Overview

The Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ service provides the easiest way to see which of your friends are online and to communicate instantly with them.

It is the **only** Internet chat program that enables you to see and communicate with all your friends, whether they are on America Online or signed on to Instant Messenger.

To start, you create a list of all your online buddies—friends, family, and co-workers who are AOL members or have registered as Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ users. Whenever they sign on, you can see them in your Buddy List window and they can see you in their Buddy List windows. Once you know a buddy is online, you can use the Instant Message™ feature to begin chatting with that person.

Additional Features

- Privacy controls allow you to determine who can communicate with you. You can allow anyone to send you messages, limit your communications to a small circle of friends, or block messages from specific people.

- Using personal profiles, you can display information about others or share information about yourself, such as your e-mail address or a link to your web page.

- A warning feature allows you to help regulate the Instant Messenger community. If someone sends you an annoying or offensive message, you can issue a warning to that person. The warning slows the rate at which he can send and receive messages. If enough people send warnings to someone, that person can lose his ability to send or receive messages for a time.

- Quick access to AOL NetFind, the easiest and most comprehensive way to find what you are looking for on the Internet.

- Find a Buddy allows you to find the screen names of those friends who already belong to the Instant Messenger service. Sign On a Friend makes it easy to invite other friends to join and share the fun of instant online communication.

Registering

Before you can use the Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ service, you need to register your copy and choose a screen name. Your screen name is the name by which you will be known to everyone else using the Instant Messenger service and America Online. You choose a password when you register so you are the only one that can use your chosen screen name.

If you are already an AOL member, your screen name has been reserved for you. You still need to register to use the Instant Messenger service however.

You can then install the AOL Instant Messenger software and sign on with your screen name and password.

Note

Anyone who knows your password has access to your account. Therefore, you should never reveal your password to anyone online. No one from AOL will ever ask you for your password while you are online.

To Connect Through a Modem

If you want to connect to the Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ service through a modem, you need to dial in to your Internet Service Provider first. Once you are connected to the Internet, you can then sign on to the service.

Resolving Connection Problems

If you experience problems connecting, you can run the automatic configuration program to find a host and port through which you can connect. You must have a live connection to the Internet to complete this procedure:

1 Click the Setup button on the Sign On screen.

2 Click the Connection tab.

3 Click the Auto Configure button.

   The Automatic Configuration program will attempt to find a host and port through which you can sign on to the AOL Instant Messenger service.

Note

   If you want to preserve your Internet connection while you are signed on to the Instant Messenger service, select the Keep connection alive check box on the Connection tab. (Some Internet Service Providers automatically disconnect you if you have been inactive for a given period.) Every five minutes the program sends a signal to keep your connection alive, even though you may be idle.

Automatically Connecting and Signing On

To make your connection to the Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ service as quick and easy as possible, you can configure the program to start when Windows starts and then automatically sign on when you connect to the Internet through your Internet Service Provider.

1 Enter your screen name and password on the Sign On screen.

2 Click the Setup button, and then the Misc tab.

3 Select the Save Password check box.

4 Select the Automatically sign on when Netscape AIM starts check box.

5 Select the Start Netscape AIM when Windows starts check box.

6 Select the Modem option under Internet Connection.

To Connect Through a Local Area Network

If you want to connect to the Instant Messenger service through a local area network (LAN) at work or school, for example, you need to have a live connection to the Internet before you attempt to sign on to the service.

Resolving Connection Problems

If you experience problems connecting, you can run the automatic configuration program to find a host and port through which you can connect. You must have a live connection to the Internet to complete this procedure:

If your local area network is behind a firewall, you will need to use a proxy server to connect to the service. Contact your network administrator to help you determine the configuration settings to enter.

1　Click the Setup button on the Sign On screen.
2　Click the Connection tab.
3　Enter the settings your network administrator supplies.
4　Click OK to save the settings and close the dialog.

　Note

　If you want to preserve your Internet connection while you are signed on to the Instant Messenger service, select the Keep connection alive check box on the Connection tab. (Some Internet Service Providers automatically disconnect you if you have been inactive for a given period.) Every five minutes the program sends a signal to keep your connection alive, even though you may be idle.

Automatically Connecting and Signing On

To make your connection to the Instant Messenger service as quick and easy as possible, you can configure the program to start when Windows starts and then automatically sign on when you connect to the Internet through your Internet Service Provider.

1　Enter your screen name and password on the Sign On screen.
2　Click the Setup button, and then the Misc tab.
3　Select the Save Password check box.
4　Select the Automatically sign on when Netscape AIM starts check box.
5　Select the Start Netscape AIM when Windows starts check box.
6　Select the Modem option under Internet Connection.

How the Buddy List(TM) Feature Works

When you sign on to the Netscape AOL Instant Messenger™ service, your Buddy List window appears. There are two tabs in your Buddy List window: Online and List Setup. The Online tab shows you which of your buddies are online and the List Setup tab allows you to create and manage your list of buddies.

Initially, three empty groups appear on these tabs: Buddies, Family, and Co-Workers. Add your buddies to any of these groups or create additional groups. You must know your friends' screen names (from either America Online or the Instant Messenger™ service) to add them to your Buddy List window.

In the List Setup tab:
- Each group appears as a folder.
- The buddies within each group appear as branches off the folder. The folder must be open to see the buddies in that group.
- You cannot see which of your buddies is online when displaying the List Setup tab. Click the Online tab to see which buddies are online.

In the Online tab:
- Names that appear in bold indicate which buddies signed on most recently. Names that appear gray and in italic indicate which buddies just signed off.
- The numbers in parentheses next to each group indicate how many people in that group are online out of the total number of buddies in that group. For example, (3/9) means that three of the nine buddies in that group are currently online.
- You can open and close groups within your Buddy List window. Click the "-" symbol next to a group to hide the screen names in that group. The "-" symbol changes to the "+" symbol indicating the group is closed. Click the "+" symbol to display the screen names.
- Hold the cursor over a buddy momentarily to display additional information about that person, such as warning rating, log in time, and idle time.

Tip

§ To toggle between the Online and List Setup tabs, press CTRL+TAB.

To Add a Buddy to Your Buddy List Window

1 Click the List Setup tab in the Buddy List window.
2 Click on the folder to which you want to add your buddy.
3 Click Add Buddy. A branch appears with the default name New Buddy.
4 Type the screen name of the buddy you want to add and press Enter.

  Remember to enter just the buddy's screen name, not your buddy's full E-mail address. For example, *johndoe*, rather than *johndoe@aol.com*.

Notes

§ You must know your friends' screen names (from either America Online or the Instant Messenger service) to add them to your Buddy List window.
§ You can check to see whether friends have screen names, if you know their e-mail addresses. Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), then point to Find a Buddy and click By E-mail Address. Then follow the instructions.
§ You can invite friends who have not yet signed up to join the Instant Messenger service. Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window)button, then point to Sign On a Friend. Then follow the instructions.

To Add a Group to Your Buddy List Window

1 Click the List Setup tab in the Buddy List window.
2 Click Add Group. A folder appears with the default name New Group.
3 Type a new name for the list and press Enter.

To Rearrange Your Buddies

1 In the Buddy List window, select the buddy or group you want to move.
2 Drag and drop the entry in a different location within your Buddy List window.

To Rename a Buddy or Group

1 Click the List Setup tab in the Buddy List window.
2 Select the buddy or group you want to rename.
3 Click the right mouse button and choose Rename from the popup menu that appears.
   The name of the buddy or group appears highlighted.
4 Enter the new name for the buddy or group and press Enter.

To Send a Message to Someone

1 On the Online tab of the Buddy List window, select the person's screen name.

2 Click the IM button.

   The Instant Message window opens.

3 Type your message and click **Send**.

Tip

§ You can use the toolbar to change text or background colors, change text size, or emphasize text with bold, italic, or underlining.

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

To Send a Hyperlink

1　Within an Instant Message window, type and select the text you want to turn into a hyperlink.
2　Click the Link button on the toolbar.
　　The Edit Hyperlink dialog opens.
3　Specify the URL (Internet location) of the site you want the link to point to.
　　You can also specify an e-mail address as the URL. For example, mailto:johndoe@aol.com.
4　Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

Tips

§　You can also click the Link button with no text selected. If you do this, you will need to enter the link text into the dialog. The link appears at the insertion point location.
§　If you enter a URL as text (for example, http://www.aol.com or mailto:johndoe@aol.com), the text automatically converts to a hyperlink when you send the message.

{button ,KL("messages;hyperlinks")} Related Topics

To Create Smilies Automatically

You can add the following commonly used smilies (or emoticons) to your messages by typing the corresponding characters.

Type	To Create
:-)	
:-(	
;-)	
:)	

Notes

§ You can also create smilies by holding down the right mouse button in a message, clicking Insert, then Smilies, and then clicking the smilies you want to insert.

§ To control whether these smilies appear in your Instant Message window and on your right mouse button menu, see the topic To Turn Smilies On or Off.

To Save Messages

1 Within an Instant Message window, choose Save from the File menu.

   The Save Text to File window opens.

2 Enter a name for the file in the File name field.

3 In the Save as type field, select Text Only if you want to save just the text of the messages.

   If you want to save the text and be able to follow any hyperlinks in the messages, select AOL Rich Text Format. This will create an HTML file you can view with your web browser.

4 Click Save to save the messages that appear in the upper pane of the Instant Message window.

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

How Away and Idle Messages Work

If you need to step away from your computer but do not want to sign off, you can instruct AOL Instant Messenger to let others know you are temporarily not available.

If you know you are going to step away, you can turn on your away message to let others know when you will be back. Your away message appears when anyone requests information about you, but AOL Instant Messenger can also automatically respond to anyone who sends you a message while you are away.

If you do not set your away message but simply leave your computer inactive for 10 minutes, then AOL Instant Messenger considers you idle. Anyone who requests information about you can see that your system is idle, but AOL Instant Messenger can also automatically respond to anyone who sends you a message while you are idle.

{button ,KL("away;idle")} Related Topics

To Define a New Away Message

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Away tab.
3 Make sure the Auto respond and insert in personal profile option is selected.

   If you do not want AOL Instant Messenger to reply automatically to messages you receive when away, select the Insert in personal profile only option.
4 In the text field below these options, type the new away message.
5 Click Add Message.
6 Click OK to save your change and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("away")} Related Topics

To Turn On an Away Message

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window) and point to Away.

2 Choose the away message you want to use.

The away message appears on your screen.

To turn off your away message, click I'm Back.

{button ,KL("away")} Related Topics

To Delete an Away Message

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Away tab.
3 Select the away message you want to delete.
4 Click Remove.
5 Click OK to save your change and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("away")} Related Topics

To Define an Idle Message

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Away tab.

3 Select Auto respond when idle with message.

4 In the text field below this checkbox, type the message you want to send to anyone who sends you a message while your computer is idle.

5 Click OK to save your change and close the dialog.

   If you do not use your computer for 10 minutes, AOL Instant Messenger automatically sends your idle message to anyone who sends you a message. To stop sending the idle message, press a key or click a mouse button.

{button ,KL("idle")} Related Topics

To Define Your Personal Information

The My Info tab of the Preferences dialog allows you to supply information about yourself that you would like others to be able to access. (For example, your name, title, e-mail address, hobbies, etc.)

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the My Info tab.

3 Type your personal profile.

4 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

Tip

§ You can use the toolbar on the My Info tab to change text and background color or font sizes; to make text bold, italic, or underlined; or to create a link to an Internet site.

{button ,KL("profile")} Related Topics

To Include a Hyperlink in Your Personal Information

1 Type and select the text you want to turn into a hyperlink.
2 Click the Link button on the toolbar.
   The Edit Hyperlink dialog opens.
3 Specify the URL (Internet location) of the site you want the link to point to.
   You can also specify an e-mail address as the URL. For example, mailto:johndoe@aol.com.
4 Click OK to apply your changes and close the dialog.

Tips

§ You can also click the Link button with no text selected. If you do this, you will need to enter the link text into the Edit Hyperlink dialog. The link appears at the insertion point location.
§ If you enter a URL as text (for example, http://www.aol.com or mailto:johndoe@aol.com), the text automatically converts to a hyperlink when you send the message.

{button ,KL("profile;mailto;hyperlink")} Related Topics

To Display Information About Someone Else

Every Instant Messenger service user can provide personal information about himself or herself that is available to other users. This information may include name, e-mail address, favorite quotation, link to a web page, etc. This information is only available if the user is logged on.

1 On the Online tab of the Buddy List window, select the user whose information you wish to see.

2 Click the Info button.

Note

§ You cannot view the profiles of AOL members from the Instant Messenger service. You can only view information about other Instant Messenger service users.

{button ,KL("profile ")} Related Topics

How Privacy Works

You can prevent specific Instant Messenger service users (or all of them) from sending you messages. This feature is useful if you find someone's messages offensive or if you simply don't want to receive messages for a while. You can also allow only certain users to send you messages or allow all users to send you messages.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

To Block a Specific Person from Sending You Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Privacy tab.

3 Select the Block the users below button.

4 Click the Add Name button.

5 In the Block List, type the name of the user you want to add.

6 Click OK to save your change and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

To Block Everyone from Sending You Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Privacy tab.

3 Select the Block all users button.

4 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

To Allow Only Specific People to Send You Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Privacy tab.
3 Select the Allow only the users below button.
4 Click the Add Name button.
5 In the Allow List, type the name of the user you want to add.
6 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

To Allow Everyone to Send You Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Privacy tab.
3 Select the Allow all users to contact me button.
4 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

How Warnings Work

No one patrols the Internet to make sure people remain polite or decent. If someone else using the Instant Messenger service sends you annoying or offensive messages, you have two ways to handle the situation. You can block the person, see Blocking a Specific Person from Sending You Messages, or impose a warning on the person.

Warnings are penalties that one Instant Messenger can issue to another. If you receive a warning, your warning level increases and your ability to send and receive messages decreases. If you receive enough warnings, you can be prevented from sending or receiving messages at all and may even be signed off.

Warnings are not permanent however; their effects decrease over time. If you have been warned off the service, you can return after a "cooling off" period.

You can see someone's warning level if you request information about that person by clicking the Info button in your Buddy List window.

{button ,KL("warnings;blocking messages")} Related Topics

To Warn Someone

To warn someone who has sent you an offensive message, click the Warn button in the Instant Message window in which you received the message.

This imposes a warning on the sender, hampering that person's ability to send and receive messages. If someone receives warnings frequently, he or she will not be able to send messages at all. Only after a "cooling off" period can that person send messages again.

You can choose to impose the warning anonymously. Anonymous warnings are less severe and the person you are warning may not know who issued the warning.

Notes

§ You can issue only one warning for each message someone sends you.

§ If someone warns you, consider ending the conversation. Every additional message you send enables that person to warn you again.

{button ,KL("warnings;blocking messages")} Related Topics

To Format Your Screen Name

If you are dissatisfied with the capitalization and spacing in your screen name, you can format it while you are signed on.

If you want to make any other changes to your screen name, you must register a new screen name at the Instant Messenger web site.

To format your screen name:

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Format Screen Name.
3 Type your new screen name in the appropriate field.
   The only changes you can make to your screen name are the addition or deletion of spaces or the capitalization of letters. For example, if your screen name was algore, you could change it to Algore or Al Gore. You could not change it to Tipper Gore however.
4 Click OK.

To Change Your Password

You can change your password whenever you are signed on to Instant Messenger. You can make any change you want to your password as long as your password contains between 4 and 16 characters.

To change your password:

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window) and point to Change.

2 Click Password.

3 Type your current password in the appropriate field and then type and re-type a new password in the appropriate fields.

4 Click OK.

Note

Anyone who knows your password has access to your account. Therefore, you should never reveal your password to anyone online. No one from AOL will ever ask you for your password while you are online.

To Update Your E-mail Address

One way that others can find you and add you to their Buddy List window is through your e-mail address. If your e-mail address changes (for example, if you change jobs or switch from one Internet Service Provider to another), you should update our record of your e-mail address. This will allow others to find you by your screen name.

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Update E-mail Address.

3 Enter your new e-mail address in the dialog.

4 Click OK.

To Change Sounds that Play when You Send or Receive Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Sounds tab.

3 In the IM Sounds group, select the Play a sound when receiving an IM or the Play a sound when sending an IM button.

4 Click the Browse button for the option you have enabled.

   The Browse for Sound dialog opens.

5 Select the sound you want to use and click Open.

6 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("messages;sounds")} Related Topics

To Change Sounds that Play When Buddies Sign On or Off

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Sounds tab.

3 In the Buddy Sounds group, click Browse for the sound you want to change.

   The Browse for Sound dialog opens.

4 Select the sound you want to use and click Open.

5 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

Tips

§ To test a sound, click Preview.

§ To turn a sound off, deselect the check box for that sound.

To Set Visual Alerts in Your Buddy List Window

You can set visual alerts to let you know when your buddies sign on or off or when they become idle.

To set visual alerts:

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Buddy tab.

3 To make your Buddy List window blink for five seconds each time a buddy signs on or off, select Flash Buddy List window when buddies sign on or off.

4 To dim the display of buddies who are idle, select the Dim buddies after they have been idle for __ minutes option and enter the number of minutes buddies must be idle. The default is 20 minutes.

5 Click OK to save the changes.

To Change the Font in Your Buddy List Window

You can change the default font used to display groups and buddies in your Buddy List window.

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Buddy tab.
3 Select the font size in which you want to display your online buddies in your Buddy List window.
4 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

To Display or Hide Information about Yourself

Using the Privacy tab, you can determine whether or not other users can see how long you have had an Instant Messenger account or how long you have been idle. Other users can see this information by holding their cursor over your screen name in their Buddy List windows. You can also determine whether or not other users who know your e-mail address can use the Find a Buddy feature to learn your screen name or whether you have an account.

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Privacy tab.

3 In the Allow other users to see and the Allow users who know my e-mail address to find boxes, select the options you prefer.

4 Click OK to save the settings and close the dialog.

To Change Key Bindings for Messages

Using the Misc tab of the Preferences dialog, you can change the behavior of the Enter and Tab keys in the Instant Message window.

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences and then click the Misc tab.

3 If you want the Enter key to insert a line break, select the Enter key inserts Return option. (Deselect this option if you want the Enter key to send your message.)

4 If you want the Tab key to insert a tab, select the Tab key inserts Tab option. (Deselect this option if you want the Tab key to toggle among fields in the Instant Message window.)

5 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

To Turn Smilies On or Off

You can control whether online symbols (also known as smilies) appear in your Instant Message windows. To see which smilies can appear in your Instant Message windows, see the topic To Create Smilies Automatically.

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.

2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.

3 If you do not want to see the smilies in your Instant Message windows, select the Disable graphical smilies option. The Smilies submenu will also be removed from the Insert menu (accessed by clicking the right mouse button in a message).

   If you want to see the smilie icons in your Instant Message windows, deselect the Disable graphical smilies option.

4 Click OK to save the setting and close the dialog.

To Change the Default Appearance of Messages

You can customize the appearance of messages you compose by changing the default font, text color, or window color.

To change the default font used for messages:
1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.
3 Click the Default Font button.
4 Select the font settings you want to use and click OK.

   The Font and Size settings only affect the display of messages on your screen. They do not change the font or size of messages you send.
5 Click OK to save the settings and close the dialog.

To change the default window color used for messages:
1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.
3 Click the Window Color button.
4 Select the color you want to use and click OK.
5 Click OK to save the settings and close the dialog.

Note

§ If you want to change the size of text you send, you must use the toolbar to increase or decrease it.

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

To View the Timestamp in Messages

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.
3 Select the Always View Timestamp option.
4 Click OK to save this setting and close the dialog.

Note

§ You can choose Timestamp from the View menu of any Instant Message window to toggle the timestamp on or off.

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

Why Load and Save Settings?

Loading and saving your Instant Messenger settings allows you to:

§ save your settings so you can quickly set up your account and list of online buddies on another computer. For example, you can copy your settings from a desktop computer to a notebook computer.

§ share your settings with others. For example, you can copy the settings you use to connect to the Instant Messenger server through a firewall and e-mail the file to your co-workers.

Notes

§ Not all versions of Instant Messenger can load and save settings.

§ You cannot load or save settings from an AOL account.

{button ,KL("export")} Related Topics

To Save Settings

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then click Load/Save.
2 Click Save Buddy List.
3 Select the type of settings you want to save and click Save.
4 Enter a name for the file you want to save and click OK.

{button ,KL("export")} Related Topics

To Load Settings

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Load/Save.
2 Click Load Buddy List.
3 Select the file containing the settings you want to import.
4 Select the type of settings you want to import.

   If you are importing Buddy List Preferences, you can choose whether or not to add the groups to your existing list (Merge with my existing Buddy List). If you choose not to merge the settings, your existing list of online buddies will be replaced by the ones you are importing.
5 Click Load.

{button ,KL("import")} Related Topics

Settings You Can Load and Save

There are six types of settings you can save and load in to your copy of the Netscape AOL Instant Messenger software.

Connection Preferences
This setting corresponds to the settings on the Connection tab of the Preferences dialog: host server, port, and proxy information. In addition, this setting stores the setting of the Auto-login checkbox on the Sign On screen.

Personal Profile Preferences
This setting corresponds to the information you enter on the My Info tab of the Preferences dialog.

Privacy Preferences
This setting corresponds to the information on the Privacy tab of the Preferences dialog: your privacy setting (Allow All, Block All, etc.), your allow list, your block list, and the settings that allow others to see your idle time or how long you have been a member.

Sound Preferences
This setting corresponds to the settings on the Sounds tab of the Preferences dialog. The on or off value of each option on the tab is imported or exported, neither sound files nor pointers to them are saved.

Instant Message Preferences
This setting corresponds to the default text properties of your Instant Message window as defined on the Misc tab of the Preferences dialog.

Buddy List Preferences
This setting corresponds to the buddies and groups in your Buddy List window. You can choose to export any or all of the groups. When you import buddy list preferences, you can choose to replace your groups with the ones you are importing or merge them into your existing groups. If you merge a group that has the same name as an existing group in your Buddy List window, the imported buddies are added to the existing group.

{button ,KL("export")} Related Topics

Away Preferences

The Away Preferences dialog allows you to define messages that appear to others while you are away from your computer or while your computer is idle.

Auto respond when idle with message
If you select this option and enter a message, this message will be automatically sent to those who send you a message after your computer is idle for more than ten minutes.

Auto respond and insert in personal profile
If you select this option and activate your away message, the message will be automatically sent to those who send you a message. Your away message will also appear in the Personal Profile section of the Buddy Info window when someone requests information about you.

Insert in personal profile only
If you select this option and activate your away message, the message will appear only in the Personal Profile section of the Buddy Info window when someone requests information about you.

Away messages
Use the top line of the text field to enter new away messages. After you have entered a new message, click the Add Message button.

{button ,KL("away;idle")} Related Topics

Buddy Preferences

The Buddy tab of the Preferences dialog allows you to define and preview the font in which to display your list of online buddies and to specify how your Buddy List indicates when buddies sign on or off and how soon it indicates that buddies are idle.

Font
From the dropdown menu, select a font for the Buddy List window.

Size
From the dropdown menu, select a size for the font in the Buddy List window.

Dim buddies after they have been idle for __ minutes
Dims out buddies after they have been idle for the specified number of minutes.

Flash Buddy List window when buddies sign on or off
Flashes the Buddy List window for five seconds when buddies sign on or off.

Connection Preferences

If you access the Internet through an Internet Service Provider, you most likely will not need to make any changes to the Server or proxy sections of the Connection Preferences tab. However, if you access the Internet through a Local Area Network firewall (for example at your workplace), then your network administrator may need to configure the proxy section of the Connection Preferences tab.

Server Host
This field contains the default Internet address of the AOL Instant Messenger™ server. Under normal circumstances, you do not need to change this field. If you should change it accidentally, you can restore the default address by clicking the Reset button.

Server Port
This field contains the default server port number to be used on the AOL Instant Messenger™ server. Under normal circumstances, you do not need to change this field. If you should change it accidentally, you can restore the default port number by clicking the Reset button.

Auto Configure
If you click this button, the AOL Instant Messenger™ software will attempt to configure itself to work in your computer's network environment. Try Auto Configure if you are having difficulty connecting with AOL Instant Messenger™ service.

Reset
If you click this button, the AOL Instant Messenger™ software will restore the default Server Host and Port values.

Connect using proxy
If you click this button, the AOL Instant Messenger™ software will activate the proxy server controls.

Proxy Host
Supply the name of the proxy server.

Proxy Port
Supply the port number to be used on the proxy server.

Protocol
Specify whether your proxy server uses the SOCKS 4, SOCKS 5, or HTTPS protocol.

Authentication Username
Supply the authentication username required by the proxy.

Authentication Password
Supply the authentication password required by the proxy.

Use proxy to resolve hostnames
Select this option if you want the proxy to act as a name server for hosts that are behind the firewall.

Keep connection alive
Select this option if you want AOL Instant Messenger to preserve your Internet connection during idle periods. (Some Internet Service Providers automatically disconnect users who have been inactive for a given period.)

{button ,KL("connection")} Related Topics

Helpers Preferences

During installation, AOL Instant Messenger™ software determines the location of your default web browser. This browser or its associated e-mail program is automatically launched when you click on a hyperlink within AOL Instant Messenger. The Helpers Preferences dialog allows you to determine whether the AOL Internet Messenger™ service launches your default browser or an alternate browser. You can also specify the e-mail program to launch when you click on a mailto link.

If you do not have a web browser or e-mail program installed, you cannot open hyperlinks or launch an e-mail program.

Default Web browser
If you select this option, AOL Instant Messenger will use your default web browser when you click on Web links.

Alternate Web browser
If you select this option and specify the pathname of an alternate web browser, AOL Instant Messenger will use the browser you specify.

Open each Web document in a new window
If you select this option, AOL Instant Messenge will open each additional Web document in a new window, instead of re-using an open window.

Default e-mail program
If you select this option, AOL Instant Messenger will use the default e-mail program specified in your registry when you click on mailto links.

Use e-mail program in Web browser
If you select this option, AOL Instant Messenger will use the e-mail program in your web browser when you click on mailto links.

Use alternate e-mail program
If you select this option and specify the pathname of an alternate e-mail program, the AOL Instant Messenger™ service will use the specified e-mail program when you click on mailto links.

Command arguments
Enter the command line arguments that your e-mail program requires to address a message. Use the argument %1 to specify where to put the e-mail address. For example, mailto:%1.

{button ,KL("browser")} Related Topics

Misc Preferences

Save password
If you select this option, AOL Instant Messenger™ will save your password, so you won't have to type it for subsequent logins.

Auto-login
If you select this option, you will be automatically logged on whenever you launch the AOL Instant Messenger™ service.This option is only active if you have selected the Save password option on the Sign On screen.

Default Font
Click this button to select a font style and size for the Instant Message window.

Window Color
Click this button to select a background color for the Instant Message window.

Enter key inserts Return
Select this option if you want the Enter key to insert a line break. Deselect this option if you want the Enter key to send your message.

Tab key inserts Tab
Select this option if you want the Tab key to insert a tab. Deselect this option if you want the Tab key to toggle among fields in the Instant Message window.

Always view time stamp
Select this option if you want the messages you send and receive to be marked with the time they are sent.

When you are finished entering and formatting your information, click the OK button to apply your changes and close the dialog.

Disable graphical smilies
Select this option if you do not want graphical smilies to appear in your Instant Message window. The Smilies submenu will also be removed from the Insert menu (accessed by clicking the right mouse button in a message).

{button ,KL("messages")} Related Topics

Privacy Preferences

Allow all users to contact me
When selected, this option allows all users to see you in their Buddy List windows and send you messages.

Allow only users on my Buddy List
When selected, this option prevents all users, except those on your Buddy List, from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Allow only the users below
When selected, this option prevents all users, except those you specify, from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Block all users
When selected, this option prevents all users from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Block the users below
When selected, this option allows all users, except those you specify, to see you in their Buddy List windows and send you messages.

Allow List
This list box is active if you have selected Allow only the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

Block List
This list box is active if you have selected Block the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

Allow users to see how long I've been idle
When selected this option enables other users to see whether you are idle, when they hold the cursor over your screen name in their Buddy List window.

Allow users to see how long I've had an account
When selected this option enables other users to see how long you have had an AOL Instant Messenger™ service account, when they hold the cursor over your screen name in their Buddy List window.

Allow users who know my e-mail address to find my screen name
When selected this option allows users who know your e-mail address to obtain your screen name through the Find a Buddy feature.

Allow users who know my e-mail address to find only that I have an account
When selected this option allows users who know your e-mail address to learn only that you have an account (but not to learn your screen name) through the Find a Buddy feature.

Allow users who know my e-mail address to find nothing about me
When selected this option allows users who know your e-mail address to learn nothing about you through the Find a Buddy feature.

{button ,KL("privacy")} Related Topics

My Info Preferences

This dialog allows you to supply information about yourself that you would like others to be able to access. (For example, your name, title, hobbies, etc.)

When you are finished entering and formatting your information, click the OK button to apply your changes and close the dialog.

You can also temporarily modify your personal information with an away message to let others know you are not available.

{button ,KL("profile;away")} Related Topics

Sounds Preferences

The Sounds Preferences dialog allows you to set which sounds, if any, play when your buddies sign on or off and when you send or receive messages.

Play sound when buddies sign on
When selected, this option plays a sound whenever one of your buddies signs on.

Play sound when buddies sign off
When selected, this option plays a sound whenever one of your buddies signs off.

Play sound when first IM is received
When selected, this option plays a sound the first time you receive a message from a particular buddy, but not on subsequent messages from that buddy.

Play sound when receiving an IM
When selected, this option plays a sound every time you receive a message.

Play sound when sending an IM
When selected, this option plays a sound every time you send a message.

Tip

§ AOL Instant Messenger™ software includes a directory of default sound files. This SOUNDS directory is located within the directory in which you installed the AOL Instant Messenger™ software.

{button ,KL("sounds")} Related Topics

Why Can't I See Anyone in My Buddy List Window?

There are several reasons why you might not be able to see anyone in your Buddy List Window.

- You must have added buddies from the List Setup tab of your Buddy List window.
- Make sure you are displaying the Online tab of your Buddy List window. Click the Online tab to display your online buddies.
- None of your buddies might be signed on.
- You may have set the Block All option on the Privacy tab of the Preferences dialog. This prevents anyone from seeing you and also prevents you from seeing anyone in your Buddy List Window.
- All of your buddies may have blocked you from seeing them.

{button ,KL("adding, buddy;privacy")} Related Topics

Why Can't I Connect?

If you cannot sign on and are not receiving errors about your password, you are not connecting to the server.

If you have been able to connect before and you know your network or Internet Service Provider connection is operating properly, the Instant Messenger server might be down. If so, you will need to wait and try to sign on later.

If you are signing on from a local area network and have not been able to connect before, you might be experiencing problems on that network or you might not be getting through a firewall. Contact your network administrator to help you determine the configuration settings to enter.

To change your connection configuration:

1 Click the Setup button on the Sign On screen.

2 On the Connection tab, enter the settings your network administrator supplies.

3 Click OK to save the settings and close the dialog.

{button ,KL("connection")} Related Topics

Why Can't I Open My Browser from a Link?

During installation, the AOL Instant Messenger software determines the location of your default web browser based on your Windows 95 registry. If your browser does not start when you click on a link within the Instant Messenger service, you need to check the Helpers tab of the Preferences dialog.

If you have selected the Default Web browser option, make sure you have not removed your default browser. If you have selected the Alternate Web browser option, make sure the pathname to the alternate browser is still valid.

Default Topic

Why Can't I Send Messages?

If you cannot send a message to a particular person, that person has either signed off or blocked messages from you.

If you cannot send messages at all (indicated by a red power bar next to the Send button), you have reached your rate limit. You cannot send or receive messages until the light turns yellow or green.

Your rate limit is determined by your warning rating. The higher your warning rating, the slower the rate at which you can send messages.

Each time you receive a warning, your warning rating increases and the rate at which you can send messages decreases. Likewise, if you try to send a lot of messages quickly, your rate limit decreases. If you receive too many warnings, send too many messages too quickly, or some combination thereof, you can be stopped completely.

You cannot reset your warnings or your rate limit. Gradually your warning rating will be reduced and your rate limit will increase, but you must be patient and behave to return to a green light rating.

How Do I Disable Automatic Sign On?

If you select the Auto-login checkbox on the Sign On screen, you automatically connect to the Instant Messenger service every time you start the software.

To turn off automatic sign on:

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), and then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.
3 Deselect the Auto-login checkbox.
4 Click OK to save this setting and close the dialog.

   The next time you start the Instant Messenger software, the Sign On screen appears.

How Do I Disable Automatic Launch?

If you enabled the automatic launch when you installed Netscape AOL Instant Messenger, the software automatically starts when you start Windows. If you also saved your password and selected the Auto-login checkbox on the Sign On screen, you automatically connect to the service when a network connection is made.

To disable automatic launch:

1 Click the Instant Messenger menu button (located in the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window), then point to Options.
2 Click Edit Preferences, and then click the Misc tab.
3 Deselect the Launch Netscape AIM on Windows start checkbox.
4 Click OK to save this setting and close the dialog.

The next time you start the Instant Messenger software, the Sign On screen appears.

Check your desired options.

Check your desired options.

Closes this dialog and saves any changes you have made.

Closes this dialog without saving any changes you have made.

Saves your changes but does not close the dialog.

Select your preferred option.

Select your preferred option.

Select your preferred option.

Click this button to make your choice.

Click this button to make your choice.

Click this button to make your choice.

Click this button to make your choice.

Check your desired options.

Check your desired options.

Allow all users to see you in   their Buddy List windows and send you messages.

Prevent all users, except those you specify in the Allow List, from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Prevent all users from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Allow all users, except those you specify in your Block List, to see you in their Buddy List windows and send you messages.

This list box is active if you have selected Allow only the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

This list box is active if you have selected Block the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

Prevent all users, except those on your Buddy List, from seeing you in their Buddy List windows and sending you messages.

Add a user to the Allow List.

Remove the selected user from the Allow List.

Add a user to the Block List.

Remove the selected user from the Block List.

Allow other users to see how long you have had an Instant Messenger account.

Allow other users to see whether you are idle.

Specify which users can and cannot contact you with Instant Messages.

Determine whether or not other users can view information on how long you have been idle and how long you have had an AOL Instant Messenger account.

This list box is active if you have selected Allow only the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

This list box is active if you have selected Block the users below. To add a Screen Name, click Add Name, type in the Screen Name, and press Enter. To delete a Screen Name, select the Screen Name and click Remove.

Specify which information can be obtained through the Find a Buddy feature by users who know your e-mail address.

Allow users who know your e-mail address to obtain your screen name through the Find a Buddy feature.

Allow users who know your e-mail address to learn only that you have an account (but not to learn your screen name) through the Find a Buddy feature.

Allow users who know your e-mail address to learn nothing about you through the Find a Buddy feature.

Specify the pathname of an alternate web browser.

Select an alternate Web browser.

Open each additional Web document in a new window, instead of re-using an open window.

Use your default web browser when you click on Web links.

If you select this option and specify the pathname of an alternate web browser, AOL Instant Messenger will use the browser you specify.

Use the default e-mail program specified in your registry when you click on mailto links.

Use the e-mail program included with your Web browser.

If you select this option and specify the pathname of an alternate e-mail program, AOL Instant Messenger will use the e-mail program you specify.

Specify the pathname of an alternate e-mail program.

Select an alternate e-mail program.

Enter the command line arguments that your e-mail program requires to address a message. Use the argument %1 to specify where to put the e-mail address. For example, mailto:%1.

Specify which Web browser AOL Instant Messenger uses when you click on a link to a Web document, and whether additional Web documents should be opened in new windows.

Specify which e-mail program AOL Instant Messenger uses when you click on a mail link.

Define and preview the font in which to display your list of online buddies.

Choose a font from the list.

Choose a point size from the list.

Dims out buddies after they have been idle for the specified number of minutes.

Specify the number of minutes you would like AIM to wait before dimming out idle buddies.

Dims out buddies after they have been idle for the specified number of minutes.

Flashes the Buddy List window when buddies sign on or off.

Click this button to make your choice.

Choose an item from the list.

Click this button to make your choice.

Click this button to make your choice.

Supply information about yourself that you would like others to be able to access. (For example, your name, hobbies, etc.)

Supply information about yourself that you would like others to be able to access. (For example, your name, hobbies, etc.)

If you select this option and enter a message, the message will be automatically sent to those who send you a message after your computer is idle for more than ten minutes.

Enter your idle message.

If you select this option and activate your away message, the message will be automatically sent to those who send you a message. Your away message will also appear in the Personal Profile section of the Buddy Info window when someone requests information about you.

If you select this option and activate your away message, the message will appear only in the Personal Profile section of the Buddy Info window. An automatic response will not be sent.

Select an away message for use or removal.

Add the new message you have entered to your Away messages list.

Remove the selected message from your Away messages list.

Display the selected away message.

Enter new away messages. After you have entered a new message, click the Add Message button.

Specify and enable your idle message.

Specify and control your away messages.

Save your password between sessions, so you don't have to enter it each time you sign on. Note that saving your password is less secure, since another person could easily sign on using your screen name.

Automatically connect to the AOL Instant Messenger service each time you launch the program. This option is only available if you have selected the Save password option.

Select a default font style and size for the Instant Message window.

Select a default background color for the Instant Message window.

Select this option if you want the Enter key to insert a line break. Deselect this option if you want the Enter key to send your message.

Select this option if you want the Tab key to insert a tab. Deselect this option if you want the Tab key to toggle among fields in the Instant Message window.

Select this option if you want the messages you send and receive to be marked with the time they are sent.

Customize the default font and window color used in your Instant Message window.

Automatically start AIM when Windows starts. Once started, AIM will wait until it detects an Internet connection. When it does, it will log on automatically.

Select this button if you connect to the Internet by a modem (dialup) connection.

Select this button if you connect to the Internet by a local area network connection.

Customize the default font and window color used in your Instant Message window.

Customize the appearance and behavior of your Instant Message window.

Customize your sign on preferences and specify the type of Internet connection you use.

Select this option if you do not want graphical smilies to appear in your Instant Message window.

Play a sound when one of your buddies signs on.

Choose a sound from the list.

Select a sound file to play when buddies sign on.

Hear the sound you have chosen to play when buddies sign on.

Play a sound when one of your buddies signs off.

Choose a sound from the list.

Select a sound file to play when buddies sign off.

Hear the sound you have chosen to play when buddies sign off.

Play a sound the first time you receive a message from a particular buddy, but not on subsequent messages from that buddy.

Choose a sound from the list.

Select a sound file to play the first time you receive a message from a particular buddy, but not on subsequent messages from that buddy.

Hear the sound you have chosen to play the first time you receive a message from a particular buddy, but not on subsequent messages from that buddy.

Play a sound every time you receive a message.

Choose a sound from the list.

Select a sound file to play every time you receive a message.

Hear the sound you have chosen to play every time you receive a message from a particular buddy.

Play a sound every time you send a message.

Choose a sound from the list.

Select a sound file to play every time you send a message.

Hear the sound you have chosen to play every time you send a message.

Control sounds that play when buddies sign on or off.

The settings in this box control sounds that play when you send or receive instant messages.

Specify the server address and port number to be used on the AOL Instant Messenger™ server. Under normal circumstances, you do not need to change these settings. If you should change them accidentally, you can restore the default settings by clicking the Reset button.

This field contains the default Internet address of the AOL Instant Messenger™ server. Under normal circumstances, you do not need to change this field. If you should change it accidentally, you can restore the default setting by clicking the Reset button.

This field contains the default server port number to be used on the AOL Instant Messenger™ server. Under normal circumstances, you do not need to change this setting. If you should change it accidentally, you can restore the default setting by clicking the Reset button.

If necessary, specify proxy server information for using AOL Instant Messenger through a Local Area Network firewall (for example at your workplace). Your network administrator may need to configure these settings.

Activate the proxy server controls.

Supply the name of the proxy server.

Supply the port number to be used on the proxy server.

Select this option if your proxy server uses SOCKS 4 protocol.

Select this option if your proxy server uses SOCKS 5 protocol.

Select this option if your proxy server uses HTTPS protocol.

Supply the authentication username required by the proxy.

Supply the authentication password required by the proxy.

Use the proxy server to act as a name server for hosts that are behind the firewall.

If you click this button, the AOL Instant Messenger™ software will attempt to configure itself to work in your computer's network environment. Try Auto Configure if you are having difficulty connecting with AOL Instant Messenger™ Service.

If you click this button, the AOL Instant Messenger™ software will restore the default Server Host and Port values.

Preserve your Internet connection during idle periods. (Some Internet Service Providers automatically disconnect users who have been inactive for a given period.)

Check your desired options.

Check your desired options.

Select your preferred option.

Select your preferred option.

Check your desired options.