Power AOL: A Survival Guide

KIRK PAUL LAFLER

Apress™

POWER AOL: A Survival Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Getting Started with AOL

THIS CHAPTER COVERS valuable tips on using AOL. Whether you're an online expert who is comfortable surfing the Internet, sending and receiving e-mail messages and chatting, or whether you're online for the first time—these tips will make your online experience a more rewarding one. By taking the time to learn how the AOL software program communicates with the person using it (this means you), you'll get better results from this powerful and effective tool. You'll learn about each feature step-by-step and in plain English so you can take immediate control of your own destiny.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to:

- Start AOL
- Choose and manage one or more screen names
- Pick passwords
- Use the AOL toolbar and navigation buttons
- Create and use keyboard shortcuts
- Stop and reload graphic image processing
- Display channel selections
- Obtain online and telephone support
- Manage your accounts and billing
- Sign off

Setting Up AOL and Connection Tips

1 Installing AOL

Installing AOL is as easy as 1-2-3—just follow these simple steps.

Windows

1. Insert the AOL CD-ROM into your computer's CD-ROM drive.
2. Follow the instructions on your screen and AOL will do the rest. You'll have AOL installed in a few short minutes.

Macintosh

1. Insert the AOL CD-ROM into your computer's CD-ROM drive.
2. Double click the **Install** icon.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions and AOL will do the rest. You'll have AOL installed in a few short minutes.

2 Launching AOL

It's easy to start AOL. Simply locate the AOL icon on the Windows or Macintosh desktop and double-click it. After the program files are activated, the AOL Welcome screen displays a greeting in the title bar (for example, Welcome, KPL Consultant).

3 Using AOL for the first time

Before you can begin using AOL, you need to set up an account, and contrary to what you might think, this doesn't happen automatically when you first install AOL Version 7.0. To set up your account, you will need to start AOL by clicking the AOL V7 icon located on your desktop. Once AOL is active, the Sign On dialog box will appear, shown in Figure 1-1.

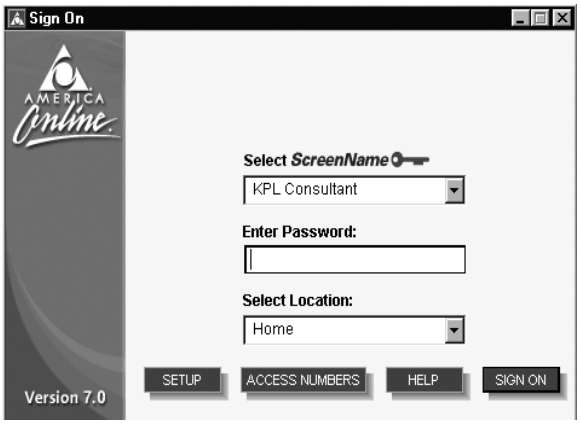

Figure 1-1. Viewing the AOL Sign On screen

Then, click the Expert Setup button to begin the setup process, as you see in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2. Using the Expert Setup button to begin the setup process

4 Choosing local telephone numbers

To avoid unnecessary telephone access charges, try to choose telephone numbers that are local (and are within your area code). You can do this by contacting your local telephone service carrier and verifying that accessing the number will involve no local surcharges. (See tips # 10–13 for information on finding and using different telephone access numbers when you're traveling.)

5 Picking a screen name

Every AOL account can have a maximum of seven screen names (or e-mail addresses) assigned. A screen name is your unique alias to the online world, and will always be the way others find you. Each screen name can have separate passwords, mailboxes, filing cabinets, and favorite places. You'll be asked to enter the screen name and password you chose initially each time you sign on to AOL. This screen name is considered your master screen name and once assigned can't be deleted or changed.

6 Selecting a password

A password is your secret sequence of typed characters and is required to access your AOL account. Anyone who knows your password could sign on to your account and potentially cause a world of havoc, such as deleting mail messages, sending bogus messages that look like they're coming from you, posting messages on public forums that appear to be coming from you, and so on. Because it is so very important, you should really think about the password you select. Don't choose a word that is too obvious or too easy to guess. Also, don't use a word that appears in the dictionary, or is the name of a family member, or a pet's name. These are generally too obvious and make it relatively easy for people or hackers to access your account. You may even consider adding one or more numbers to a screen name to make it unique.

7 Protecting your AOL password

It doesn't matter whether you are the secretive type or not, never give your AOL password to anyone—not even your family members. AOL staff will never ask you for your password for any reason and you

should never volunteer your password to others. Giving your password to someone else is the virtual equivalent of handing your car keys to a perfect stranger. If you think your AOL account and password has been compromised, contact AOL immediately by phone or send an e-mail message to screen name `TOS Email1`.

8 Storing a password

AOL enables you to store your password on your computer. By saving your password, you avoid having to enter it each time you start AOL. Although this feature can be handy and prevent you from typing additional keystrokes, it can be misused if put in the wrong hands. When this feature is used, anyone with access to your computer (such as family members, perhaps even your kids' friends) can sign into AOL with your account. For this reason, you may want to weigh the pros and cons of using this AOL feature.

9 Signing onto AOL as a guest

You can sign onto AOL using any computer as long as the computer has AOL software installed, you have a valid AOL account, and you know your screen name and password. To sign on as a guest, do the following:

1. Select **Guest** from the **Select Screen Name** list on the **Sign On** screen.
2. Click the **Sign On** button.
3. In the **Guest Sign On** window, enter your screen name and password, and click the **OK** button.
4. Any time you spend online as a Guest will be billed to your account.
5. Your address book, filing cabinet, and favorite places cannot be accessed while signed on as a Guest.

10 Connecting tips for the frequent traveler

If you are a frequent traveler and want the benefits associated with an online existence, then there are a few things you should know. The following tips will help improve your online experience as you work from far-off places.

1. Ask the facility you are staying at for a fax line or an analog phone line.

Analog phone lines are "normal" ones. Digital phone lines have been known to fry modems—so be careful. An increasing number of business hotels also offer high-speed Internet access—generally for a daily surcharge of about $10—and some are also beginning to offer wireless Internet access.

2. If you're trying to connect from an international location, contact your long distance provider—this can prevent costly and unnecessary phone charges.
3. Match your modem speed (see Chapter 17, (Miscellaneous Tips) with the maximum modem speed permitted for connecting to a specific number.
4. Wireless and satellite usage with AOL may cause a poor connection, so attempt to make a connection using a land-based line.
5. Because some International dial tones may not be recognized by your computer's modem, you may need to reconfigure your modem so it will ignore the dial tone and automatically dial the access number. For situations like these, it is recommended that you contact AOL Technical Support for assistance.
6. Line noise is a common problem in some countries. To compensate, try connecting to AOL with a slower modem speed.
7. Shut down any unnecessary programs before using AOL to prevent memory-related problems and ensure top performance.

'X' Marks Your Spot

31 Bookmarking your favorite places

As you use AOL to explore what America Online and the Internet have to offer, you're sure to find an area or Web site to which you'd like to return. When this is the case, bookmark it by adding it to your Favorite Places. To add an area or Web page to your Favorite Places follow these steps:

1. Find and display the area or Web site you like.
2. Click the **Favorites** menu on the AOL toolbar located at the top right of your window.
3. Click **Add Top Window to Favorites** in the drop-down menu list.

32 Creating new favorite places folders

After surfing the Web for a while, you may notice that your favorite places list has become a bit long and disorganized. To ease the pain of having to search around for that favorite place, you can create one or more new folders to help group and store your favorite places. It's really pretty easy. Here's how:

1. Click the **My Favorites** button, or choose **Favorite Places** from the **Favorites** toolbar.
2. In the **Favorite Places** window, click the **New** button to open the Add New Folder/Favorite Place window, shown in Figure 1-9.
3. In the **Add New Folder/Favorite Place** window, select the New Folder radio button to create a new folder, shown in Figure 1-10.
4. **Drag** any favorite places, identified with a heart icon, to your new folder in the Favorite Places window, shown in Figure 1-11.

Figure 1-10. Adding a new folder

Figure 1-9. Opening the "Add New Folder/Favorite Place" window

Figure 1-11. Dragging a favorite place to your new folder in the "Favorite Places" window

33 Organizing favorite places

Being able to organize your favorite places is an important feature if you want to locate interesting sites later. The drag-and-drop feature allows you to

Getting Help 24/7

63 Getting the Help you need

The AOL Help Center is your very own personal self-contained, electronic answer guide to a variety of topics and features within AOL. You access the Help Center by pressing the **F1 key** or clicking the **Help** pull-down menu at the top of your screen, and selecting AOL Help. Once the Help Center is launched, you can request assistance by using the Search tool at the top of the Help window or browsing through the various Help topics.

64 Exploring the Help categories

The AOL Help Center has categorized a variety of Help topics for you to browse through. Yes, I know that a lot of the information in this book is also available online, but I've tried to make this even easier to use than AOL's online help—and something you can read when you're not actually online. ? So here are the Help topics:

- Your E-mail
- Instant Messages and Buddy List
- Signing on to the AOL Service
- Parental Controls, Privacy & Security
- Finding Anything Online Quickly
- Personal Finance, Stocks & Quotes
- Exploring the Internet
- Downloading Files & Attachments
- Personalizing Your AOL
- AOL Multimedia Features
- Installing New Version of AOL

65 Searching and finding in Help

The following tips will help you find the information you need, and get the most out of the AOL Help Center.

1. The AOL Help Center screen is organized into different areas. Some areas are updated frequently, such as the new AOL access numbers, billing information, and so one.
2. To search for an answer with the Search tool—enter one or more words in the text box at the top right of the AOL Help Center, and click the **Search** button.
3. You can view any folder or article that matched your requested search by double-clicking on an item displayed in the search window.
4. Verify spelling of key words for accuracy.
5. Use **AND** and **OR** search operators to narrow or expand your search criteria and results. For example, specifying **e-mail AND folders** searches for information containing both words in the search results.
6. Use the **NOT** search operator to negate or ignore a word. For example, specifying **e-mail NOT folders** searches for information containing references to e-mail but not folders.
7. If the search results are not what you were hoping for, try other words that may have the same or similar meaning.

66 Using the Help search tool

The AOL search tool can be the best way to locate needed information. To launch a search, enter one or more words in the text box located at the top right of the Help Center window, and click the **Search** button.

67 Calling AOL for assistance

Depending on the type of problem you are having, you can get help from a live person anytime by calling the AOL Customer Service toll-free line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Select from the following list of phone numbers:

AOL Technical Support (Windows version):

1-888-346-3704

CHAPTER 2

Communicating to the World with E-mail

E-MAIL IS ONE OF THE most popular features on AOL. From exchanging messages with family, friends, and associates, to attaching files, documents, and pictures, e-mail is a wonderful way to stay in contact with people without the cost of long-distance phone calls. This chapter supplies e-mail tips that even the savviest online connoisseur will love. You'll learn practical and timesaving tips to help you:

- Set up e-mail
- Read, create and send e-mail
- Send courtesy and blind courtesy copies
- Jazz up your message text
- Manage e-mail messages
- Create and use your address book
- Format and spell-check message text
- Add hypertext elements
- Use signatures, and smileys
- Manage junk mail
- Attach and detach files and photos

Setting Up Your E-Mail

1 The AOL e-mail interface

The America Online electronic mail interface is one of the easiest and most flexible Internet e-mail software packages in the world. Its utter simplicity and flexibility make it so easy to use that you may be asking, "What's to learn—I've been using e-mail services from AOL for some time now—what more is there to know?"

Whether you are a seasoned e-mail expert or just clicking your proverbial mouse into the electronic world for the first time makes no difference. To get the most from AOL's e-mail services, as many millions of online users already have, you'll want to at least skim each tip that follows to see if there are any interesting tidbits of information meant just for you. AOL Version 7.0's incredible capabilities and features provide a tried and proven way to communicate online—all through a simple and effective e-mail interface. To help get the most from your e-mail experience, the tips that follow will provide a quick look at each feature one-by-one.

2 Setting up your e-mail account

Before you can begin using e-mail, you must set up an account. When you first install AOL Version 7.0, or an earlier version, it's not automatically set up for you. To set up your e-mail account and other personal information, you'll need to start AOL by clicking the AOL V7 icon located on your desktop. Once AOL is active, the Sign On screen will appear, as displayed in Figure 2-1.

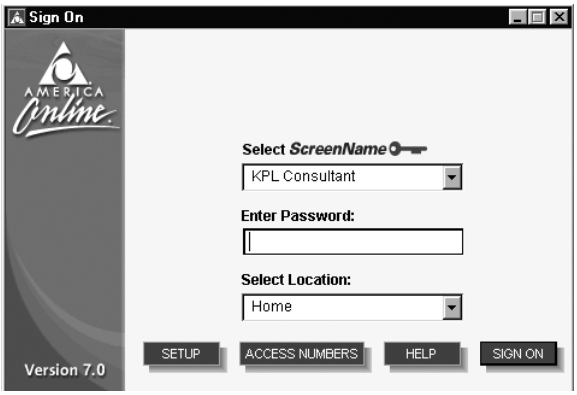

Figure 2-1. AOL's Sign On screen

Then, click the **SETUP** button to begin the online setup process. The Edit America Online Setup screen will appear, as you see in Figure, 2-2.

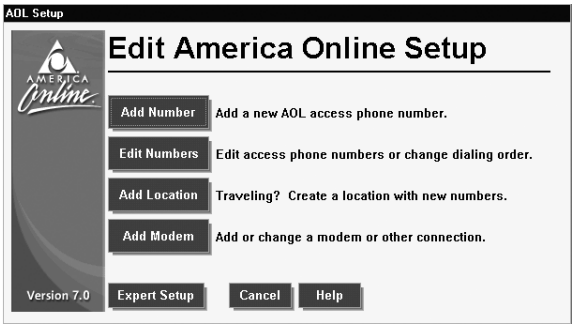

Figure 2-2. Accessing AOL's Online Setup process

3 Securing your AOL password

It doesn't matter whether you are the secretive type or not, never give your AOL password to anyone. AOL staff will never ask you for your password for any reason and you should never volunteer your password to others. Giving your password to someone else is the virtual equivalent of handing your car keys to a perfect stranger. If you receive suspicious-looking e-mail, click the **Forward** button and send it to screen name `TOS Email1`.

4 Picking mail preferences

You can control how AOL is to behave as you handle your mail. AOL can be made to show e-mail addresses as hyperlinks, automatically display the next message when the current one is deleted, notify you when a message contains a picture (or image) before you actually open it, control how you write your e-mail, and how AOL sends your message. To control the behavior of AOL's mail features, simply set one or more e-mail preferences, and let AOL do the rest.

5 Setting preferences to automatically save e-mail

After e-mail messages have been read, they are automatically sent to your Old Mail box or your Sent Mail box. Mail in your Old Mail box will remain there for 3–7 days, while mail in your Sent Mail box will remain there for 27 days. To alter the way AOL saves your e-mail, follow these steps:

1. From the AOL toolbar, click the **Settings** menu and select **Preferences**.
2. Select **Mail** in the **Communications** section of the **Preferences** window to display the Mail Preferences window, shown in Figure 2-3.
3. Change the number of days in the **Keep my old mail online __ days after I read it** by clicking the increase/decrease button corresponding to the number of days.
4. Click the **Save** button.

Figure 2-3. Setting preferences to automatically save e-mail

Creating E-mail Messages

40 Writing an e-mail message

AOL makes sending an e-mail message as easy as 1-2-3. You have three ways to display a blank e-mail message window:

- Click the **Write** icon button on the AOL toolbar
- On the **Mail** menu on the AOL toolbar, click **Write Mail**
- Press **CTRL-M**.

Any one of these actions will display the **Write Mail** window, as seen in Figure 2-17.

The **Write Mail** window resembles a text editor and acts as the interface between you and your message. This is where your message will be entered.

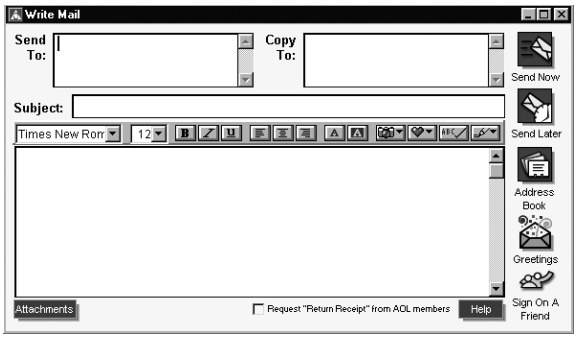

Figure 2-17. Displaying a blank e-mail window

41 Using e-mail message fields

When you create an e-mail message, four principle fields (text boxes) are filled in:

Send To
Copy To
Subject
Message area

The **Send To** text box identifies who the message is to go to, the **Copy To** text box identifies who will receive a courtesy copy of the message, the **Subject** is a brief description of the message, and the **Message** text box consists of the message itself. You can move forward between each text box by pressing the **Tab** key (or backward by pressing the **Shift-Tab** key).

42 Getting the address right

Just like regular mail, or snail mail, which requires a name, street address, city, state, and zip code, (and a country for foreign mail), e-mail requires an address too. The **Send To** field in an e-mail message tells AOL who to send the message to. In AOL, your screen name is your e-mail address. You enter the complete e-mail address of the person you want to send the message to, or have your personal address book fill in the field by clicking the person's name. However you decide to do it, an address is always necessary for your e-mail message. To send your e-mail message to more than one recipient separate each address with a comma (,).

43 Using the carbon copy (CC) text box

Sometimes it's useful to have a copy of your e-mail message sent to yourself and/or someone else. Just as you did for the **Send To** text box (see previous tip), you enter the complete e-mail address of the person you want a courtesy copy sent to in the **Copy To** text box. To send your e-mail message to more than one recipient separate each address with a comma (,). For a blind carbon copy (BCC), you can use your address book or type directly in the BCC field.

44 Describing the e-mail subject

You can write anything you like in the subject line of an e-mail message, but it's best if the text corresponds to what is contained in the message itself. Often the subject field is one of the first things, along with the sender's e-mail address, the e-mail recipient will look at to help determine what the message is about and whether the message should be opened. So always try to provide a descriptive heading for your subject line—it can also provide a good way to locate messages at a later time should the need arise.

Sending E-mail

52 Sending e-mail messages online

After you've entered an address for the **Send To** and **Copy To** fields, a **Subject** and your message text, you're ready to send your e-mail. Although you don't have to be signed on to AOL to compose your e-mail message, you'll need to be signed on to send it. When your e-mail is ready, click the **Send Now** button located in the upper-right corner of the **Write Mail** window. AOL will immediately send your e-mail, close the **Write Mail** window, and confirm that your e-mail was sent by displaying the message, **Your mail has been sent,** as you can see in Figure 2-18.

Figure 2-18. AOL's "Your mail has been sent." confirmation window

53 Forwarding e-mail messages

AOL allows you to forward a copy of a message to anyone you wish. So whenever you want to forward an e-mail message, just follow these steps:

1. Open the e-mail message you want to forward, and you'll see the screen shown in Figure 2-19.
2. Click the **Forward** button located on the right side of the **Read** window. AOL opens a new **Write Mail** window, shown in Figure 2-19, complete with the **Subject** line containing the letters **Fwd** for Forward.
3. Enter the address or addresses you wish in the **Send To** and **Copy To** fields, and any message you think is appropriate for forwarding the e-mail.
4. Click the **Send Now** button and your e-mail is forwarded.

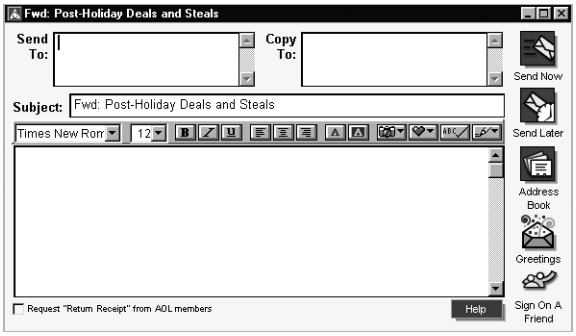

Figure 2-19. Forwarding a copy of an e-mail message to someone else

54 Replying to sender

Anytime you receive an e-mail message, you have the option of replying back with an e-mail of your own. This is typically referred to as **Reply** to sender—and is accomplished by following these steps:

1. Open the e-mail message you want to reply to.
2. Click the **Reply** button located on the right side of the **Read** window. AOL opens a new **Write Mail** window, shown in Figure 2-20, complete with the sender's address in the **Send To** field and a subject in the **Subject** field with the letters Re for Reply.
3. Write any message you'd like to send with your reply, and, if you'd like, enter an address in the **Copy To** field.
4. When finished, click the **Send Now** button.

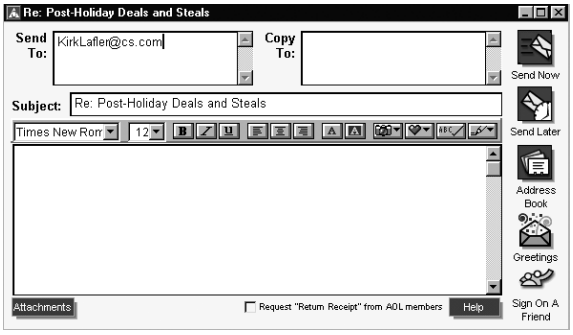

Figure 2-20. Replying to sender with an e-mail of your own

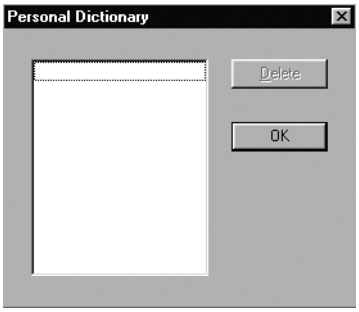

Figure 2-35. Adding words to your Personal Dictionary

Handling Hypertext Elements

98 Turning on Web addresses as hyperlinks

Your e-mail can contain much more than just text: It can include graphics, sounds, and hypertext links. This gives the reader a variety of options with a simple point-and-click of the mouse. All AOL versions after 2.0 provide users with a handy feature—being able to turn on a Web address as a hyperlink. Here's how:

1. Click the **Mail** menu button on the AOL toolbar, and select **Mail Preferences**.
2. In the **Mail Preferences** window, select **Show addresses as hyperlinks** under the **Reading Mail** category, as seen in Figure 2-26.
3. Click the **Save** button to store your preferences.

99 Embedding hypertext address in e-mail

You can share a favorite place with a friend by placing a Web address directly in your e-mail. Available for all versions after 2.0, this handy feature makes it easy for others to view your favorite site by pointing and clicking their mouse on the hypertext address. Here's all you'll need to know to embed a hypertext address and begin using this feature.

1. Click the **Write** icon on the AOL toolbar.
2. Click the **Favorites** icon on the AOL toolbar, and select **Favorite Places**, or click the **My Favorites** button on the AOL toolbar.
3. Drag the heart icon corresponding to your favorite place to the message box in your e-mail message.
4. **Send** your e-mail message as usual.

*Figure 2-36. Selecting **Show addresses as hyperlinks** on the Mail Preferences window*

CHAPTER 6

Chat, Instant Messaging, and Message Boards

AMERICA ONLINE LETS YOU stay in touch with loved ones and friends, as well as make new acquaintances anytime you want with a variety of online services and member communities. From chatting in live online group areas to sending instant messages, AOL provides exciting ways to stay in touch with family and friends. You'll also see how you can meet people who share your interests by reading and posting messages to online message boards. These tips will help you discover and explore the exciting world of chat, instant messaging, and message boards—all AOL features that are sure to give the whole family hours of enjoyment.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to

- Enjoy AOL's chat feature
- Use Instant Messenger (AIM)™
- Manage and access Buddy Lists®
- Get the most out of electronic message boards

The World of Chatting

1 Finding a chat room—chat communities

With hundreds of public chat rooms to choose from, you're bound to find lively group interaction where you can share your knowledge and experiences with others, or simply sit back and watch the discussions between other chatters.

AOL provides two types of public chat rooms: those created by People Connection, and those created by AOL members. Some chat rooms are hosted and open around the clock while others have scheduled events such as presentations or classes. Knowing how to find a chat room of particular interest to you is a lot easier than you think. AOL lets you either browse a list of public chat rooms or search the database of People Connection chat rooms to find what you're looking for. Here's how it works.

Browsing the Public Chat Rooms

1. Select **Find a Chat** from the **People** menu on the AOL toolbar.
2. Select either the **created by People Connection** or **created by AOL Members** tab in the **Find a Chat** window.
3. Select a chat category from the list of categories in the left selection window and click the **View Chats** button.
4. Select a chat room from the list of rooms in the right selection window and click the **Go Chats** button.

Searching the Database of People Connection Chat Rooms

1. Select **Find a Chat** from the **People** menu on the AOL toolbar.
2. Click the **Search All People Connection Chats** button in the **Find a Chat** window.
3. Enter a search word in the Search field in the **Search Featured Chats** window and click the **Search** button, shown in Figure 6-1.

28 Dictating your chat message with AOL Speaks

Dictating text and messages with AOL Speaks is a great way to capture or compose your messages, but it will take a little getting used to. As with anything new, you may want to practice a bit so you can become familiar with the technology. Here are a few tips on becoming a pro with AOL Speaks.

- Turn the microphone on.
- Speak clearly and naturally into your microphone—unless you're a seasoned radio announcer or disc jockey, you may want to practice a bit.
- Speak at normal speed.
- Speak in longer phrases rather than short abrupt words.
- Say the e-mail address so it appears in the Send To field. Immediately correct an incorrect address by saying "Correct" and typing in the correct address in the Correction dialog box.
- Pause briefly between voice commands so AOL Speaks recognizes it as a command rather than normal dictation.
- Press and hold down the **Ctrl key** while saying the command—this will force AOL Speaks to recognize the command as a command.
- For normal dictation, press and hold down the **Shift key**. This will force AOL Speaks to recognize these words as dictation.
- Correct speech recognition errors by saying "Correct That" or pressing the minus key immediately after AOL Speaks make a recognition error. The Correction dialog box appears displaying a list of recognized words and a list of different interpretations.

Each time you correct speech recognition errors, AOL Speaks improves the way it understands your speech patterns.

AOL's Instant Messenger (AIM) and Buddy Lists

29 Launching the Instant Message window

Are hectic schedules, budget constraints, time zone differences, and the rising cost of postage preventing you from staying in touch with friends and loved ones? AOL can help by providing a great feature to bridge the communication gap. AOL's widely heralded Instant Message feature provides a totally live and private one-on-one chat environment between two people who are currently online. You'll find chatting with friends or collaborating with coworkers rewarding and fun.

Best of all, AOL's Instant Messenger (AIM) is free and easy to use. Plus you don't have to be an AOL member to take advantage of this feature, as you'll see from the next tip. There are several ways of launching the Instant Message (IM) window right away so you can begin communicating as often as you want. Here's how:

1. Sign on to AOL (or if you're a non-AOL member, see Tip # 30).
2. Click the **IM** button located on the AOL toolbar or select the **Send Instant Message** option from the **People** menu on the AOL toolbar or press **Ctrl+I** keys, or click the **Send IM** button in your **Buddy List** window, or click the **IM** button in your **Address Book** (see Chapter 2 for more information about the Address Book).
3. The **Send Instant Message** window appears.
4. Type your message and click the **Send** button, shown in Figure 6-7.

Figure 6-7. Sending an Instant Message note is just a mouse click away.

31 Sending and receiving Instant Message notes

Participating in an Instant Message (IM) conversation with another online person is as easy as 1-2-3. After opening the **Instant Message** window, enter the screen name of the person you want to send a message to in the **To**: field, enter your message in the message box, and click the **Send** button to send the message.

If you receive an IM from someone else, you can reply to the IM by clicking the **Respond** button to continue the conversation. If you are unable to reply, AOL lets you cancel the IM by clicking the **Cancel** button.

32 Locating a buddy in your Buddy List

AOL lets you determine the whereabouts of buddies stored in your Buddy List who are currently signed on. From your Buddy List, select the screen name you want to locate and click the **Locate** button in your Buddy List window. Another way of locating a member online is to press the **Ctrl+L** keys, enter the desired screen name in the box, and click the **OK** button. The resulting information will let you know whether your buddy is in one of the many chat areas or not.

33 Viewing a buddy's profile

As an AOL member, you can view any other AOL member's profile if they have taken the time to create it. The profile or directory listing is available to the entire AOL community and contains information such as a member's name, city, state, gender, marital status, hobbies, occupation, and a personal quote. AOL members are cautioned that they may prefer not to post information such as street address, telephone numbers, or other sensitive information because the entire AOL community can see it. To view a buddy's profile, follow these simple steps:

1. Press **Ctrl+G** to display the **Get a Member's Profile** window.
2. In the **Get a Member's Profile** window, enter the screen name you want information on.
3. Click the **OK** button to display the member's profile, shown in Figure 6-9.

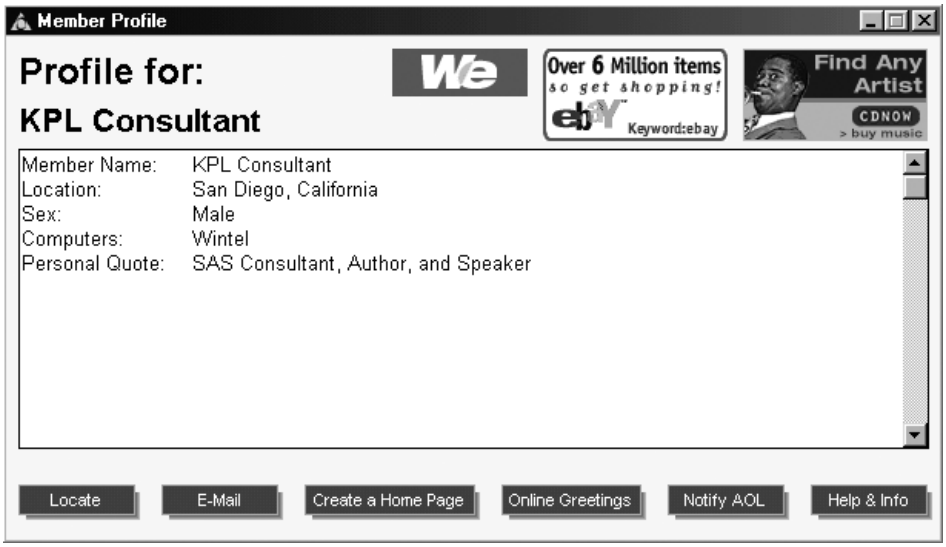

Figure 6-9. Displaying a member profile is easy.

Using Message Boards

55 Message board etiquette

With the great selection of AOL message boards, you'll have no problem finding others who share your interests. Message boards are not the same as chat rooms because conversations are not immediate. Instead, messages are posted and saved for months so others can read and respond to them. They are also frequently monitored by AOL personnel and must conform to certain rules of conduct as stated in the AOL Online Content Guidelines.

First, messages should not contain vulgar language, explicit sexual content, hate language or speech, and any type of language offensive to any person or group of people. Second, photos revealing frontal nudity should never be posted. Next, depictions of illegal drug use as acceptable forms of behavior are not permitted. Finally, graphic images containing blood and gore, and/or violence are not acceptable and should never be posted. Should you identify offensive behavior, you can naturally ignore it, or you may report it by typing AOL Keyword: **Notify AOL**.

56 Finding message board communities

Message boards are a electronic bulletin boards covering practically any type of topic and community you can think of. So you may be wondering, how can I access them? That's easy. Practically every AOL window you'll access has a message board area. So look for the phrase "message boards" in the windows that display. Chances are you'll find just what you're looking for.

One way to begin your search for AOL message boards is to access the message board Search Web site at AOL Keyword: **message board**. All you need to do is enter a search word or phrase in the search field and click the **Search** button, shown in Figure 6-20.

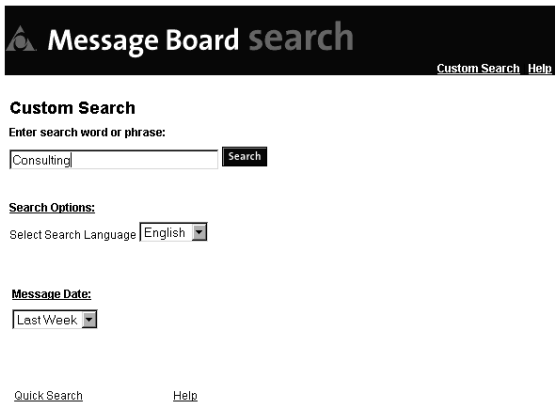

Figure 6-20. Entering a word or phrase in the Quick Search Message Board Search Web site

You can customize the specific search options using message board Custom Search, which provides a more flexible searching mechanism. From drop-down boxes you can select the search language to use and the dates for which you want to display messages.

Another way to access AOL's message board communities is to type in AOL Keyword: **Hometown**. The categories of communities make it easy to access a particular interest. They include Business Park, Careers & Money, Cultures & Beliefs, Education & News, Entertainment & Games, Family & Home, Food & Travel, Health & Wellness, Hobbies & Interests, Local, Personal Interests, Sports & Recreation, and Women's Interests.

You can usually access a community of message board forums by clicking the folder button located at the top of each message board window. The list, once displayed, will identify the topics and subjects available in that category of AOL message boards. As an example, a partial list of Professional message board forums is shown in Figure 6-21.

CHAPTER 8

AOL Shopping and Services

EXPLORING AOL'S one-stop Shopping channel is simple, fast, and fun. In this chapter you'll be able to locate your favorite stores, products, and brands. You'll also learn where to find and print valuable coupons that will save you big bucks when you shop—all from your PC. Another exciting feature is the AOL Rewards program. It lets you earn points for each item purchased, and when you're ready, lets you redeem the points you've accumulated for fabulous gifts and services. So take a few minutes to explore the variety of merchants, products, and services that are available. It's fast and easy, and most of all fun for the entire family. Happy shopping.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to

- Shop the simple and easy way
- Find specials, discounts, and all sorts of bargains
- Find gifts for anyone
- Purchase those big-ticket items
- Save big bucks with coupons
- Earn and redeem rewards for every dollar you spend
- Shop safely anyplace and anytime you'd like
- Get help when you need it

Shopping the Simple Way

1 Shopping convenience on AOL's Shop@AOL

The days of fighting traffic, crowds, and finding a parking spot are a thing of the past. AOL offers an exciting one-stop shopping experience for AOL members everywhere. Discover the convenience of online shopping; from home, work, or anywhere else—you'll be amazed by the time you'll save shopping online.

Shop@AOL lets you buy everything you need in one convenient virtual marketplace. Powerful tools help you find all your favorite stores, departments, and products, bringing them to your computer's screen in living color. Find and buy everything you need around the clock, 365 days a year, from the privacy of your computer and at your convenience, not others.

From department stores to home and garden shops; from beauty and fragrance products to books, music, and videos; and from electronics and computer equipment to the latest fashions—everything is available on Shop@AOL. Anything that's at your local brick-and-mortar department store can be bought safely online, and often at wonderful savings too. And best of all, it's brought right to your doorstep. Follow these steps, for a shopping experience like no other:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Shop** and click the **Go** button, or click the **AOL Shopping** channel located on the left side of your screen. Either method displays the **Shop@AOL** window, shown in Figure 8-1.

Figure 8-1. Offering an exciting one-stop shopping experience at AOL's Shop@AOL

2 Checking out–AOL's Quick Checkout

Shopping at your favorite stores on America Online isn't only safe and easy—it saves time too. With AOL's Quick Checkout, you'll only have to enter your credit card and shipping information once. AOL will automatically remember it for you after that. Your private information is stored safely and securely for future shopping visits. Once you've found all the products you'd like to purchase, take your shopping cart to the front of the line with Quick Checkout. Quick Checkout only asks for your secret password each time you checkout. Billing and mailing information is processed safely to the credit card you specified. Here's how you can find out more about AOL's Quick Checkout feature:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **AOL Quick Checkout** and click the **Go** button.
2. Click the **Sign Up Now!** button on the **Quick Checkout** Web site.
3. Enter your **Zip Code** and click the **Continue** button.
4. Enter the requested information on the **Quick Checkout Signup** application form and click the **Continue** button, shown in Figure 8-2. The application process consists of five easy steps: Credit Card information, Shipping information, Shopping Password, Security Question and Answer, and Mailing List.
5. Follow the remaining on-screen instructions to set up the **Quick Checkout** process.

AOL's ClassifiedPlus Real Estate Web Site

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Home for Rent** and click the **Go** button. The **ClassifiedPlus Real Estate** Web site appears.
2. Use the built-in search engine to find resources applicable to your needs or click the topics of interest from the available links that are displayed.

Coupon Shopping

22 Saving big bucks with coupons

Coupons are a great way to save money on the products you buy. AOL lets you get coupons on deals in your area or brand name products redeemable nationwide. You'll be able to access stores in your area's ValuPages or have manufacturers brand name coupons mailed to you to save big bucks on many of the products you and your family enjoys. Here's how:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Coupons** and click the **Go** button. The AOL **House & Home Coupons & Savings** channel appears, shown in Figure 8-11.
2. From the **Coupons & Savings** channel, enter your **zip code** and click the **Search** button to print valuable coupons or click the **Get Coupons** button to get exclusive brand-name coupons mailed to you.

Figure 8-11. Getting coupons for deals and products you buy is simple on AOL.

23 Registering and using ValuPage coupons for instant savings

Stores in your area list valuable offers and coupons in the form of ValuPages. You'll be able to get huge savings such as free samples, rebates, and offers specifically designed around your shopping habits. You'll also be able to see recipes for the products listed on the ValuPage. To begin taking advantage of your local stores ValuPages, you'll need to register. After you've registered (a one-time process), you'll be on your way to big savings. Here's how it's done:

Registering for Supermarket ValuPages

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Coupons** and click the **Go** button to display the AOL **House & Home Coupons & Savings** channel.
2. Enter your **zip code** and click the **Search** button on the **Coupons & Savings** channel. The **ValuPage** for the stores in your area appears.
3. Click the **Want to Register?** button on the ValuPage screen.
4. Enter your first and last name, e-mail address, and zip code, and click the **Enter Info** button.
5. Check the supermarkets where you want to use your **ValuPage** list of offers at and click the **Enter Info** button.
6. Enter specific information about you and your family and click the **Enter Info** button.
7. Click **Get my ValuPage** button to view the supermarket you selected **ValuPage** of values. Your **ValuPages** will be mailed to your e-mail address on a weekly basis.
8. You'll be assigned a unique password that you'll use with your e-mail address.

information changes, pricing plans, or surcharges.

38 Contacting AOL by phone

America Online is available to answer your AOL questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Before calling on of their toll-free numbers, you should have your account information available (i.e., screen name and credit card number) so account verification can be performed. Select the phone number from the list below.:

AOL Technical Support (Windows version):
1-888-346-3704
AOL Technical Support (Macintosh version):
1-888-265-8007
Screen Name or Password Problems:
1-888-265-8004
Access Numbers:
1-888-265-8005
Billing Inquiries:
1-888-265-8003
Account Cancellation:
1-888-265-8008

39 Contacting customer service by e-mail

America Online makes it easy to contact customer service representative with a technical or billing problem you're having. You can get the assistance you need anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by e-mail, and it's free. An AOL staff member will send a reply to your question directly to your online mailbox within 72 hours. Here's how it works:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Customer Service** and click the **Go** button to display the AOL **Customer Service** channel.
2. Click **Contact Customer Service by E-mail** from the customer service options.
3. Click **Technical** to contact a technical representative with questions related to connection problems, error messages, or other technical issues. Complete the detailed information on the form and select the dropdown selection options that best describe your computer, and click the **Send** button.
4. Click **Billing** to contact a billing representative with questions related to account information changes, pricing plans, or surcharges. Complete the detailed information on the form and select the dropdown selection option that best relates to your question, and click the **Send** button, shown in Figure 8-16.

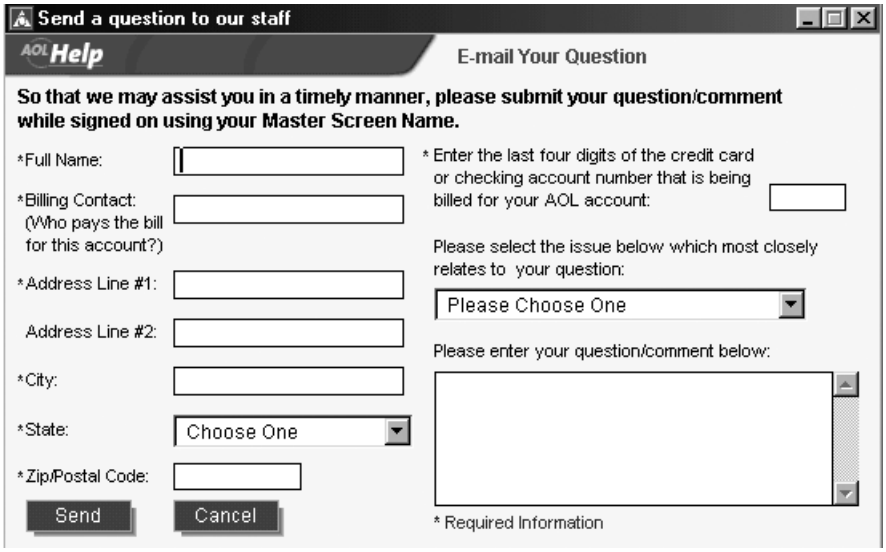

Figure 8-16. Sending a billing question is a snap.

CHAPTER 12

Family Matters

AOL OFFERS A VARIETY of tools, services and advice that will help busy families get everything done and have fun, too. Planning a vacation with the kids? Check out Family Events, Outings and Vacations. You'll find travel tips for all ages and plenty of good ideas for the younger set. Share your pictures across the miles. Is home schooling an option? Chat with other parents on this very topic. From dealing with aging parents to coping with loss, share your ideas, feelings and suggestions with other AOL members. And best of all, this information is easily accessible to the entire family without leaving the comforts of home.

In this chapter you'll learn how to:

- Find information on outings and vacations that are fun for the whole family
- Use resources to help you handle family issues and relationships
- Locate family living and parenting resources
- Access family services resources

Family Events, Outings, and Vacations

1 Finding family adventures

AOL's Family Adventure Web site opens a world of fun and excitement for the whole family to enjoy. It provides ideas on cool things you and your family can do in your local community including theme parks, kid-friendly events, zoos, parks, aquariums, museums, movies, and much more. You can also use it to find adventures in major cities around the United States. Here's how it's accessed:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Family Adventure**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Family Adventure** Web site.
2. Click the city hyperlink that you'd like to find family adventure for.

2 Dining out with kids

Does your busy schedule prevent your family from sharing quality time at dinner or other meals? AOL's Family Dinner channel provides family- and time-friendly ideas on preparing sit-down meals that give your family the opportunity to discuss events that occurred during the day. According to recent statistics, a family that dines together fosters a bond of togetherness while staying connected to daily events, issues, and other important family matters. The Family Dinner channel offers tips on proper etiquette, easy table talk, great timesaving recipes, and more. Here's how it's accessed:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Family Dinner**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **The Dinner Table** channel.

3 Grilling tips the whole family will enjoy

The Grilling channel is your single-source to wonderful and tasty grilling tips and ideas that family and friends are sure to enjoy. You'll learn great recipes for high-flavor sauces and rubs, how to arrange coal, test grill temperature, light and clean a gas grill, grill tasty hamburgers and brats,

and much more. Visit the Grilling channel for all your grilling needs. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Grilling**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Grilling** channel.

4 Searching for family entertainment

AOL's Family Entertainment channel is your resource for finding family-oriented television shows and movies, toys and books, travel and activities, and much more. You'll also discover what other parents are doing for family entertainment, find great children's book by age, view a gallery of toys by age, learn about the 10 worst toys for kids, and get family travel ideas. Make AOL's Family Entertainment channel your online destination for family entertainment ideas and tips. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Family Entertainment**. Click the **Go** button to display the **Family Entertainment** channel.

5 Entertaining craft ideas

AOL's Crafts channel provides cool crafts and projects that'll be fun for the whole family. You'll find great ideas for under $10, simple projects that can be done to enhance the appearance of your living space, and how to utilize interior room planners to visualize what your room will look like before you rearrange your furniture. Shop for housewares and appliances, share ideas to make jewelry, get quilting ideas, capture your memories with scrapbook ideas, find needlepoint and sewing supplies, search for carpentry projects, and more. Here's how to get to the Crafts channel:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Crafts**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Crafts** channel.

6 Planning a family vacation

The Family Vacation Web site lets you find and book a family vacation to anywhere in the world. It provides vacation tips and tools, a vacation finder, hot deals, vacation discounts, travel guides, photo galleries, and more. You'll find vacation packages, including details about air, cruise, bus, tours, hotels, and meals, by specifying a travel destination, month of travel, price per person, and length of stay. Here's how to visit:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Family Vacation**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Family Travel** Web site, shown in Figure 12-1.

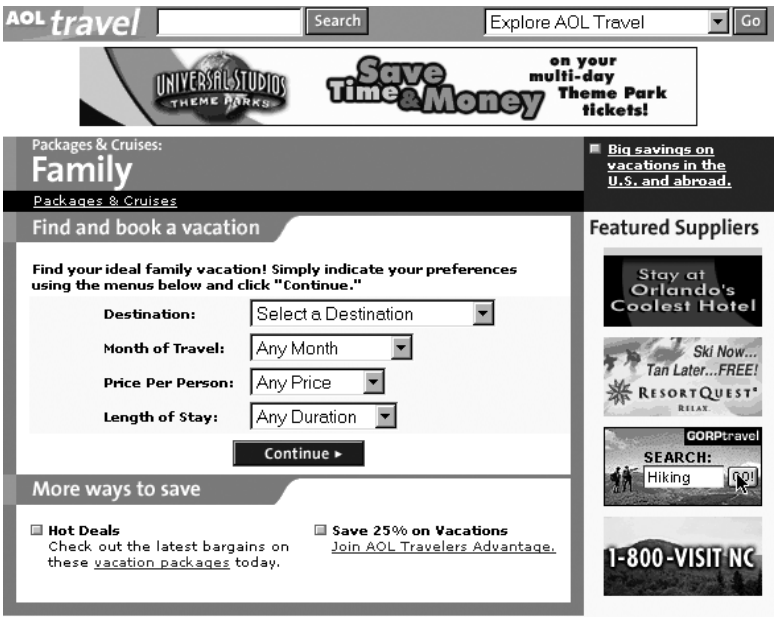

Figure 12-1. Finding and booking a family vacation on AOL's Family Vacation Web site

30 Communicating with people who share your spirituality

Connect with people who share your same spiritual beliefs. AOL's Spirituality Web site provides thought-provoking articles, tips, and expert advice on all religious communities and denominations. You'll also be able to request a free newsletter to be sent to your e-mail address. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Spirituality**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Lifestyles Community- Spirituality** Web site.

Family Living and Parenting

31 Parenting tips

AOL's Parenting channel provides wonderful information for parents everywhere. You'll find insightful parenting advice, parenting tips by age, work and family issues, entertainment, news, single parent topics, health warnings, parenting with a disability, and an assortment of tools such as coupons, a newsletter, chats, and message boards. Here's how to visit AOL's Parenting channel:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Parenting**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting** channel.

32 Accessing the Parents Hotline for expert advice

AOL provides a 24/7-advice hotline for parents. AOL's Parents Hotline channel provides a community of leading experts—parents who help answer the questions and issues important to parents everywhere. From baby to teen issues, parenting tips to safety alerts, child health to family issues, you'll find electronic postings on a variety of topics. Access AOL's Parents hotline channel to get answers to your questions from other parents. Here's how:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Parents Hotline**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Hotline** channel.
2. Click **Enter Help Area** to list, read, and find posts and answers by parents everywhere.

33 Understanding baby's early years

The early years of a baby's life are often referred to as the bonding years between baby and parent. This is the time when you and your baby build a healthy and loving relationship that will endure throughout your lives. AOL's Parenting Babies channel offers a variety of resources including month-by-month baby development guidelines, immunization schedules, baby feeding and nutrition advice, breastfeeding guidelines, baby safety tips, and sleep problem tips.. Visit AOL's Parenting Babies channel and develop a better understanding of your baby's early years. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Baby** or **Babies**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Babies** channel.

34 Understanding the preschooler years

AOL's Preschoolers channel provides resources galore for how to experience the joys and deal with the challenges of a preschool child. You'll find great articles, tips, and guidelines to nurture your little one's developmental needs. From learning how to handle bed-wetting issues to what the best toys are to buy, and managing health and learning disability issues to finding out various learning resources. AOL's Preschooler channel is your online resource for children in their preschool years. Here's how it's accessed:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Preschool**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Preschoolers** channel.

35 Understanding the grade school years

Does your child possess a unique natural ability for mathematics, music, art, or science? AOL's Grade Schoolers channel provides a wealth of resources that can help you identify your child's innate abilities while nurturing hidden talents. You'll find an assortment of self-help tools including techniques

39 Learning to be a good dad

As a dad, you want to be a major positive influence in your child's life. Recent studies show that more dads are learning not only to be dads, but also to be good dads. However, learning to be a good dad isn't always easy. AOL's Dad channel can help by letting you get involved in all aspects of your child's life. You'll find insightful information on the challenges facing dads everywhere, as well as tips, advice, and guidelines that dads can follow. Learn to become a great father figure to your child. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Dad**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Dads** channel.

40 Being Mr. Mom

Recent statistics show that more and more moms are returning to work after baby is born than ever before. This means that more dads are staying home to care for baby, clean the house, and perform other duties once performed by mom. Parents often decide on this type of arrangement because the wife makes more money, they want to have their child cared for by a parent, or for a host of other reasons. AOL's Mr. Mom channel offers tips, advice, and guidelines for dads who have hung up their suits and work boots in favor of diapers and caring for their child. You'll find an assortment of must-read articles and other help areas including the challenges and issues faced by Mr. Mom, online support groups, chats, message boards, and much more. Here's how it's accessed:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Mr. Mom**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Mr. Mom** channel.

41 Teaching your kids to love sports

Are your kids active in sports? Are you a fan or a fanatic when it comes to your kids' sporting events? Would you like to see your kids act less like couch potatoes and be more active in sports? AOL's Kids & Sports channel gives you the information you need as a parent to become your child's biggest fan. You'll find wonderful resources to help you coordinate your responsibilities as a working parent with your kid's sporting activities, find the right sport(s) for your child to participate in, find the right coach to work with your child, and much more. If your child is active in sports, you must visit AOL's Kids & Sports channel. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Kids and Sports**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Parenting Kids and Sports** channel.

42 Homeschooling tips

Is your child being taught in a homeschooling type of program? Have you decided to homeschool your children? Do you want to identify existing support groups that can provide a pre-packaged curriculum? Homeschooling is legal in all 50 states in the United States, although each state has its own unique requirements. AOL's Homeschooling Web site provides valuable information and other resources to help you develop a top-notch home-schooling curriculum. You'll find homeschooling curricula, teacher's aides and supplies, resource books, workbooks, arts and crafts ideas, support groups, chats, message boards, and more. Make AOL's Homeschooling Web site the one destination for your home schooling needs. Here's how:

Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Homeschooling**. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's Parenting **Homeschooling** Web site.

43 Setting Internet parental controls for your children

You can control what type of access is available for a particular screen name through parental controls. AOL's Parental Control channel lets you assign a safety net for members to prevent unauthorized contact by other members while online. This feature controls member access while using Instant Message, chat rooms, newsgroups, message boards, and other online communication mediums. AOL lets you set parental controls for the following age categories:

- Kids Only (ages 12 and under)

CHAPTER 13

Privacy and Security

ENSURING COMPUTER PRIVACY from unwanted exposures and outside forces due to security violations, terms of service violations, viruses, and Trojan horse programs isn't an option—it's a must. AOL offers a variety of methods to control privacy preferences via communication mediums such as e-mail and chat, as well as account controls like passwords, marketing, and newsgroups. AOL also offers expert advice on maintaining a computer's health and well being by safeguarding against viruses and Trojan horse programs, which appear to perform a valid function but are designed to steal private information from your computer. These types of problems and issues not only raise frustration levels, they hinder productivity, and in the worst cases, may cause you lost or damaged data. Whether you're a seasoned AOL expert or new to AOL, you'll find AOL services and features to help with privacy and security issues and their resolutions.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to:

- Handle e-mail issues and solutions
- Set and modify parental controls for a safe and secure online experience
- Set Instant Messenger and newsgroup controls
- Shop and bank safely and securely from your own home

E-mail Issues and Solutions

1 Ensuring e-mail privacy

Ensuring and maintaining e-mail privacy is crucial, and AOL members have a couple methods to ensure their privacy. The easiest method is to send messages using a process referred to as a blind courtesy copy (BCC). This protects the privacy of the address you specify in a blind copy. It also speeds up the process of opening an e-mail message—since fewer addresses are displayed. To specify a blind courtesy copy for an e-mail address, simply surround each e-mail address in parentheses, e.g., (KPLConsultant). To specify a blind courtesy copy for a group of e-mail addresses, separate each address with a comma and then add parentheses around the entire set of addresses, e.g., (KPLConsultant, MacFamily).

You can use the Address Book window to send blind copies too—just click the Blind Copy button.

The second method of ensuring e-mail privacy is to block advertisements from businesses, offers from adult-oriented sites, chain letters, and countless other types of unwelcome and unsolicited junk mail. Never again will you be forced to take time away from your busy schedule to delete mail you

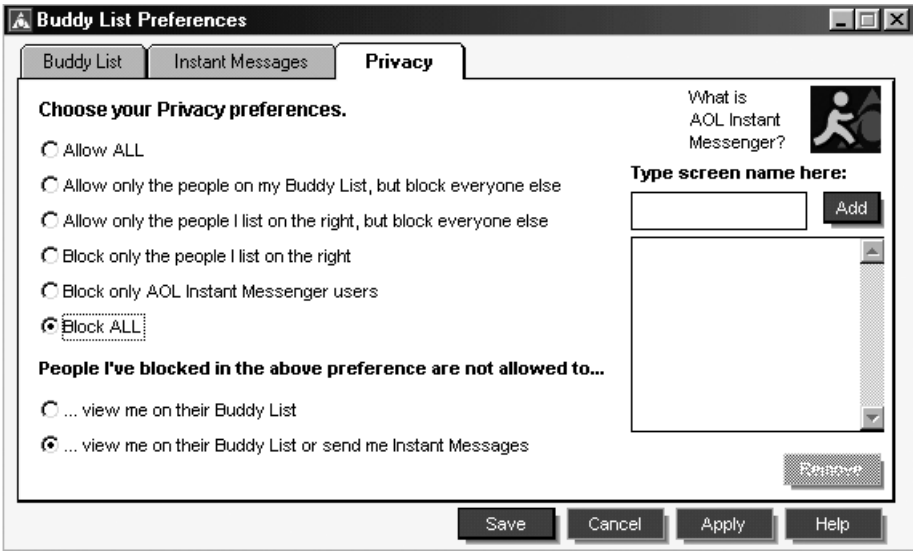

Figure 13-4. Blocking all screen names on AOL's Buddy List Preferences Privacy tab

15 Understanding parental controls

Parental controls let you decide which type of mail access is to be available for a particular screen name. By selecting a parental control, a safety net for each screen name is created to prevent unauthorized contact by other members while online. This feature controls member access while using e-mail, Instant Message, chat rooms, newsgroups, message boards, and other online communication features.

16 Setting parental control levels

To limit the amount and type of mail and other content one is able to receive online, AOL lets you set parental controls for specific age categories. Although normally set at the time a screen name is created, changes can be made at any time as an account management function. The following age categories are available for each screen name:

- Kids Only (ages 12 and under)
- Young Teens (ages 13–15)
- Mature Teens (ages 16–17)
- General Access (ages 18 and older)

17 Changing parental controls for children

As children grow, parents will need a way to make parental control changes to their children's screen name. In order to set or modify a parental control setting for children, the person doing this task will need to be signed on as a master screen name. AOL lets you change the parental control age setting to one of the following: Kids Only (12 and under), Young Teen (13–15), Mature Teen (16-17), or General Access (18+). Here's how it's done:

1. Verify that you're currently signed on as the primary or master screen name.
2. Select **Screen Names** from the **Settings** menu on the AOL toolbar.
3. Click **Edit Parental Controls Settings** under the **Parental Controls** heading on AOL's **Screen Names** channel.
4. Select the screen name you want to assign parental control settings for from the **Edit controls for:** list.
5. Click an age category from the list displayed at the bottom of the **Edit Parental Controls Settings** window.

6. Click the **Accept New Category** button on the **Alert! Parental Controls Category Change** window.
7. Click the **OK** button in the **Your changes to Category Setting have been saved** dialog box.

18 Restricting access to premium services

Would you like to restrict the access to premium service content providers? Premium service providers generally charge a special fee for their content such as games and, when accessed, automatically charge an hourly or one-time access fee on the credit card you use for AOL billing. AOL lets you block the ability to access premium services easily by following these simple steps:

1. Verify that you're currently signed on as the master screen name.
2. Select **Screen Names** from the **Settings** menu on the AOL toolbar.
3. Click **Edit Parental Controls Settings** under the **Parental Controls** heading on AOL's **Screen Names** channel.
4. Select the screen name you want to block premium services for from the **Edit controls for:** list.
5. Click **Premium Services** from the **Custom Controls** on the **Edit Parental Controls Settings** window.
6. Click the **Block Premium Services** checkbox, and click the **Save** button.
7. Click the **OK** button in the **Your changes to Premium Services Controls have been saved** dialog box.

19 Kids' safety tips

As a parent, you'll want to do everything you can to let your kid have a safe and enjoyable online experience. AOL, through the Neighborhood Watch channel, offers kid-friendly online safety tips that parents should share with their kids. Here's how you and your child can access these useful tips:

1. Click the Keyword button on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Kid Safety**.
2. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Neighborhood Watch** channel.
3. Click **Kids' Online Safety Tips** to display **Kids' Safety Tips**.

20 Setting the online timer for your children

For kids-only screen names, AOL lets you limit how long your child can be online.

1. Verify that you're currently signed on as the primary or master screen name.
2. Select **Screen Names** from the **Settings** menu on the AOL toolbar.
3. Click **Edit Parental Controls Settings** under the **Parental Controls** heading on AOL's **Screen Names** channel.
4. Select the child's screen name for whom you want to restrict online time from the **Edit controls for:** list.
5. Click **Online Timer** from the **Custom Controls** on the **Edit Parental Controls Settings** window.
6. To set or modify online timer settings, review the existing settings and click the **Next** button on the **Custom Control Settings: Online Timer** window.
7. Click the level of flexibility you want from the available radio boxes (**Same Limit Daily**, **Weekday/Weekend Limits**, **Custom Daily Limit,** or **Unlimited**) on Step 1 of 4, and click the **Next** button.
8. Select the number of hours you will allow your child to be online each day from the available options (**# of Hours**, **Starting Time**, and **Ending Time**) on Step 2 of 4, and click the **Next** button.
9. Select the time zone where your child resides and whether AOL should adjust for daylight savings time on Step 3 of 4, and click the **Next** button.

CHAPTER 15

Create Your Own Web Page

Before embarking on the creation of your own Web page, you should ask yourself why you want one in the first place. Once you can answer this question, you'll have a better idea about what it should contain. Analyzing the purpose of your page and your reasons for wanting a Web page will help you provide something of value while leaving a lasting impression on your intended audience. A Web page should be fresh and exciting, providing a reason for your audience to revisit your page often. As one of the most dynamic mediums in the world, the Internet is always changing. To better cope with these changes, you'll need to be aware of your target audience and the available resources on AOL.

In this chapter you'll learn how to:

- Create your own Web page
- Access AOL's Web publishing software and tools
- Customize your Web page with HTML and JavaScript
- Download and add clip art graphics to your Web page
- Find shareware Web publishing tools

Web Page Basics

1 My own Web page—why and how?

The rise of the World Wide Web, or Web for short, over the last decade has been phenomenal. In the early 1990s when graphical browsers were first introduced, home pages were simple one-pagers in newsletter-style format about some topic with a few snapshots of the owner's favorite pets, or cars. Now, Web browsers have developed the capability to handle multimedia effects such as video, audio, frames, and Java applets, everyone from personal users to large corporate behemoths is taking full advantage of the Web as an efficient means of self-expression. Larger business-oriented Web sites come complete with product and service promotions, customer feedback, electronic commerce, banner advertising, chat and discussion group capabilities, and everything in between.

So why create a Web page? The Web is a well-established medium for an ever-growing audience in addition to being an avenue for self-expression. Many AOL members and Internet users from around the world have created Web pages for a list of reasons. Let's take a look at some of the reasons that others have expressed as to why they created a Web page:

- To share information about a topic of interest such as recipes, cars, trading card collections, political beliefs, and countless other topics.
- To display pictures of family members and friends.
- To share favorite vacation memories.
- To promote artistic talent.
- To display a resume.
- To sell products or services.
- To promote a business.
- To have fun.

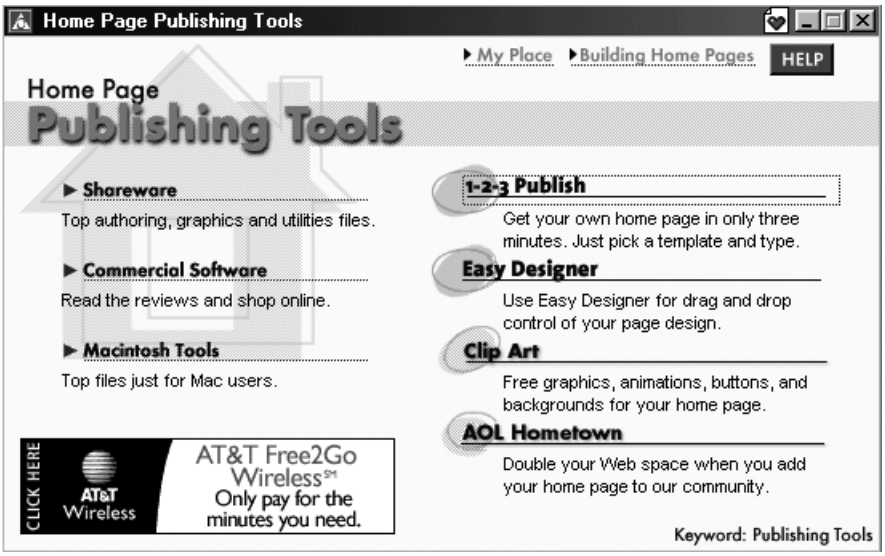

Figure 15-2. Accessing the free Web building tools is easy with AOL's Publishing Tools channel

6 Getting help—it's just a click away

AOL has a variety of resources for aspiring Web page builders to choose from including computer communities such as chat rooms, message boards, Web classes, FAQs, and tutorials; image download centers, upload centers, publishing tools; and much more. You'll be amazed at the number of Help channels and Web sites that are available for your use anytime you need them. Table 15-1 shows a list of popular AOL Help channels and Web sites.

Table 15-1. Web Publishing Resources

CHANNEL/WEB SITE	AOL KEYWORD
Authoring Tools/Publishing Tools	Publishing Tools
Build Your Web Page	Web Page
Computer Center	Computer Center
Computer Community	Web Community
Easy Designer	Easy Designer
PC Upload Center	Upload Center
Web Art & Artists Center	Web Art
Web Publishing Tutorials	Web Tutorial

Web Design & Templates for Beginners

7 Choosing AOL Web site building tools

If you've never designed or built a Web page before, you should visit AOL's Computer Center Build Your Web Page channel. Here you'll find quick and easy tools to design and build a Web page from simple to complex. Using 1-2-3 Publish you'll be able to have a simple Web page up and running in minutes, or you can use Easy Designer to design and build more advanced pages.

AOL's 1-2-3 Publish Web site provides over 90 existing templates of popular Web page designs for you to choose from. You'll find an assortment of Web page designs and themes that cover horoscopes, vacations, music, holidays, memorials, hobbies, sports, cities, auctions, and much more. Here's how you can select one of these popular 1-2-3 Publish templates:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **1-2-3 Publish**.
2. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **1-2-3 Publish** Web site.

19 Adding hyperlinks to your page with Easy Designer

AOL lets you add hyperlinks, which allow users to move from one Web page to another in just one mouse click. Hyperlinks are displayed in color, usually in blue underline text, and your mouse pointer changes to a pointing finger as the mouse is moved over a link. With AOL's Easy Designer, you'll be able to add hyperlinks to text or graphics, whatever objects you choose. Here's how it's done:

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Authoring Tools** or **Publishing Tools**.
2. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Publishing Tools** channel.
3. Click **Easy Designer** on AOL's **Publishing Tools** channel to display AOL's **Easy Designer** Web site.
4. Click **Open an Existing Page** on AOL's **Easy Designer** Web site to display the **Easy Designer** tool.
5. Click **Click to get started!** button to display the **Easy Designer—Open an Existing Page** window.
6. Select the page you want opened and click the **Open** button on the **Easy Designer—Open an Existing Page** window to display your Web page in the **Easy Designer** window.
7. Right-click the desired object (e.g., graphic image) on your Web page and select **Modify** from the drop-down selection list that appears.
8. Click the **Link This Object** button on the **Easy Designer—Picture Gallery** window.
9. Enter the Web Address (URL) you want to link to on the **Easy Designer—Link To** window and click the **OK** button, shown in Figure 15-14.
10. Click the **OK** button on the **Easy Designer—Picture Gallery** window to complete the hyperlink process.
11. Click the **Save** button located on the **Easy Designer** toolbar to save your Web page.
12. Click the **OK** button on the **Your page has been saved. The page address is …** dialog box.
13. Close the **Easy Designer** customization window.

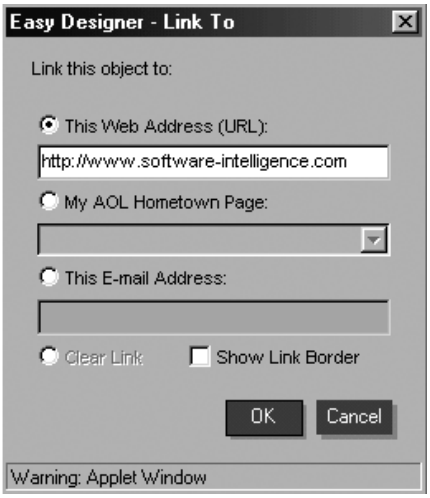

Figure 15-14. Adding a hyperlink to a Web page object with AOL's Easy Designer Web site

20 Checking hyperlinks to see if they work

The Internet is a dynamic medium with content always changing. Hyperlinks let you transfer your user from one place on a Web page to another place. Consequently, you should check hyperlinks periodically to make sure they are not broken or out-of-date. This will prevent visitors from becoming frustrated with your Web content, or worse yet, shying away from your page altogether.

21 Avoiding the risks associated with hyperlinks

AOL lets users of Version 4.0 or higher block the blue underlined text links, commonly referred to as hyperlinks from appearing in e-mails, chats, Instant Message notes, and message boards. This prevents children or others from clicking on a link and being redirected to a Web page that is inappropriate or has undesirable content. To avoid the risks associated with hyperlinks on a Web page,

26 Understanding sound file types and extensions

Understanding sound file types and extensions is helpful in making your Web page the best it can be. Although a variety of sound and music file types exist, you'll want to know which file types offer the best sound and access speed, especially when selecting files to be downloaded or when creating your own. This will make your Web page shine while giving your visitors the greatest online experience possible.

.AVI	Represents an audio visual file, used for Windows video files. AOL's Windows software will display these files.
.MID (.MIDI)	Represents a Musical Instrument Digital Interface file. MIDI files are songs for most sound cards and MIDI boards. AOL's software will play these files.
.MOD	Represents a music module that includes the instruments as well as the score, and they play through a sound card, not MIDI. You will need a special program to play these files in Windows or on the Macintosh.
.SIT	Represents a StuffIt file. These are Macintosh compressed files that can be extracted by Windows users with programs such as UnSit and UnStuff. Some of the files with this extension will not run on Windows, even after extraction. AOL's Macintosh software will open these files.
.SND	Represents a sound file for Macintosh System 7 sounds that can be played on Windows using converters such as SOX. AOL's Macintosh software will run these files.
.WAV	Represents a Windows sound file. Mac users can find utilities in the Software Center at Keyword: Software to convert them to sound files that the Macintosh can play. AOL's Windows software will play these files.

27 Adding animation with Easy Designer

Adding animation to your Web page can create visual impact like nothing else. AOL lets you add images that blink, move, twirl, scroll, and much more. You can even treat your visitors with a movie that they can download and view on their own computer. Here's how you can create a stimulating environment for anyone visiting your page.

Downloading Animated GIF Files

1. Click the **Keyword** button located on the AOL toolbar and enter AOL Keyword: **Animated GIFS** or **AGIF**.
2. Click the **Go** button to display AOL's **Animated GIF Resources** channel, shown in Figure 15-22.
3. Double-click the library or folder of interest to open it.
4. Select the animated GIF file you want to download from the list and click the **Download Now** button to save the file to your computer's hard drive. Using the **Download Manager**, navigate to the desired folder on your computer's hard drive.

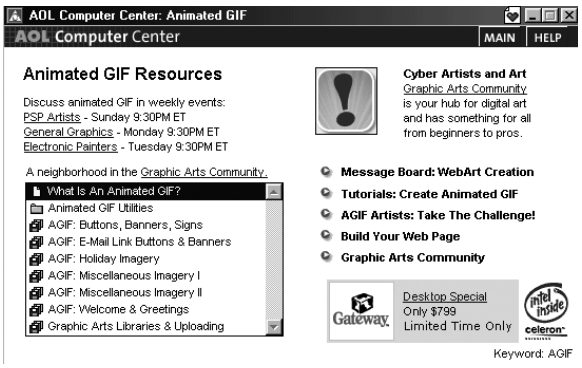

Figure 15-22. Downloading an animated GIF file from an assortment of categories is easy.

Adding Animated GIF Files to Your Web Page

Adding an animated GIF file to your Web page requires that you add a single line of HTML code to your page and uploading the GIF file to AOL Keyword: **FTPSPACE** as a binary file. Here's how it's done: