Viable Software Alternatives'

ViaTalk Conference

Serious Conferencing Software For The Internet
Version 1.1

Contents:

Overview

Welcome To ViaTalk, powerful network conferencing software   for business or personal use.   Get ready to heighten your Internet Interactivity!

The ViaTalk Community

While in development, ViaTalk was envisioned as providing a community atmosphere for Internet "Chat".   A community where people with the same interests, same employer, or simply the same temperament, could get together and discuss things in a "live" forum.   A sort of cyber-localization of the Internet - not by geographical boundaries, but rather by intellectual and/or emotional ones.

With that goal in mind, the ViaTalk Conferencing system was developed, not as a series of linked, world-wide Internet "Chat" servers, but rather as small, limited cyber-spacestations for interactive talk.

For an up-to-date listing of the latest users connecting to ViaTalk, visit our Web page at:

http://viablesoftware.com/viatalk

We hope to encourage the creation of as many ViaTalk Communities as we can!

Viable Software Alternatives
Ordering And Technical Support

To order ViaTalk Conference, see the information below.   The complete program is $39.95.

For technical support or to report bugs/make suggestions, visit our Web Forum.

We here at Viable are always looking for ideas that will allow us to build useful tools for the Internet, either client or server software.   If you need a utility that would enhance your ability to use the Internet, contact us using the information below:

How To Reach Us

Home Page: http://viablesoftware.com

Web Forum: http://viablesoftware.com/forum

ViaTalk Page: http://viablesoftware.com/viatalk

Order Desk: http://viablesoftware.com/order

Internet Email: support@viablesoftware.com

To Order Toll Free By Phone: 1-800-854-4902
**   (Orders Only, Please.)**

FAX Orders: 702-739-9960

We Accept MasterCard and VISA.

For Mail Orders Or Inquiries, Our Address Is:

> **Viable Software Alternatives**
> **P.O. Box 98134**
> **Las Vegas, NV   89193-8134**

If you order by mail, be sure to include the program name and the size of diskette you'd like it sent on.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Entering Your Session Profile

Before joining a ViaTalk Community, you need to enter some items to tell ViaTalk who you are.   The "Session Profile" contains information about your connection, your email address, and a short summary of your interests that other ViaTalk users can view.

Public ViaTalk (Self Sign-on)

Before connecting you must at least fill in the following information in the Account Profile Window:

* Email Address

This is the address through which you'll be reached by other users. It must be an email style address containing the "@" sign and at least one dot (".").   Preferably you should use your own email address if you have one.

* Username

This is the name by which you'll be known in the ViaTalk community you connect to.   It must be greater than 4 and less than 13 characters.   Spaces, punctuation, and special characters are not allowed.

* Password

This is a 4 to 8 character word, number, or abbreviation that identifies you to ViaTalk Central.   Be sure to write it down so you can re-enter it later if necessary.

The rest of the fields here are optional.

Connecting To Another User

After filling in the required fields in your Account Profile, you're ready to make your first ViaTalk connection.   This is the first easy step!

After the program has initialized successfully, the "Connect To User" Button becomes active.   Click on this button to connect to another user.   A window will appear from which can select the user address you wish to connect to.   You can also access your Address Book at this window if you want to add a user to it.

When the user's address is displayed in the window, press okay.

* If Things Go Right:

If all is well and the connection with the user's ViaTalk is completed, the server version number will be displayed in the "Discussion Area", along with that user's welcome message, if any.   You are connected!!

* If Things Go Wrong:

If you cannot connect, read the text in the "System Status Area" and you may be able to tell what went wrong.

Some other things to check if your connection fails:

   1. Make sure you have entered the a valid user address.   If you didn't, the system status display will tell you.

   2. Make sure you've entered a valid Username and Password in your Session Profile.

   3. Make sure your modem is connected and your Winsock version is active.

If all else fails, visit ViaTalk's support forum on the Web at:

http://viablesoftware.com/forum

The ViaTalk Main Window

Welcome to your ViaTalk Community!   Once connected, the main ViaTalk Conference window is the place group discussions are held.   The following is a description of the areas available in that window:

The System Status Area

The System Area is at the top of the ViaTalk window on the right.   Its purpose is to keep you informed of what's happening.   Error messages are displayed here, as well as information messages like "User XXXXX Has Entered (or Left) ViaTalk".

The Discussion Area

Below the System Area is the Discussion Area, were group discussions are displayed. When you send a message it will appear here, along with the messages of your other ViaTalk community users.

The Message Area

Here is where you'll compose your messages to others.   The Message Area is directly below the Discussion Area, at the lower-left of ViaTalk.

The User List

At the bottom-right of the ViaTalk window is the User List box.   When you are connected, this box contains a listing of all the members of your current ViaTalk community.

The ViaTalk Function Buttons

Just above the User List box are the ViaTalk Button Functions.   These are explained in the next section.

The ViaPic Display Box

In the upper-left corner of the ViaTalk Conference window is the ViaPic Display Box.   It probably now contains the ViaTalk Logo, but later on this is the place where the pictures you send, and picture that are sent to YOU, will be displayed.

Talking With ViaTalk

The next easy step!   Just type a message into the Message Area and click on the "Send" Button there.   You can also press the [ENTER] to send a message (press [CTRL+ENTER] to start a new paragraph in your messages).   Your message will go to ViaTalk Central, be sent back to you and other members, then be displayed in the Discussion Area.

Private Rooms In ViaTalk

ViaTalk allows you to hold up to 10 private conversations in addition to participating with other users in the Discussion Area.   Private discussions take place in virtual "private rooms", or windows that only you and the user you select can see.

Creating A Private Room

To create and enter a private room, simply highlight the name(s) of the user(s) you wish to invite to enter the room with you, then click on the "Privacy Button".

A "room window" will appear immediately on your screen.   Your action will cause a dialog window to appear on the other user's screens as well, inviting them to a private discussion in the room with you.

The "Room Service" Window

When the room is created, another window will appear on the right side of your screen. This is the Room Service Window and it allows you to switch from room to room, and back to the ViaTalk main window, any time you wish. The Room Service Window is a "floating" window, which means it stays on top of the other windows.

Each window has a corresponding button on the Room Service Window, and clicking on that room's button will cause that window to come to the front of your screen.

Beside each button on the Room Service Window is also a small green indicator light.   This light will change to bright green anytime a message (or picture) arrives at one of your room windows or the ViaTalk Main Window.

Private Room Function Buttons

The five function buttons available for each Private Room are as follows:

* The Send Button

Like the Send Button on the main ViaTalk window, the Private Room Send Button will ship your messages off to the ViaTalk Central server to be relayed to other occupants of the room.

* The Name Button

This button allows you to NAME your private room.   For example, if you wanted others to join you to talk about a certain subject, you can name the room after that subject.   Then browsing users can decide if they'd like to participate or not.

* The Lock Button

Allows you to "Lock" the room so that no other users can enter.   It's perfect for really private discussions that you don't want to share.   When you lock the room, the Lock Button turns to an Unlock Button.   Pressing it now will "Unlock" the room so that other users can enter.

* The Who? Button

Pressing this button will cause your ViaTalk Central server to tell you who currently is in the room with you!

* The Leave Button

This button removes you from the room, and its window is closed.   If no Private Rooms exist, the Room Service Window will also be closed.

Important Information

The commercial version of ViaTalk Conference is priced at $39.95.   The demonstration version will operate as a fully-functional version for 30 days in order for you to determine if it meets your needs.   Use of the evaluation version after that period constitutes a violation of the program's copyright, which will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

IMPORTANT: This software is a copyrighted, proprietary program offered "as is", without any warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, performance, or otherwise; all warranties are expressly disclaimed.   By using ViaTalk Conference, you agree that the author will not be liable for any use of (or inability to use) or performance of this product, or for any damages whatsoever.

The ViaPic Sketch Pad

With ViaTalk you can send pictures to other users.   Photos, graphics, or pictures you create yourself, all can be uploaded to any connected ViaTalk user in ViaPic's handy wallet-sized picture format.

Uploading Pictures

Pictures, or pictures pasted from the Windows Clipboard into ViaPic, are automatically re-sized to fit the ViaPic Display box on your ViaTalk main window.

To upload a picture you must first be connected, AND you must have at least one user name highlighted in the User List box.   Then just click on the ViaPic button.

In the ViaPic Sketch Pad window, select "Load Picture" from that window's File menu.   You can also select "Paste Picture" from the Edit menu, but there must be a picture in the clipboard!   An easy way to test the Paste function is to press the [PRINT SCREEN] key on your keyboard, then choose "Paste Picture" from the ViaPic menu.   A miniature replica of your screen will appear!

To send the picture to the user(s) you have highlighted, just click on the "Send" button and the picture will be on its way.

Editing Pictures Using ViaPic

ViaPic is really a full-fledged miniature picture editor with several drawing tools.   The tools are represented by icons.

At the bottom of the window:

Top Row:

Circle Tool: For drawing circles
Line Tool: For drawing straight lines.
Rectangle Tool: Draws Rectangles
Fill Tool: Fills an area with color

Bottom Row:

Filled Circle Tool: Draws filled circles
Draw Tool: Draws as you move your mouse
Fill Rectangle Tool: Draws filled rectangles
Text Tool: Allows you to add text to your picture

Center:

Line Size Selector: Makes your lines thick or thin.

At the right of the window:

       Color Palette: 16 colors are available
       Clear Button: Erases the picture
       Undo Button: Restores the picture

ViaTalk Menu Functions

ViaTalk has several features to make your cyber-talk more interesting and/or productive. The following explains the functions in the FILE and EDIT menus:

Save Discussion [FILE Menu]

You can save the contents of the Discussion Area, both in the main ViaTalk window and in each Private Room you use.   Just select "Save Discussion" from the menu bar and give the discussion a name in the file window that appears.   Discussions are saved as text files and can be loaded into any word processor or Windows Notepad.

Load/Save Picture [FILE Menu]

You can load a picture, or save a picture that someone has sent you, by using the "Save Picture" or "Load Picture" command from the ViaTalk main window's menu bar.

Session Profile [EDIT Menu]

Selecting this option will allow you to edit your Account Profile.

Copy and Paste Text [Edit Menu]

In the main ViaTalk window, as well as in the Private Rooms, you can copy text from the Discussion Area by highlighting it, then selecting "Copy" from the Edit menu.

When you select "Paste", any text in the clipboard will be pasted into the Message Box.

Large Font/Fixed Font [Edit Menu]

In both the ViaTalk main window and the Private Rooms, you can select "Large Font" in order to make the text in the Message and Discussion Areas larger.

You can also select a Fixed or Proportional font here.

ViaPic Sketch Pad [Tools Menu]

You can launch the ViaPic Sketch Pad from the Edit menu whether you're connected or not. This option lets you create or edit pictures off-line.   However, if you start ViaPic from the Edit menu you won't be able to upload.

Sounds [Tools Menu]

Selecting this option will allow you to customize ViaTalk's sounds to suit your taste.   From the window that appears you can browse your hard drive and select appropriate sounds for the various ViaTalk events.

Ringer [Tools Menu]

The ViaTalk Ringer can be turned on and off by clicking on the "Ringer" item in the Edit menu.

ViaTalk Home Page [Tools Menu]

Selecting this option will run the PocketSurfer Text Web Browser, which will load in the ViaTalk Home Page automatically.   There you see the latest ViaTalk news, download the latest version, and check who connected most recently!

ViaMail [Tools Menu]

Brings up ViaTalk's built-in SMPT client for sending Internet email.   Just fill in a subject, write your message, and hit the "Send" button.

ViaTalk Address Book [Tools Menu]

See the section on this elsewhere in this help file.

Button Functions

While connected, the ViaTalk buttons are what you'll use to perform various tasks with ViaTalk...

The "Connect To User" Button

Pressing the Connect Button connects you to the user you specify from your Address Book. Once connected, the caption of this button changes to "Disconnect", and pressing it will disconnect you from the other user's system.

The "Rooms" Button

This button causes the "Current Rooms" window to be displayed.   If there are currently any Private Rooms in use, they will be listed in this window, along with the room name (if any), and the usernames of the room occupants.

To enter an existing Private Room, click on the button for that room.

If a room is LOCKED, its button will be greyed out and you won't be able to enter.   Rooms YOU are already occupying will also be greyed out.

The "Bye" Button

When users are connected to YOUR SYSTEM, you have the option of disconnecting them with the "Bye" Button.   Just highlight their name in the user list and click on it.

The "ViaPic" Button

Pressing this button allows you to load/create/edit/upload a picture.   See the "ViaPic Sketch Pad" section of this help file for more information.

The "Profile" Button

Every time you connect to ViaTalk Central, your Account Profile is sent to the server and saved in its user database.   Other users can view what you typed there (if you allow them to) by highlighting your name when you're connected, then clicking on this button.

You can look at their profiles too!

The "Ring" Button

If you highlight a connected user name, the Ring Button becomes active.   Clicking this button will cause the user's ViaTalk to sound the page sound once, just in case they're away from their computer or don't know that you are talking to them.

While ViaTalk was in development, a particular beta tester had the habit of falling asleep in the middle of a conversation!   The Ring Button is dedicated to DaveJ....

The "Privacy" Button

Selecting the name of a user (or users) who is connected, then pressing this button, will cause a Private Room to be created and that user to be invited into the room with you.   See the section on "Private Rooms" elsewhere in this help file for more information.

The "Send" Button

Located in the lower right-hand corner of the Message area, this button sends the message you've composed there to the ViaTalk Central server, then to other users!

ViaMail & PocketSurfer

We've included two convenient Internet utilities with ViaTalk Conference, ViaMail, a handy E-mail client for sending messages via SMTP, and PocketSurfer, our mini-Web browser that makes visiting the ViaTalk home pages - and downloading the latest ViaTalk - easy!

Check out our listing of the latest connected ViaTalk users with PocketSurfer...

Advanced Functions

When your ViaTalk is running, it is acting as an Internet ViaTalk Host, or 'server'.   You can control how the server operates using the following functions:

Host Setup (ADVANCED Menu)

The Host Setup Window allows you to control the following settings:

* The Welcome Message

Anything you enter here will be displayed on other user's screens when they connect to YOUR ViaTalk.

* ViaTalk Port

This is the TCP/IP Port that ViaTalk uses for connections.   Don't change this unless you know that other user's are also using a different port.   If you do, no one will be able to connect to you, and you won't be able to connect to them!

The default ViaTalk Port is 2082.

* Send Timeout

This setting controls how long ViaTalk will try to send, AND how long it will attempt to make a connection.   If you are having difficulty connecting or getting messages through, increase this value.   The default timeout is 10 seconds.

* Maximum Connections

This setting determines the maximum number of users that can be connected to YOUR ViaTalk at once.   The default is 25.

* Name Server DNS

This field holds the Internet domain name of the ViaTalk Name Server you wish to use. The default is our server here, 'viablesoftware.com'.   Watch the ViaTalk Home Page for other name servers if/when they become available.

* Name Server IP

The IP number of the name server.   If you know the IP you'll get faster connections. Otherwise leave this field blank.

* Name Server Port

Don't change this unless you KNOW the Name Server you want to use is connected to a port other than port 7.

Deny Access By IP (ADVANCED Menu)

Use this window to enter IP's or partial IP's that you do not want connecting to your ViaTalk Conference.

At some point you may need to lock a user out of the server for some reason. In ViaTalk Central this is accomplished by entering the user's IP address as a 'Restricted' IP. Connections with restricted IPs are refused by the server.

Unfortunately, many users are given dynamic IPs, addresses that change each time they connect.   In this case, you can use the partial IP address.   For example:

213.113.45

...will lock all IPs that begin with '213.113.45'.   Be careful using this feature, you could unintentionally lock out users from the same domain.

To add a restricted IP, type the IP or partial IP into the text box at the top of the window, then click on 'Add'.

To delete an IP from the restricted list, first highlight the IP in the the list, then click the 'Delete' button.

Host Status Window (ADVANCED Menu)

Brings up the server status display.   Connections are logged to this window each time a user connects to your ViaTalk.

The ViaTalk Address Book

Use the Address Book to store user addresses and information about that user.   You can also create 'Address Groups', groups of user addresses that, when in effect, will restrict connections to members of the group, automatically rejecting connections from users not in the list.

Access the Address Book from the TOOLS menu or from the Connect Window.

Adding an address to the Address Book

(IMPORTANT: You can add any address that appears in the ViaTalk Discussion Area or System Area just by double clicking on that address. To add the address of a user currently connected to you, highlight their name in the User List, click on "Profile", then double click on their email address in the window that appears.)

ViaTalk addresses are Internet email addresses (You can invent an address, but it must take the form of a valid emial address containing the "@" character and at least one dot ".").   You can add an address by typing it into the field at the upper right of the Address Book window, then clicking on the "Add User" Button.

On the left are fields that can be filled in for each address you add to the Address Book, the user's username, real name, and a comments box.

Creating A Group of Addresses

The default address group is "General Addresses".   When you are using this group, anyone can connect to your ViaTalk and you can connect to anyone listed in General Addresses.

ViaTalk lets you create your own groups too, however, the address in groups you create are treated differently from those entered in General Addresses. When you create and select a group, ONLY the address listed in that group are allowed to connect to your ViaTalk.   All other attempts to connect to you will be rejected.   To accept all connections again, just select the first group, "General Addresses", again.

To create a group:

Select "Add Group" from the Address Book window.   You can add up to five groups of addresses.   When you've added a group, it will be shown on bottom of the Address Book window.   To select the group, click on its name there.

You can add as many addresses to this group as you wish, just keep in mind that while the group is selected in the Address Book, only those addresses will be able to connect to your ViaTalk.