

Using Instant Messenger in the Finance Course

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Abstract

The internet has changed the way we, as finance instructors, conduct and teach our courses. Several examples have been published recently in the business education journals. In this paper we investigate the benefits of using Instant Messaging (IM) in finance courses. We discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using IM, how to implement IM, and provide personal examples of using IM in our classes.

There are several free IM programs, including: *AOL Instant Messenger* (AIM), *Yahoo Messenger* and *MSN Messenger*; as well as corporate (non-free) IM software, such as Lotus Software Group's *Sametime* and *Presence Platform* from Bantu, Inc.

Important Links: for AOL Instant Messenger Registration – <http://www.aim.com/index.adp> and for a tutorial see www.old.umassd.edu/tew/aimwelcome.html

Results from a survey of 66 students include: 47% of our students use instant messaging at any time, the majority of the IM users use it several times a day and have used it for two to three years, only about 14% of our students have used IM for our classes, of those students who have used IM for our courses, they have used it 2-5 times during the semester and they all found it useful. Our students strongly like face-to-face communication, followed by (in order of preference) email, instant messaging, and telephone. Students disagree with the statement that IM is a substitute and agree that IM is a supplement to face-to-face interaction.

One must properly manage your time with respect to IM usage because the beeping from the IM window can seem to be incessant. But like email, we have found, that properly managed, IM can be another valuable tool in working with students and faculty.