Wired up to Wellbeing

E-Friendship
Company - you're never alone with E-friends

Introduction

It has never been easier to keep in contact with friends and relatives, make new acquaintances and re-connect with people from your past. Whether it's simple text messages, computer-based telephone calls or video conferencing, communication is now just a click away thanks to the Internet.

As always with the web, caution is required. We have all heard stories in the news of the dangers posed by tools like chat rooms and people need to be on their guard when participating in online communication. Protecting our personal information and being wary of who we make contact with are probably the key issues to bear in mind.

In this module you will get a taste of several ways of online communication and tips on how to use these exciting tools safely. We will look at the following areas:

If you enjoy this lesson, make sure you try the next module, which looks at using the Internet to find out more about your family history.

Good luck and enjoy the session!

Birmingham Library Services

Safety Issues

The following Internet tools are a wonderful way of keeping in contact with friends and colleagues as well as meeting up with new people with similar interests. However, places like forums and social networking sites are public spaces. Any information you post can be viewed by visitors to the service, so always err on the side of caution when giving away personal information. Here are some general tips to bear in mind.

Safety Tips

- When registering with services you will be asked to give personal information like an email and sometimes your home address. Check the terms and conditions to see what use is made of this information before signing up.
- Use a pseudonym for your username to help you stay anonymous. This should be something that doesn't identify your real name such as 'Happysurfer'.
- Never give out personal information such as phone numbers or email addresses in a public place like your profile or in forums.
- On social networking sites or on Instant Messenger, avoid accepting a contact request from a stranger.
- Check to see whether the site allows you to block contacts from individuals.
- Remember, photographs and information about strangers you come across online can be completely fictitious. Be careful who you trust!
- Check whether the settings on the service allow you to block attachments such as files and images, which can contain viruses.
- Report anyone who misuses the service.
- Check to see if it is easy to delete your account and leave the service if you choose to.

Community Forums

In a nutshell
Also called discussion boards, forums are like public notice boards and allow visitors to read and reply to messages.
We like
You don't have to be online at the same time as others and can read and reply to messages whenever you want. Replies to messages are listed one below the other on the forum, making the 'thread' easy to read. Forums are a very popular way of developing online communities and support networks.
Caution
Messages posted are public and can be read by anyone visiting the forum. It can sometimes take a while for messages to receive replies, especially on quieter forums.

Visitors to forums usually navigate through three levels:

1) Top level (Forum homepage): You will see general categories of messages
2) Middle level (Inside a category): You see a list of messages inside a category
3) Bottom level (Inside a message or a thread): You see individual messages and replies

1) Category >>   Household
1) Category >>   Holidays
    2) Message >>   Hotels in Spain
    2) Message >>   Cheap Flights
    2) Message >>   Where can I buy a cheap tent?
        3) Replies >>   Re: Where I can buy a cheap tent?
        3) Replies >>   Re: Where I can buy a cheap tent?

1) Start by finding the category you're interested in and click the title.
2) Look through the messages and find one to read. Click the title.
3) Read through the message and the replies.
4) If you want to post a message or reply to one, register as a member.

You can often tell how popular and busy a forum is by checking how many posts there have been and how many views a post has received.

Instructions

Visit any of these forums. The questions below are simply to steer you towards important features. Feel free to have a look around while you're there.

Walking

Go to www.ramblers.co.uk/forum
The Ramblers use Facebook to post updates and for members to communicate with each other. Click 'Wall' on the left to see the latest posts.

Cooking

Go to www.deliaonline.com/community
Scroll down and click 'Discussion forums'.
Scroll down. Which topic has the most messages?
Check how recently the messages were posted.

Financial advice:

Go to forums.moneysavingexpert.com
Scroll down. Click 'Pensions, Annuities & Retirement Planning'.
A very busy forum! Which message has had the most views?

Moving house

Go to www.homemove.co.uk/forums
Scroll down and click on 'Buying Property Abroad'.
In which countries do people seem interested in buying property?

Local History

Go to forum.birminghamhistory.co.uk
Scroll right down and click on 'Pubs'
Do you recognise any of the pub names?

Age Related

Go to https://www.facebook.com/ageuk
Spend some time exploring this Facebook Page.

Email Groups

In a nutshell
These services allow you to post and read email messages within a group. These messages can be read in your email inbox or, a like a forum, from your group homepage.
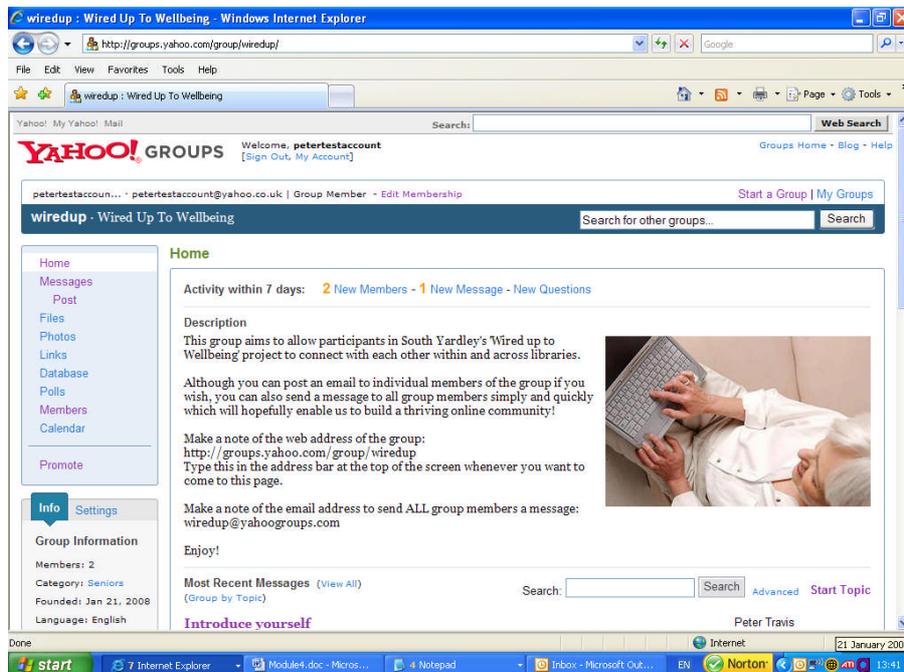
We like
Some can be moderated and can be private and safe from unwelcome visitors. They offer an easy way to post to a community of users and messages are delivered to your inbox. You can read and post to the group at a time that suits you. Groups come with other facilities such as photo and file sharing, calendars and polls.

Caution
No real problems if part of a closed group. As always, be careful when sharing files, personal information or communicating with someone you don't know.

You can now join our very own 'Wired up to Wellbeing' Group at Yahoo®. If you haven't already got one, you will need to create a Yahoo® account to join.
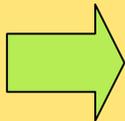
Instructions

1) Go to: groups.yahoo.com/group/wiredup

2) Click '**Join This Group**' on the right and then sign in if you have a Yahoo® account or '**Sign Up**' to create an account. When you have an account you can join the group. Emails from the group will be sent to your yahoo email address. Decide whether you want to receive **individual emails** or a **daily digest**.

3) Click '**Messages**' on the left and then read the list of messages on the right. Find a message with '**Introduce Yourself**' in the subject line. Read the message and then click '**Reply**' to introduce yourself.

Clicking '**Reply**' or '**Start Topic**' will send your message to everyone in the group. If you want to send a personal message to one person click the **envelope icon** below their ID.
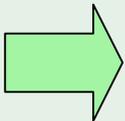
Note the email address for the group:
wiredup@yahoogroups.com

4) Why not start a topic of your own? Maybe you're interested in communicating with people about digital photographs, local history, shopping etc. To start a new thread or topic click '**Start Topic**' on the right.
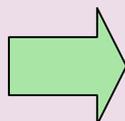
Connect
Click '**Members**' to see all the people from the 'Wired up' project who have joined this group so far.

Group photos
See photographs members of the group have added. You too can create an album and add photos for the group to see.

Group weblinks
Share your favourite websites with the group and see which websites others like to visit.

Your Profile

You can see everyone's personal profile from the Members area. If you would like to update your profile:

1) Click '**Edit Membership**' towards the top of the screen.

2) Click '**Add new profil**e' under '**Step 1**'

3) Click '**Edit**' next to your Yahoo ID. (DO NOT CLICK CREATE NEW PUBLIC PROFILE.)

4) Click '**Edit Profile Information**'

5) Complete the information you feel comfortable sharing.

6) For privacy do not click Directory Listing and click '**Save changes**'

Social Networking

In a nutshell
These are online communities, often organised around occupations, school networks or interests where people connect with others.
We like
They offer a variety of ways to connect and communicate with old friends and new acquaintances.
Caution
The service interface can become quite confusing with so many options. Connections to strangers grow as your list of contacts grows, which highlights the need for caution.

Personal Information

Sites will ask for personal information when you register, some of it required, such as your email address. This can sometimes extend to your home address. Check the terms and conditions to find out what the company uses this information for. Other information, such as the details that appear on your profile, will not be required. You can usually leave this blank and edit details later, when you've had the chance to check out the site.

Friends Reunited

A very popular website where people can look up old friends or colleagues from school, college, university or work. You can find out what people from the past are doing now – even organise reunions.
www.friendsreunited.co.uk

Want To Register?

1) Go to the website
2) Click **'Register Here'**
3) Supply the required information
4) Choose **Primary or Secondary school**
5) Find your school
6) Click '**Add my name**'
7) Confirm your email
8) Click the message in your email to confirm registration

You will now be at your school page. Choose the year you want to look at and see who you remember. Check the image gallery. Notice at the bottom you can change the year you've been listed and remove yourself from the system.
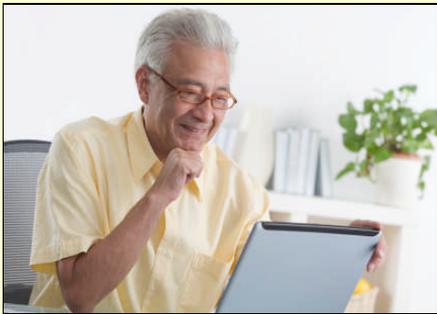
Saga Zone

Saga Zone offers you the chance to join a new social network of friends and keep in touch through the Internet.
Tools include:
your own personal profile page
an online forum.
your own web diary, or blog.
www2.saga.co.uk

Want to Register?

1) Go to the website **www2.saga.co.uk**
2) Register and confirm your email address
3) Add personal details.
4) Leave the **'Tell us about yourself'** section until later.
5) Click the Saga Zone icon at the top.
6) Scroll down. How many members are online at the moment?
Notice that many people use a pseudonym to allow for privacy
7) Click '**See all online members**'
8) Click any of the photos to see the person's profile. This is what other people will be able to see when you fill in your **'Tell us about yourself'** profile.

You can send the person a private message and also ask them to become a friend, which they may or may not agree to.

Instant Messaging

In a nutshell
A way of communicating in real time with personal contacts. Communication is normally on a one-to-one basis but group chats can also be held. Text, audio and video can be used.
We like
The user has much more control over who they communicate with than in an open chat room.
Caution
The same issues that apply to other forms of communication online, namely giving out personal information, downloading viruses, connecting with strangers.

As with email there are two ways to communicate using Instant Messaging: an Internet-based service or using software that is installed on your computer. The first option has the advantage that you can login from any computer connected to the Internet. The second option offers more features such as using a webcam.
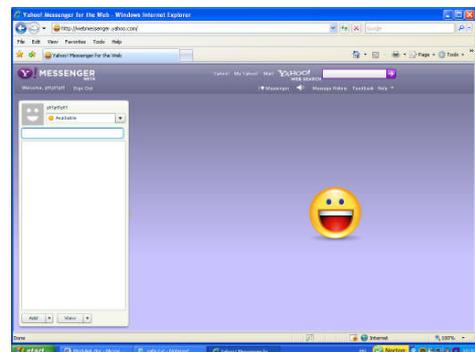
Internet-based Instant Messenger

As you now have a Yahoo account we will start with an Internet-based service. This will show you how to:

A) Login to Yahoo Instant Messenger
B) Add a contact
C) Send and receive a message from your contact
D) Add a contact to your messenger list.

Instructions

1) Collect the Yahoo IDs of everyone in the group.
2) Go to **messenger.yahoo.com** scroll down and click '**Get Started**'.
3) Login with your Yahoo username and password.
4) Click the '**Sign in**' button.
5) You will then see a screen like this:

6) Click the '**Add**' button at the bottom. Choose '**Yahoo Contact**' and type in the Yahoo ID of the person sitting next to you. Press the enter key on the keyboard. If the person doesn't have a Yahoo ID you can add their Hotmail ID instead.

7) The ID should appear on the left. Click on the person's ID. A window will appear on the right with the person's username and whether they are online of offline. Type a message in the box at the bottom of the screen and click '**Send**'. Your message will appear in the window. Wait for your partner to write back.

8) When you receive a message or contact request from a new person you will have the option of adding them as a contact. Click '**Add**' or '**Accept**' and '**New Group**'. Under '**Enter a group name**' type '**Wiredup'** and then '**Create**'.

> ⚠ In general, block strangers who request to add you as a contact. If they have been referred to you from a friend or relative they will tell you. Some people avoid using a photograph of themselves on their profile. It is perfectly acceptable to use a cartoon character or something that allows you to remain anonymous.

Once you are signed in to your account, the Yahoo® homepage offers you quick access to your Mail, Instant Messenger and your WiredUp group.

Not Just Text

Depending upon the software you have available you can also speak to your contact and see them if you both have a webcam.

Webcam

A webcam is a video camera which is connected to the Internet through a person's Computer and Internet connection. Webcams are often used to enable people to see each other when communication online through instant messaging or chat.

Software-Based Instant Messenger

If you want to have all the extra features of Instant Messaging such as multi-person communication, voice and video communication you need to use a software-based package rather then an Internet-based tool. '**Yahoo Messenger**' has a version you can install on your computer as does Microsoft with its own '**Windows Messenger**'.

Check to see whether your local library has the technology available to try this now. The following instructions are for Windows Messenger.

NB. If you haven't already got a Hotmail account you and your contacts will need to set one up to use 'Windows Messenger'. Sign up for Windows Live account here: **uk.msn.com** and click **'Sign up'.**

Instructions

1) Get a few Hotmail addresses from others in your group.

2) If Windows Messenger is installed click '**Start**' at the bottom of your screen, then '**Windows Live Messenger**'.

3) Sign in with your Hotmail email address and password. If this doesn't work it probably means you have an old hotmail account and you will need to create a Windows live ID. You will probably be able to do this with the same Hotmail ID you already have.

4) Find your name at the top left of the screen and click it. Check the options, such as changing your online status to busy, offline etc. This status will appear to others who have you in their list of contacts.

5) Click the green icon at the top right of the screen to '**Add Contact**'. Add one of the Hotmail email addresses on your list and a short introductory message.

6) Select a group to place the contact in and click '**Add contact**'. The name will appear on the left under the category you have chosen.

7) Place the cursor over the icon to the left of the person's name. Is the person online or offline?

8) Right click the icon. Which options are available?

9) Double click the icon and start chatting or leave a message.

10) Add further people to your contacts.