CoolTalk Help Contents

CoolTalk is a realtime audio and data collaboration tool specifically designed for the Internet.   Users can enhance interpersonal communications and avoid long distance phone charges.

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Starting a New Conference

The following steps explain how to start a new conference with CoolTalk.

1. Select Start... from the Conference Menu.

The Open Conference window will appear.   There will be two tabs at the top of the window, Address Book and IS411 Directory.

2. Make sure that Address Book is selected.

The window contains an input field where you can enter the user address of a user that you wish to conference with, and a listing of the users who are contained in your Address Book.   If this is the first time you are using CoolTalk, your Address Book will be empty.

3. Enter the user name and hostname of the user that you wish to conference with in the field provided, in the user@host format and hit the OK button.

For example, to invite user 'rafe' at the machine 'tornado.insoft.com', you would enter rafe@tornado.insoft.com in the field.

When you press the OK button, the user you have invited will be sent an invitation to conference with you. Depending on whether they are in another conference, and whether they currently have the software loaded, your invitation will be accepted or refused, or their Answering Machine will pick up.

If they answer, you can begin speaking or using CoolTalk's collaborative tools, the Whiteboard and Chat Tool.

The IS411 Server

The IS411 Server is a service that enables you to locate other CoolTalk users to conference with, and to register with so that other CoolTalk users can conference with you.

To change your IS411 Server or to register (or un-register), you should select Options from the Conference menu and click on the Conference tab.

In order to invite someone found on the IS411 Server, select Start from the Conference menu.   Click on the IS411 Directory tab.   Highlight the user on the list that you wish to invite and click OK.   You can also add a user from the IS411 Directory to your Speed Dial Bar by highlighting their name and clicking on the Add to Speed Dial button.

The Address Book

The Address Book contains a list of all of the CoolTalk users that you have invited to conference.   To invite a user from your Address Book to conference, you should select Start from the Conference menu and click on the Address Book tab.

Select a user in the list of past conference participants and click on OK to invite them into a conference.   To remove a user from the list, select their name and click on the Delete button.   To add a user from your Address Book to a Speed Dial button for easy access, select their name in the list and click on Add to Speed Dial.

Creating a Business Card

Your CoolTalk Business Card allows you to input personal information and save an image that will be used to provide information about you to other CoolTalk users that you conference with.   It also allows you to set the login name that you wish to be identified by when other users invite you into conferences or look at your listing on an IS411 Server.

To launch the Business Card Editor, select Options from the Conference Menu and click on the Business Card tab.   A page with standard business card fields will appear.

First you should set your Login name.   The Login name currently being used on this machine will appear in the Login field.   To list other Login names used on this machine, click on the list button.   To choose a new login name, simply enter it in the Login field.   To edit an existing Login name, select it from the listing.

After you have confirmed that your Login name appears in the Login field, you should enter the appropriate information in the other fields on the Business Card, including your name, address, and E-mail address.   Entering information into the fields is not required, but this data will be sent to other people that you conference with, so you may find it convenient to include pertinent data on your Business Card.

Once you are satisfied with the information have entered, you can select a business card photo.

Selecting a Business Card Photo

Your Business Card Photo is used by CoolTalk to identify you to other CoolTalk users when you conference.   When a conference is initiated, Business Cards are automatically exchanged, and your Business Card Photo will appear on the other conference member's CoolTalk window and vice versa. For this reason, you may wish to save a photo of some kind with your Business Card data.

A Business Card Photo can be loaded in three ways, you can type the pathname of the image file that you wish to import manually, you can browse your file structure and select it, or you can paste in an image from the Windows clipboard.

Creating your business card.

Entering a Pathname

A CoolTalk Business Card Photo can be one of several popular graphics formats, including Windows Bitmap, Compuserve GIF, JPEG, Sun Raster, or TIFF.

To input an image in one of these formats as your Business Card Photo, simply type the file's pathname in the Photo field.   The image will automatically be scaled to the appropriate size and color depth and saved as your personal Business Card Photo.   It will appear immediately in the upper right hand corner of the Business Card Editor.   (Note that the original file will not be altered in any way).

Browsing the File System

In order to browse your file system and select an image to use as your Business Card Photo, you should first click on the Browse button. This will open a Windows File Requester, from which you can navigate any drives that your computer is connected to.

In the lower right hand corner of the requester, you should specify the image format of the file that you are looking for. As you browse through your directory structure, images of the specified file type are listed on the left side of the requester.

When you spot the file you wish to use, highlight it in the list and click on OK. The file will automatically be scaled to size and set to the proper color depth (Note that the original file on disk will not be altered in any way).

Paste Image from Clipboard

If you have a bitmap stored in the Windows clipboard, you can paste it into CoolTalk as your Business Card Photo by clicking on the Paste button.   The image data contained in the clipboard will automatically be scaled to fit in the Business Card Photo.

The data in the clipboard will not be changed.

Audio Conferencing with CoolTalk

CoolTalk supports two audio encoding algorithms, one designed for 14.4k bps modems, and another for 28.8k bps modems and higher.   You can select which modem you have from the Conference Options page.   If you are set at 28.8k and you conference with a 14.4k user, you will automatically scale to their bandwidth.   Note that when you are in a conference, the audio bandwidth you are using is displayed in the lower right corner of the CoolTalk window.

In the main CoolTalk window, there are two meters that monitor the current audio levels in the conference. The meter on top measures the current record level, which is picked up by your microphone.   The bottom meter displays the current playback level, received from the other conference member.

On the top meter, there are two sliding controls which enable you configure when you send audio.   The red slider, which always appears to the left of the white slider, is the Silence Sensor.   The white slider is the Echo Cancellation setting.

The Silence Sensor

The Silence Sensor is the volume level at which you begin sending audio.   It should be set so that when you are not speaking, no audio is sent to the other conference member.   In order to make sure that you don't experience "clipping", the Silence Sensor should be set as low as possible without sending audio when you are not speaking.

Every time the green bar crosses the Silence Sensor's position, audio is sent.   To set the Silence Sensor, do not speak and see where the green bar rests.   This is the room's ambient noise level.   Set the Silence Sensor just above that.

Echo Cancellation

In some cases, your microphone can pick up audio played by your speakers and retransmit it to the conference.   This is played back as "echo".   In order to prevent echo from occuring in your conferences, CoolTalk includes an Echo Cancellation setting, which is set by the white slider on CoolTalk.

The Echo Cancellation setting determines the level of audio that has to be picked up in order to transmit audio when you are receiving audio from the other conference member.   By setting Echo Cancellation all the way to the right, you will never send audio when the other conference member is speaking.   By setting it at the same level as the Silence Sensor, CoolTalk will disregard the fact that the other member is speaking when determining whether to send audio.

Audio Options

From the Audio Options page you can set which audio devices CoolTalk will use, and adjust other audio settings.

CoolTalk automatically determines whether you have full duplex Audio capability.   (Full duplex means that you are capable of sending and receiving simultaneously, half duplex audio must switch between send and receive modes).   If you are using half duplex audio, you can set CoolTalk to automatically switch between send and receive modes to simulate full duplex operation.

Using the selection boxes on the Audio Options page, you can select which devices you wish to use to send and receive audio.   You can also set the level of amplification that is applied to your audio input.   If your audio is too quiet for the other user in the conference, you should turn up the amplification.

The Answering Machine

The CoolTalk Answering Machine works similarly to a conventional answering machine, picking up calls that you may miss when you are away from your computer.   When the Answering Machine is active, calls will be picked up a short time after the invitation is received, a greeting that you record will play, and an audio message will be recorded for you to play later.

To turn on the Answering Machine, click on the Answering Machine button on CoolTalk's main window. When you have a message waiting (indicated by the message counter on the main CoolTalk window), you can click on the message counter to open the Answering Machine.   When no messages are waiting, the Answering Machine can be accessed by selecting Options from the Conference menu and clicking on the Answering Machine tab.

Operating the Answering Machine.

Operating the Answering Machine

In the Incoming Messages area of the CoolTalk interface, there are several buttons that let you work with the incoming messages, and a listing of messages that have been left for you.

The Business Card Photo of the person who left the currently selected message appears in the upper right corner of the Incoming Messages area.

Play Message - plays the currently selected answering machine message

Stop - stops playing the current message

Delete Message - deletes the message that is currently selected

Callback - automatically calls back who left the currently selected message

Save WAVE File - save the selected message to disk in WAVE format

You can also specify the folder where you wish to save messages that are left for you using the Answering Machine.   The folder that messages are currently saved to is displayed.   To specify another folder, click on the browse button and locate the folder that you wish to use.

Recording an outgoing message.

Recording an Outgoing Message

Before you start using the Answering Machine, you will want to record a personalized outgoing message.

To record an outgoing message, you will need to open the Answering Machine.   To do so, select Options from the CoolTalk window, and click on the Answering Machine tab.

The Greeting controls are found at the bottom of the Answering Machine's window.   To play the existing message, press the Play button.   To record a new message, press the Record button and speak your message, then press the Stop button to stop recording.

You can also use a pre-recorded WAVE file as your outgoing message.   To do so, click on the Browse button (to the right of the outgoing message's filename) and locate the file on disk that you wish to use.

CoolTalk Options

Selecting Options from the Conference menu launches the CoolTalk Options page.   From the Options page, you can edit your Business Card, use the Answering Machine, change your Audio settings, and set your Conference options.

Conference Options

Audio Options

Answering Machine

Business Card

Conference Options

IS411 Server: Enter the hostname of the IS411 server you wish to use.   The IS411 Server is a service that maintains a list of users currently running CoolTalk.   From the Start Conference dialog, you can invite other users who are connected to the same IS411 Server as you.

If you wish to make yourself available to other users connected to the IS411 Server you have specified, select Make Me Available Through Server.

Bandwidth: CoolTalk's audio communications include two options 28,800 bps and 14,400 bps.   If you are able to connect to your Internet Service Provider at 28,800 bps you should select it so that you can enjoy higher quality audio when conferencing with other 28,800 bps users.   If you connect to a user who has 14,400 bps selected, you will automatically step down to their bandwidth.

Accept Invitation: There are three settings for CoolTalk's behavior when you are invited to conference, Always accept, Ask before accepting, and Never accept.   Note that when the Answering Machine is on, this setting is ignored.

Participant Information

There are two ways to get information about the conference participants.   You can either click on the Business Card Photo found on the main CoolTalk window, which will display participant information on the person you are conferencing with (if you are in a conference).   If you are not in a conference, your personal information will be displayed.

You can also use the Participant Information menu in the Conference Menu to display information on yourself or on the other conference member while you are in a conference.

Participant info includes the participant's Business Card, host information (including platform type, host name, and IP address), and version information for CoolTalk.

Exiting CoolTalk

To exit the application, select Exit from the Conference menu.   If you are in a conference when you select Exit, you will be asked to confirm that you wish to leave the conference before the application is closed.

The Speed Dial Bar

The Speed Dial Bar is designed to provide you with easy access to users that you conference with frequently.   To invite someone on your Speed Dial Bar to a conference, simply click on the Speed Dial button that corresponds to their conference address.

Buttons can be added to the Speed Dial Bar in three ways, from the Address Book, the IS411 Directory, and the Speed Dial Bar itself.

To add a button to the Speed Dial Bar manually, right click on the Speed Dial Bar and select Add from the popup menu.   A dialog will appear requesting a Label and Address.   The Label is the text that will appear on the Speed Dial Bar, and the Address is the actual user name and hostname of the person the button will invite.   (The Address should follow the user@host format).

Add Button

Selecting Add from the Speed Dial popup menu enables you to manually create a Speed Dial button.   A dialog will appear, in which you should enter a Label for the button, and the address of the user that you want to conference with.

Delete Button

Selecting Delete removes the button under the mouse pointer from the Speed Dial Bar permanently.

Remove All Buttons

Remove All Buttons will completely erase the contents of your Speed Dial Bar.   Before all of the buttons are erased, you will be asked to confirm that you wish to remove them.

Move Left

Moves the button under the mouse pointer one position to the left on the Speed Dial Bar.

Move Right

Moves the button under the mouse pointer one position to the right on the Speed Dial Bar.

Arrange Buttons by Label

The Speed Dial Bar can be sorted alphabetically by button label or user address.   To arrange them by label, select Arrange Buttons by Label from the menu.

Arrange Buttons by Name

The Speed Dial Bar can be sorted alphabetically by button label or user address.   To arrange them by address, select Arrange Buttons by Address from the menu.

Button Properties

Selecting Properties enables you to edit the address and label corresponding to the button currently under the mouse pointer.

Start Conference

Selecting Start from the Conference menu launches the Start Conference dialog, which enables you to initiate a new conference with another CoolTalk user.

Leave Conference

Selecting Leave from the Conference menu ends the current CoolTalk call.

System Information

Selecting System Info from the Help menu launches InSofts System Information utility, which provides you with information on your PCs configuration.

Setup Wizard

The Setup Wizard automatically configures CoolTalk for use with your PC.   It changes your settings to work best with your audio card and modem.