

Wireless AOL Instant Messenger

An AIM for WAP / Sprint

User Study Proposal

October 30, 2001

1 Background

The AIM for WAP client has been hosted without significant modifications on Sprint PCS phones since October, 2000, and Sprint has expressed a desire for improving the user interface design. Targeted user data is needed to better understand the issues affecting AIM utilization on the Sprint PCS Wireless Web and to assess specific usability issues affecting the AIM for WAP user experience.

2 Goals

The *primary goal* is to answer the following question, “*Is the current user interface design a significant factor effecting perceptions about the AIM for WAP service?*” The answer to this question will assist with determining the scale of effort required to identify and resolve specific usability issues. The *secondary goal* is to identify and evaluate the usability issues specifically related to the user interface design and to recommend changes to the user interface design to improve the user experience.

3 Benefits

The benefits from implementing the proposed user study are:

- A determination can be made regarding the impact of the existing AIM for WAP user interface on end-user satisfaction. Therefore, a clear business decision can be made to invest in improvements to the AIM for WAP design.
- If the user interface and user interaction design is found to confound the user experience, the user interface design problems will be identified and resolutions can be easily defined.

4 Strategy

The proposed strategy for achieving the primary goal includes identifying the major contributing factors that affect the user experience. The possible contributing factors can be grouped into the following categories:

- User Interface Design – factors that reflect a problem with the user interface design.
- User Benefits – factors that relate to the perceived and actual value of AIM to the user.
- Service Provider Contract – factors that relate to the rates and other conditions imposed by the service agreement.
- Handset Features – factors that reflect ergonomic issues related to the hardware, such as key mapping, text input, and the physical size of buttons and screen.
- Marketing Materials – factors that suggest a failure to communicate realistic expectations, represent product features accurately, or fail to inform necessary user instruction through printed materials that accompany the handset.

Emphasis is placed on the *User Interface Design* category; however, user information collected that identifies other factors is important to making a determination on whether the user interface is a factor contributing to a poor user experience.

5 Target User

The target user is a current or former Sprint Wireless Web subscriber, and a current or former AIM for WAP user.

6 User Study Phases

The user study is divided into two phases to be completed in sequential order. *Phase One* is designed to achieve the primary goal. *Phase One* involves collecting and evaluating user data and AIM for WAP usage data in order

to make a determination on the significance of the AIM for WAP user interface design on user satisfaction. *Phase Two* is designed to achieve the secondary goal. *Phase Two* involves identifying detailed user interface design issues and proposing changes to the user interface design to improve the AIM for WAP user experience.

6.1 Phase One – User Surveys

Phase One is divided into two parts. *Part 1* is comprised of an online user survey of target users who are registered members of the AOL Beta Test Program. *Part 2* is comprised of an online or telephone survey of existing subscribers and previous subscribers of the Sprint PCS Wireless Web service. Completion of *Phase One* will produce AIM for WAP user demographics and the factors affecting the AIM for WAP user experience.

6.2 Phase Two – User Interviews

Phase Two is comprised of interviewing a sample target user population in-person or by telephone to collect detailed information necessary to identify specific usability issues related to the user interface design as well as other specific issues affecting the AIM for WAP user experience.

7 Budget Summary

Phase One	
Total Estimated AOL Salaried Hours	X (Hours)
Total Estimated Third-Party Fees	\$
Total Estimated Gift Incentive Cost	AOL Gifts = TBD
Estimated Time To Completion	X (Days)
Phase Two	
Total Estimated AOL Salaried Hours	X (Hours)
Total Estimated Gift Incentive Cost	Cash = \$ AOL Gifts = TBD
Estimated Time To Completion	X (Weeks)
Estimated Totals For Both Phases	
Total Estimated AOL Salaried Hours	X (Hours)
Total Estimated Third-Party Fees	\$
Total Estimated Time To Completion	X (Days)