

# Technology In Our Lives



## Staying In Touch With Video Instant Messaging

(NAPSA)—“Having a good time, wish you were here!”

That sentiment, long associated with postcards sent from exotic destinations, could just as easily be applied to family gatherings that distant relatives are unable to attend. Fortunately, thanks to the advent of online instant messaging and webcam technology, it's now possible for family and friends to visit face-to-face from thousands of miles away, without leaving home.

Whether it's for a special holiday, a milestone birthday, or just an informal “Hi, how are you,” people can bridge the distance that separates them anytime, anywhere there is a webcam and an Internet connection. Instant messaging (IM) has quickly become the fastest growing communication tool, and with the addition of video, it has taken on a new face, literally.

For example, Microsoft's MSN Messenger now enables people to add live video to their text-based messages, bringing them even closer—since they can actually share a smile or a virtual hug with a loved one, anytime they IM.

And, it's so easy. The application is free to download from the Web. Once it's installed, you can see when friends are online. After you start a normal text message session, you then select the “webcam” button to invite a friend to view your video. Your friend receives an invitation to view what's on your webcam—and you'll instantly be connected. Friends don't have to have a camera in order to see you—but it is much more fun when both parties can see each other.

One webcam that works especially well for video instant messaging is the Logitech QuickCam



**Webcams let families share special occasions, even when separated by thousands of miles.**

Orbit. This stylish looking camera is simple to operate, and actually physically moves to keep your face centered in the field of view. The face-tracking software makes people feel like they have their own cameraman, since the camera can automatically follow a person's face as they move around during video IM sessions. The camera includes a nine-inch stand, so it can be elevated to eye level. A built-in microphone lets you add audio to your instant messaging sessions as well.

“It's not always possible to travel hundreds of miles to see someone,” said Spencer Johnson, director of product marketing for Logitech's Video Business Unit. “But today, the webcam, coupled with video instant messaging, brings people closer together—in real time. It is truly the next stage in the ‘small world’ story.”

To download MSN Messenger, visit <http://messenger.msn.com>. To learn more about Logitech's webcam products, visit [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com).