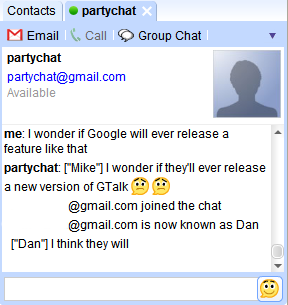
CHATTING

**Online chat** can refer to any kind of communication over the Internet, but is primarily meant to refer to direct one-on-one chat or text-based group chat (formally also known as synchronous conferencing), using tools such as instant messengers, Internet Relay Chat, talkers and possibly MUDs. The expression *online chat* comes from the word *chat* which means "informal conversation".

**Chatiqutte**

The term *chatiquette* is a variation of netiquette (chat netiquette) and describes basic rules of online communication. To avoid misunderstandings and to simplify the communication between users in a chat these conventions or guidelines have been created. Chatiquette varies from community to community, generally describing basic courtesy; it introduces new user into the community and the associated network culture. As an example, it is considered rude to write only in UPPER CASE, because it looks as if the user is shouting. The word chatiquette has been used in connection with various chat systems (e.g. IRC) since 1995.

Chatiquette Guidelines:

* Always introduce yourself.
* Be polite.
* Be considerate of differing opinions.
* Don't type in ALL CAPITALS - it is called shouting and is considered to be rude.
* If answering a question, type the person's name before you answer, example: Jane, I agree with your comment but…
* If you have to leave the chat for a short time, tell the others you will be away or set your chat session to 'away'.
* Don't use sarcasm - it may be misinterpreted. Remember that people cannot see your facial expressions in an online environment.
* Make a positive contribution to the chat.
* Don't reply to personal requests on the main chat screen - use Whisper mode.
* Give thought to the persona you project.
* Say goodbye .

Cultural Impact

Despite being virtual, chat can spill into the outside world. There can also be a strong sense of online identity leading to impression of subculture.

**Software and Protocols**

The following are common chat programs and protocols:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) * Camfrog * Campfire * Gadu-Gadu * Google Talk * ICQ (OSCAR) * Internet Relay Chat (IRC) * Jabber(XMPP) * MUD * Paltalk | * PSYC * QQ * SILC * Skype * Talk * Talker * messenger-logo.jpgTeam Speak(TS) * Windows Live Messenger * Yahoo! Messenger |

Chat programs supporting multiple protocols:

* Adium
* Digsby
* IMVU
* Kopete
* Lotus Sametime
* Miranda IM
* Pidgin
* Trillian
* Quiet Internet Pager

Web sites with browser based chat services:

* Meebo
* Tokbox

**Chat Rooms**

The term **chat room**, or **chatroom**, is primarily used by mass media to describe any form of synchronous conferencing, occasionally even asynchronous conferencing. The term can thus mean any technology ranging from real-time online chat over instant messaging and online forums to fully immersive graphical social environments.

Graphical Multi-User Environments

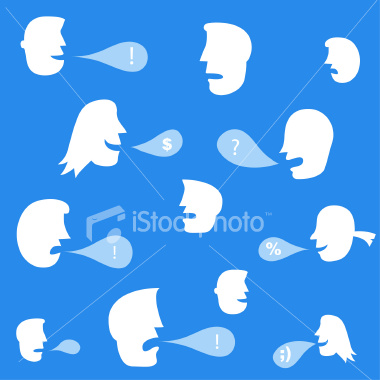
Visual chat rooms add graphics to the chat experience, in either 2D or 3D (employing virtual reality technology). These are characterized by using a graphic representation of the user (avatar) that can be moved about a graphic background or in a graphic environment. These virtual worlds are capable of incorporating elements such as games (in particular massively multiplayer online games) and educational material most often developed by individual site owners, who in general are simply more advanced users of the systems. The most popular environments also allow users to create or *build* their own spaces.

Some visual chat rooms also incorporate audio and video communications, so that users may actually see and hear each other. However, some find these types of environments cumbersome to use and actually an impediment to chatting.

Chat Room Activities

The primary use of a chat room is to share information via text with a group of other users. New technology has enabled the use of file sharing and webcams to be included in some programs and almost all Internet chat or messaging services allow users to display or send to each other photos of themselves. Games are also often played in chat rooms. Historic examples are initgame or Hunt the Wumpus on IRC.

Rules of Behavior

Chat rooms usually have stringent rules that they require users to follow in order to maintain integrity and safety for their users. Particularly in rooms for children, rules usually do not allow users to use offensive language, or to promote hate mail, violence and other negative issues. Also chat rooms often do not allow advertising in their rooms or flooding, which is continually filling the screen with repetitive text. Typing with caps lock on is usually considered shouting and is discouraged.

Sometimes chat room venues are moderated either by limiting who is allowed to speak (not common), or by having moderation volunteers patrol the venue watching for disruptive or otherwise undesirable behavior.

Yet, most commonly used chat rooms are not moderated and users may type what they personally choose to send.

**Internet Relay Chat**

**Internet Relay Chat** (**IRC**) is a form of real-time Internet text messaging (chat) or synchronous conferencing. It is mainly designed for group communication in discussion forums, called *channels*, but also allows one-to-one communication via private message, as well as chat and data transfers via Direct Client-to-Client.

As of March 2009, the top 100 IRC networks served more than half a million users at a time, with hundreds of thousands of channels (the vast majority of which stand mostly vacant), operating on a total of roughly 1,500 servers world-wide.

IRC was created by Jarkko Oikarinen in August 1988 to replace a program called MUT (MultiUser Talk) on a BBS called OuluBox in Finland. Oikarinen found inspiration in a chat system known as Bitnet Relay, which operated on the BITNET.

IRC was used to report on the Soviet coup attempt of 1991 throughout a media blackout. It was previously used in a similar fashion during the Gulf War. Logs of these events, and other events, are kept in the ibiblio archive. IRC client software is available for virtually every computer operating system that supports networking.

Modern IRC

IRC has changed much over its life on the Internet. New server software has added a multitude of new features.

* **Services** : Network-operated bots to facilitate registration of nicknames and channels, sending messages for offline users and network operator functions.
* **Extra modes** : While the original IRC system used a set of standard user and channel modes, new servers add many new modes for such features as removing color codes from text, or obscuring a user's hostmask ("cloaking") to protect from denial of services attacks.
* **Proxy detection** : Most modern servers support detection of users attempting to connect through an insecure (misconfigured or exploited) proxy server, which can then be denied a connection. An example is the Blitzed open Proxy Monitor or BOPM. This proxy detection software used by several networks, although that real time list of proxies is defunct since early 2006.
* **Additional commands** : New commands can be such things as shorthand commands to issue commands to Services, to network operator only commands to manipulate a user's hostmask.
* **Encryption** : For the client-to-server leg of the connection SSL might be used (messages cease to be secure once they are relayed to other users on standard connections, but it makes eavesdropping on or wiretapping an individual's IRC sessions difficult). For client-to-client communication, SDCC(Secure DCC) can be used.
* **Ident** : Provides identification to the IRC server, but in modern Internet that RFC 1413 identification is almost useless.
* **Connection protocol** : IRC can be connected to via IPv4, the current standard version of the Internet Protocol, or by IPv6, the next-generation version of the Protocol.

**MUD’s**

In online gaming, a **MUD** (**Multi-User Dungeon**), pronounced /mʌd/, is a multi-user real-time virtual world described entirely in text. It combines elements of role-playing games, hack and slash, interactive fiction, and online chat. Players can read descriptions of rooms, objects, other players, non-player characters, and actions performed in the virtual world. Players interact with each other and the world by typing commands that resemble a natural language.

Traditional MUDs implement a fantasy world populated by fictional races and monsters, with players being able to choose from a number of classes in order to gain specific skills or powers. The object of this sort of game is to slay monsters, explore a fantasy world, complete quests, go on adventures, create a story by roleplaying, and advance the created character. Many MUDs were fashioned around the dice rolling rules of the *Dungeons & Dragons* series of games.

Such fantasy settings for MUDs are common, while many others are set in a science fiction–based universe or themed on popular books, movies, animations, history, and so on. Not all MUDs are games; some, more typically those referred to as MOOs, are used in distance education or for virtual conferences. MUDs have attracted the interest of academic scholars from many fields, including communications, sociology, law, and synthetic economies.

Most MUDs are run as hobbies and are free to players; some may accept donations or allow players to purchase virtual items, while others charge a monthly subscription fee. MUDs can be accessed via standard telnet clients, or specialized MUD clients which are designed to improve the user experience. Numerous games are listed at various web portals, like *The Mud Connector*.

It has been argued that modern games like *World of Warcraft*, and social virtual worlds such as *Second Life* can have their origins traced back to the early MUDs. Originally graphical virtual worlds were called graphical MUDs, most notably Everquest, but by 2000 the term MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) had become the standard. The MMORPG *RuneScape* started out as a text-based MUD before graphics were added. Many MUDs are still active and a number of influential MMORPG designers, such as Raph Koster, Brad McQuaid, Mark Jacobs, Brian Green, and J. Todd Coleman, began as MUD developers and/or players.

Graphical MUD’s

A **graphical MUD** is a MUD that uses computer graphics to represent parts of the virtual world and its visitors. A prominent early graphical MUD was *Habitat*, written by Randy Farmer and Chip Morningstar for Lucasfilm in 1985. Graphical MUDs require players to download a special client and the game's artwork. They range from simply enhancing the user interface to simulating 3D worlds with visual spatial relationships and customized avatar appearances.

After the increase in computing power and Internet connectivity during the late nineties, graphical MUDs became better known as MMORPG’s, Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games.

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