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# AOL 4.0: You've got tips

June 23, 1998

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by Lisa Moskowitz

(IDG) -- With more than 12 million subscribers worldwide, America Online is the Big Kahuna of Web portals. Keyword searches, Web access, and easy-to-use e-mail make AOL the definitive Internet gateway. And this old standby still has a few moves that upstart search engines don't.

While AltaVista, Excite, InfoSeek, Lycos, and Yahoo scramble to consolidate and expand, AOL is beefing up the basics. Its upcoming incarnation, version 4.0, sports an array of new user-interface and back-end features that make the service more fun, colorful, easier to work with, and a lot faster.

Based on beta testing--the release of the final version is scheduled for late July--I've pulled together a collection of tips and tricks that will give you a head start when you install AOL 4.0.

If you've been wondering when you'd be able to attach multiple files to your e-mail or insert a picture in a message, the wait is over. AOL 4.0's Mail Center is chock full of new features, from alphabetizing your address book to enabling the spelling checker.

I'll show you how to navigate quickly around AOL 4.0 and how to take advantage of cool new e-mail features. I'll reveal how to clean up Buddy List windows, keep your data secure, and get your e-mail over the Web when AOL isn't handy. You'll also find tips for making the most of the new Microsoft Internet Explorer 4 integration features. Lastly, I'll show you how to find your favorite features in the new interface.

You can download the preview version of AOL 4.0 by clicking the Keyword button in your current version of AOL and typing the word preview. The Welcome to AOL 4.0 window will appear and you can

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download a new version of the service. To use version 4.0 you must have a Pentium-level processor or faster and Windows 95 or 98. This preview version will not install if you have a stand-alone Internet Explorer 4 installed on your PC; the final version of AOL 4.0 is expected to address this compatibility issue.

## You Sure Do Get Around

Thanks to the integration of Internet Explorer 4.0, navigating AOL is much easier than before. You can search and navigate Web sites and AOL Channels in the same way, and you can move quickly from a Web page to an AOL Channel and back again. You can add up to three buttons of your own to the AOL Toolbar for one-click access to your favorite Web pages. Plus, you can use the Windows 95 right-click menus to access additional commands in some AOL windows.

## The History List

The drop-down History list located on the main AOL Toolbar lets you quickly return to Web sites and AOL Channels you've visited. Click the down arrow to the left of the Go button and scroll through the places you've been. When you find your desired location, select it and the AOL Channel or Web site launches.

As in the previous version of AOL, you can determine how many days destinations should remain on the History list (up to 999), view the list, or clear the list entirely. To modify these options, go to My AOL on the AOL Toolbar and select Preferences. Click the WWW button to get to the AOL Internet Properties dialog box, then choose the Navigation Tab and go to the History section to make your changes.

## Back and Forward

If you use a Web browser, you're familiar with Back and Forward buttons for jumping to sites you've visited. AOL 4.0 adds Back and Forward buttons to the toolbar, just to the left of the Keyword/URL address box. During a browsing session click Back or Forward to revisit Web pages and AOL Channels without jumping between the browser and the AOL interface, as you needed to in the previous version.

## Keyboard Shortcuts

AOL has never been accused of being fast. Here's a collection of keyboard shortcuts that can help you speed up your browsing:

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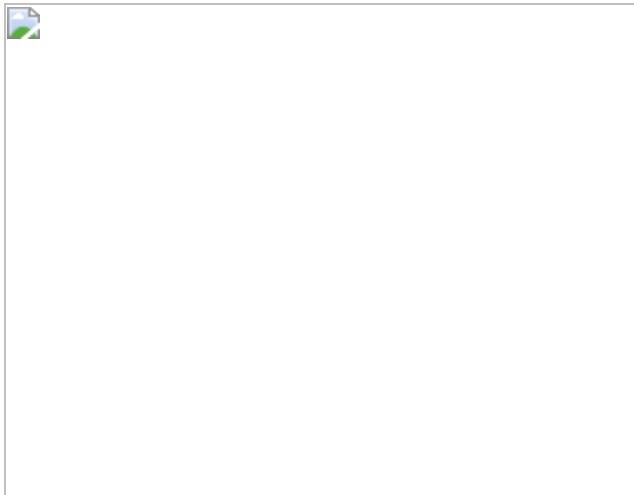
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### **Click My Buttons**

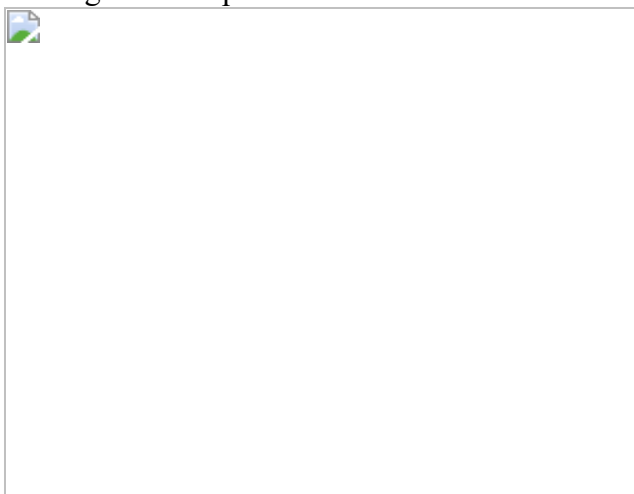
Adding new buttons to the AOL Toolbar is a simple way to speed up access to your favorite AOL Channels or Web sites. To add a channel, click the Channels icon in the center of the AOL Toolbar, then double-click a channel to open it.

In the window that opens, you'll see a Heart icon in the upper right corner. Drag and drop this icon into the far right end of the AOL Toolbar. The Icon Selector window will appear. Select an icon to represent your new button, then name it by typing in the Label text field. Click OK and the button will appear in the AOL Toolbar.

To delete a button, right-click it and choose "Remove button from AOL Toolbar," then click Yes.

### **Right-Click Tricks**

In a few AOL 4.0 windows you can right-click the screen to open a menu list rather than going to the AOL Toolbar and searching a drop-down menu for an option. The table below lists the windows in which new right-click options have been added.



### **Switch Screen Names Online**

If you're like many AOL members, you have several "screen names," or handles by which you log on (you can have up to five on one account).

In version 4.0 you can switch from one screen name to another without first closing AOL. To do this click Sign Off in the Menu bar, then select Switch Screen Name. The Switch Screen Names window will appear. Select the screen name you want to use and click the Switch button. A message box appears, telling you how long you were logged on under your last screen name. Click OK and AOL will automatically reopen under the new name.

## **The Browser Dilemma**

Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4 is tightly integrated into AOL 4.0. That offers quite a few advantages, including better navigation around the service and a high level of Internet security. The drawback is that you're stuck with IE4.

While there's no way to change the IE4 default browser in AOL 4.0, you can install a special version of Netscape Navigator that uses AOL's Internet connection, but must be launched from your desktop or hard drive (you could do this in AOL 3.0 as well).

To download AOL Co-Branded Netscape Navigator, type Netscape into the Keyword/URL address box. The AOL Co-Branded Navigator replaces any other Netscape browsers you have installed on your PC, but leaves your other Communicator settings intact. However, you won't be able to use your Communicator features (such as Netscape Mail) while you're logged on to AOL.

If you want to import your Bookmarks to the AOL version of Navigator, be sure to back up bookmark.html before you uninstall your current version of the browser.

### **Remove Navigator**

- 1.Remove any current versions of Navigator running on your system. To do this, go to the Start menu and select Settings, Control Panel.
- 2.Double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon.
- 3.Scroll down the list of programs and select Netscape.
- 4.Click the Add/Remove button and follow the instructions to uninstall the program.

### **Install AOL Co-Branded Netscape Navigator**

- 1.Sign on to AOL 4.0.
- 2.In the AOL Toolbar text field, enter Netscape.
- 3.Click the Netscape logo to proceed with the download. The Download Netscape window will open.
- 4.Double-click Download Netscape in the right-hand box to save the file to your AOL 4 Download folder.

5. When the file has been saved, go to the Start menu, choose Program, Windows Explorer, and find the AOL 4 folder.

6. Double-click the AOL 4 folder, then open the Download folder.

7. Double-click setupex.exe to install Navigator, and follow the directions.

To use your current bookmarks with the AOL-Netscape browser, click the Bookmarks button on the Netscape menu bar, then select Edit Bookmarks. Now choose File, Import. Navigate to where you backed up your original bookmark file and select it.

## **E-mail Tricks**

The Mail Center has an all-new interface for composing e-mail, as well as an advanced spelling checker. You can finally alphabetize your address book, block junk e-mail, send pictures in the body of a message, and attach multiple files to a message. Try changing your fonts for a dash of personal pizzazz.

### **Alphabet City**

The new Address Book automatically alphabetizes entries and lets you include a picture with each entry. To add a recipient to your Address Book, click the Mail Center icon on the AOL Toolbar and choose Address Book from the drop-down menu. Click New Person, then enter a name and e-mail address.

To add a picture to an Address Book entry, click the Edit button, then the Picture tab. Click Add Picture, then browse any local drive for an image. Double-click the image to insert it, then click OK.

### **Block Junk Mail**

AOL users have long suffered the indignity of spam in their mailboxes. Now you can block (some) unwanted junk e-mail using E-Mail Parental Controls. To set these controls, you must be signed on to AOL under the Master Account screen name. Select Mail Center on the toolbar and choose Mail Controls, or type Mail Controls into the address box on the toolbar.

Click the Set Up Mail Controls button and the E-Mail Parental Controls box will appear. Select the screen name that you want to modify the e-mail options for. Choose a setting from the list that appears, then click the Edit button. Now click the appropriate boxes to allow e-mail from AOL members and listed addresses only, listed addresses only, or AOL members only. You can also block all e-mail, or e-mail from the addresses you specify. You can also block all e-mail attachments. When you are finished setting your controls, click OK.

### **Justify Your E-Mail**

To align the text in your e-mail messages, just click the Align Left, Center, or Align Right buttons on the Write Mail window toolbar. If you

want your text to run the full width of the window, right-click the message field, choose Justification, then Full. (In previous AOL versions this option was available via a button on the Write Mail toolbar.)

## **Spelling Bee**

The Mail Center now has a spelling checker that automatically checks all your e-mail messages for spelling and grammatical errors. To enable this feature, click the Mail Center button on the main AOL toolbar and select Mail Preferences. Click the "Perform a spell check before sending mail" option, then click OK. AOL will now spell-check your work before it sends off a message.

## **Custom Spelling**

To customize the spelling checker, select the My AOL icon, then choose Preferences from the menu that appears and click the Spelling button. The Spelling Preferences window will appear. You'll see a list of fixes to select, including capitalizing sentences and proper nouns, deleting doubled words, and correcting punctuation. Click the appropriate boxes, then click OK.

You also have the option of adding words to a personal dictionary. Click the Advanced button for a complete list of enabled grammar rules. To disable a rule, select it and click Off under Current Status.

## **Disable Spelling Checker**

While many sloppy typists and careless spellers appreciate the automatic spelling checker, it can be annoying if you're just sending off a two-sentence memo or your e-mail style is that fashionably sloppy Web shorthand (for example, "how r u?" or "c-ya later"). To turn off this feature, select the Mail Center icon in the main AOL Toolbar and choose Mail Preferences, then deselect "Perform a spell check before sending mail." You can still check individual messages by clicking the Spell Check button on the message field toolbar.

AOL member and version 4.0 beta tester J.C. Pier suggests another way of turning off the spelling checker without disabling it altogether. Hold down the Ctrl key when you hit the Send button and the spelling checker will be disabled for that particular message only.

## **Insert Picture**

AOL 4.0 lets you insert pictures into an e-mail message. Here's how: Open a Write Mail window by clicking the icon in the toolbar. Place your cursor in the message field in the area where you want the picture to appear. Now click the Insert a Picture button (it has a camera on it) on the Write Mail window toolbar. Choose Insert a Picture to browse your local drive for a picture. When you select a file the image will appear in a small preview window on the right. Click Open. If the picture is large, you will be asked to resize it. Click "Yes, resize the image." AOL will then fit the image into your message so it's easy to view and doesn't take up too much space.

The picture will appear in the message as an inline image. To delete it, right-click in the message field and select Undo. Now you can continue writing or click Send Now to e-mail the message.

### **Attach Multiple Files**

AOL 4.0 lets you attach several files to a message without compressing them first. To do this, open a Write Mail window by pressing Ctrl-M. Type in an address and your message, then click the Attachments button in the lower left corner. The Attachments dialog box will open. Click Attach, then browse your hard drive for the files you want to send with your message. Double-click a file; it will appear in a list in the Attachments dialog box. When you're done, click OK to return to the Write Mail window.

### **Fontabulous**

If aubergine text on a lilac background isn't stylish enough for you, you'll be happy to know that you can now express yourself with a funky font style as well. To set your font, go to My AOL, Preferences, and click the Font button. The Font Preferences window will appear. Click the drop-down menu on the far left to select a font. Click once and a sample will appear in the text field. In this window you can also choose colors for the text, text background, and text field. Click OK to exit.

You have now set your default font and color preferences, which apply to e-mail, Chat, and Buddy List text. However, you can quickly change these preferences in the Write Mail window via a drop-down font menu above the text field.

### **Hey Buddy!**

Not much has changed in AOL's Buddy List feature, which is still accessible via the People icon. The icons at the bottom of the Buddy List window -- Locate, Instant Messenger, Setup, and Buddy Chat -- look different, but their functions are the same. The most significant enhancement is the ability to choose a custom font for your Instant Messenger text. To find out how, see the section entitled "Fontabulous."

### **Less Clutter**

It can be annoying to have Instant Messenger invitations pop up in separate windows on your screen. Here's how to remedy that situation: Since you can only have one invitation window open at a time, just send an invitation to yourself, then drag the invitation window out of sight. When additional invitations are sent, the information will appear in that same window--which is no longer in view.

*Lisa Moskowitz is a PC World Online staff editor.*

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