

# OPEARLSO

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## Instant Messaging for Intra-Office Communication

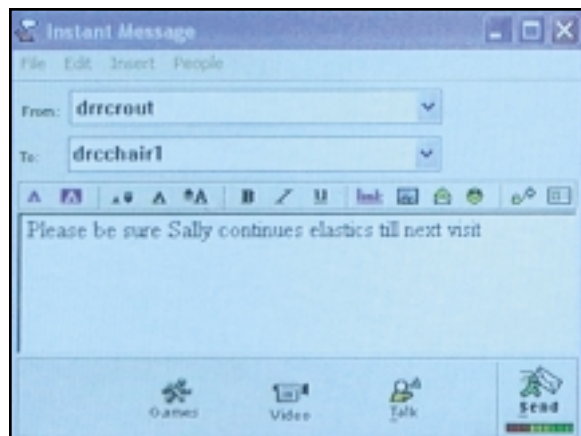
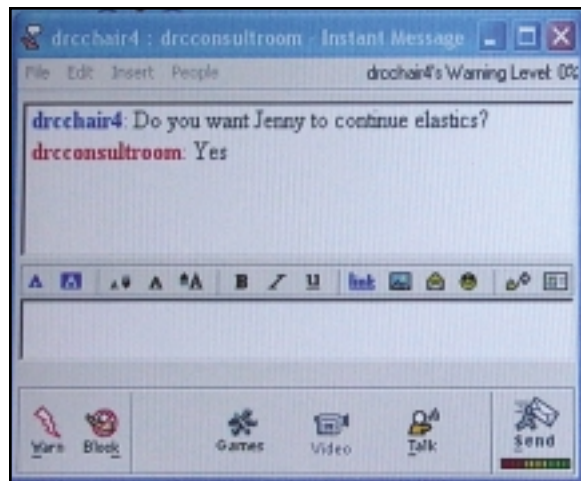
**W**hen designing my present office, I elected not to incorporate chairside signals that the assistants could use to reach me when needed. This turned out to be a serious mistake. We tried many different communication techniques, but nothing worked to our satisfaction.

After installing a cable modem and router to enable Internet access on all our computers, we had established an e-mail address for each employee. That allowed them e-mail me if they were ready for chairside checks or had questions about patients. My staff then suggested using the free America Online Instant Messenger service. I downloaded the program that evening from [www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com), even though I don't use AOL as my Internet service provider.

Now, every staff member can send instant messages without leaving the chair. The system is far superior to light signals because the messages can address specific concerns, and I can respond immediately from my office.

Originally, I had only planned to use instant messaging in the treatment bay. It was so effective and easy to install, however, that we extended it to the front desk. I have already saved money on the Post-It notes that seemed to litter my office. Instant messaging allows the front-desk staff to ask me or anyone in the treatment bay about seeing late patients or resolving financial problems without leaving the reception area. If I'm on the phone, I can answer without interrupting my call.

Instant messaging has quickly become an efficient means of communication in our office. The only requirement is Internet access.



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