7 and 8 with regards logo usage and positioning.

Reversed logo

Example

This image shows the standard Skype logo being used in a graphical overlay in the lower third.

TV Show logo

Interviewees' names
Location

skype™

UI

Look like Skype

Being true to the Skype UI is key to creating a believable and authentic Skype call.

If you want to mimick a specific device, please use the UI temples and assets provided instead of creating your own versions to ensure you are following the Skype UI design correctly.

To ensure your call represents a true Skype experience, always compare it with the latest version of the Skype client.
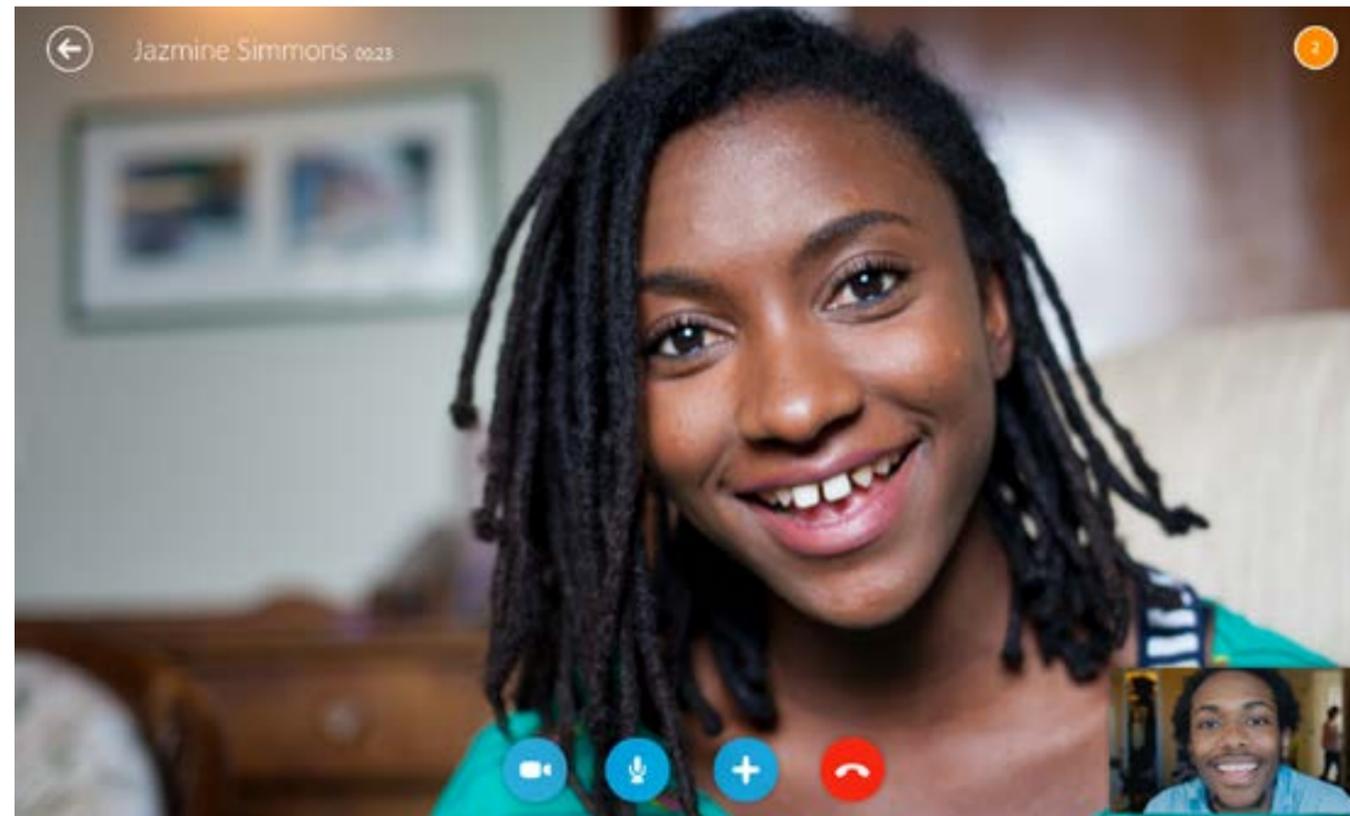
For licensing reasons, ensure you remove the place holder avatar and calling images and replace with your own.

If you require a template for a particular screen that we haven't provided, please contact skypebrand@microsoft.com.

Skype for Windows Phone UI
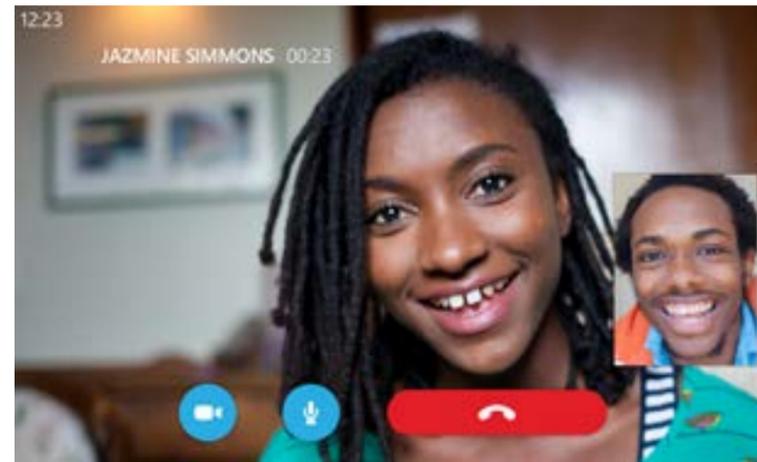
Skype for Windows desktop UI

Watermark logo

The translucent Skype Watermark should be used when representing the user interface, placed in the top right (preferred) or top left corner of the screen.

The logo is semi-transparent so the picture below should be visible through the logo.

The Watermark logo should not be used anywhere other than the Skype user interface, and should not be used on Skype video messages.

Please make sure you are using the latest version.

The following pages cover the size and position of the Watermark.

Watermark logo

Watermark logo in position
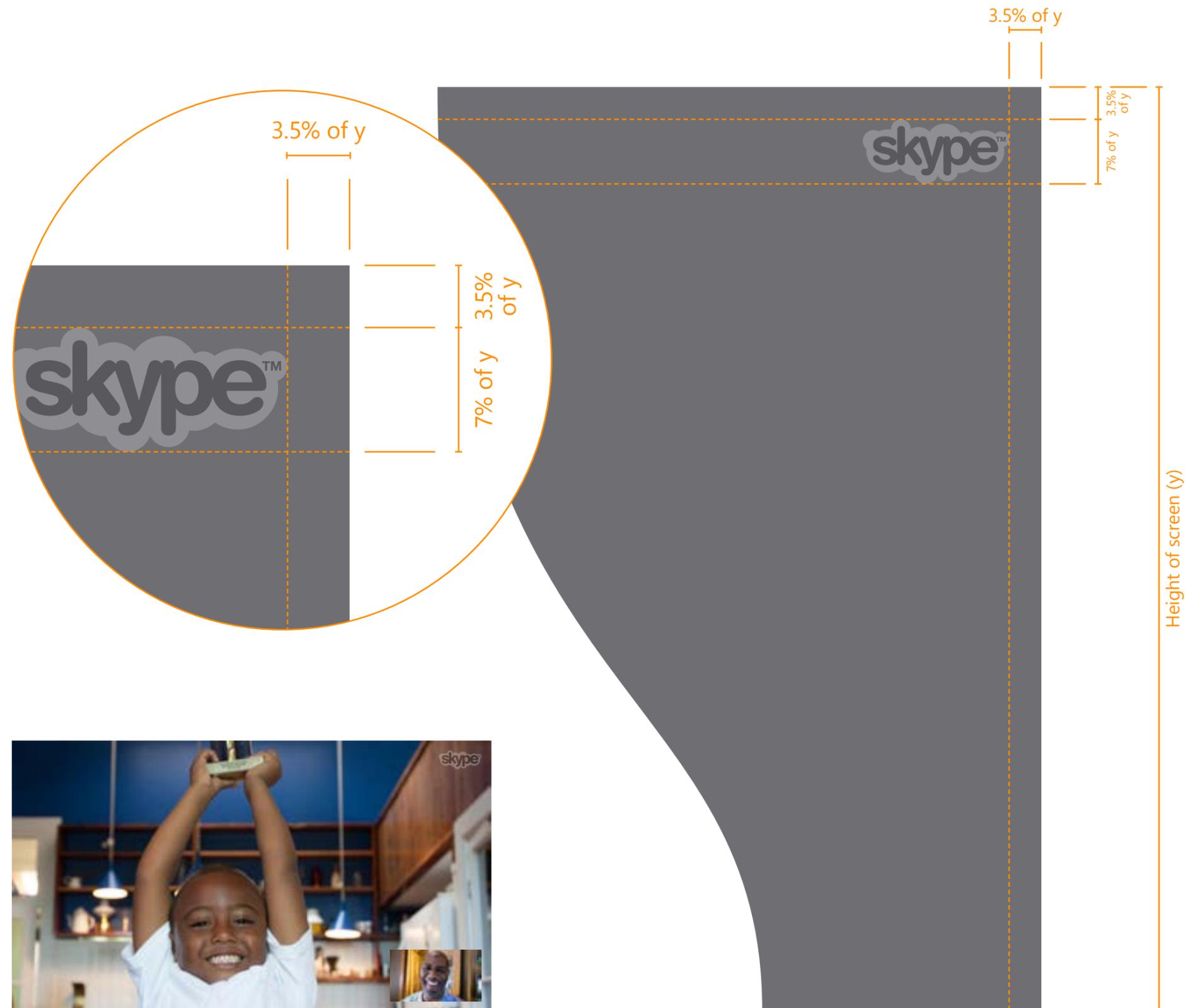
Watermark size and position

Device specific UI

When footage needs to match a specific device UI, use the vector screen templates of the major UIs available from the resources section of the Skype in Media website.

You may wish to capture both sides of a Skype call on different devices. To avoid the Watermark and PIP jumping around in the edit, keep the size and position of the elements consistent, matching one of the device UIs and applying to both sides of the conversation.

Fallback

If no specific device UI is being mimicked, the height of the logo should be 7% of the height of the screen (7% of y) and postioned 3.5% of the height of the screen (3.5% of y) away from the edge (margin).

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for more information.

3.5% of y

3.5% of y

3.5% of y

3.5% of y

7% of y

7% of y

3.5% of y

Height of screen (y)

Watermark size and position

This page shows how the Watermark logo is sized and positioned on various standard screen sizes using the fallback 7% of *y* sizing rule.

720x480
Watermark = 34px high
Border = 17px

768x576
Watermark = 40px high
Border = 20px
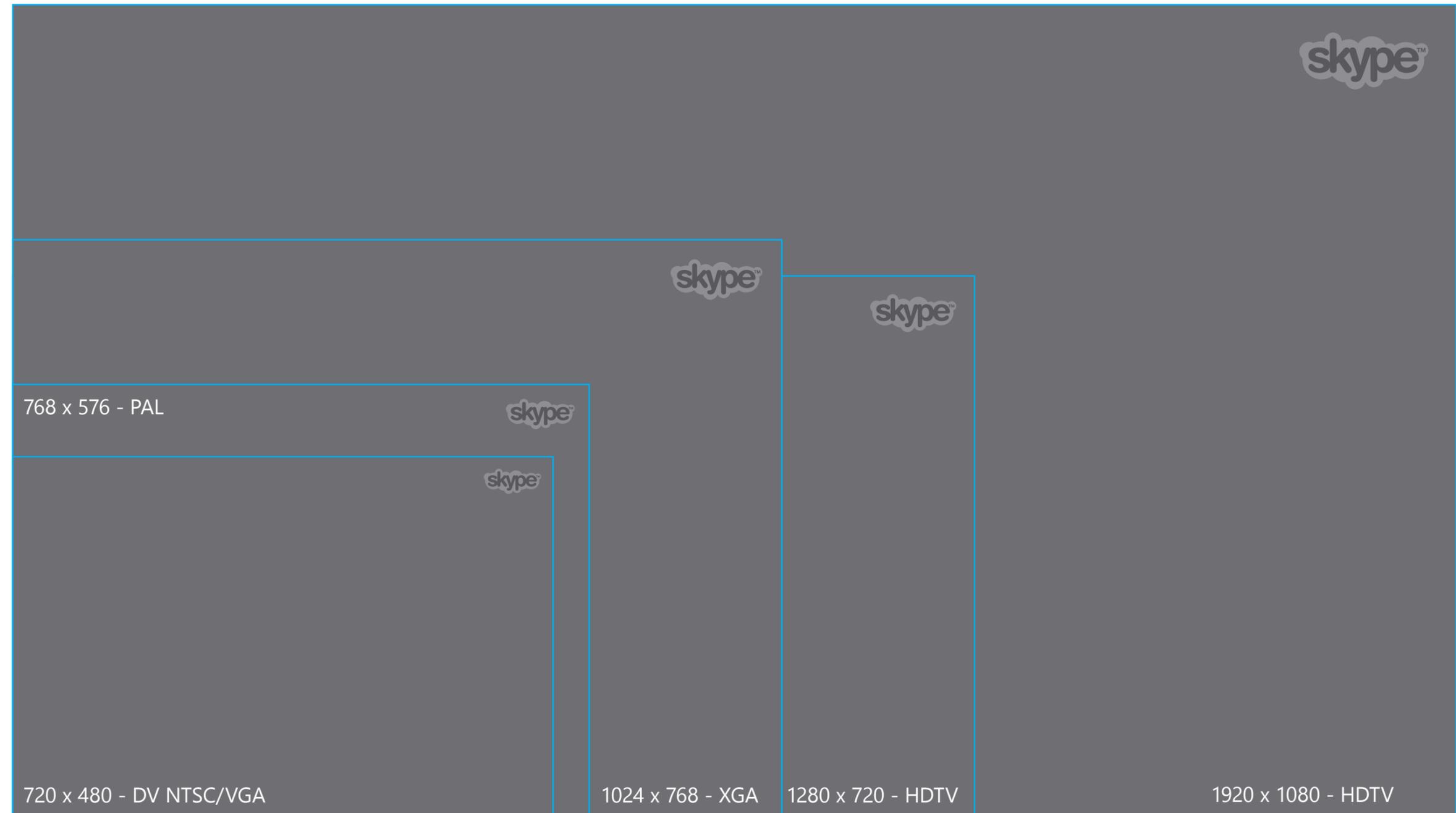
1024x768
Watermark = 54px high
Border = 27px

1280x720
Watermark = 50px high
Border = 25px

1920x1080
Watermark = 76px high
Border = 38px

768 x 576 - PAL

720 x 480 - DV NTSC/VGA

1024 x 768 - XGA

1280 x 720 - HDTV

1920 x 1080 - HDTV

Using a PIP

The use of a PIP is optional and not always necessary when visualising Skype in a broadcast environment.

When using a PIP, be true to Skype's user interface with regards to the size and positioning on the screen.

Device specific UI
When footage needs to match a specific device UI, use the vector screen templates of the major UIs available on request by emailing media@skype.net.

You may wish to capture both sides of a Skype call on different devices. To avoid the Watermark and PIP jumping around in the edit, keep the size and position of the elements consistent, matching one of the device UIs and applying to both sides of the conversation.

Fallback
If no specific device UI is being mimicked, the height of the PIP should be 19% of the height of the screen (19% of y) and postioned 3.5% of the height of the screen (3.5% of y) away from the edge (margin).

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for more information.

3.5% of y

Height of screen (y)

19% of y

3.5% of y

19% of y

3.5% of y
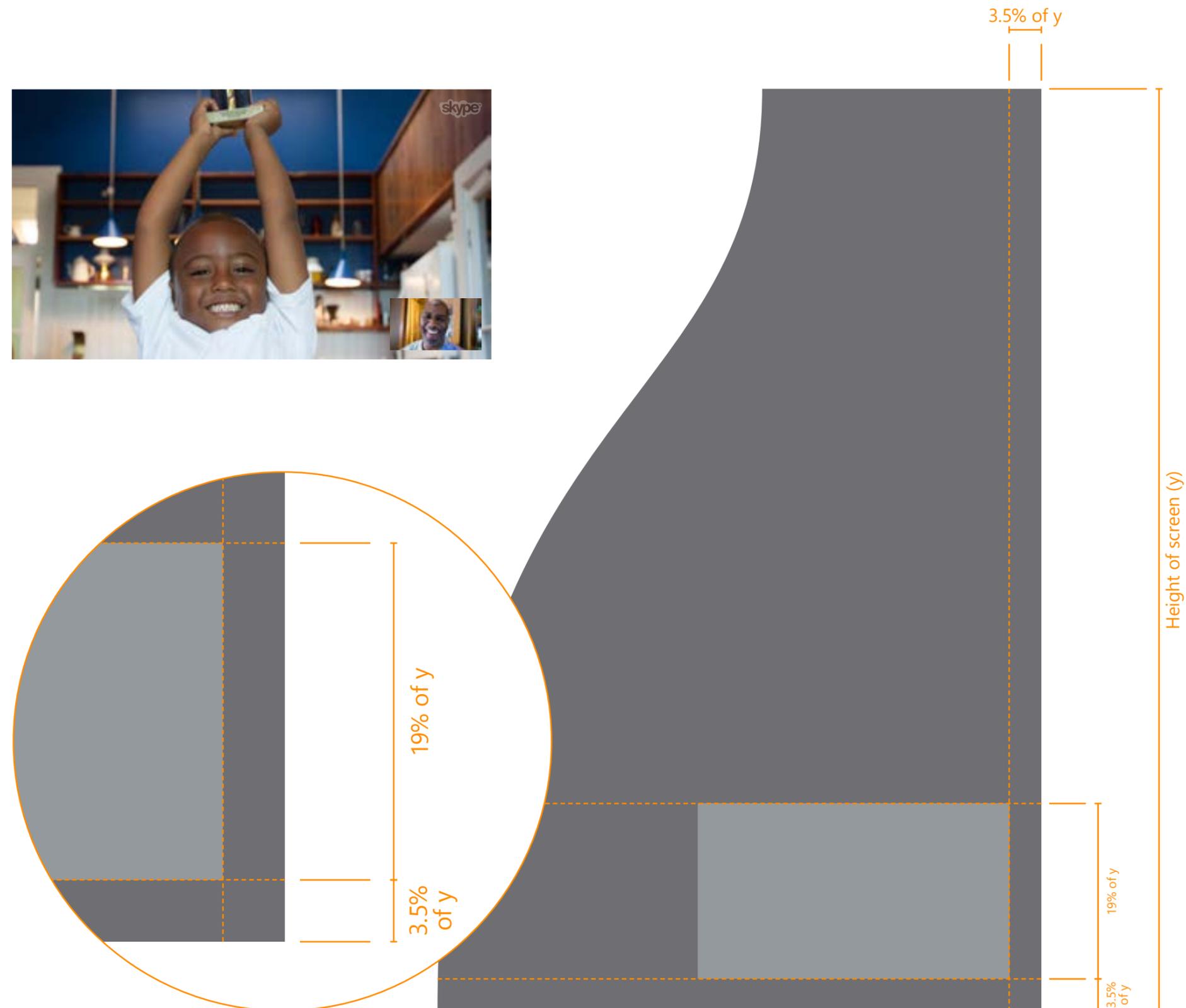
PIP size and position

This page shows how the PIP logo is sized and positioned on various standard screen sizes using the fallback 19% of *y* sizing rule.

720x480
PIP = 136 x 91
Border = 17px

768x576
PIP = 146 x 109
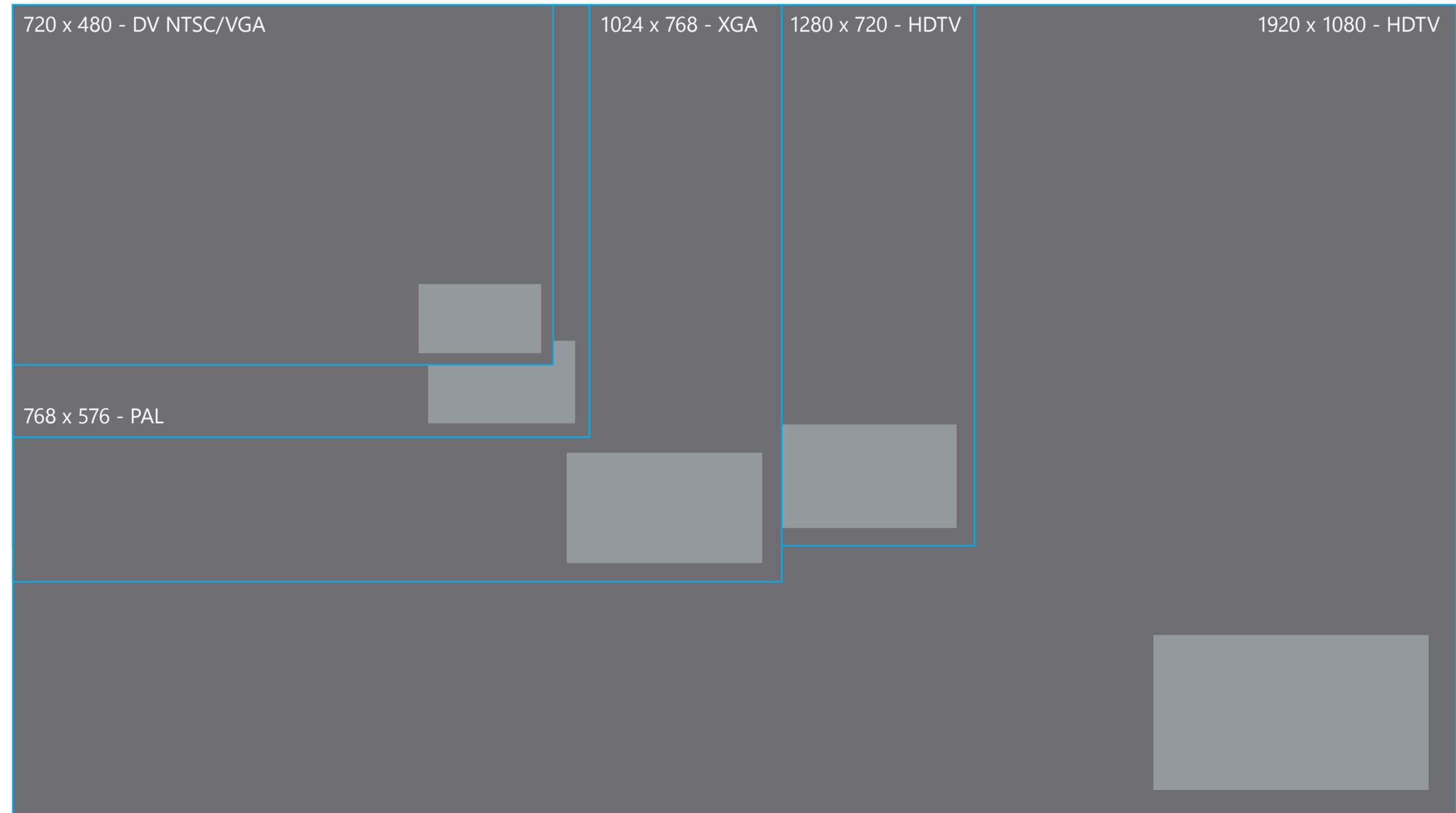Border = 20px

1024x768
PIP = 195 x 146
Border = 27px

1280x720
PIP = 243 x 137
Border = 25px

1920x1080
PIP = 365 x 205
Border = 38px

720 x 480 - DV NTSC/VGA

1024 x 768 - XGA

1280 x 720 - HDTV

1920 x 1080 - HDTV

768 x 576 - PAL

Sounds

Sonic elements are really important to our brand.

We have a variety of sounds that are instantly recognized as 'Skype'. Click on the icons to hear them.

Each sound is specific to a Skype feature and should only be used to represent that feature. Skype sounds shouldn't be used as sound effects to accompany unrelated actions.

Product sounds should always be added in post production. You should consider the device and the environment in which they are occurring.

Please ensure that these sounds are used in the correct context and that they match up to the action on screen.

Always check that the sounds you are using are up to date.

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for more information.

Use this call answer sound when a call has been accepted.

Use this sound on a loop while a call is connecting.

Use this dialing sound once the "call" button has been pressed and before the outgoing call sound starts.

Use this call hangup sound once a call has been terminated.

Use this sound on a loop while a call is on hold.

Use this sound for an incoming call and incoming video call.

Use this sound when there is no answer.

Use this sound for an outgoing call and outgoing video call.

Use this sound when a call is reconnecting.

Use this sound when a call is resumed.

Use this sound when contacts are available.

Use this sound when a contact is received.

Use this sound when a contact is added.

Use this sound when a file transfer is incoming.

Use this sound when a file transfer has completed.

Use this sound when a file transfer has failed.

Use this sound when signing into Skype.

Use this sound when signing out of Skype.

Use this sound when an instant message has been received.

Use this sound when an instant message has been sent.

Use this sound when a video message has started recording.

Use this sound when recording on a video message is stopped.

Use this sound when a voice message has been received.

Editorial

Verbal mentions of Skype

You should always reference the fact you are using Skype in your broadcast.

For audio only programs where no visual representation of the brand is possible, this should be done by a verbal announcement.

If the call is less than 15 minutes in length, an announcement should be made at the beginning of the call. For calls longer than 15 minutes, you should make the announcement at the beginning and end of the call, and at no less than 15 minute intervals.

This page gives examples for verbal mentions in two types of scenarios:
– using Skype in voice and video calls
– using Skype in a voice-only call.

And some things to keep clear of.

Contact skypebrand@microsoft.com for more information.

Voice and video usage
"Newscaster [Nina] is joining us on a Skype video call."
"We are chatting with [Nina] on a Skype video call."
"Video calling with [Nina] on Skype."
"We are speaking to [Nina] on a Skype video call."

Voice-only usage
"We are talking to [Nina] on Skype."
"Over to newscaster [Nina] on a Skype call."
"Calling [Nina] on Skype."

What not to do...
Avoid using "connect" or "connecting". Skype doesn't connect calls, it helps you keep in touch or reach people.

Try not to use "via Skype". It sounds a little robotic. We like to keep things conversational.

Never use Skype as a verb e.g. "We are Skyping [Nina]."

Technical advice

System requirements

The best calls have good quality video and sound. These pages have some technical tips that will help you get the best performance from a live Skype call.

For questions regarding technical support for your production, please contact SIMprodu@microsoft.com.

Computer

Your computer hardware needs to meet the minimum requirements to broadcast HD video as best as possible. Restart your computer before the broadcast, switch off all background applications, and disable firewalls and virus scanners during the broadcast. If you are using a laptop, it should be mains powered where possible, and set to "optimal performance mode".

Always make sure the user has the latest version of Skype.

Minimum requirements
Windows
Version: Windows XP Service Pack 3, Windows Vista, Windows 7 (32-bit and 64-bit versions supported), Windows 8
Processor: At least 1 GHz
RAM: At least 256 MB
Additional software: DirectX v9.0 or above

Mac
Version*: Mac OS X v10.6 "Snow Leopard"
Processor: At least 1 GHz Intel processor (Core 2 Duo)
RAM: At least 1 GB
Additional software: Latest version of QuickTime

*Mac OS X v10.5 "Leopard" doesn't support Skype for Mac 6.4 and higher.

Linux
Version: Ubuntu 10.04+; Debian 6.0+; Fedora 16+; OpenSUSE 12.1+
Processor: At least 1 GHz
RAM: At least 256 MB
Additional software: Qt 4.6; D-Bus 1.0.0; libasound 1.0.18; Pulse Audio 1.0 (recommended); BlueZ 4.0 (recommended)

Internet connection

Check that your internet connection speeds are suitable for video calls. You need at least 400kbps upload and 500kbps download speed.

Test the caller's internet speed to determine what quality to expect from the call: www.speedtest.net

Use a dedicated broadband internet access with greater than 1.2Mbps bandwidth for HD calling (Dedicated Wired Broadband or LAN, then WIFI, or 3g/4g in order of preference).

For a good HD call, the download speed should be 10Mbps down with 5Mbps up. For a robust HD call, the internet connection should have headroom.

Minimum specs for Skype video
Standard Def: Download 0.5Mbps / Upload 0.5Mbps
720: Download 1.2Mbps / Upload 1.5Mbps
1080: Download 3.5Mbps / Upload 5Mbps

Government and public buildings such as schools and town halls are notorious for having firewalls that throttle Skype's quality so the first thing to do is contact their IT administrator.

Video

The best calls have good quality video and sound. These pages have some technical tips that will help you get the best performance from a live Skype call.

For questions regarding technical support for your production, please contact SIMprodu@microsoft.com.

Simple tips for best performance

Everything that is visible on the computer screen will also be visible on the recording. Therefore, it is best to avoid mouse movements over the picture, and to disable pop-ups, screen savers and sleep mode. You should also set Skype to "do not disturb" to avoid incoming calls and messages.

Set your shot. You'll need an HD webcam or camera in order to record and broadcast HD video content.

Get your acoustics and audio right. Set the lighting for improved performance. Don't back light and avoid sudden movements.

We recommend plain clothing for participants, as patterns and black or white clothing can be difficult for cameras to decode.

Even if the user has a HD cam, if they are on a low powered netbook or their CPU usage is high, you will never obtain a high quality feed.

Allow the call to stablise before recording. The quality of the call will improve gradually as the system optimises. This can take around 1 minute.

Equipment for remote participants

Video: Most external cameras will produce better quality results than any internal camera. We have found great success using the Logitech C920 which can produce a very good HD picture with good colour balance.

Mobile: We do not recommend using mobile phones for on TV interviews. Of the phones we have tested, the Nokia 1020 has the best rear camera quality for Skype calls.

Audio

The best calls have good quality video and sound. These pages have some technical tips that will help you get the best performance from a live Skype call.

For questions regarding technical support for your production, please contact SIMprodu@microsoft.com.

Simple tips for best performance

Use a separate high quality microphone and pre-amp setup with balanced cables. In-built systems tend to pick up more background noise and therefore should be avoided for professional use.

During the broadcast, mute all microphones when not in use. Use wind screens on microphones to prevent environmental interference and ambient bleed.

Ensure that microphones are as far away as possible from loud sources of ambient noise and close to the intended sound source (voice).

Capture ambient sounds using an alternate microphone.

When recording a conversation over Skype, the preferred order of audio capture for recording conversational Skype audio is as follows:

1. Skype TX.

2. Sound card audio capture programs (such as Soundflower, Audio Hijack, Free Sound Recorder).

3. Stereo headphone output to line-in of auxiliary device or workstation.

4. 'Over-the-Shoulder' camera capture of audio.

Equipment for remote participants

Audio: We favor the Plantronic Blackwire C435

A pair of generic headphones with no access to a USB mic is better than having the caller listen to the return video via the internal speakers.

In some laptops we get good results from a generic headset/earphones with a built in mic.

Mobile: We do not recommend using mobile phones for on TV interviews.

Contact us

Contact us

The Skype brand is really important to us, so we need to work together to make sure it's at its best everywhere it's used.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact the Skype brand team.

skypebrand@microsoft.com

For questions regarding technical support for your production, please contact SIMprodu@microsoft.com.