

## A Brief Introduction to Internet Relay Chat (IRC)

IRC allows real time communication with users all over the world. To utilize IRC you first need an IRC client. There are a variety of excellent clients available for whatever your choice of computing platforms is.

For Windows an excellent client is X-Chat. The Windows version is shareware which is free to use for 30 days, after which time you must pay a registration fee to continue using it. You can download the client from: <http://www.xchat.org/windows/>

When you first start up X-Chat, you will be presented with a server list. Scroll down the list of networks on the left side to select FreeNode. At the top of the window you will need to choose a nickname for yourself. Usually these are short (8 characters or less) names, similar to those required on many web forums and on instant messenger systems. Try to pick a name that is unlikely to be used by another person.

Once you've selected FreeNode and given yourself a nickname click on the Connect button in the lower left corner. After a short delay a welcome message will appear from the server that contains technical information about the server you've connected to. At the bottom of the main X-Chat window is a text entry bar preceded by the nickname you've chosen. In this window type the command "/join #cscw" (without the quotes, but with the / and #) and you will be connected to the main CSCW channel. Once you connect to a channel, you'll see a listing on the right side of the other people in the channel.

To talk in a channel, type your message in the text entry bar at the bottom of the window (where you previously typed the "/join #cscw" command) and hit return. This will send the text to all of the users in the channel. If you'd like to talk to just one person, right click on their name in the listing to the right and select "open dialog window". This will create a new window where all messages you send will go only to that selected person. Clicking on the X on the right hand side beneath the menu bar will close the conversation.

There are a total of four channels we'll be using for communication during the conference.

- #cscw – General conference communications

- #cscwA – Sessions in Continental A or International North

- #cscwB – Sessions in Continental B or International South

- #cscwC – Sessions in Continental C

To connect to any of these channels type "/join [channel]" where [channel] is the channel name given above including the # (for example "/join #cscwC"). You can be in multiple channels at the same time and switch between them using the buttons with their names at the bottom of the window.

More general information IRC can be found at <http://www.irchelp.org/>