

# What is a webcam?

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A webcam – short for ‘web camera’ – is a digital camera that’s connected to a computer. It

can send live pictures from wherever it’s sited to another location by means of the internet. Many desktop computer screens and laptops come with a built-in camera and microphone, but if yours doesn’t, you can add a separate webcam at any time.

There are various types. Some are plugged into computers through USB ports, but others are wireless (wifi). Other features might include:



- an integral microphone
- the ability to pan and tilt
- in-built sensors that can detect movement and start recording
- a light that, when on, will let you know that the camera is in use.

There’s a wide range of things that you can do with a webcam. The most common is to video chat over the internet using Skype – see our [Skype guides](#) for all the information you need to get going.

And always remember, and remind your children, that any images you make available to others via your webcam could remain on the internet forever.

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## Next steps

-  [How to use a webcam in your home](#)
-  [How to view the world via webcams](#)