

Re: Video conferencing

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 - *Date:* Thu, 1 Feb 2007 15:34:20 +0000
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On Thursday 01 February 2007 15:05, Frank Pineau wrote:

When I travel on business, I like to set up video chat to talk to my family at home. The problem is, home is behind a NAT firewall (a PIX to be exact). I have limited IP addresses and cannot spare one to statically assign to an endpoint inside my network for this purpose. Regardless, I'd like to be able to connect to any node in my network, depending on who I want to call. I never know what I'm going to be behind, but it's usually also some sort of NAT firewall that I do not control. I've tried ekiga (nee Gnome Meeting), and a few others with almost no luck. I thought something like skype (which doesn't support video under linux) or an instant messenger that uses an intermediary server (Yahoo, ICQ, etc.) to get around the NAT issues but none of those support video either. I've tried VPN to my PIX, but as I can't control where I'm coming from, I haven't been able to configure a reliable VPN client for linux.

Much depends on your router. The NetGear that I bought recently does allow a service to be made available to more than one end-point box. I believe that it's what is called a 'stateful inspection firewall'. I've not tried it out, so I don't know whether the initialisation would have to be from the home box, though. Without that, it would be necessary to change port-forwarding settings each time a new user was required – obviously not a good idea for your situation.

aMSN is quite good in serving video, but there is no voice chat yet – it's in the pipeline. You see the other person, but have to type your messages. I've used it with a windows msn user at the other end, without any problems, too.

In short, when trying to video conference under linux, I'm successful around 5% of the time. It's almost always easier to boot into Windows and do it from there. What do you use for mobile video chat and how have you set it up?

I used to use GnomeMeeting with h.323 and that worked very well. I think

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ekiga's move to sip, while good in the long run, introduces more complications. Sadly, I don't have a friend using ekiga that I can test it with, but I believe the people do get very good results.

Things are far from perfect, but improving all the time.

Anne

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