

## Creative Live! Cam Video IM webcam

Want a webcam for IM?

by Chris Hall published on 24 April 2008

With the raising popularity of online chat options, webcam use has never been more popular. As the name suggests, Creative are aiming this webcam at users of online chat programs. Will this keep you in touch with your beloved around the globe?

Taken a traditional webcam form, the camera sits on a base providing a number of options, from standing on the flat, to the top of a CRT or flatpanel monitor, or even, at a push, it can perch on the screen of a notebook. The 1.7m cable provides a degree of freedom to camera placement and the flexible neck means you can swivel the camera, for example, when letting someone else chat.

The webcam is based around a VGA (640 x 480) CMOS sensor that will give you 800 x 600 video at 30fps, and still images at 1.3MP. Of course, these options come with the caveat that this is the result of software enhancement, so lower settings yield better results.

Focusing is a manual effort, rotating the white bezel on the front of the cam. There is also a built-in microphone so you get everything you need in the one unit. You also get a headset which features dual plugs for the headphone and the microphone sockets, meaning you can have a video conference without disturbing the rest of the office.

Performance-wise there are no real surprises here and it is difficult to set the webcam apart from similar spec models from rivals; indeed, some notebooks ship with an integrated webcam to rival the offering here. Balancing exposure remains a problem and an even lighting certainly helps the results, i.e., not sitting side-on to a window.

However, in the box you get a whole host of



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software options, to control various options from basic settings, to recording video, taking photos and time-delay or motion detection. You may not want your webcam solely for conversations over the net, you might want to shoot video diaries or any number of possibilities. Generally speaking, the Creative software will let you do it.

You also get SightSpeed and muveeNow! bundled in the box, the first presents a video chat solution, but you'll probably be looking to use a more common application like Skype; the latter piece of software allows you to create basic movies, to edit your video diaries for example.

Unfortunately none of this software comes with an uninstall option menu option, so it is a case of removing it all via the long route - with so many different applications, this can be a bit of a chore.

## VERDICT

Creative were making webcams long before people had a real need to use them. The Live! Cam series provide a reliable option, in this case tailored specifically for "Video IM". Under the skin, there is nothing specific that enhances the instant messaging target here, rather, it is a case of pitching a camera to a specific user group.

At this price you do get quite a lot of camera for your money and for those who don't need a serious video conference option, this will certainly fulfil most of your online video chat requirements.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Messaging-focused webcam

### Good

Price, software options, included headset

### Bad

Potentially too much software, dirty uninstall

### Verdict

There is nothing specific that enhances the instant messaging element here, but this will meet most of your online video chat needs

**Price** £19.99

**Our score**

**7/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**