

Live Support Software

LIVE SUPPORT SOFTWARE

Live Support Software is a popular term for instant messaging applications designed specifically to provide online assistance to users of a web site. The software enables the administrator or webmaster of a web site to receive and respond to text communication from multiple users of the web site.

From a list of live support software (applications), there are some that use JavaScript, Java or Flash Player to run directly inside the browser. These online applications differ from classic software mostly because Website visitors don't have to install anything on their PC's and they can communicate freely with website's online agents. There are also live support software that goes beyond basic text chat, and offer such advanced communication capabilities as true VoIP (Voice over IP), application sharing, remote view and remote form filling.

The majorities of live support applications opens in a window and connect the user to a member of "call centre" staff. The more advanced scripts allow the users to be queued, so that one member of staff can deal with a customer and then automatically move on to the next customer. The customer's position in the queue is sometimes displayed.

Live support applications are typically written using PHP and possible a backend database such as MySQL. This is due to the fact that PHP and MySQL are open source and effectively free. Making it highly probable that a companies webserver will have the capability to run PHP scripts. As stated before a wide variety of techniques are used to create the display which the user receives.

WEB CHAT

A web chat is systems that allow users to communicate in real time using easily accessible web interfaces. It is a type of internet online chat distinguished by its simplicity and accessibility to users who do not wish to take the time to install and learn to use specialized chat software. This trait allows users instantaneous access and only a web browser is required to chat.

History and technology

The history of web chatting is characterized by trends in underlying web technologies. The first chat sites featured simple interfaces made from dynamically generated HTML pages. The use of HTML allowed sites to incorporate fonts, colors, links, and images into their interfaces, giving them a more modern hypermedia feel, which was an advantage over older, but more established text-based chat services like IRC. The biggest downside to HTML chat was in its interactivity. Every message sent to an HTML chat required a form submission and subsequent page load, which meant that there was a waiting period between the time a user could send one message and the time they could begin to type the next one. Receiving messages also required frequent page reloads, and could lead to delays, page flicker and distracting browser activity. For these reasons HTML chats have largely fallen out of use today, although some of the older HTML chat sites still remain active.

In 1995, Java applet technology was introduced into web browsers. Java's well developed network and graphical capabilities made it an ideal platform for creating chat interfaces, some of which are in use on the most popular web chat sites today. Commonly used Java chat interfaces include ChatSpace and PJIRC. While there are some drawbacks associated with Java chats such as long initial page loading times, the technology has worked well and scaled well.

Newer web technologies, such as Ajax and Flash, have been used as the basis for some new chat systems. Commonly used software includes Pichat. There are some disadvantages such as incomplete support for networking in the underlying Javascript and Actionscript programming languages. However, the trendiness of these technologies, as well as their strong support for graphical and usability features mean it is likely that these types of chats will become more widespread.

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Comparison with other chat services

Web chatting is only a small part of the world of online chat. Web chats do not have the same network effects as chat services like instant messengers, which become more useful as they become more popular. Smaller, less busy chats can actually have more appeal to users than crowded, popular ones. Really, the only unique feature web chat sites offer is instant accessibility. And in an internet where there are so many other choices for real-time social interaction: internet relay chat networks, instant messenger services, online games, and virtual worlds. Web sites devoted to simple text-based chat remain a small, but singular phenomenon.

There are hundreds of web chat sites, which actively compete with each other to the point where some of the more popular ones actually censor the names of other chat sites, preventing users from referring each other to competing chats. The simple accessibility generates an extremely high level of competition between chat sites, as it allows users to switch between them with ease.