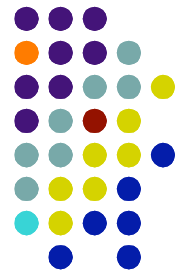


# IM @ Mac: where we've been, where we're going

Amanda Etches-Johnson  
McMaster University

Laurier Library, Wilfred Laurier University, May 4, 2006



## IM is...

- a real time conversation
- synchronous
- “email on steroids”

## IM services:

- MSN Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), Yahoo! Messenger, ICQ, Google Talk, Skype, etc.

## Multi-protocol clients:

- Trillian, GAIM, meebo.com (web-based)

## Why IM?

- 86% of Canadian students use IM (*Young Canadians in a Wired World*)
- 75% of online teens use IM (*Teens & Technology*)
- our students/patrons don't all come into the library
- take a look around...they're already using it on your library computers!
- shut it down or learn from it?
- user-centred, minimal staff-training, no start-up costs

## IM @ Mac: the first steps...

- user survey: for 2 weeks, asked everyone who came to the Reference Desk (do you use IM and if yes, which service?). 154 polled: 82% used IM, 72% of which used MSN.
- pilot: June-August 2005, M-F 11am – 3pm, staffed by volunteers
- staff software: Trillian (multi-network & free)
- user software in the library: web-based versions of all clients
- staff training & materials: get all volunteers into a training room; overview of the technology & service; how to set up an IM account; how to set up & configure the software; IM tips; canned messages; get them chatting!
- IM on the desk? Based on personal preference, use signage, don't be afraid of success!

## Security concerns – how to minimize risk:

- fact: IM is not as secure as email
- worms, viruses – virus protection; 3<sup>rd</sup> party apps are less vulnerable
- unencrypted transmission – education, awareness, common sense
- weak authentication – password complexity should be common sense too

## IM @ Mac: where we've been

- slow start, steady increase in use, not overwhelming
- percentage of total reference questions: low (peaked at 3.13% in December 2005!)
- types of questions so far: 61% reference, 36% information, 3% spam
- keep an eye on how many users have added you to their “buddy” lists!

## IM @ Mac: challenges, solutions:

- the “shift change” – all IM staffers set up their own MSN accounts
- new technology for most staff – practice!
- the “instant” in IM – relax! Learn the “IM mindset”.
- IM lingo – relax, they won't talk to you the way they talk to their other buddies!
- IM takes ~ x3 longer – be willing to refer,
- if we build it, they might come! – don't be afraid of success!
- careful what you call it – “MSN” and “chat” are more widely used by Canadian millennials!



## IM @ Mac: where we're going:

- a "VR service point"
- advertising & promotion
- outreach to distance ed students
- IM "office hours"
- information literacy
- group chats
- logs, stats, reports (moving to a PHP stats form, deleting logs)

---

## Select Bibliography

Braxton, Susan. 2005. Eewww! My Patron Tried to Pick Me Up. *American Libraries* 36, no. 4:30.

Curtis, Donnelyn, and Araby Greene. 2004. A university-wide, library-based chat service. *Reference Services Review* 32, no. 3:220-233.

Houghton, Sarah, and Aaron Schmidt. 2005. Web-Based Chat VS. Instant Messaging: WHO WINS? *Online* 29, no. 4:26-30.

Kim, Sangkyun, and Choon S. Leem. 2005. Security of the internet-based instant messenger: Risks and safeguards. *Internet Research* 15, no. 1:88-98.

Lenhart, Amanda, Madden, Mary, and Paul Hitlin. 2005. *Teens and Technology*. Retrieved December 10, 2005 from [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Teens\\_Tech\\_July2005web.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Tech_July2005web.pdf).

Media Awareness Network. *Young Canadians in a Wired World (2002-2005)*. Retrieved November 15, 2005 from <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/research/YCWW/index.cfm>.

Schmidt, Aaron, and Michael Stephens. 2005. IM me. *Library Journal* 130, no. 6:34-35.

Shiu, Eulynn and Amanda Lenhart. (2004). *How Americans Use Instant Messaging*. Pew Internet and American Life Project. Retrieved October 12, 2005 from [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Instanmessage\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Instanmessage_Report.pdf).

## Bonus! Presentation Materials & Other Helpful Sites:

- this presentation is online at <http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/laurier/IM.pdf>
- this handout is online at <http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/laurier/handout.pdf>
- staff training materials: overview of IM ([http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/intro2im\\_training.ppt](http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/intro2im_training.ppt)) & how to set up an IM account (<http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/imaccount.pdf>)
- other staff materials: IM Tips ([http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/staffmaterials\\_imtips.pdf](http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/staffmaterials_imtips.pdf)), canned messages ([http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/staffmaterials\\_canned.pdf](http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/talk/ola2006/staffmaterials_canned.pdf))
- great training materials at Michael Stephen's site: <http://www.tametheweb.com/downloads.html>
- good example of a page on IM security: <http://www.cites.uiuc.edu/security/imvirus.html>
- good site for IM security awareness: [http://imlogic.com/im\\_threat\\_center/index.asp](http://imlogic.com/im_threat_center/index.asp)
- libraries that IM, Library Success Wiki: [http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Online\\_Reference#Libraries\\_Using\\_IM\\_Reference](http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Online_Reference#Libraries_Using_IM_Reference)