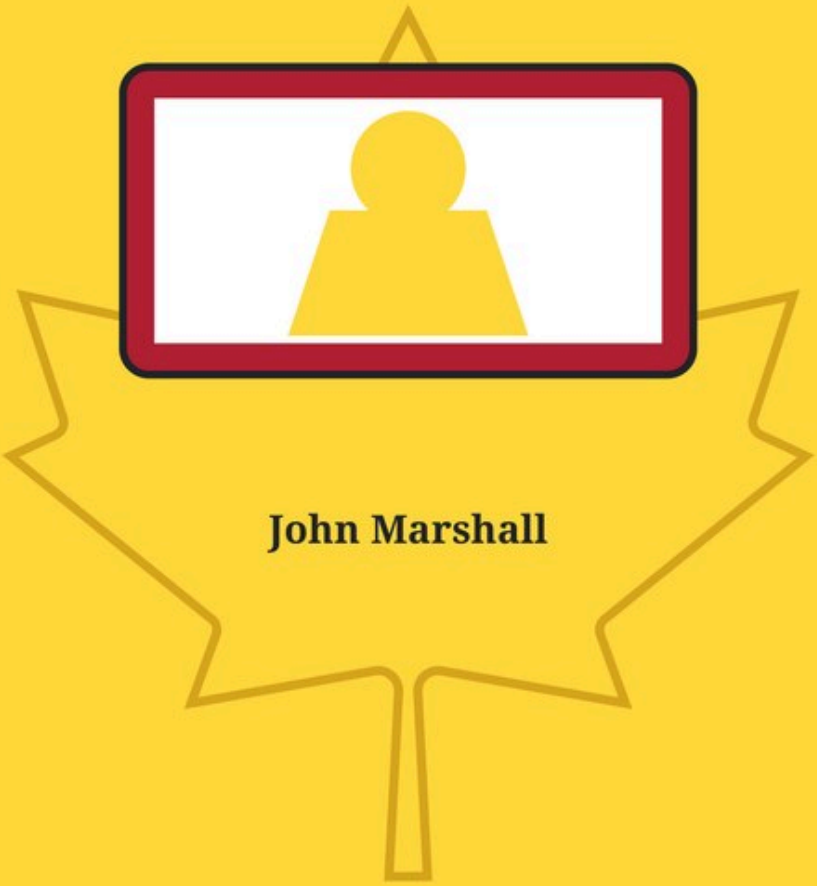
THE PROOF SERIES

A PLAYFUL GUIDE TO VIDEO CALLING FAMILY

Call Proof

A senior's simple guide to seeing family face-to-face on FaceTime, WhatsApp, and Zoom



John Marshall

PROUDLY CANADIAN



PROUDLY CANADIAN

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

By John Marshall

www.buyproof.ca



FIRST THINGS FIRST

What Video Calling Really Is

A video call is a phone call with pictures: you see the other person's face, and they see yours, right on your screen. If you can answer a telephone, you already know eighty per cent of this.

You tap call › They answer › Faces appear › You chat away

1. Picture a phone call — Everything you know about calling still applies. You dial, they answer, you chat. The only difference is a little window showing faces.

2. It works over the internet — Instead of phone lines, video calls travel over your Wi-Fi or mobile data. That is why they are usually free.

3. Any device with a camera — Phones, tablets, and most laptops already have a tiny camera above the screen. Nothing to buy, nothing to plug in.

4. See and be seen — Hold the device so your face is in the picture, speak normally, and wave. Congratulations: you are video calling.

TALE

STORY

When Marjorie, 81, first saw her granddaughter's face pop up on her iPad, she waved at the screen and said, "Can you see me waving?" Her granddaughter laughed: "Grandma, I can see you waving."

! Video calls have funny names depending on the app — FaceTime, WhatsApp video, Zoom — but they all do the same basic job: faces plus voices, live.

Take care: You do not need three apps at once. Master the one your family already uses; the rest can wait.

WHY BOTHER

Why Seeing Faces Matters

Hearing a voice is lovely. Seeing a smile is better. Video calls turn a quick check-in into a visit, and visits are what keep families close.

Pick a regular day › Keep it short › Show something fun › End with a wave

1. Grandchildren grow fast — A photo from last month is already out of date. A video call shows you the missing tooth, the new haircut, the lost shoe — live.

2. Read the room — On a voice call, “fine” sounds fine. On video, you can see whether “fine” really means fine. Faces tell the truth.

3. Show, don't just tell — Point the camera at the garden, the new curtains, the burnt toast. Some things need showing, not describing.

4. Beat the loneliness — A regular Sunday video call gives the whole week a pleasant shape. Something to look forward to is powerful medicine.

TALE

Doug, 78, video-calls his brother in Halifax every Sunday at four.

“We mostly complain about the weather,” he says, “but now I can see him complaining, which is twice as funny.”

! Short and frequent beats long and rare. Ten happy minutes every Sunday beats an exhausting hour once a season.

Take care: Never feel guilty about ending a call. “This was lovely, I must go” is a complete and gracious goodbye.

THE TOOLKIT

What You Need to Get Started

The shopping list is short, and you probably own most of it already. Here is the complete inventory for happy video calling.

Device › Internet › One app › One willing relative

1. A device with a camera — An iPhone, iPad, Android phone, or tablet made in the last ten years already has a front camera. Laptops usually do too.

2. A microphone and speaker — Built into every phone and tablet. No headset required, though one helps in noisy rooms.

3. Internet access — Home Wi-Fi is ideal. Mobile data works too, but video uses more of it — check your plan before long chats.

4. One app — FaceTime (iPhone/iPad), WhatsApp (any phone), or Zoom (any device). Pick the one your family already uses.

TALE

STORY

Ruth, 84, tried video calling on her phone and squinted the whole time.

Her daughter switched her to the iPad. “Oh!” said Ruth. “There you all are. You were hiding in the small one.”

!

Bigger screens are kinder to older eyes. A tablet beats a phone for video calls, and a laptop beats a tablet.

Take care: Charge your device before a long call, or plug it in. Video calling drinks battery faster than anything else.

WI-FI WISDOM

Your Internet: Just Enough Speed

Video calls need a steady internet connection the way a kettle needs steady power. Here is how to give yours the best chance.

Find the router › Sit reasonably near › Check the bars › Call away

1. Sit near your router — The little box with blinking lights is your Wi-Fi's heart. The closer you sit, the stronger and steadier your picture.

2. One video call at a time — If someone else is streaming movies in the next room, your call may stutter. Stagger the big internet jobs.

3. Watch the signal bars — The fan-shaped Wi-Fi symbol on your screen shows strength. Three full arcs is perfect; one arc means move closer.

4. Restart fixes most things — Choppy call? Hang up, wait ten seconds, and call back. Most gremlins give up after a fresh start.

TALE

STORY

Harold, 79, took every call from his basement workshop, where the Wi-Fi barely reached.

His family watched a pixelated blob hammering things. He moved upstairs. “Turns out I have a face,” he reported.

!

You do not need blazing-fast internet. A basic home connection handles video calls comfortably — steadiness matters more than speed.

Take care: Public Wi-Fi in cafés works for calls, but skip anything private there — save banking and passwords for home.

THE PRICE TAG

Does Video Calling Cost Money?

The happiest sentence in this book: the apps themselves are free, and calls between app users cost nothing extra. Here is the fine print, in large print.

Free app › Home Wi-Fi › Call anywhere › Pay nothing extra

1. The apps are free — FaceTime, WhatsApp, and Zoom's basic version cost nothing to download and nothing per call. Anyone telling you otherwise is mistaken.

2. Wi-Fi calls are free — On home Wi-Fi, video calls use your internet plan, which you already pay for. Chat for an hour; the bill does not notice.

3. Mobile data is the catch — Away from Wi-Fi, video eats mobile data — roughly half a gigabyte per hour. Fine occasionally; check your plan for daily use.

4. International calls: still free — Calling family in another country costs the same as calling across the street: nothing, on Wi-Fi. This still amazes everyone.

TALE

STORY

Edna, 83, called her sister in Scotland every week for a year before learning it was free.

"I kept the calls short to save money," she said. "All that wasted waving."

!

Zoom's free version limits group meetings to 40 minutes — plenty for family chats, and one-to-one Zoom calls have no such limit on most plans. Details change; the free tier remains generous.

Take care: Ignore any email or caller demanding payment to "activate" video calling. It is free, and they are scammers.

PICK YOUR PLAYER

Three Apps, One Idea

The video-calling world has three main doors. They all lead to the same room — faces on screens — so just pick the door your family already walks through.

Ask the family › Pick their app › Learn that one › Call happily

1. FaceTime: the Apple door — Built into every iPhone and iPad. If your family uses Apple devices, this is the simplest choice — nothing to install.

2. WhatsApp: the everybody door — Works on iPhones and Androids alike, and it is the world's most popular calling app. Ideal for mixed-device families.

3. Zoom: the group-event door — Best for bigger gatherings — book clubs, family reunions, birthday parties with twenty cousins. Anyone can join from a link.

4. One is enough — Learn the app your family already uses. You can always add another later, but mastery beats variety.

TALE

TALE STORY

The Tremblay family held a vote: FaceTime, WhatsApp, or Zoom.

WhatsApp won four to three. Grandpa voted twice — once for each phone he owns. Democracy prevailed anyway.

!

Ask one simple question: “Which app do you video-call on?” Then use that one. Matching the family beats picking the “best” app.

Take care: All three apps are legitimate and free. Download them only from your device's official app store, never from a link in a text.

THE APPLE DOOR

Meet FaceTime

FaceTime is Apple's video-calling app, and it comes already installed on every iPhone and iPad. No downloads, no accounts, no fuss — it is simply there, waiting.

Open FaceTime › Pick a contact › Tap the camera › Say hello

1. Already on your device — Look for the green icon with a white video camera. It arrived with your iPhone or iPad, like the oven mitts that come with a stove.

2. Apple to Apple only — FaceTime calls work between Apple devices — iPhone to iPhone, iPhone to iPad, iPad to Mac. Both ends need an Apple gadget.

3. Uses phone numbers or emails — You call someone the way you would phone them: tap their name in your contacts, then tap the video camera. That is the whole trick.

4. Free over Wi-Fi — FaceTime calls cost nothing on Wi-Fi, even to the other side of the planet. Your phone bill will not notice.

TALE

STORY

Agnes, 86, refused to believe FaceTime was already on her iPad.

“I never ordered it,” she insisted. Her son pointed at the icon. “Well,” she said, “it's about time something arrived without paperwork.”

! Someone with an Android phone cannot receive a classic FaceTime call — but newer iPhones can send them a web link to join from their browser. Ask a family member to set that up if needed.

Take care: FaceTime will never ask for your password or payment during a call. Anyone who does is not Apple.

YOUR FIRST CALL

Making Your First FaceTime Call

Four taps stand between you and your first face-to-face chat. Do it once with this page beside you, and you will never need the page again.

Open FaceTime › New FaceTime › Pick a person › Tap the camera

1. Open FaceTime — Tap the green FaceTime icon. You will see a list of recent calls, and a "New FaceTime" button at the top.

2. Tap New FaceTime — A "To:" field appears. Start typing the person's name — your contacts will offer suggestions as you type.

3. Choose the person — Tap their name when it appears, then tap the green video-camera button at the bottom. The call begins.

4. Wait for the answer — You will hear ringing and see yourself in a small window. When they answer, their face fills the screen. Wave!

TALE

For his first FaceTime call, Frank, 80, dressed in a tie.
His daughter answered in pyjamas. "I didn't know the dress code," he said. There isn't one — but the tie was a lovely touch.

!

The little window showing you is called "self view." It is supposed to be there — it helps you stay in frame, like a mirror.

Take care: Make sure you tap the video camera, not the phone handset. The handset makes a voice-only call — still nice, but no faces.

PICK IT UP

Answering a FaceTime Call

When someone FaceTimes you, your device rings and shows their name with two big buttons. This page is about pressing the right one — calmly.

It rings › See who's calling › Tap green Accept › Smile

1. Recognize the ring — Your screen lights up with the caller's name or number and a preview. It looks different from a normal phone call — that is normal.

2. Slide or tap to accept — On iPhone, slide the green button or tap “Accept.” On iPad, tap the green “Accept” button. Big, green, friendly.

3. Decline if it is a bad time — Tap the red button to decline. The caller is told you are unavailable. No guilt — you can call back later.

4. Compose yourself first — You have a few rings before voicemail. Take a breath, sit up, and then accept. Nobody minds waiting three seconds.

TALE

Mabel, 82, answered her first FaceTime call while holding the iPad upside down.

Her son saw only ceiling. “Lovely ceiling, Mum,” he said. She flipped it. “There's my girl,” she said. “Ceiling's overrated.”

! If you miss the call, it appears in your FaceTime recents with a red badge. Tap the caller's name to call straight back.

Take care: Only accept video calls from people you know. Unknown video callers get declined — every time, no exceptions.



MID-CALL MASTERY

The Buttons During a Call

During a FaceTime call, a row of small buttons sits at the bottom of your screen. You only need four of them, and here is what each does.

Find the buttons › Mute for coughs › Flip to show things › Red to hang up

1. The red button ends the call — Big, red, obvious. Tap it when you are done. It is the most important button and the hardest to press by accident.

2. The microphone mutes you — Tap it once and they cannot hear you (a line appears through it). Tap again to unmute. Handy for coughs and doorbells.

3. The camera turns video off — Tap the video icon to hide your picture while staying on the call. Useful when the grandkids want privacy — or you do.

4. The flip swaps cameras — Two curved arrows switch between the front camera (your face) and the back camera (whatever you are looking at). Show them the garden!

TALE

E STORY

George, 77, spent ten minutes shouting "CAN YOU HEAR ME?" at his daughter before noticing the muted microphone icon.

She could see him perfectly. She still teases him. He has earned it.

!

If the buttons disappear, tap the screen once and they pop back. They hide themselves to give you a bigger picture.

Take care: Muted means they cannot hear you — including the muttered remarks about the call quality. Unmute before commenting.

Enjoyed this sample?

Get the full book, and more free sample chapters, at
www.buyproof.ca

Join our email list and be the first to hear about
new Proof-series releases for Canadians.

We email only about new books.
Unsubscribe anytime.

