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Internet

Second Edition

Explains Web-based chat, newsgroups, instant messaging, and voice and video conferencing

Shows how to share an Internet connection on your home or office LAN

Includes updated coverage of Windows® XP, Internet Explorer and Outlook Express 6.0, DSL, and cable Internet connections

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Internet

Second Edition

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This book is dedicated to
Dionir Souza Gomes Young and Jordan Marten Young, Sr.
on the 50th anniversary of their marriage.

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Introduction

The Internet has grown explosively over the last ten years, with increases in the number of users, the amount of information that it makes available, and the number of different programs you can use. If you're a serious Internet user—relying on e-mail for business and personal communications and the Web for news and entertainment—you've probably run into snags and questions that basic Internet books don't answer. This book can help you with the complexity of the Internet and solve these snags. It covers the most important aspects of the Internet, skipping the basics, with clear instructions for how to get the most out of the Net.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is for anyone who uses the Internet and wants to know more. You might have one of the following questions, for example:

- What do I need to reconfigure if I switch from dial-up to a DSL connection?
- Should I prevent my browser from storing cookies on my hard disk? How can I look at the cookies that my browser has already stored on my system?
- How can I minimize my chances of getting a virus?

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- What's the best search engine?
- How do I register a domain name and set up my own web site?
- How can I deal with the increasing number of e-mail messages I get each day?
- Can I run my own e-mail discussion list?
- Is it safe to try peer-to-peer file-sharing services like KaZaA and Morpheus?
- Is voice conferencing over the Internet hard to set up? Is it expensive?

This book answers all of these questions and thousands more. It describes programs for Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows ME, Macintoshes, and UNIX, and covers how to configure your e-mail program and web browser, connect your home network to share one Internet connection, and much more.

In this book, the authors assume that you know how to use your computer—whether it's Windows, a Mac, or UNIX. We also assume that you know the basics of the Internet, including how to send and receive e-mail and browse the Web.

Note *If you want an introduction to the Internet (or you think someone you know needs one), get* How to Do Everything with the Internet *by Dennis Jones (McGraw-Hill/Osborne, 2000) or* The Internet For Dummies, 8th Edition *by John R. Levine and Margaret Levine Young (John Wiley & Sons [formerly Hungry Minds], 2002).*

What's in This Book?

This book is divided into six parts.

Part I: Connecting to the Internet

Part I describes the components of the Internet—hosts, domains, Internet services, and how computers and LANs can connect to the Internet.

Chapter 1 covers Internet concepts, including the new Internet domains. If you want to register your own domain (or you've wondered how the domain naming system works), it's covered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 contains the instructions you need to configure your computer to connect to an Internet account, including DSL and cable Internet accounts. If you want to connect an entire local area network (LAN) to the Internet as an intranet, read Chapter 4.

Part II: Exchanging E-mail

The most widely used Internet service is e-mail. It's worth learning the advanced features of your e-mail program so you don't have to spend as much time keeping up with your messages.

Chapter 5 covers basic e-mail concepts like attachments, formatting, and netiquette. Configuration commands for the most popular e-mail programs—Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger, Netscape Mail, Eudora, and web-based mail—are

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described in Chapter 6, including reading and sending mail from multiple accounts and with multiple addresses. If you've had trouble sending or receiving files by e-mail, read Chapter 7 to learn about file attachments. Chapter 8 has instructions for handling the increasing amount of e-mail many people receive, including how to configure your e-mail program to presort your incoming messages and how to deal with spam.

Part III: Chatting and Conferencing on the Internet

Instant messaging, chat rooms, and other person-to-person Internet programs are incredibly popular. This part of the book describes the various Internet services that allow groups of people to communicate over the Internet.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of ways you can use the Internet for conferencing and chatting. In Chapter 10, you learn how to participant in e-mail mailing lists and set up your own mailing lists. If you want to read or post to Usenet newsgroups, read Chapter 11 for the basic concepts and Chapter 12 for how to use the most popular Usenet newsreading programs. Chapter 13 is an introduction to the world of Internet Relay Chat (IRC), the Internet's original real-time chat network. If you use AOL Instant Messenger or another IM program (or you're ready to try one), check out Chapter 14. Chapter 15 describes web-based discussions, including how to set up your own. For voice and video conferencing, look at Chapter 16.

Part IV: Viewing the World Wide Web

Everyone can use a browser, but not everyone knows how to configure browsers to make web-surfing fast and efficient. Part IV describes how to take advantage of the possibilities of the Web.

Chapter 17 gives you an overview of the Web's components, including plug-ins and ActiveX controls. To configure your browser to display the toolbars and buttons you really use and to install plug-ins for interactive web sites, see Chapter 18. Chapter 19 covers the ways you can set up your browser to make it easy to return to your favorite web sites. If you are concerned about privacy and security, see Chapter 20. Chapter 21 lists the best web search engines and directories and how to use them. In Chapter 22, you learn how to find and play Internet-based audio and video.

Part V: Creating and Maintaining Web Sites

If you or your organization want to provide information over the Web, you need to plan, design, create, test, and maintain a web site. Part V tells you how.

Chapter 23 covers the concepts of web site creation, including HTML, web site design, and programs for creating pages. In Chapter 24, you learn how to create Web pages using a text editor, inserting the necessary HTML codes yourself. Chapter 25 describes the best and most popular web page editing programs: Dreamweaver, GoLive, Netscape Composer, and FrontPage. To create or edit graphics files to enliven your web pages, read Chapter 26; and if you want your Web site to include audio clips, take a look at Chapter 27. For more advanced sites, Chapter 28 contains an overview of interactive and database-driven web site design, including CGI, JavaScript, PHP,

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Active Server Pages, and ColdFusion. Chapter 29 describes how to use cascading style sheets to make your web site better looking and easier to maintain and how to add message boards, news feeds, and other features without programming.

Once you have created and tested your web site on your own computer, Chapter 30 describes how to upload it to a web server so that the rest of the world can see it, too. To analyze how people find your site and increase the number of visitors you receive, see the tips in Chapter 31. In Chapter 32, you can find out how to turn your web site into a retail store.

Part VI: File Transfer and Downloading

Whether you have created a web page and need to upload it to your web server or you've heard about a program that you can get from a web-based shareware library, sooner or later you'll need to upload or download files. Chapter 33 has an overview of FTP (file transfer protocol) concepts and step-by-step instructions for using FTP programs. It also describes how to use telnet and ssh to log into web servers to manage the files in your web site. In Chapter 34, you learn what to do with the files you have downloaded, including how to install programs.

Conventions Used in This Book

This book uses several icons to highlight special advice:

A handy way to make the Internet work for you.

An observation that gives you insight into the way the Internet works.

Something to watch out for so you don't have to learn the hard way.

When you see instructions to choose commands from a menu, the parts of the command are separated by vertical bars (|). For example, "choose Tools | Internet Options" means to choose Tools from the menu bar and then choose Internet Options from the Tools menu that appears. If the command begins with "Start |," click the Start button on the Windows Taskbar as the first step. Unless otherwise noted, all the instructions in this book are for Windows XP. If you need more information about using Windows, refer to *Windows XP: The Complete Reference*, *Windows Millennium Edition: The Complete Reference*, and *Windows 98: The Complete Reference* (all published by McGraw-Hill/Osborne).

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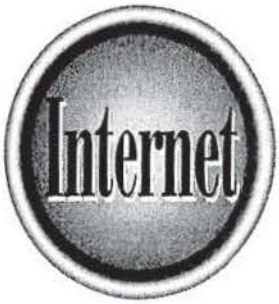
To find out which button is which on the toolbar of most programs, move the mouse pointer to the button and wait a few seconds without clicking. Most programs display a little box, or tooltip, *with the name of the button.*

Contacting the Authors

This book isn't just a book—it's a Web site, too. For updated information about the Internet, use your browser to see our Web site at **net.gurus.com/nettcr2**. While you're there, you can tell us what you thought of the book, or you can let us know by writing to us at **nettcr2@gurus.com**. Please don't ask us a lot of questions about the Internet, though—we're too busy updating this book and writing new ones to provide a lot free e-mail consulting. With luck, you'll find some answers at the book's web site.

The Complete Reference



Chapter 14

Instant Messaging

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At times, using the Internet can be a very solitary experience. You're online, you're using the Web or checking your e-mail, but you have no idea whether anyone else is out there. Wouldn't it be nice if you knew when your friends were online and had an easy way to get in touch with them? Don't you sometimes want to send a quick message to the person working down the hall? That's probably what Mirabilis Ltd. was thinking about when they developed ICQ, the first *instant messaging (IM)* program to be widely used across the Internet.

This chapter describes ICQ as well as newer, more widely used instant messaging programs like Windows Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger, and Yahoo Messenger.

What Is Instant Messaging?

Instant messaging programs have a unique combination of useful chat features. With an instant messaging program, you can

- *Keep track of which of your contacts is currently available to chat.* Most programs enable you to keep a list of contacts, in the form of a "buddy" or friend list, which is used to notify you when your contacts log on.
- *Chat privately with a single person.* Unlike other forms of chat, instant messaging is private and one-on-one. Some IM programs now allow additional people to join a conversation, but the original idea of IM is one-on-one.
- *Send an immediate message that is likely to get quick attention.* When you send an instant message, you generally cause a chime to sound and a new window to open on the recipient's computer screen. Instant messages are hard to ignore.
- *Converse back and forth in a way that's similar to face-to-face communication.* Instant messaging is extremely interactive and is the most conversation-like of any text-based Internet chat capability. Some instant messaging programs even allow users to hand documents and pictures to each other and play online games together.

The most popular instant messaging programs include ICQ, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), Windows (MSN) Messenger, and Yahoo Messenger. As of 2002, AIM is the market leader, but we expect Windows Messenger to gain users as Windows XP is more widely installed.

Unfortunately, these programs don't work together: if you're using ICQ, you can keep tabs only on your other friends who are using ICQ. If your friend uses AOL Instant Messenger only, then you can't communicate unless you use AOL Instant Messenger, too. However, each of these programs can be downloaded at no charge, so many instant messaging enthusiasts use more than one, sometimes simultaneously. (See the sidebar on Jabber and Trillian later in this chapter for programs that can connect with multiple IM services.)

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ICQ

With over 100 million enrolled users, ICQ (pronounced "I Seek You") is a leader in direct messaging systems. ICQ (from ICQ Inc., formerly Mirabilis, now owned by AOL/Time Warner) was the first publicly available system to offer contact lists and instant messages. There are ICQ users all over the world, especially outside of the United States and Canada, making it an excellent instant messaging tool for those who want to communicate internationally. It's available in a number of languages, including Chinese and Arabic. ICQ enables you to talk with one other friend or join IRC-style group chats on a variety of subjects. The ICQ web site (**www.icq.com**) lists available topics.

ICQ is always being enhanced by ICQ, Inc., and on each operating system its use is slightly different. The instructions provided in this book are for use of ICQ version 2001b with Windows XP, but users of other versions and operating systems should have no difficulty adapting these directions for use with their configurations.

Installing and Getting Started with ICQ

You can use ICQ Lite at **lite.icq.com** without installing the ICQ software, but most people prefer to install and use the full-featured program. ICQ Lite plugs into your browser, rather than running as a separate program.

To download and install ICQ, go to its web site at **www.icq.com**, find the Download button amid the amazing clutter on the page, and follow the instructions. The ICQ program is available for all recent versions of Windows, Macintosh, several types of hand-held computers or personal data assistants (PDAs), and Java. (Refer to Chapter 34 for information about how to download software from the Web.)

Download the installation file and keep your computer connected to the Internet while you run the installation program. After the installation is complete, the ICQ registration program automatically starts. It asks you for a lot of personal information, and although only a password is absolutely necessary, personal information will help your friends and others who share your interests find you. You can add to or change your personal information after registering.

After the registration process is complete, the ICQ program starts. Type your password and click OK to log onto ICQ.

Tip *The ICQ program is designed to run whenever your computer is running. This enables the program to alert you when one of your friends comes online or when someone wants to contact you. Keep ICQ loaded if you want your friends to be able to contact you.*

ICQ is represented by a flower icon that appears in the notification area (system tray) of the Windows taskbar. The flower is green when you are connected to ICQ and

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red when you are not connected. Double-click the tray icon to open the ICQ window, shown in Figure 14-1. When you are not using the ICQ window, minimize it. When minimized, ICQ appears only as a flower on the taskbar.

ICQ knows when you are connected to the Internet and using ICQ, and you can configure it to automatically indicate to your contacts that you're "Away" if you don't use your computer for a while. Additionally, ICQ has dozens of configuration options you can explore by clicking the Main button on the ICQ window.

Finding People on ICQ

Before you can use ICQ, you need someone to talk to. No problem! Click the Add/Invite Users button in the ICQ window to search the ICQ database for friends and acquaintances. Each ICQ user is issued a long number such as 20230642. This ICQ identification number is similar to a telephone number: if you want to contact another ICQ user, you need the person's number. ICQ users often include their ICQ numbers in e-mail messages or on their web pages, and the ICQ web site includes an online database that you can use to look up friends and associates who have agreed to be

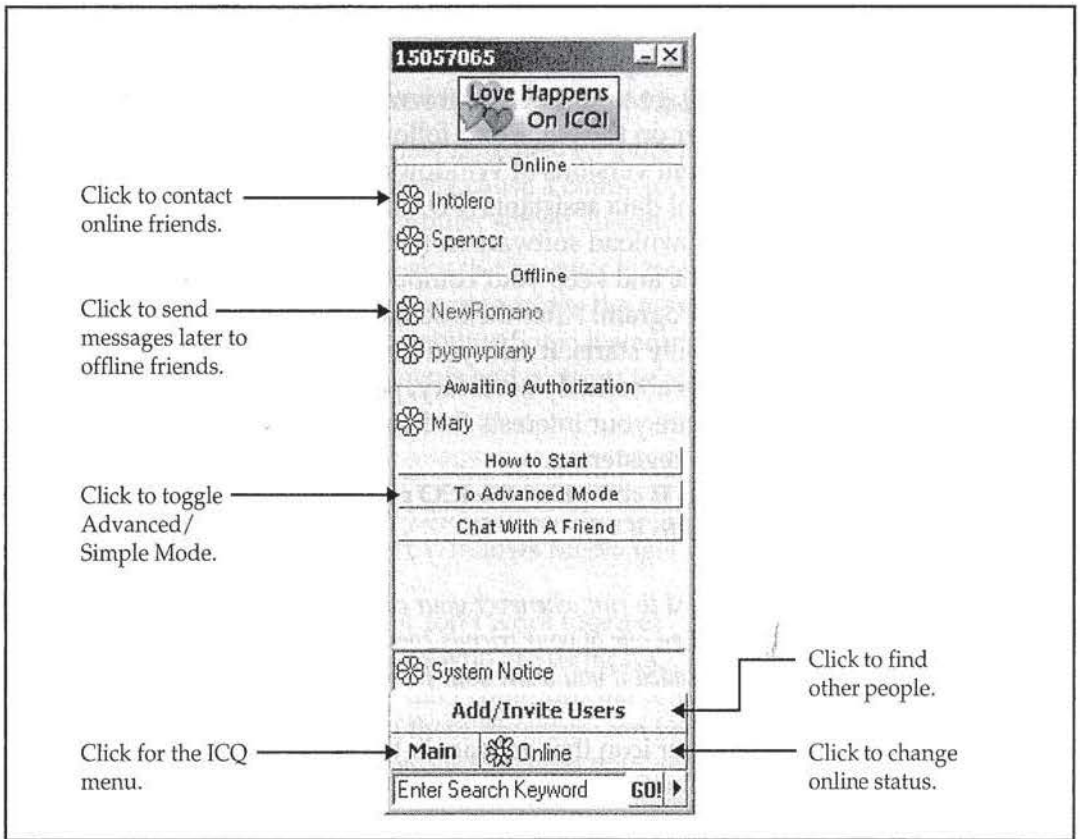


Figure 14-1. *The ICQ window*

listed in the database. There are also lists of users grouped by interest, if you're seeking a new friend.

You can search for a friend's ICQ number if you don't know it. The most reliable way to find people is by e-mail address, although you can also search by name. Type some identifying information into the Find/Add Users To Your List window (as in Figure 14-2) and click Search. If ICQ finds a person who matches what you typed, it displays the person's ICQ number and other identifying information from the ICQ database. Highlight your friend's entry and click Add User to add the person to your contact list. Whenever this person starts ICQ while you are online, the person's nickname appears in the Online portion of your ICQ window.

Some people have configured ICQ to ask for their approval before you can add them to your contact list. When you try to add those people to your contact list, ICQ asks you to type a message to the person explaining why you'd like to be able to talk to them. (If it's a friend, you can type something like, "Hey, it's me!") Once the person approves, you receive a system message from ICQ: click the blinking ICQ taskbar button to read the message.

You can easily prevent people you don't know from adding you to their contact lists. Click Main in the ICQ window and then click Security & Privacy Permissions. In the Security & Privacy Permissions window, choose My Authorization Is Required Before Users Add Me To Their Contact List and click OK.

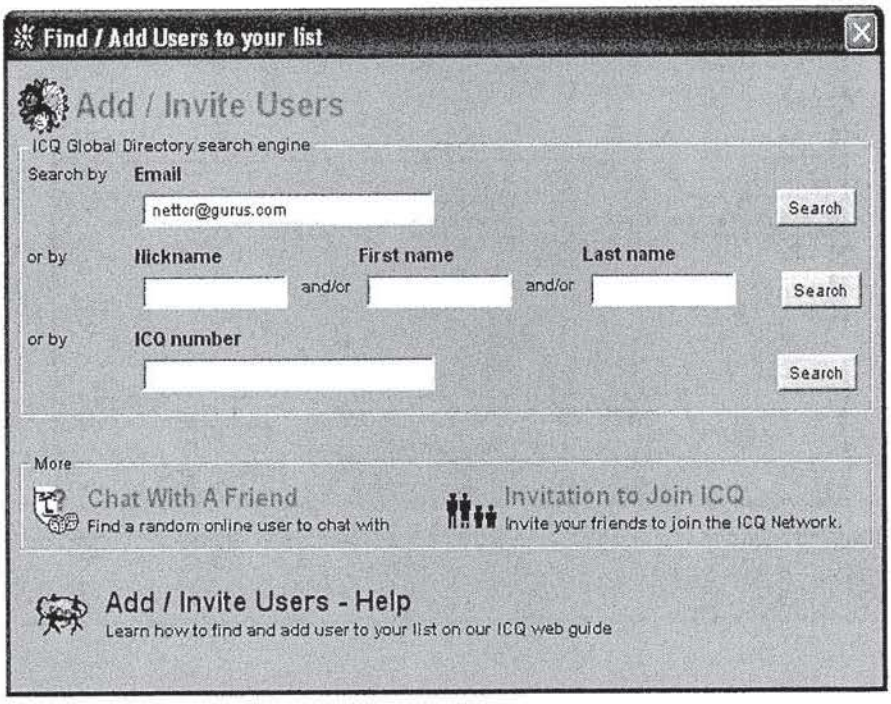


Figure 14-2. *Finding other ICQ users*

Sending Messages with ICQ

Open the ICQ window, shown earlier in Figure 14-1, by double-clicking the ICQ flower icon in the system tray. The Online portion of the ICQ window lists the nicknames of people on your contact list who are online right now. The Offline portion lists your friends who aren't on the Internet right now or who don't have ICQ running. Double-click the nickname of the person from your contact list to whom you want to send a message or click the entry once and choose Message from the small window that appears. The Message Session window, shown in Figure 14-3, opens. Type your message in the lower portion of the window and click Send. If your contact is online, your message appears on his or her computer within seconds. If your contact is not online, ICQ can hold your message until the person connects.

When someone sends you a message, a blinking ICQ button opens in your taskbar or, if the ICQ window is already open, the icon to the left of the nickname begins to blink. Double-click the icon or click the blinking ICQ taskbar button to see the message.

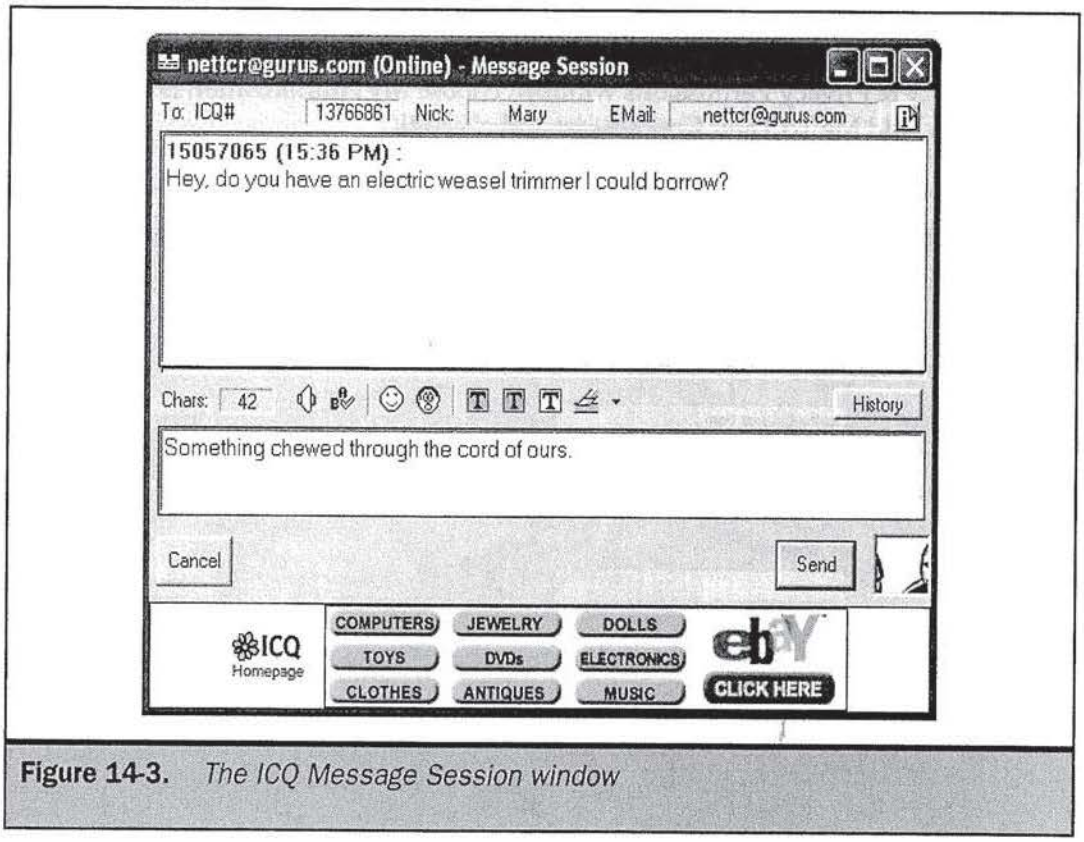
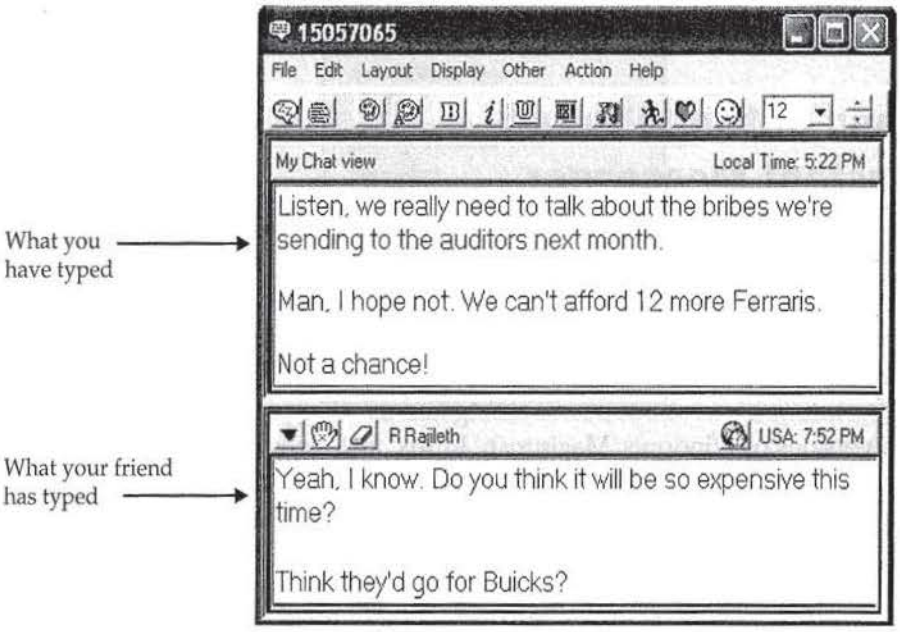


Figure 14-3. *The ICQ Message Session window*

Another type of conversation is possible with the ICQ chat feature. ICQ chat is only available in Advanced Mode, so first you'll need to switch to that.

To enter Advanced Mode, click To Advanced Mode on the ICQ window and click Switch To Advanced Mode in the Simple/Advanced Mode Selection window. Your ICQ window will change slightly to include additional ICQ functions.

To use chat, click a nickname in the Online portion of your ICQ window and choose ICQ Chat from the small window that appears. When you see the Send Online ICQ Chat window, type a message to your prospective chat partner in the Enter Chat Subject box and click Send. If the other person accepts your chat request by clicking Accept, the ICQ programs on the two computers each open a chat window, like this:



As you type messages, they appear character by character on the other person's screen.

Other ICQ Features

ICQ can do lots of other things, including voice telephony, file transfer, e-mail sending and receiving, and group chats. Much of the fun of using ICQ is in exploring its many features! For instructions, go to the ICQ web page at **www.icq.com**, and click one of the links that offers more information about the program. For voice features, see the ICQ section in Chapter 16.

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AOL Instant Messenger (AIM)

Although there are AOL Instant Messenger users in many countries, the majority of users are located in the English-speaking world and particularly the United States. With over 100 million registered users, AIM has one distinct advantage over all other instant messaging tools: it connects to AOL's own messaging system, so that all AOL subscribers are part of its user base. In fact, AOL subscribers don't even have to sign up for or install AIM because it is part of their AOL software.

AOL continues to enhance AIM, and its use is slightly different depending on the configuration you use and whether you're an AOL subscriber. The instructions provided in this book are for use of stand-alone AIM version 4.8 and Windows XP, but users of other versions and operating systems should have no difficulty adapting these directions for use with their configurations.

Installing and Getting Started with AOL Instant Messenger

You may already have AIM because it's included at no cost with many other Internet programs, including Netscape. Search your computer for a file called aim.exe to determine if it's already installed. If you don't see AIM on your system, you can use AIM Express, a browser-based version of AIM, at **www.aim.com/get_aim/express/aim_expr.adp**, or you can download the AIM software from the AIM home page at **www.aim.com**. (See Chapter 34 for information about downloading and installing software.) AIM is available for all recent versions of Windows, Macintosh, Linux, and several versions of PDA.

After downloading and installing the software from the AIM home page, the AOL Instant Messenger Screen Name window appears. If you already have an AOL screen name, type it in the Screen Name box and click OK. Otherwise, click Get A Screen Name to be taken to an AOL web page where you can create one. You may have difficulty finding a screen name you're happy with because the millions of existing AOL and AIM users have already chosen many of the best ones. Make sure you enter your correct e-mail address because AIM will send you a confirmation e-mail message that you must reply to.

AIM is represented by an icon that looks like a person running in the notification area (system tray) of the Windows taskbar. When you are connected (logged on) to AIM, you see a blue circle around the running person, but when you're disconnected, no blue circle appears. Double-click the tray icon, and depending on whether you are already connected, either the Sign On window or the Buddy List window opens.

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If you see the Sign On window, type your user name and password and click Sign On, like this:

The Buddy List window is shown in Figure 14-4.

Tip *AIM is designed to run whenever your computer is running. This enables the program to alert you when one of your friends comes online or when someone wants to contact you.*

Finding People on AOL Instant Messenger

Now you need to find someone to talk to. You'll notice that the Buddy List window has two tabs, one to set up the Buddy List (the List Setup tab, shown in Figure 14-5) and one to see which of your contacts is online. To add someone to your list, click the List Setup tab, click the Add A Buddy button, and type a friend's AOL screen name or AIM user name. You can add as many friends as you like.

If you don't know your friend's AIM user name or AOL screen name, click the Find button (which looks like a magnifying glass) in the lower-right corner of the Buddy List

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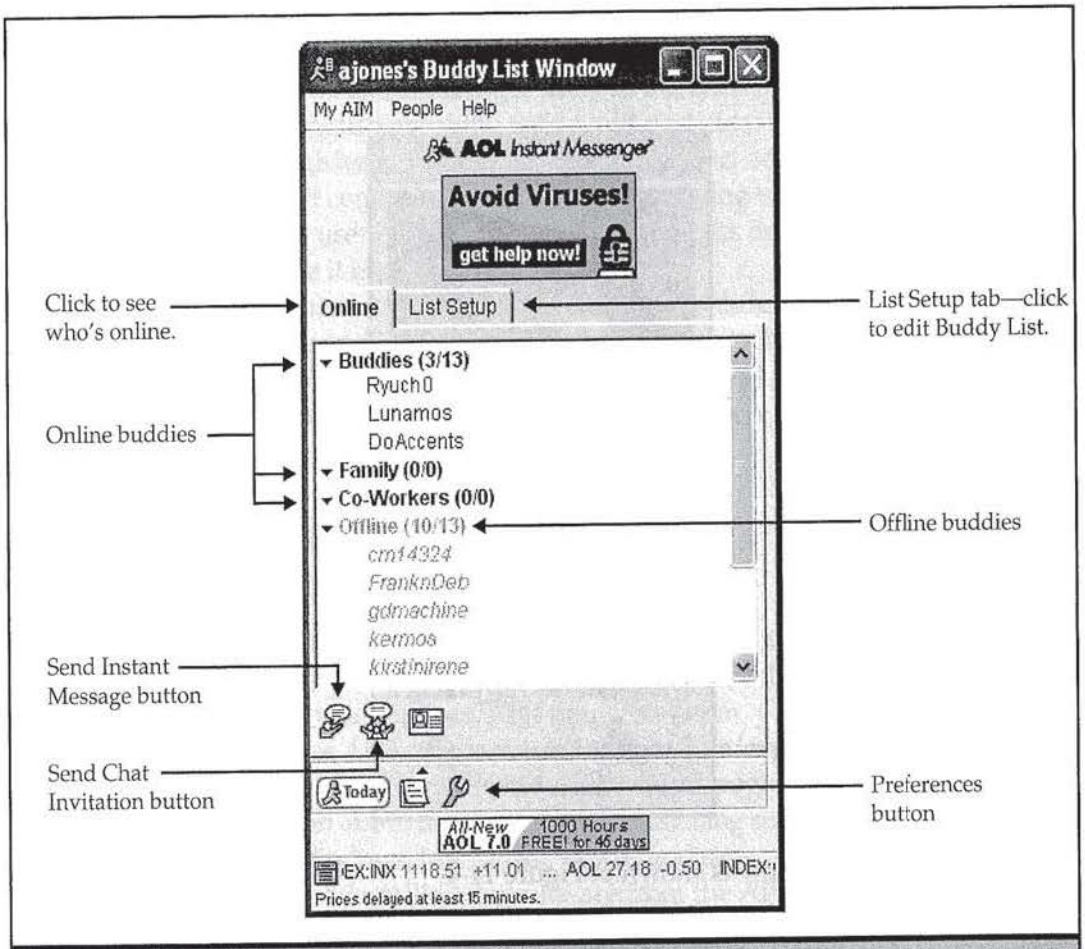

Figure 14-4. *The AIM Buddy List window, Online tab*

window and choose Find A Buddy. You can find a person by his or her e-mail address or name, or you can locate someone who shares an interest of yours.

Sending Instant Messages

Before sending an instant message to someone on your buddy list, be sure the Online tab of the Buddy List window is visible as in Figure 14-4.

The Online tab shows which of your contacts are currently connected to the Internet and signed onto either AOL or AIM. The numbers next to each group of friends

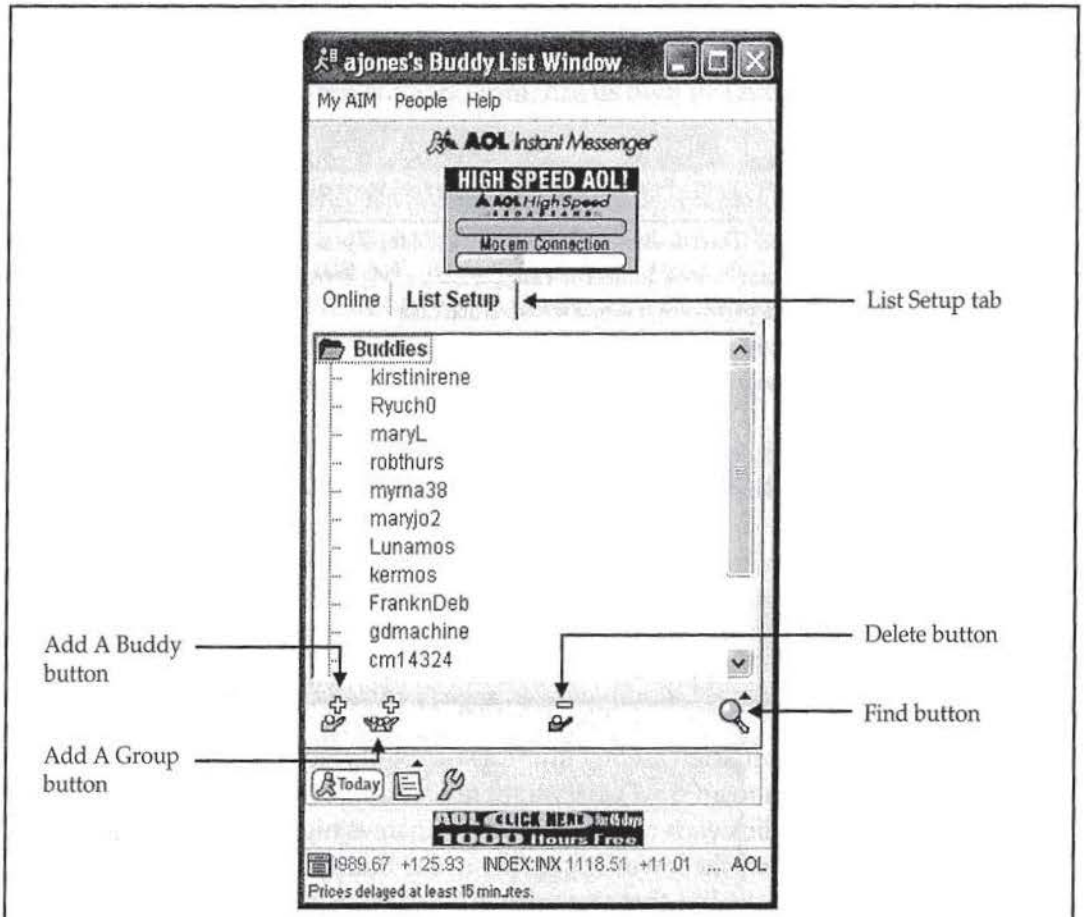

Figure 14-5. *The AIM Buddy List window, List Setup tab*

(Buddies, Family, or Co-Workers) show how many of your friends are online, followed by the total number of friends you have in that group. The last of the Buddy List groups, displayed in pale type, contains your AIM contacts who are Offline. Click the arrow next to any group to minimize or maximize it.

When you want to chat, double-click the name of an Online contact, or highlight it and click the Send Instant Message button near the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window. An Instant Message window will open. Type your message, click Send, and the Instant Message window changes to display the messages to and from your friend

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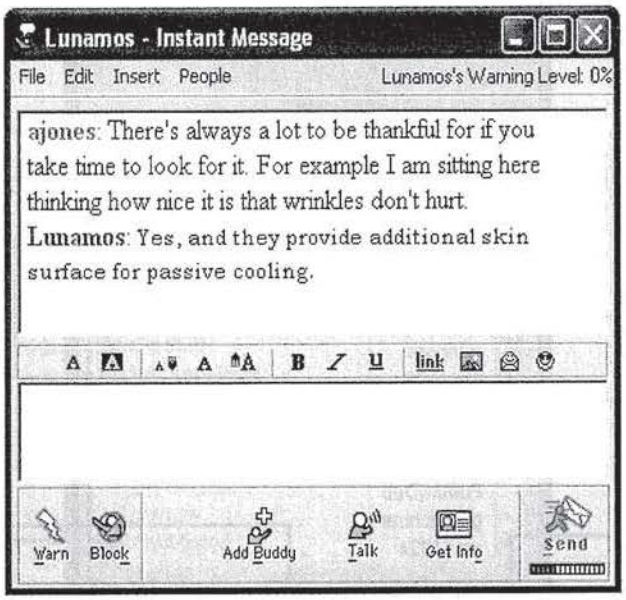
in the top part of the window, with a box for you to type new messages in the bottom part of the window, like this:



AIM also allows a discussion among multiple people, which AIM refers to as Chat. To invite several contacts to an AIM Chat, highlight all their names by holding down the CTRL key while you click each name. With all the names highlighted, click the Send Chat Invitation button near the lower-left corner of the Buddy List window. (The Send Chat Invitation button looks like three people with a cartoon dialog bubble over their heads.) Before clicking the Send button in the Chat Invitation window, you may type an Invitation Message and name the chat room. AOL subscribers can open the Buddy List window by going to the keyword BUDDYVIEW or by selecting People | Buddy List.

Tip *You can change your AIM user preferences by clicking the Setup button on the Sign On window or by clicking the Preferences button (which looks like a yellow wrench) in the Buddy List window. You may want to modify your Privacy settings to control who can send you messages; otherwise, you may be interrupted frequently when you're online.*

AIM can do much more than instant messaging. If you enjoy using it, be sure to explore its ability to access e-mail, exchange files with your contacts, make telephone calls, and view news and stock market information. For voice features, see the AIM section of Chapter 16.

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Yahoo Messenger

Yahoo, the web portal at **www.yahoo.com**, has its own instant messaging service, called Yahoo Messenger. (Yahoo! and Yahoo! Messenger actually include exclamation points in their names, but we omit these for readability.) Yahoo Messenger is very popular among people who use the many Yahoo functions such as e-mail, discussion boards, shopping services, maps, stock quotes, and more. Yahoo Messenger is a vailable for Windows 95/98, NT, 2000, ME, and XP; PowerPC Mac 8.5 or higher; several versions of RedHat and FreeBSD Linux; Java; Palm handhelds; Windows CE; and web-enabled telephones. You can learn about and download Yahoo Messenger at the **messenger.yahoo.com** web site. (See Chapter 34 for information about how to download and install programs from the Web.)

Yahoo continually enhances Yahoo Messenger, and in each operating environment its use may be slightly different. The instructions provided in this book are for using Yahoo Messenger version 5.0 on Windows XP, but users of other versions should have no difficulty adapting these directions for use with their configurations.

Getting Started with Yahoo Messenger

After you've installed Yahoo Messenger, the Login window opens:

If you already have a Yahoo ID and password, type them in the fields provided; otherwise, click Get A Yahoo ID to register. In the Login window you can choose from three options. If you select Remember My ID & Password, your Yahoo ID and password are saved in a cookie file on your computer, and you won't have to type

them each time you log onto Messenger. If you also choose to Automatically Login, you will completely bypass the Login window when you start Messenger and can thereby log into Messenger very quickly. The third option is to Login Under Invisible Mode. This privacy function prevents other Yahoo Messenger users from knowing you are logged in.

Yahoo Messenger is designed to run whenever your computer is running. This enables the program to alert you when one of your friends comes online or when someone wants to contact you. When Yahoo Messenger is running, you see a red *Y* behind a yellow smiley in the system tray. Double-click the tray icon to open the Yahoo Messenger window.

Finding People on Yahoo Messenger

The right-hand side of Figure 14-6 shows the Yahoo Messenger window, which is a list of the people you want to talk to. To find a contact to add to your Yahoo Messenger window, click the Add button and type your friend's e-mail address, Yahoo ID, or a keyword from his or her Yahoo profile.

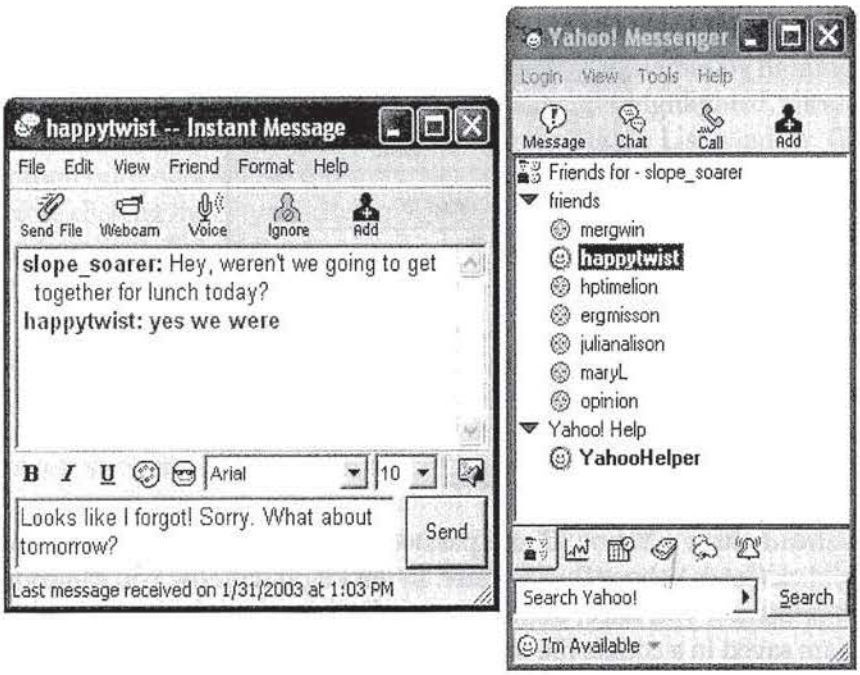

Figure 14-6. *The Instant Message window and the Yahoo Messenger window*

Sending Messages with Yahoo Messenger

When you want to use Yahoo Messenger to send an instant message to one of your contacts, double-click a name in its window. The Instant Message window opens, as shown on the left side of Figure 14-6. Type your message in the bottom part of the window and click Send.

Tip *Part of the fun of Yahoo Messenger is in using its smileys or emoticons. Click the sunglass-clad smiley in the Instant Message window to see some of the available smileys. Surprise your friends by using one of the "hidden smileys" from* ***www.geocities.com/williampettrey****.*

Yahoo Messenger also allows a discussion among multiple people, which is called a *chat* or *chat room.* Chat rooms can be publicly available or private, and they can include the use of live voice and video images. Yahoo Messenger is particularly strong when it comes to voice and video features: see Chapter 16 for details.

To create a chat room, click the Chat button in the Yahoo Messenger window. Select one of the listed Categories and click Create New Room. In the Create Chat Room window (Figure 14-7), choose your Access options and click Create Room. Once in the chat room, you can invite others with the Friend | Invite To Chat Room feature.

Figure 14-7. *The Yahoo Messenger Create Chat Room window*

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Jabber and Trillian Connect with Multiple IM Services

If you have friends or coworkers on several different IM services, it's annoying to have to load and run multiple IM programs (for example, AIM, Windows Messenger, and Yahoo Messenger). Trillian (**www.trillian.cc**) and Jabber (**www.jabber.com**) solve this problem, assuming that you run Windows. Trillian is an IM program that can connect to all the major services; download it from **www.trillian.cc/download.html**. In addition to large-scale IM server products for organizations that use IM for business purposes, Jabber offers Jabber IM (JIM) for Windows, which can connect to Windows Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, and ICQ. You can download JIM for free from **www.jabber.com/products/clients.shtml**.

Tip *Yahoo Messenger can also let you know when e-mail messages arrive in your Yahoo Mail mailbox, when you get responses to your ad in Yahoo Personals, the current prices of the stocks in your portfolio, and more. See the Yahoo Messenger home page at* ***messenger.yahoo.com*** *for information.*

Windows Messenger (MSN Messenger)

Not to be outdone by AOL and others, in 1999 Microsoft released its own instant messaging option called MSN Messenger or Windows Messenger. Windows Messenger is integrated with Outlook Express, Hotmail, MSN TV, and some other MSN services, so it has a large following among users of those products. Windows Messenger is available for Windows 95/98, NT, 2000, ME, and XP; PowerPC Mac 8.6 or higher; Pocket PC; and MSN Companion.

You may already have Windows Messenger because it's included at no cost with some other Microsoft programs, including Windows XP. Search your computer for a file called Msmsgs.exe to determine if it's already installed. You can learn about or download Windows Messenger at **messenger.msn.com**. (See Chapter 34 for information about how to download and install programs from the Web.) To use Windows Messenger, you must have an e-mail address and a free Microsoft .NET Passport, but you can obtain a Passport (discussed in Chapter 18) when you begin using Windows Messenger.

Caution *Some versions of Windows Messenger are extremely difficult to uninstall. If this bothers you, consider using another of the instant messaging systems described in this chapter.*

Microsoft continually enhances Windows Messenger, and in each operating environment its use may be slightly different. The instructions provided in this book are for using Windows Messenger version 4.6 on Windows XP, but users of other configurations should have no difficulty adapting these directions for use in their environments.

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Getting Started with Windows Messenger

After you have installed Windows Messenger, its window opens. Click the Click Here To Sign In button, and the program takes you through its registration steps.

Finding People on Windows Messenger

Unlike many other instant messaging services, Windows Messenger does not tout itself as a "love connection," and it is not designed for making new acquaintances who share your interests. Instead, Windows Messenger is intended for communicating with people you already know. To send a Windows Messenger instant message to someone, you must first add the person to your list of contacts, which generally means you must know the person's e-mail address. If you have that information, click Add A Contact in the Windows Messenger window (Figure 14-8) and indicate whether you want to add a contact by e-mail address or search for a contact in the Hotmail directory.

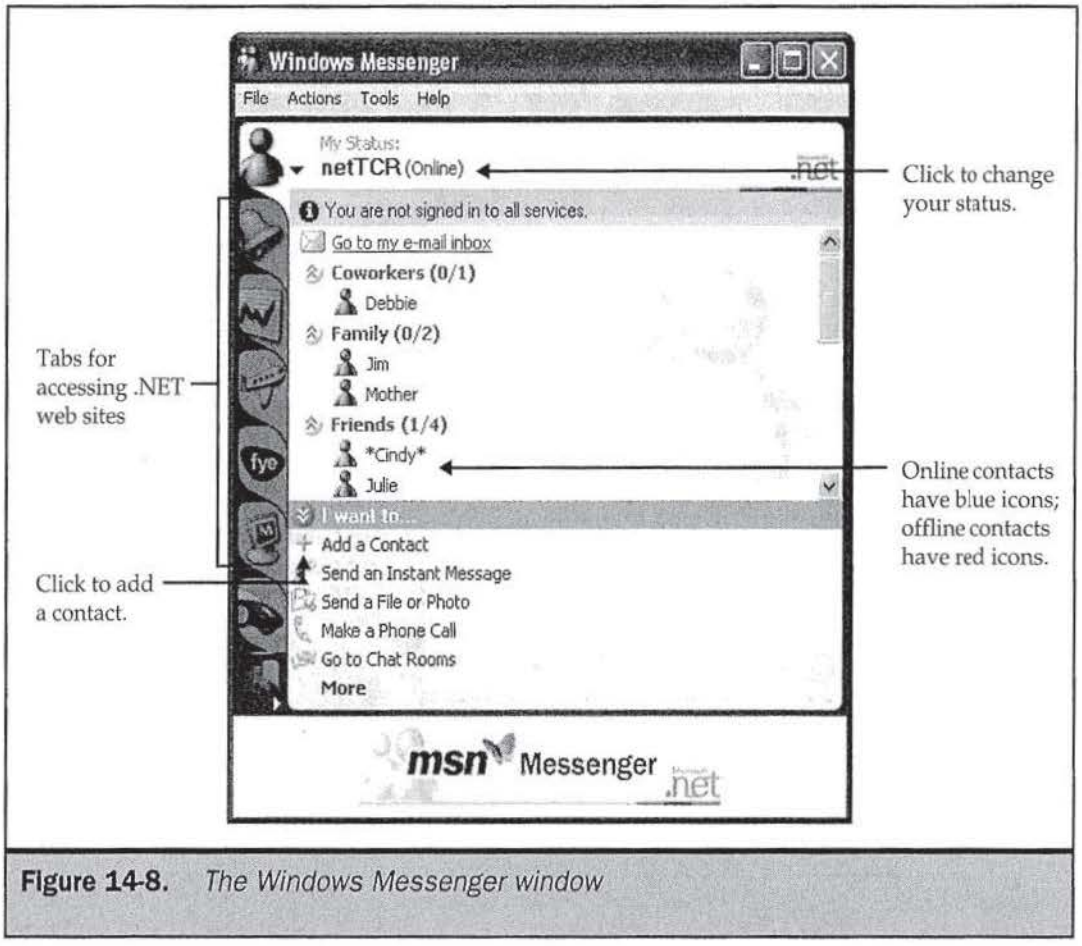

Figure 14-8. *The Windows Messenger window*

Windows Messenger is designed to run whenever your computer is running. This enables the program to alert you when one of your friends comes online or when someone wants to contact you. Messenger knows when you are connected to the Internet and using Windows Messenger, and you can configure it to automatically indicate to your contacts that you're "Away" if you don't use your computer for a while.

Messenger appears as a stylized human torso icon in the notification area (system tray) of the Windows taskbar. The icon is green when your status is Online or red when your status is Offline. A red circle on the green icon indicates that youare online but not available. Double-click the tray icon to open the Windows Messenger window.

Sending Messages with Windows Messenger

When you want to use Windows Messenger to send an instant message to one of your contacts, double-click the name of an online contact in your Windows Messenger window. The Conversation window will open, as shown in Figure 14-9. Type your message in the bottom part of the window and click Send.

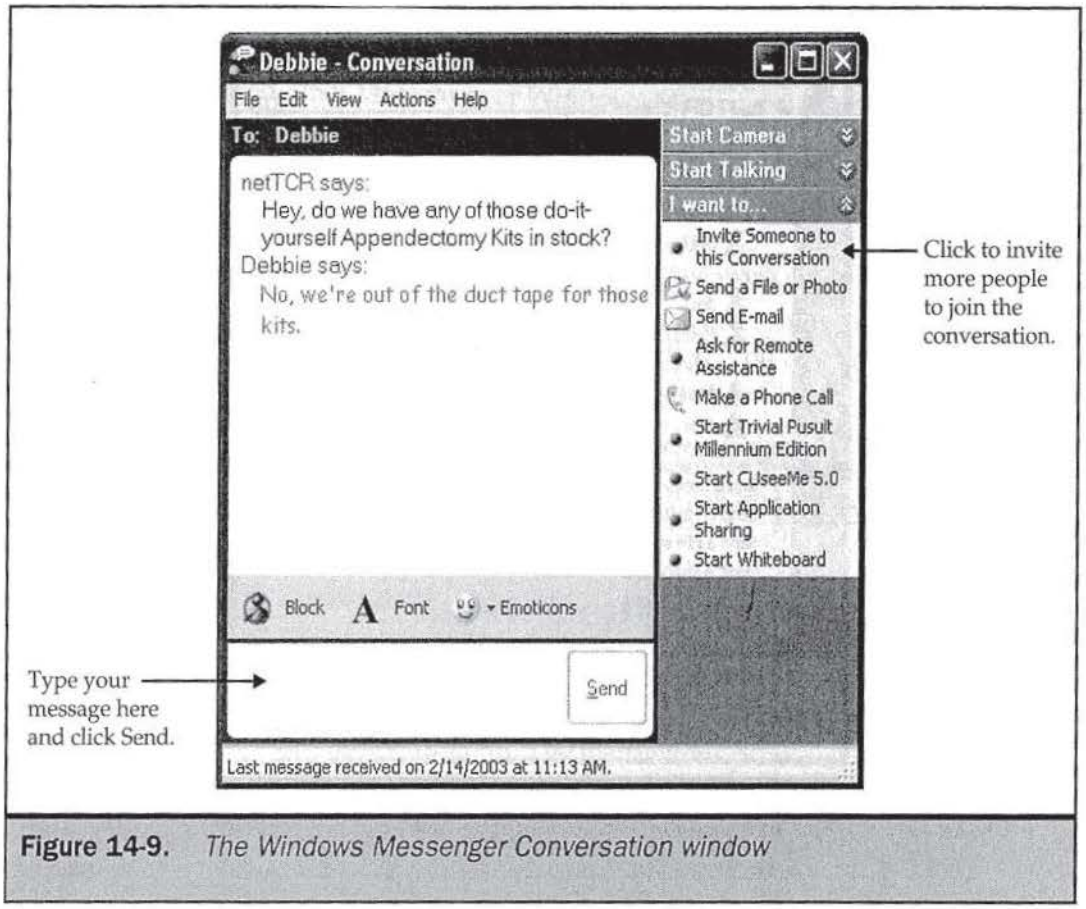

Figure 14-9. *The Windows Messenger Conversation window*

Secure IM Services

Instant messaging can be used for business as well as individuals. However, businesses may not want to trust their internal corporate communications to a public IM service. Several private, secure IM services have sprung up to fill this need, including Bantu (**www.bantu.com**), iPlanet (from Sun Microsystems, at **www.iplanet.com**), Imici (**www.imici.com**), WiredRed (**www.wiredred.com**), and Jabber (**www.jabber.com**). These IM programs include other features for business users, such as logging of conversations.

Once a Conversation window is open, you can invite multiple contacts to join the discussion. Just click Invite Someone To This Conversation, click the name of the person you want to add, and click OK. All Windows Messenger Conversations are private, and no one can view or join a Conversation without being invited by one of the invited participants. Windows Messenger Conversations can also include the use of live voice and video images, as discussed in Chapter 16.

Windows Messenger has dozens of configuration options you can explore by clicking the File, Actions, and Tools menus of the Windows Messenger window. Furthermore, you can use Windows Messenger to make telephone calls, exchange files, play games, communicate on a whiteboard, directly access another person's computer, and more. Most of these features require the installation of a free add-in program. For information about add-ins for Windows Messenger, go to **messenger.microsoft.com/download/addin.asp**.

Note

Although you have to jump through hoops to do it, it is possible to remove Windows Messenger from Windows XP if you don't plan to use it. To uninstall Windows Messenger, open up C:\Windows\Inf\Sysoc.inf in Notepad. (It's a hidden system file, but you can open it by choosing Start | Run and typing ***notepad c:\windows\inf\sysoc.inf*** *in the Run dialog box.) Search for the line "msmsgs=" and remove the word "hide." Now you'll see Windows Messenger when you run Add/Remove Programs in the Control Panel, and you can uninstall the program.*