

# A Web icon looks to the future—Rebranding AIM



## AOL

Before Twitter or Facebook there was AIM, AOL's instant messenger service. It's one of the iconic properties of the Web, a tremendously useful service that's withstood changing tastes and the test of time. Over the years, however, AIM's identity had grown too big, often acting as a stand-in for the entire AOL brand. AIM asked Hot Studio to help reclaim the identity of its signature social product and redefine what AIM would mean to a new generation of users.

*"Hot really worked with us to get the creative brief right, which was key. Then they delivered high-quality branding work that we're proud to have represent AIM."*

*Jason Shellen, VP of Messaging Products, AOL*

### Listen and learn

Early on, Hot's designers focused on understanding how AIM's product team wanted the new identity to integrate with the product itself. Concurrently, Hot reviewed previous explorations, along with brand guidelines, usage information, and user research from AIM. Hot explored the history of the brand and the brand landscape of new social networking and connectivity brands, and worked with the AIM product team to establish a framework for mapping target users against attributes for the new AIM products. This pragmatic approach informed the collaborative development of brand attributes and personality for future AIM products.

### Organic solutions

As Hot's designers began working on a visual language for AIM, they took an open, exploratory approach that considered both evolutionary and

revolutionary directions. The team explored three rounds of concepts for the identity mark design, and another three for logotype design, the whole while integrating feedback from AIM about intentions and direction.

### A winner at long last

From a bevy of options, AIM chose a revolutionary brand direction that underscores the fun and functionality of AIM. AIM's elegant new hand-drawn wordmark is a clean break from its identity of old, and will help this valuable social platform remain an icon for years to come.