

2a: A chosen product combining good and bad design features:

Skype



Skype is an instant messaging app that provides online text message and video chat services. At the end of 2010, there were over 660 million worldwide users, with over 300 million estimated active each month as of August 2015.

Usability characterization

Visibility:

- + Good icons include green call button and message button along with separate areas for a contact list and a button to end call
- + All the functional buttons are visible
- + Overall a clear layout divided in 'contacts' panel and 'main' panel
- Sometimes the menus get confusing

Feedback:

- + With a good WiFi connection your signal strength and feedback is good
- Poor wifi connection leads to bad signal strength for audio and video calls
- When skype is trying to reestablish network connection, it's not clear to the user if something went wrong
- Sometimes calls just crash without any explanation
- Impossible to figure out why video signal gets lost or the call doesn't go through at all, as the software doesn't provide any hints

Affordance:

- + easy to use interface: buttons design follows common conventions; contacts list is well-organized

Mapping:

+ the mapping is good as well since everything is straightforward and uses easy icons

Constraints:

- Limited number of people able to participate in conference at once
- In number of cases video should preferably be off to provide acceptable sound quality

Consistency:

+ Consistent through desktop and mobile versions as well as through different OS platforms