






# What is instant messaging?

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Instant messaging, or IM, is a form of text communication between two or more people in 'real time' while online. It's similar to email but with the speed and immediacy of a phone conversation. It's also similar to a [chat room](#), but with greater privacy as you can select those involved in the text conversation. You do this by creating a list of contacts or 'buddies' - you'll be alerted when they're online at the same time as you.

## Next steps

-  [What is Skype?](#)
-  [What is email?](#)
-  [What is a chat room?](#)
-  [How to use WhatsApp on your smartphone](#)
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