

How to set up Real-time Text with AIM Instant Messaging

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Instant Messaging (**IM**) is a popular texting service.

To use Instant Messaging (IM) you need a 'client application' (a program to us mere mortals) that will display the information in a useful way and provide other services for the user like lists of the addresses of people you communicate with.

When texting to another person using IM, users usually type some text and then send it when they press the 'RETURN' key or click the 'SEND' button. The other user receives the text quickly and the text of the two users is shown with their names and often in different colors to make it easier to read. The receiving user then types a response and press the RETURN key to send it. It is fast but text is sent in 'chunks'.

Text that is sent character-by-character provides a different user experience. It is more 'conversational'. This is called 'real-time text'.

AOL Instant Messaging (AIM) is a very popular IM service that is used by many millions of people worldwide. AIM has developed a real-time version of IM that aims (sic) to provide a more real-time texting experience. (It is based in part on some work done by Trace + Gallaudet Uni (USA) and Omnitor (Sweden).)

Only the latest version of AIM (version 6.8) has the real-time IM feature included. Both users involved in a real-time IM conversation need to have the AIM 6.8 client installed or the IM session will revert to ordinary IM.

AIM version 6.8 works very well and is currently being trialled amongst users before being officially released so the current software is called a 'beta' version. Note that it is very stable and very usable.

The current version only works on PCs. Support for other operating systems and for use on mobile phones may follow.

To try out this service, you need to:

- a) get a Username (called a Screen Name) and a Password and to
- b) download the client application (software).

a) To get the Screen Name and Password:

1. Using your computer's web browser, go to <http://www.aim.com> and then click on the '**Get a Screen Name**' link (written in blue) at the top right of the AIM web page.
2. Click '**Create an Account**' and then click '**Continue**'.

3. Complete the registration form, remembering that there are many millions of users so try to create a unique Screen Name first time. (The system will help you if you choose a name that is already used.)

b) To download the AIM 6.8 client application:

1. Using your computer's web browser, go to <http://beta.aol.com> to get the latest version of the AIM client that has the real-time text option included. Then click on the **AIM 6.8** link in the January 10 News Item. It will take you to <http://beta.aol.com/projects.php?project=aim6> (*Note – later versions may become introduced as they improve it. Use the latest version available.*)
2. The AIM 6.8 Beta web page explains the real-time text service very well.
3. Click on the '**Download AIM 6.8 Beta**' link and then accept the License Agreement. Then save the .file to your Desktop (or to your Program Files directory if you prefer). The file is the executable file that will install the AIM 6.8 client software on your computer that will enable you to use AOL Instant Messaging (AIM).
Note – older versions of AIM do NOT support real-time text IM.
4. When the download has been completed, find the .exe file where you asked for it to be saved and double-click on it to install the AIM 6.8 client.
An icon for the AIM client will appear on your Desktop. It is set to start automatically when you turn on your computer.

Using AIM Client:

1. When you turn on your computer, the AIM client window will appear (usually on the right side of your screen).
2. You can add any addresses that you know – known as as 'Buddies' – by going to the menu and click on 'Edit' then 'Add Buddy'.
3. Once a Buddy is created, you can double-click on a Buddy's name and the Chat Window will appear. It will tell you if the Buddy is available or not.
4. If the Buddy is available, go to the Actions menu item of the window and click on the Real-time IM option to enable it.
5. Then start typing – something short like 'Hi there' and click SEND.

Tell others about this service and what you like or don't like about it. Tell the author also so he can provide feedback to the people who are advising AIM about real-time IM.