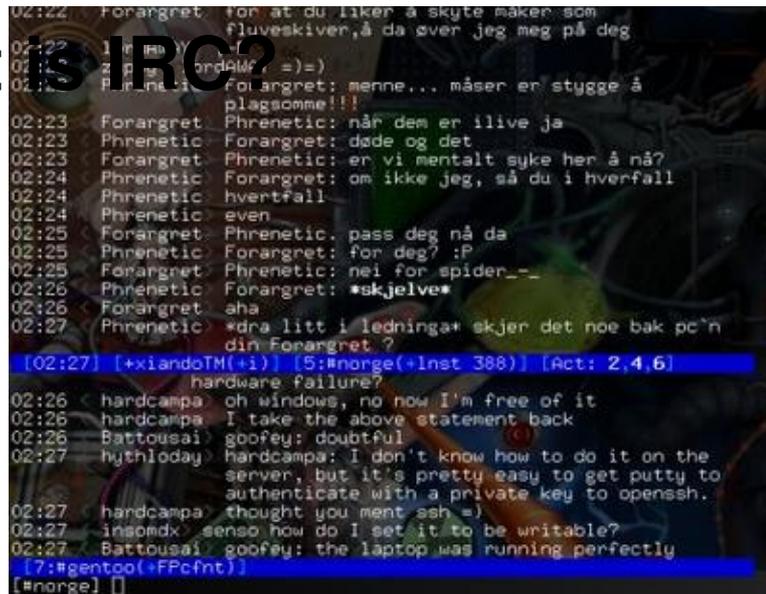# IRC - How to join the worlds biggest communications network, how to hide your identity with a BNC and how to stay in touch with IM contacts using a IRC client

IRC - How to join the worlds biggest communications network, how to hide your identity with a BNC and how to stay in touch with IM contacts using a IRC client v2.0.1 (en), xiando

Internet Relay Chat is a conference service where you can exchange thoughts and effectively communicate with existing and new relations. Choose between the excellent IRC clients to get the world at your fingertis.

1. What is IRC?

IRC (Internet Relay Chat) is a protocol for text based conferencing.

IRC is a service where you, by using a IRC client, connect to one or more servers where you can chat live with other people. The server you connect to may be connected to other IRC servers and together these make up a IRC network. There is a huge number of different IRC networks, and only servers within the same network exchange messages. If you connect to a server in EFNet then you are not able to view or talk to people using Undernet. Your IRC client can connect to as many different IRC networks as you want.

Every IRC network has a huge amount of chat-rooms, or channels, and you can be in many channels at the same time. It is also possible to communicate private directly with other users.

Since its birth in 1989 IRC has become increasingly more popular and is today the standard for computer based communication.

Specially interested can read the detailed RFC description of IRC:

- [RFC 2810 : IRC Architecture](#)
- [RFC 2811 : IRC Channel-Management](#)
- [RFC 2812 : IRC Client-Protocol](#)
- [RFC 2813 : IRC Server-Protocol](#)

2. Graphical (X-Windows) clients

2.1. X-Chat

xchat is a very good chat client (GTK/GTK2). It supports scripts and everything else you expect from an advanced IRC client, and is the best alternative if you want a graphical client.

It doesn't really matter what version of X-Chat you get.

The xchat 1.x series are based on GTK, the 2.x series is based on GTK2. The 2.x series has gotten quite stable and very usable, and is our recommended choice.

Gentoo installation:

```
emerge xchat
```

Both versions are available on the xchat homepage.

2.2. KDE

kvIRC is the best choice for KDE, it is easy to configure and learn. But there's really no such thing as a good IRC client for kde.

3. Text mode clients

The best IRC clients are the text mode ones.

IRCii, epic, bitchx, irssi , ... no graphical client comes close to being as good as them.

bitchx is a very rude IRC client in many ways.

Best IRC client?

irssi is a good choice. Windowing is very easy with irssi, alt left and right and alt+# (1,2,3, etc) to switch chat channel window.

irssi 's configuration is done by simple /commands. To view the default settings, type **/set**. To hide join/parts in a channel, try **/help ignore** for instructions.

Text mode IRC clients and text mode programs in general might seem difficult to use at first, but once you learn how to use them, they will seem more powerfull than the graphical programs.

It is also true at using a mouse stresses your arm, and those text applications can teach you to use smart keyboard shortcuts. This is good in general, as most KDE applications actually have all the smart keystrokes you need.

If you learn to use keyboard shortcuts instead of the mouse, you will find yourself working faster and more productive without the mouse...

4. IRC in your browser

CGI:IRC is a server-side Perl/CGI program that allows visitors to use IRC in their browsers.

Try IRC now using Free services:

ginnypig.net EFNet, QuakeNet

5. Things you should be aware of before your first IRC experience

There is a huge number of unwritten ethical rules that apply to IRC.

To prevent chaos most of the larger channels have their own rules. The rules, or a link where you can find them, are usually found in the channels topic. You should always read the topic when entering a channel. It is generally a good idea to idle a while to get an idea of what people are talking about when you enter a chat room, do not immediately scream out for attention.

IRC is mainly used by people with a permanent net connection who are connected to IRC almost at all times. Do not expect users to sit in front of their computer waiting eagerly for your questions or opinions just because they appear to be connected. Do not repeat yourself because no one instantly gives you an replies, your audience is still able to view your original comment after 10 minutes. The universal wizard of knowledge with the answer to your question may be occupied when you ask, but he (90% of IRC users are men) will probably give you an answer when he eventually flips by his IRC window.

Using CAPITAL LETTERS is regarded as screaming and should be avoided unless you actually mean to do so. If your caps lock is stuck you probably should replace your keyboard.

6. Using other communication services (msn, icq, jabber) in your IRC client

BitlBee is "An IRC to other chat networks gateway". manual page

The BitlBee daemon is capable of connecting to IM networks like AIM, ICQ, Jabber and MSN. Your IRC client connects to BitlBee like any other IRC server, and after telling it about your accounts and passwords it creates a normal IRC channel with all your IM contacts listed as regular IRC users - and you can talk to them as if they were normal IRC users.

If you do not want to run your own BitlBee server you can use one of the free servers available.

Read more: msn, icq and jabber in your IRC client (quickstart and details on running your own server)

7. Useless facts about EFNet

A channels `/topic` can be **120** chars long. The first thing you should do when you enter a channel is to read the topic and check links that are posted there.

You can write lines that are up to **450** chars long. IRC is more readable when users think through what they want to say and ask a good well-formulated question on one line instead of flooding the channel with 10.

7.1. Some IPv4 EFNet servers

```
irc.efnet.nl:6667
irc.avalonworks.ca:6667
irc.servercentral.net:6667
irc.efnet.org:6667
irc.inet.tele.dk:6667
irc.easynews.com:6667
irc.he.net:6667
irc.homelien.no:6667
irc.banetele.no:6667
irc.prison.net:6667
irc.dks.ca:6667
irc.wh.verio.net:6667
irc.inet.tele.dk:6667
irc.efnet.pl:6667
irc.du.se:6667
irc.daxnet.no:6667
irc.nac.net:6667
```

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