# Skype to be retired after two decades of pioneering online communication



After more than two decades of service as a pioneer in online communication, Skype is set to be retired on 5 May 2023. The announcement comes from its owner, Microsoft, which acquired the platform in 2011 for $8.5 billion (£6.6 billion). This marks the end of an era for a service that, since its launch in 2003, revolutionised the way people connect globally through free computer-to-computer audio and video calls.

Skype was originally founded by Danish software developer Janus Friis and Swedish developer Niklas Zennström. It quickly rose to prominence, amassing 75 million active users by the end of 2005. Early successes included its acquisition by eBay in 2006 for $2.6 billion and subsequent sales before Microsoft took ownership. At its peak around 2011, Skype boasted approximately 150 million monthly users and 663 million registered users worldwide. It became so embedded in popular culture that "Skype" evolved into a verb synonymous with video calling.

The platform's early years were marked by a playful user experience and memorable audio cues. Peter Raeburn, a British composer who led the creative team behind Skype’s original sounds, explained that the aim was to create a "relatable being" through sound, making notifications feel like a friendly "Oh, hi!" The distinctive login sound, which Raeburn described as "an exaltation of quiet joy," exemplified the warm and personable identity Skype cultivated. This creative approach contributed to the futuristic feel of video calling in the mid-2000s, which was then a novel experience for many users.

However, Skype’s popularity began to decline in the late 2010s. The rise of competitors such as Zoom, Slack, and Microsoft’s own Teams platform introduced new functionalities that better met the demands of an increasingly mobile and hybrid workforce. Skype’s technology was seen as less adaptable to smartphones, especially compared to integrated solutions like Apple’s FaceTime on iPhones.

The COVID-19 pandemic briefly revitalised Skype usage, as remote working and virtual socialising soared, but its user base had significantly dwindled by 2020, with daily active users falling to around 23 million. Experts believe that Microsoft’s strategic focus shifted to Teams, which offered more integrated workplace collaboration tools including chatting, video calling, task management, and file sharing. Skype, while foundational in online communication, was seen as less suited to modern demands.

Nigel Dunn, managing director at workplace software firm Jabra, noted that Microsoft shifted emphasis toward collaborative experiences with Teams after its launch in 2017. He said, “Skype’s end is a reminder that people expect more than just calls. They want intuitive and connected workspaces that support the way they work today.” Meanwhile, Alex Yarotksy, CTO at workforce management company Hubstaff, cited Skype’s inability to keep up technologically, leading to "glitches, laggy calls and slow connection times," which drove users towards other platforms.

Despite the closure announcement, millions of users continue to rely on Skype for international calls. Online forums reveal concerns about issues like preserving call history and transitioning elderly users accustomed to Skype. Microsoft has assured users that call history data will be transferred to Teams as part of the migration process.

Peter Raeburn expressed mixed feelings about the closure. “The essential character behind what we created has lost a lot of its groove,” he told The Independent. Yet, he acknowledged the emotional impact Skype has had, saying, “It brought people together. I know people in long-distance relationships whose love has survived because of Skype.” Raeburn suggested that modern platforms lack the emotional connection Skype inspired, describing current tools like Teams or Zoom as "all functional" but without the sentimental value of their predecessor.

As Skype shuts down, Microsoft will redirect the remaining user base to Teams, its corporate-focused communications platform, which remains a key element in its software suite. Skype’s retirement signals a strategic consolidation in communication technology as user expectations evolve beyond simple audio and video calls towards integrated collaborative workspaces.

The Independent is reporting.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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6. <https://www.ft.com/content/00ed633f-e6d9-49ed-96bb-1db6cd5b0d79> - This source notes that Microsoft shifted emphasis toward collaborative experiences with Teams after its launch in 2017, supporting the statement about Microsoft's strategic focus shifting to Teams.
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