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10 Instant Messaging Services That Used to Be Popular

Remember when you had to sit in front of a huge computer to chat online?

By [Glenn Mervin](#) · Updated on May 3, 2021 · Reviewed by [Jessica Karpov](#)



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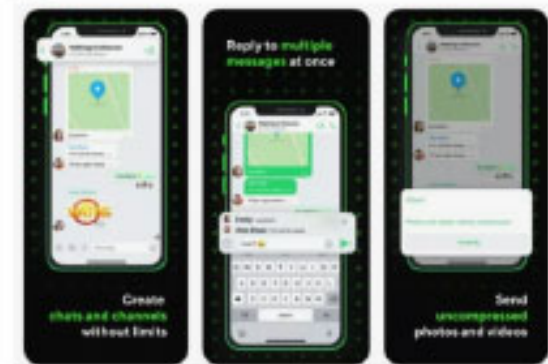
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In this day and age, it's totally normal for people to message each other with photos, videos, [emojis](#), and [emoji](#) using popular apps like [Snapchat](#), [WhatsApp](#), [Facebook Messenger](#), and others. Given how mainstream these apps have become, it's hard to believe that none of these apps existed only a decade or so ago.

For a quick trip down memory lane, have a look at some of the old instant messaging tools the world grew to love before the internet was such a social place. If you ever used any of these messaging services, which one was your favorite?

01 ICQ

of 10



Back in 1996, ICQ became the first instant messaging service to be embraced by users from all over the world. Remember the "Uh-oh!" sound it made when a new message was received? It was eventually acquired by AOL in 1998 and peaked at more than 100 million registered users. ICQ is still around today, updated for modern-day messaging on all platforms.

[Download ICQ](#)

02 AOL Instant Messenger (AIM)

of 10



In 1997, AIM was launched by AOL and eventually became popular enough to capture the largest share of instant messaging users throughout North America. You can no longer use AIM; it was shut down in 2017.

03 Yahoo Pager (Later Yahoo Messenger)

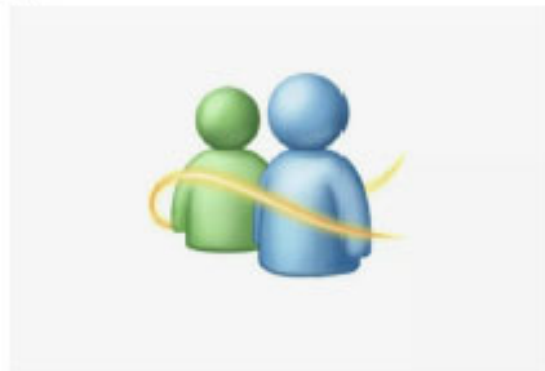
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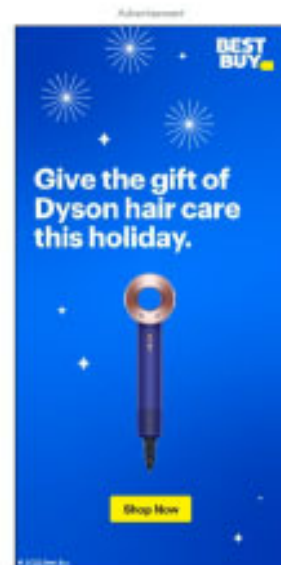
Yahoo launched its own messenger in 1998 and, while it's not available anymore, was one of the most popular IM services. Formerly called Yahoo Pager back when it first came out, the tool was also launched alongside its popular Yahoo Chat feature for online chatrooms, which was retired in 2012.

04 MSN / Windows Live Messenger

of 10



Microsoft



MSN Messenger was introduced by Microsoft in 1999. It grew to become the messenger tool of choice by many throughout the 2000s. By 2009, it had over 330 million monthly active users. The service was rebranded as Windows Live Messenger in 2005 before it was completely shut down in 2014.

05 iChat

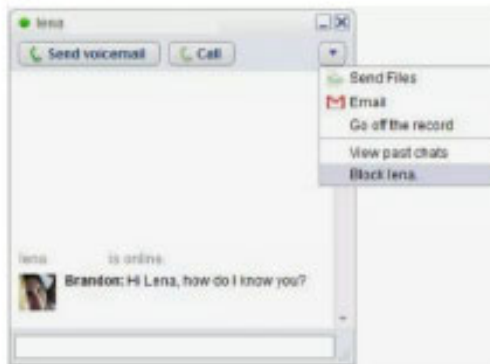
of 10



Today, we have the Apple Messages app. However, back in the early 2000s, Apple used a different instant messaging tool called iChat. It worked as an AIM client for Mac users, which could be fully integrated with users' address books and mail. Apple finally pulled the plug on iChat in 2014 for Macs with old OS X versions.

06 Google Talk

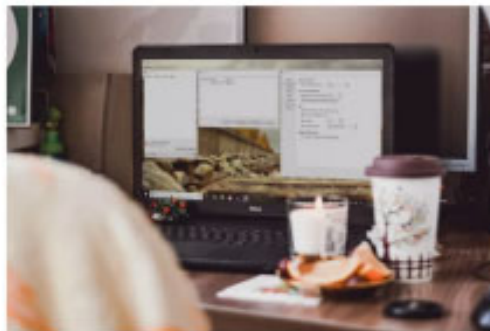
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Long before the Google+ social network was rolled out alongside its corresponding [Hangouts](#) feature, Google Talk (often referred to as "GTalk" or "GChat") was the way that a lot of people chatted by text or voice. It was launched in 2005 and discontinued in 2015.

07 Gaim (Now called Pidgin)

of 10



Although it may not be among one of the more recognizable messaging services of the digital age, the 1998 launch of Gaim (eventually renamed Pidgin) certainly was a large player in the market, having over three million users by 2007. Known as "the universal chat client," people can still use it with popularly supported networks like AIM, Google Talk, IRC, SILC, XMPP, and others.



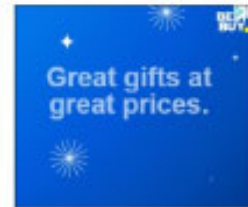
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08 Jabber



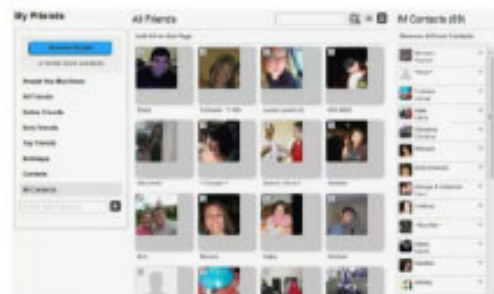
Wikipedia

Jabber came out in the year 2000, attracting users for its ability to be integrated with their friend lists on AIM, Yahoo Messenger, and MSN Messenger so they could chat with them from one place. The jabber.org website is still up, but it appears that the registration page has been disabled.



09 MySpaceIM

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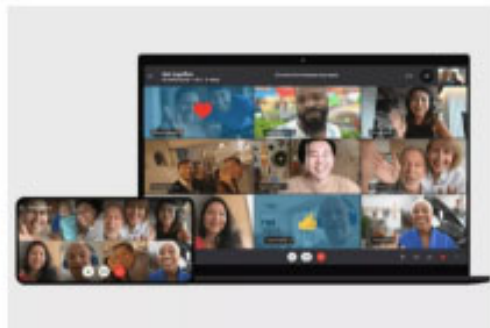


Back when MySpace dominated the social networking world, MySpaceIM gave users a way to message each other privately. Launched in 2006, it was the first social network to bring an instant messaging feature to its platform. MySpaceIM is still downloadable today; however, it doesn't look like there's a web option.



10 Skype

of 10



Wikipedia

Even though this article is about "old" instant messaging services, Skype is still popular today, especially for video chatting. The service was launched in 2003 and rose to popularity against competing tools like MSN Messenger. In an effort to keep up with the times, Skype later launched a mobile messaging app called Qik that looked a lot like Snapchat. Qik was discontinued in 2016.

[Download Skype](#)

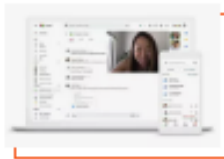
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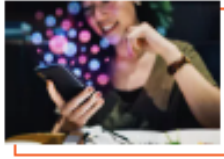
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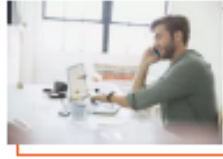
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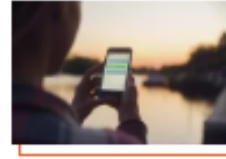
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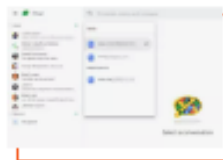
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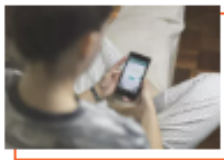
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