

# TECHNOLOGY

## *Improving Lives*

### Free Video Calls Cut Household Costs

(NAPSA)—As household budgets shrink and phone costs rise, many consumers are using new technology to help make keeping in touch cheaper.

For instance, millions of minutes of free video calls are made over the Web each day, helping families, friends and businesses communicate face-to-face over long distances without the expense of phone calls or traveling.

Some Web sites even let users hold video calls with multiple people, collaborate on projects, conduct video interviews or even date online—and you don't have to be tech-savvy to use them.

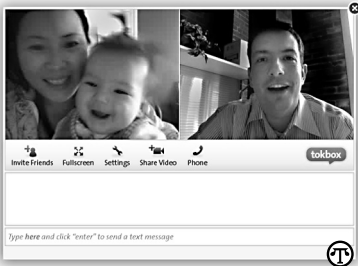
#### **Making Calls**

So how can you start saving with a video call service? The first step is to choose a free call site, such as TokBox ([www.tokbox.com](http://www.tokbox.com)), which is designed to be simple to use. With TokBox all you need is an Internet connection and Web camera to start making video calls for free to whomever you want. No registration is needed and users don't have to make adjustments to their PC or Mac—just log on and start talking.

In addition to chatting with multiple friends at once (think video conference calling), the site lets users send video e-mails and embed video communications into Web sites, blogs or social networking pages. For people using Facebook, TokBox also provides a Firefox add-on that enables voice and video calls right from Facebook chat.

#### **Seeing Clearly**

The next step is to choose a webcam. Many newer computers come with the cameras built in,



**Get Your Word's Worth—Some free video-call Web sites can be used from any computer.**

but you can also find cameras that connect through your USB port at any office supply or discount store. If you're shopping for a webcam, pay attention to something called the frame-per-second rate—the higher the rate, the better. Additionally, try to get a camera with the best resolution you can afford. That will help keep your pictures clear and detailed.

#### **More Cost-Cutting Tips**

As a final cost-cutting tip, look for times when you could replace travel with online video calling. Due to high travel costs, many folks may be cutting back on travel plans. But just because you can't afford to fly home to visit family and friends doesn't mean you have to miss out on seeing them. Using video calling in between visits to loved ones may allow you to extend the time between in-person visits. Eliminating just one trip a year will result in significant savings for you and your family.

For more information about video calling and to get started making calls today, visit [www.tokbox.com](http://www.tokbox.com).