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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Phone Home—For Free!

Use the web to make free long distance phone calls.

by Tamar Maor

**S**ick of spending money on phone calls each month? Try getting your long distance for free. Yes, free. Make calls over the web and save money.

There are two ways to get long distance calls for free: either use a program where you speak through your computer to a phone, or earn calling card minutes by listening to advertisements before or during your call.

The site that offers the best service is [MyfreeLD.com](http://MyfreeLD.com) ([myfreeLD.com](http://myfreeLD.com)). They provide no-charge long distance service to the U.S., U.K., France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. If you have friends around the world this is the only site that offers such a large selection of countries in their service. First make sure you have their system requirements. You'll need Microsoft's NetMeeting, which you can download for no charge at [microsoft.com/windows/netmeeting](http://microsoft.com/windows/netmeeting). After installing NetMeeting and registering, there's no limit on the number of calls you make, or how long you speak.

Phonefree ([phonefree.com](http://phonefree.com)) also requires a software download and registration, but you receive many free services in exchange. They offer PC-to-phone calling in the U.S., PC-to-PC voice calling anywhere in the world, voice mail, and file and picture transfer.

If you'd rather not put more programs on your computer, there are several options that don't require downloads. Mediaring has a free PC to phone service ([freecalls.mediaring.com](http://freecalls.mediaring.com)) where you just make calls directly off their site. You can call the U.S., Canada, or China. Another site that offers web-



based service is Dialpad ([dialpad.com](http://dialpad.com)). All you have to do is register, and then use their Java-based program to make all the calls you want.

The one problem with making PC-to-phone calls is the poor sound quality, especially

if you're using the microphone and speaker from your computer. If you're planning on using web-calling as your primary mode of making calls, invest in a headset—purchase one online or at your local computer store—and your sound quality will improve.

If talking through your computer doesn't satisfy that need to nuzzle the telephone between your shoulder and ear, all is not lost. Direct your browser to [Speak4Free](http://Speak4Free) ([Speak4free.com](http://Speak4free.com)). Ready to make your phone call? Enter your number and the number you're calling. Your phone will ring and you'll hear a short audio ad before being connected with your friend. The call is limited to five minutes, but you can make as many as you wish.

To make a longer phone call, [Broadpoint](http://Broadpoint.com) ([Broadpoint.com](http://Broadpoint.com)) is the service you should use. Listen to as many 10-15 second ads as you wish—each earns you two minutes of telephone talk time—before you make your call. You can only earn two hours a month, but how you divide your two hours is up to you.

Next time you pick up the phone to call your friends across the country, you might consider using an Internet-based long distance service instead. With all the money you save you might be able to buy a plane ticket and see them in person! •

## WOMEN

### iVillage

[iVillage.com](http://iVillage.com)

It was only a few years ago that men dominated the Internet, but now men and women travel the information superhighway in nearly equal proportions. However they're often headed in different directions. Right now, the most popular Internet site for women is [iVillage.com](http://iVillage.com). The site is so heavily trafficked, its nearly 6 million unique visitors per month outnumber even [ESPN.com](http://ESPN.com) and [USA Today Online](http://USA Today Online). With channels of information such as Health, Beauty, Fitness, Money and Relationships, [iVillage](http://iVillage.com) is the complete destination site for women.

## MUSIC

### Musicmaker

[musicmaker.com](http://musicmaker.com)

Imagine being able to order music directly from a recording studio:

"I'll take some Smashmouth, the new Santana, and a little Coltrane."

"Do you want any Strauss with that?"

With today's eclectic tastes, it is often hard to find the CD that is just right. [Musicmaker.com](http://Musicmaker.com) makes the search a little easier. Their 200,000+ database of songs (everything from Beethoven to Britney Spears) offers just that—the tunes you want minus the industry filler. It is a sleek, easy-to-navigate site that keeps prices low (helping to defray the unfortunate shipping charge), and offers a secure server for all transactions. [Musicmaker](http://Musicmaker.com) assures you that with a few simple steps and clicks, you'll be hearing only the music you want on your custom-made compact disc. *MDougherty*



## SEARCH ENGINE

### Magellan

[magellan.excite.com](http://magellan.excite.com)

A new type of search engine that provides an even more comprehensive way of finding things on the web. With new technology, [Magellan](http://Magellan.com) is