# Google™

Review Guide - Gmail Chat

Gmail Chat creates a seamless communications experience, enabling users to email and send instant messages from directly within the same browser. There's nothing to download and no separate application to use—it just works in Gmail. Users can see when their contacts are online, and chat instantly with them.

Communications today can be frustrating. Users typically have to use separate email and instant messaging applications to talk to the same people, not to mention having to keep track of what information was sent where. Gmail Chat addresses some of these issues by breaking down the arbitrary barrier that's been created between email and IM. Chats need not be different from email messages. Important information is communicated and stored in both.

Gmail has always been committed to making communications more efficient and helping users find and access information. Now we've extended this model to instant communications.
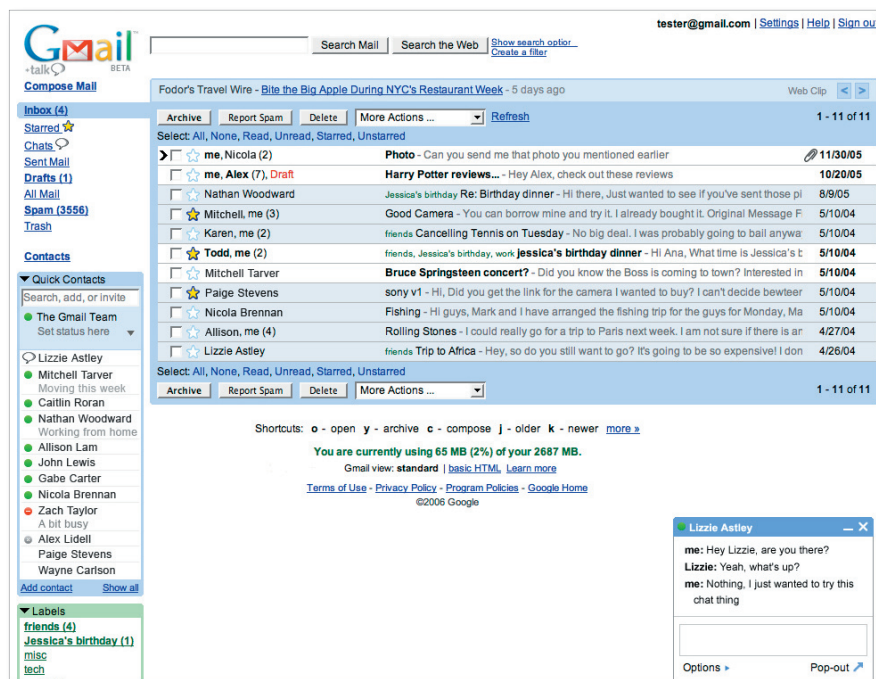
Chat features

Quick Contacts. Located on the left of your Gmail screen, the Quick Contacts list automatically displays the people you communicate with most frequently. Here, you can also designate certain people to appear "always" or "never ". From the Quick Contacts list, starting an email or chat, and viewing recent conversations with a contact, is just one click away.

Online presence and status. From anywhere in Gmail, you can see the contacts who are available to chat, denoted by a colored ball next to their name. When composing an email, you may notice that the recipient is online and choose to send an instant message instead. You can also set your own status message and see those of your contacts.

Google Talk synchronization. Your Quick Contacts list is synchronized with your Google Talk Friends list. The same contacts will show up on both, and contacts you've blocked will not appear in either place.

Chat history saving. You can choose to automatically save chats in your Gmail account, where they become just like email messages. Chats can be easily viewed, searched for, forwarded, printed or deleted. You can even "Reply" to a chat, which sends an email message to the person you were chatting with.

Easy-to-read formatting of saved chats. Each saved chat is distinct, marked with the person you were chatting with and the date and time. The formatting makes it really easy to read through saved chat histories.

Going off the record. While chatting, you can go "off the record" so that nothing typed from that point forward gets automatically saved in either person's Gmail account. Going off the record applies to individual people, and is persistent across chats. Once you go off the record with a particular person, you will always be off the record with him or her, even if you close the chat window. You will not need to go off the record each time you chat with the same person, but you will need to make this decision for each person you chat with. This socially-negotiated setting ensures that one user doesn't control the experience of other users, and gives users full disclosure and control over whether the person they're talking to can save their chat.

How to use Gmail Chat

Gmail Chat is offered on **Internet Explorer 6.0+** and **Firefox 1.0+** and is currently available on the US English interface only.

To access the chat features, sign in to your Gmail account as usual. A Quick Contacts list will be on the left side of your screen.
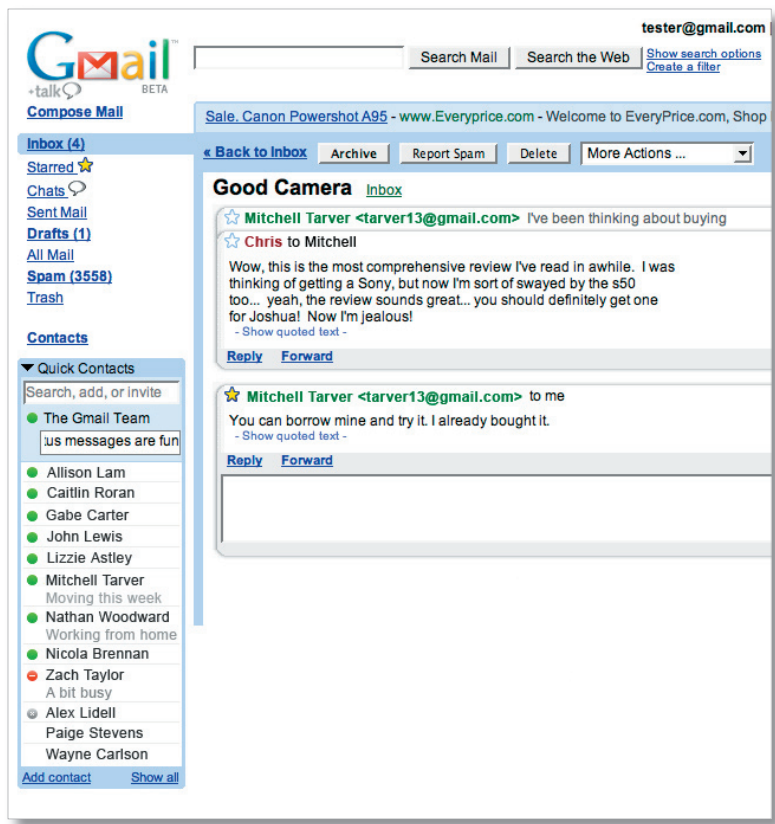
If any of your contacts use Gmail, Google Talk or an open service that's part of the Google Talk network, they will be able to chat with you in Gmail, and will appear in Quick Contacts with a colored ball icon next to their name. These icons indicate your contacts' status as well as yours.

Green: Available
Yellow: Idle. Your status automatically changes to idle when you're away from your computer for 15 minutes.
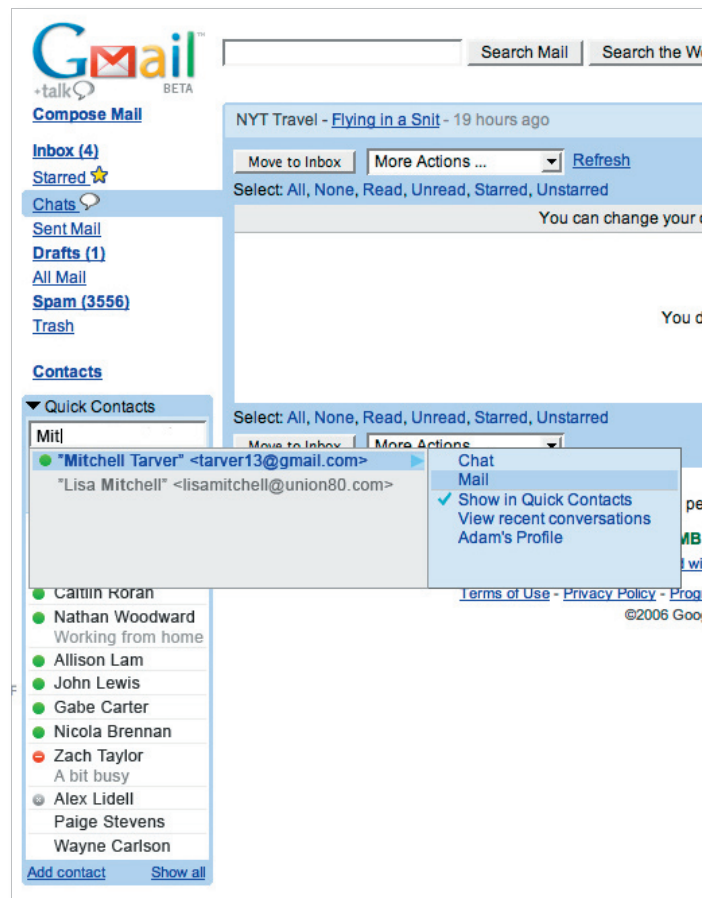**Red:** Busy
Grey: Signed out of chat
No ball icon: These contacts can't chat with you yet. Send them an invitation by hovering over their name and clicking Invite to chat.

Setting your custom status

You can create custom status messages when you're available or busy. From the status drop-down menu, select **Set custom message**… and enter your custom message in the box.


This status message will be visible to anyone that you can chat with, and is synchronized with your status message if you also use Google Talk.

Chatting with your contacts

To chat with contacts who are online, just hover over their name anywhere in Gmail and click the **Chat** button. Or you can simply click their name in Quick Contacts.
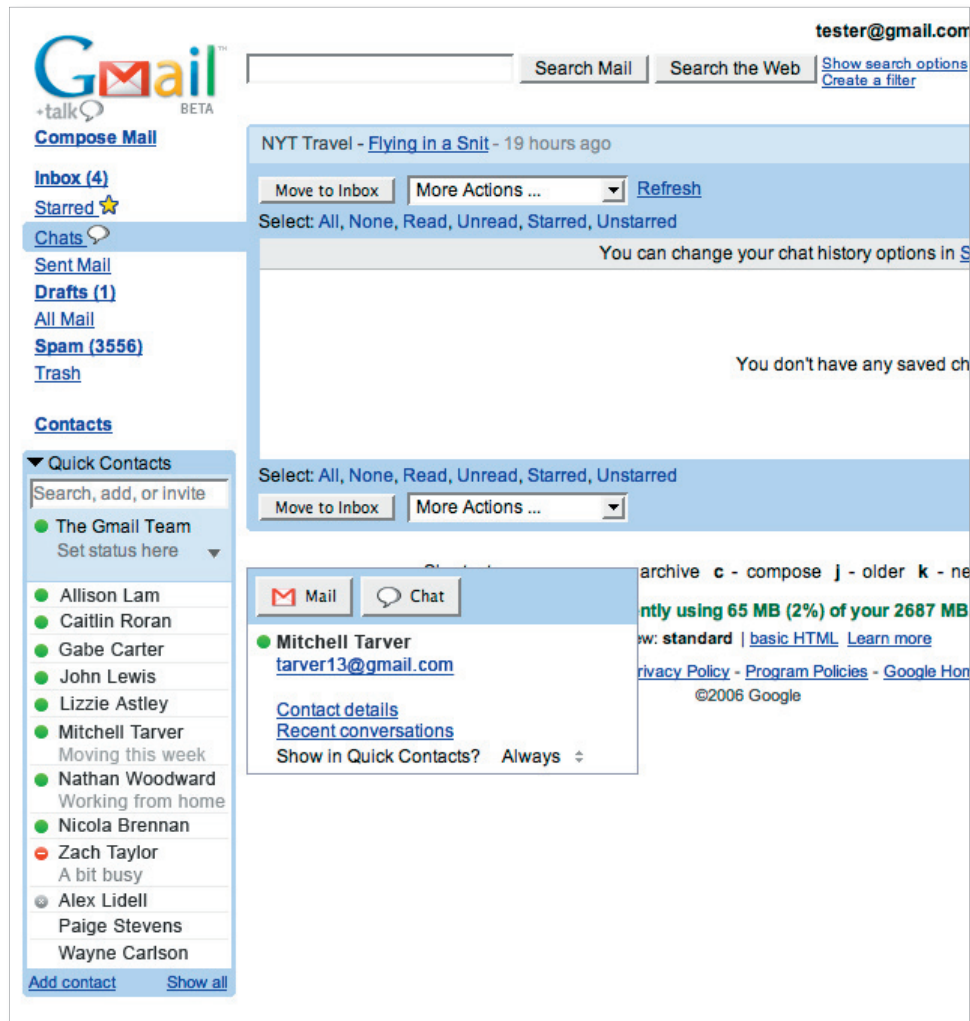
A chat window will appear at the bottom right of your Gmail screen and you can chat with them here directly. You can have several chats at once, and you can even pop out a chat session into its own window.
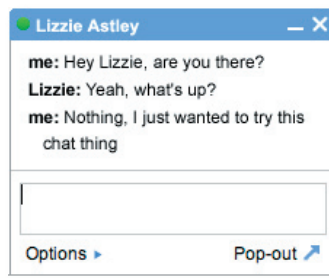
You may have contacts who are online and available to chat that don't show up in Quick Contacts. To initiate a chat or email message, just type their name into the search box at the top of Quick Contacts. Gmail will auto-complete as you type with the names from your entire Contacts list.

Inviting others to chat

To enable someone to chat with you instantly, simply add that person's name to your Quick Contacts list. Click **Add contact** at the bottom of Quick Contacts and enter one or multiple email addresses. If you enter an address of someone who isn't using Gmail, Google Talk or a service that's part of the Google Talk network, we'll send them an invite for Gmail. Once they sign up, you'll be able to chat with them instantly whenever they're signed in to Gmail or Google Talk.

To make it even easier for you to get in touch with your friends, you can designate that certain people always show up in Quick Contacts. Just select **Always** for **Show in Quick Contacts?** when hovering over their name or from your Gmail Contacts list

Chat history saving

You can choose to save your chats automatically to your Gmail account from the Settings page.
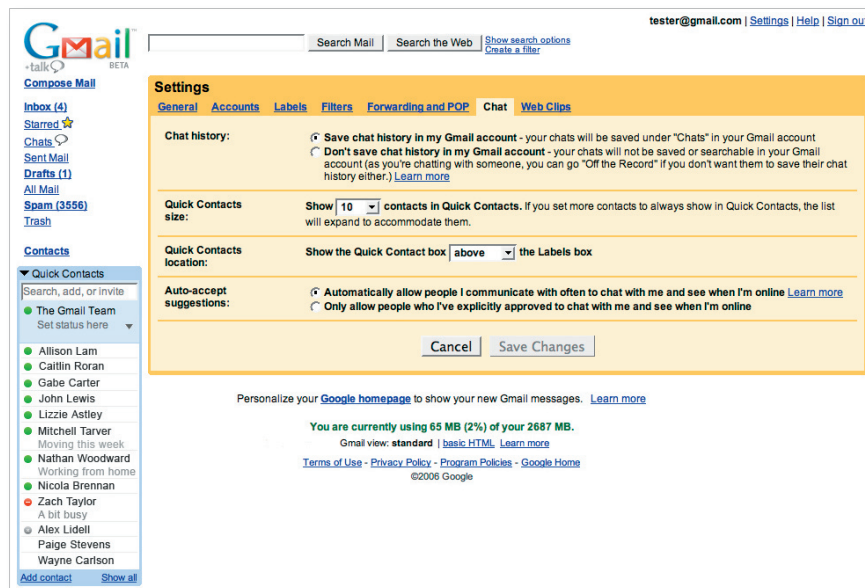
You can access saved chats by clicking on the Chats link along the left side of your Gmail screen. Here, chat conversations are displayed just like email conversations.
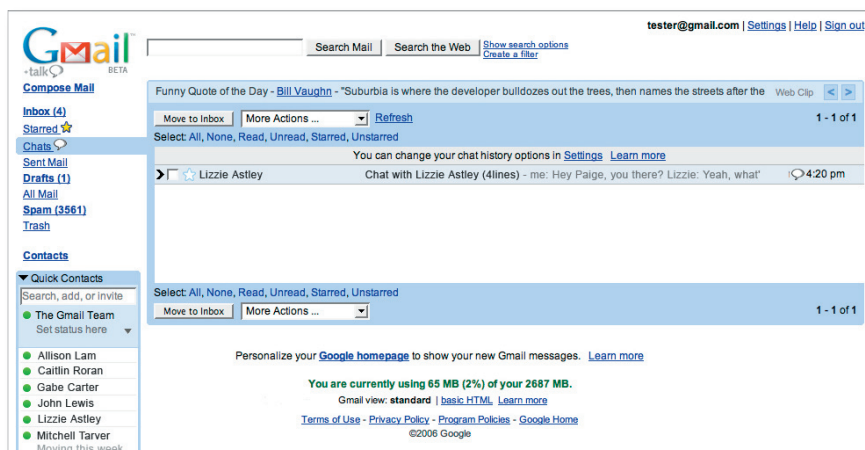
Saved chats are time-stamped. You can reply to or forward a chat as an email message. Everything else you can do with email messages in Gmail, such as printing, deleting or applying labels, you can do with saved chats as well.
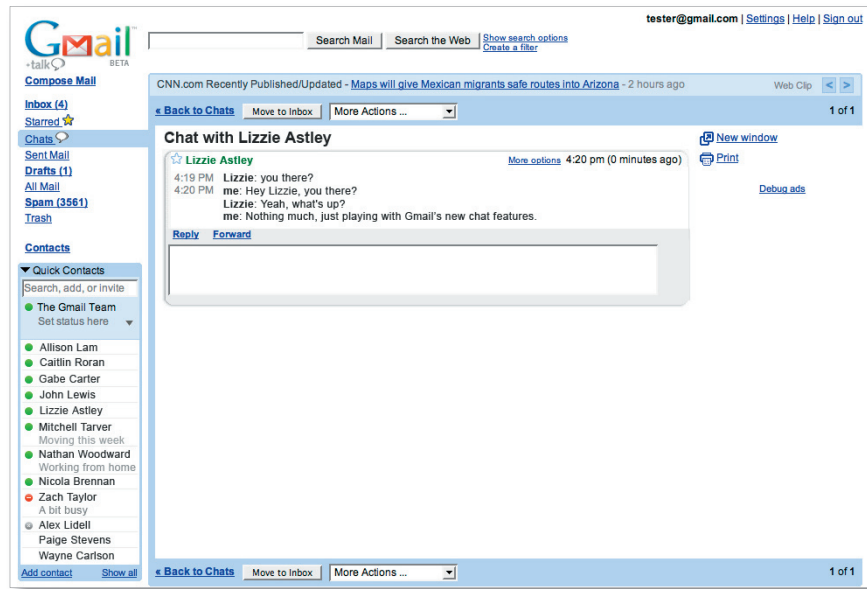
Going off the record

While chatting, you can go off the record from Options at the bottom left corner of your chat session. From that point forward, your chat will not be automatically saved in either your Gmail account, or that of the person you're chatting with, until one of you stops chatting off the record.
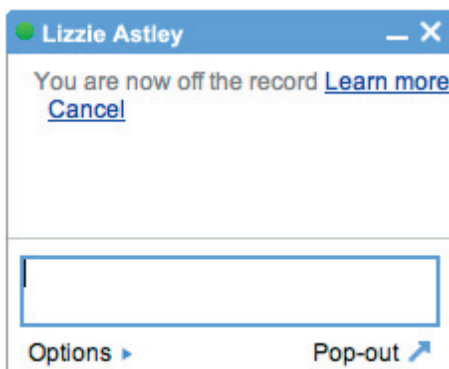
Either person can go off the record or stop chatting off the record at any time, and we will notify both parties of such a change.

This is an innovative, industry-leading privacy protection since most existing instant messaging services give no indication of whether the person you're chatting with is saving your conversation. However, we want to make sure users are aware that going off the record does not guarantee that no saving is going on whatsoever. For example, someone you're chatting with may be accessing the Google Talk service using a variety of third party clients and many clients save chats locally to the users' computers. When you go off the record, we can only prevent the chat history from being automatically saved in either person's Gmail account. We can't guarantee what the other person is doing, since, as is the case for all chats, he or she could always be cutting and pasting, and saving the contents of the chat elsewhere.

For more information about Gmail, please visit **http://mail.google.com** or contact:

Eileen Rodriguez
Consumer PR Manager
(650) 253-4235
eileen@google.com

February 2006