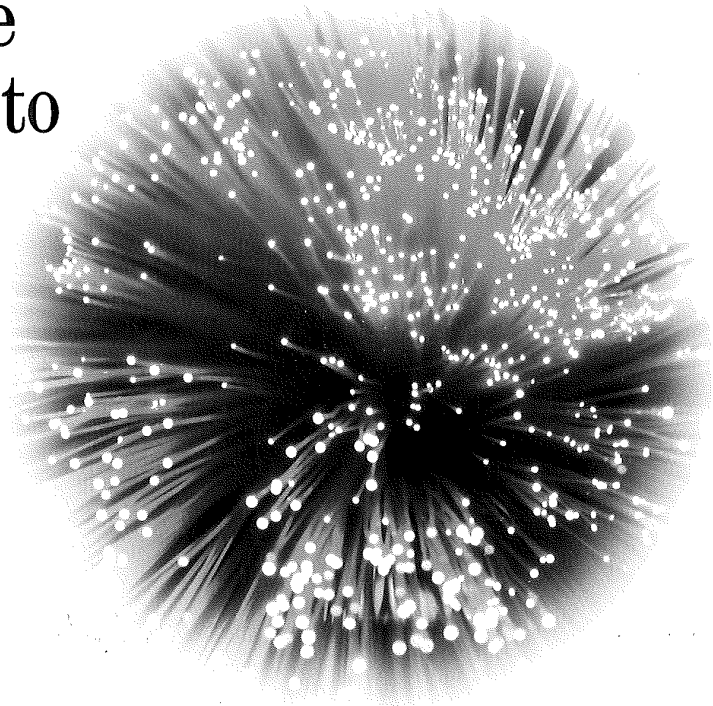


Instant Messaging Systems

Complete source
code and design to
create your own
IM applications

Dreamtech
Software Team



Instant Messaging Systems: Cracking the Code™

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Instant Messaging

Instant messaging (IM) is an Internet-based protocol application that allows one-to-one communication between users employing a variety of devices. The most popular form of IM is chatting, where short, text-based messages are exchanged among computers. With the advent of technologies such as Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) and the popularity of handheld devices such as mobile phones, Short Message Service (SMS) added a new dimension to instant messaging integration.

SMS refers to sending and receiving text messages to and from mobile telephones. The text may be composed of words or numbers or may be an alphanumeric combination. SMS was created as part of the GSM Phase 1 standard. We think the first short message was sent in December 1992 from a PC to a mobile phone on the Vodafone GSM network in the U.K. Each short message ranges between 70–160 characters. SMS has a store-forward capability; this means sending messages is possible even when the recipient is not available. The user is notified when a message is waiting, as with voicemail.

Integration of SMS and instant messaging allows you to deliver short messages by using the instant messaging facility over handheld devices. Today, instant messaging can be availed free of cost. Software giants such as Yahoo!, Microsoft, and AOL are already offering free instant messaging facilities.

A Brief History of Instant Messaging

Instant Messaging has been around for more than two decades. The first major player to enter the arena of Instant Messaging was AOL, which launched its own version of instant messenger with a component used for managing all the incoming and outgoing messages and the list of friends. This component is popularly known as *buddy list*. Soon, Microsoft and Yahoo! followed AOL's trail. As a result, MSN and Yahoo! messenger appeared on the market with a variety of impressive new services. In its early days, instant messaging uses were restricted to splashing messages on bulletin boards. Gradually, instant messaging became a major area of interest for youngsters. Society acknowledges instant messaging as the most common means by which people of varying age groups, especially youngsters, communicate with one another.