

Chapter 6

Using Sound Files with Online Services

Back in the Dark Ages, online services had no graphics or sound. That was fine because our computers didn't either. But now — wow! Most online services use graphics as their primary interface. Sound often acts as an enhancement rather than playing a major role in the interface.

This chapter deals with sound as it exists today on the three most popular online services — America Online (AOL), CompuServe, and the Microsoft Network (MSN). I am also including a service that is not strictly an online service but where you can chat and share sound files — Internet Relay Chat (IRC) using the mIRC interface for Windows.

What you'll learn:

- How to configure and use America Online's sound events, buddy sounds, and chat room sounds (also, how to use PowerTools to manage chat room sounds)
- How to use configure CompuServe's sound events
- How to use configure, play, and trade sounds in mIRC channels (also, how to use WaVGeT to manage sound files)
- How to configure and use Microsoft Network's sound events and chat room sounds

Sounds on America Online

AOL provides a few sound events, which you can reassign, but the major use of sound here is in the chat rooms, where you can play sounds for the people you're chatting with. In the following sections, you'll learn where to find the AOL sound events, how to play sounds in chat rooms, and where to find lots of sound files to download.

Basic AOL sound events

When you sign on to AOL, a man's voice says, "Welcome," perhaps followed by a delighted "You've got mail." He also bids you "Goodbye" when you leave. (Silly me — I used to think the voice belonged to Steve Case, the founder and CEO of AOL. It's really an actor named Elwood Edwards.) These audio messages are triggered by sound events, of course. Table 6-1 lists the six basic sound events on AOL, along with their Windows filenames. The Mac snd resource names are the same as the sound event names, except that the system alert sound is used in place of Drop. Two more events, associated with AOL's Buddy Lists, are discussed in the next section.

Table 6-1 AOL Basic Sound Events

Event Name	Default Windows File	Default Sound
Drop	drop.wav	water drop (for PC)
File's Done	filedone.wav	"File's done"
Goodbye	goodbye.wav	"Goodbye"
IM	im.wav	chimes
Welcome	welcome.wav	"Welcome"
You've Got Mail	gotmail.wav	"You've got mail"

If you're using Windows, you'll find the AOL sound events in your Sounds Properties window, shown in Figure 6-1. You can assign any WAV files to them, just like any other sound events. To change their assignments, use the Sounds Properties window, Wave Events, or another sound editor, as explained in Chapter 4.



Figure 6-1 The AOL sound events appear in the Windows 95 Sounds Properties window.

There's another way to change the AOL event sounds — replace the default files. For example, you might record yourself saying, “Welcome,” “Is your homework done?” or “Look out cyberworld, I'm online again!” In Windows, name the new file `welcome.wav`. Replace the default file with your new one, and that's the sound you'll hear every time you or anyone else using your computer signs on. Be sure to save the old file in case you ever want to go back to it. You'll find lots of replacement files named `welcome`, `im`, `gotmail`, and so on, in AOL's sound libraries. With a Mac, use Agent Audio (or a similar program) to replace the sound resource in the AOL program file, as explained in Chapter 5.

**Note**

The event sounds are specific to each computer. If you sign on to your account from someone else's computer, you'll hear their Welcome sound, not yours.

AOL's Buddy List sounds

AOL's Buddy Lists have their own sound events — BuddyIn occurs when someone on your Buddy List signs on, and BuddyOut when someone on your list exits. For Windows, AOL provides two sound themes to start with. The Door theme plays a door opening for BuddyIn and a door slam for BuddyOut. The SDW theme says, "You've got company" for BuddyIn and "Later" for BuddyOut.

Where to find sounds on AOL

The AOL sound libraries are full of WAVs and SNDs for you to use with AOL events and elsewhere. Most of them were created by AOL members and range from amateur to professional. AOL provides some collections too. You've already seen the sound library for Buddy sounds. But there are several more.

PC users should head for keyword: PCSOUND, while Mac users use keyword: MMS to find their Music and Sound forum. The Music and Sound Forum includes message boards, special interest groups such as the Guitar SIG, and a huge software library that offers not only software (players, converters, recorders, and the like) but also lots and lots of sound files. Also try keyword: FILESEARCH to access all of AOL's software libraries. Then search for phrases such as SND, WAV, Christmas, train, welcome, and so on.

**Note**

The files you download might be compressed by programs such as PKZip (ZIP files) or StuffIt (SIT files). AOL should automatically decompress them when you sign off. If not, you can decompress them yourself with a program such as PKUnzip, WinZip, or StuffIt Expander. See my book *MIME, UUENCODE & ZIP: Decompressing and Decoding Internet Files*, for complete instructions on how to decompress files.

Try keyword: CELEBRITY VOICES to visit AOL's Gallery of Celebrities, shown in Figure 6-3, where you can download famous voices such as Reba McEntire and Dennis Rodman to replace your Welcome, You've Got Mail, and Goodbye sounds. You'll also find downloadable sounds scattered around various forums, such as Nickelodeon and MuchMusic. Of course, some of the best places to get new sounds are chat rooms. That's the subject of the next section.

Playing chat room sounds

You play a sound file in a chat room by typing a sound command in this format, where *filename* indicates the name of the sound file (without the extension):

```
{S filename}
```

If you want to play a file named ohno, for example, you would type the following command on the chat line and press Enter:

```
{S ohno}
```

Everyone in the room who has a file named ohno on their system will hear it. (They might hear different sounds from yours — they'll hear whatever ohno files reside on their disk.) Windows users must have files named ohno.wav, while Mac users must have snd resources named ohno.

You can leave out the closing brace if the sound command is at the end of a line:

```
Hiya TJ! {S siddown
```

But you must use the closing brace if any chat text follows the command:

```
Hey Bugs {S sploot} to you too!
```

Can't make chat sounds work? Here are the most common reasons:

- Chat sounds are not enabled.

You must enable chat sounds before you can hear them. Go to keyword: PREFERENCES, open the Chat Preferences, and enable "Enable chat room sounds" (Windows) or "Play chat sounds sent by other members" (Macintosh).

- You don't have the sound files or resources.

You must download the desired files from somewhere—a sound library or a Web site, perhaps—or get a friend to send them to you.

- You have the sound files, but not in the right place.

For Windows, the files must be located in the main AOL folder. For Mac OS, sound resources must be in the System suitcase (also known as the System file).

Many people download sound files to their standard download folder and then try to use them in chat rooms without moving them to the necessary folder. Then they age ten years trying to figure out why other people can hear sounds and they can't. The secret is to move sound files from the download folder to the correct place.

- You didn't spell the name of the file correctly.
- You didn't type the {S *filename*} command correctly.

There must be a space after the S.

**Note**

Sounds don't work in the AOL auditoriums even though you can chat there.

Managing sounds with PowerTools

Suppose a buddy just played a “boo!” sound and you want to come back quickly with “eek!” You try {S eek}, {S eekk}, {S Eke}, {S EEK} . . . nothing works. By the time you finally get the right filename, you're lagging three miles behind everyone else in the room. It might be time for you to get an AOL add-on to manage your sound files.

An *add-on* is a program that runs in conjunction with AOL to extend AOL's features. The most popular Windows add-on is PowerTools from BPS Software (keyword: BPS). It offers plenty of features for enhancing e-mail, IMs, and chatting. Figure 6-2 shows an AOL window with PowerTools added on. As you can see, it pretty much replaces the standard AOL interface with its own. Notice PowerTool's WavMan window, where you can create groups of WAVs for your different chat environments. Perhaps you might create Trivia WAVs, Romance WAVs, and Just Us Girls WAVs. Open the right WAV group for the chat room you're in—you want the same WAVs as everyone else in the room—and leave the window open while you chat. When you want to play a WAV, you simply select it and choose Send. You can preview it by choosing Play or by double-clicking it.

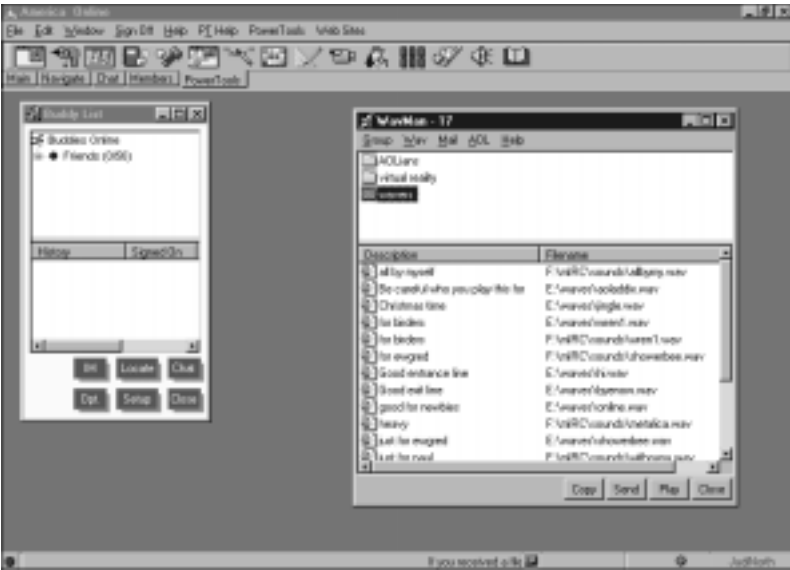


Figure 6-2 *BPS Power Tools includes WavMan to make it easier to handle WAVs while chatting.*

I have not included PowerTools on the CD-ROM that accompanies this book. Its integration with the AOL software is so intensive that even a minor AOL revision forces BPS to upgrade PowerTools. If I put it on the CD-ROM, it would be out of date by the time you get it. You can download the latest version from keyword: BPS.



Note
PowerTools is shareware. You can try it out for 20 days. If you decide to keep it, the shareware registration fee is \$29.95 (\$24.95 if you register it before the 20 days are up). Some features are disabled in the unregistered version as an incentive to register. It also nags you to register.

How to create a WAV group:

1. Choose PowerTools ⇨ General ⇨ Wav Manager to open the WavMan window. (You can do this offline or online.)

2. In the WavMan window, choose Group ⇨ New to pop up a dialog box where you can name the new group.
3. Type a name for the group and press Enter. The new group appears in the top box in the WavMan window, where your WAV groups are listed.

How to add individual WAVs to a group:

1. Select the group in the top box in the WavMan window.
2. Choose Group ⇨ Add Wav to open a common browse dialog box.
3. Locate and double-click the desired WAV. WavMan asks if you want to enter a brief description.
4. Choose Yes to open the dialog box where you can enter the description.
5. Type a description and then press Enter. The dialog box closes and the new WAV file and description appear in the bottom box in the WavMan window.

How to add all the WAVs in a folder to a group:

1. Select the group in the top box in the WavMan window.
2. Choose Group ⇨ “Add all from directory” to open a common browse dialog box.
3. Locate and select the desired folder, and then choose Open. WavMan asks if you want to enter a brief description for each WAV.
4. If you choose Yes, WavMan shows you one WAV at a time so that you can enter a description for it.
5. When you’re done entering descriptions and the last dialog box closes, all the WAVs in the selected folder are added to the group and appear in the bottom box of the WavMan window.

To remove one or more WAVs, select them and then right-click any one of them to pop up a context menu where you can *Delete from group* (to remove them from the group only) or *Delete from system* (to delete them from your hard drive). In either case you must confirm that you want to delete them. To add or change a description, select the WAV and choose Wav ⇨ Edit description. To move one or more WAVs to a different group, select them and choose Wav ⇨ Move to pop up a dialog box where you can select the destination group.

PowerTools also lets you send WAVs in IMs, but only to other PowerTools users. Select the IM window and then select the WAV in the WavMan window and choose Send.

**Tip**

Even if you don't have PowerTools, you can use the `{S filename}`. Play a WAV in an IM for someone who does – you won't hear it but they will. Just be sure to include the closing brace in the `{S filename}` command.

You can also use WavMan to reassign your AOL sound events. WavMan's AOL menu provides options to assign the selected WAV to any of the sound events, including the buddy sounds. The Mail menu lets you send one or more WAV files to someone else via e-mail.

**Tip**

Check out BPS's WavMan site for lots of links to sound files: <http://members.aol.com/bpscowav/wavman/index.html>

Sounds on CompuServe

CompuServe 3.0.4 greets you audibly when you arrive (“Welcome to CompuServe”) and when you leave (“Thank you for using CompuServe”). In between, sounds provide audio clues as you click buttons and receive various types of messages.

CompuServe's sound events

Table 6-3 shows CompuServe's nine sound events. The Start event occurs when you open the CompuServe program, not when you sign on. Likewise, the Exit event occurs when you close the program, not when you sign off. ButtonDown occurs when you click one of the CompuServe buttons. Some buttons pop back up immediately, triggering the ButtonUp event. The Invitation event occurs when someone invites you to a private chat. After you accept the invitation, you hear Received Talk each time the person you're chatting with sends you a message.

Table 6-2 The CompuServe Sound Events

Event	Default Windows File	Default Sound
Start	Wcstart.wav	"Welcome to CompuServe"
Button Down	Wcclick.wav	Slight click
Button Up	Wcclick.wav	Slight click
Host Message	Wcasyn.wav	Tinny beep
Invitation	Wcinvite.wav	"You're invited"
New Forum Messages	Wcformes.wav	Ding
New Mail	Wcgetmai.wav	"You have mail"
Received Talk	Wcinact.wav	Three beeps
	ExitWcexit.wav	"Thank you for using CompuServe"

With Windows, the sound events are registered with and appear in the Sounds Properties window where you can reassign them as desired. As always, any WAVs will do. For the Macintosh, the sound resources are located in the CompuServe program file and you can change them with the SoundMover program (or a similar program) as explained in Chapter 5.

Where to find sounds on CompuServe

CompuServe's best-known feature is its treasury of forums, and you'll find several devoted to music and sound. Here are a few to get you started:

- MIDI forums group (MIDI)
- Mac Multimedia (MACMULTI)
- Music Hall (music forums group) (MUSIC)
- Sight and Sound (SSFORUM)

But don't just look in the sound forums. Lots of other areas include sound files in their libraries. Forums like Nostalgia (NOSTALGIA), Mac Entertainment (MACFUN), the Beatles Fab Forum (BANDS), and dozens of others include large collections of sound files in their libraries. Try searching for areas pertaining to the types of sounds you want. Choose the Search tool on CompuServe's main toolbar to open the general search page, shown in Figure 6-5. Then try out these search facilities:

- **Forums:** To search for forums by topics such as cartoons, sound effects, and holiday
- **Search by Topic:** To search for forums, communities, online magazines, and more
- **Search for downloadable files:** To search CompuServe's extensive download libraries for WAVs, SNDs, and so on



Figure 6-3 You can locate lots of sound files via CompuServe's extensive search capability.

In a forum, the File Libraries button opens a list of all the files in that forum's libraries, much like the one in Figure 6-4. (Some libraries are organized into sections and you must open a section to see the file list.)

When someone uploads a file to a library, they provide a description and a set of keywords to help you decide if you want the file. Select a file and choose Description to read the description, which also shows you the keywords and who uploaded the file. If you decide you want the file, choose Retrieve (to download it immediately) or Retrieve Later (to add it to your to-do list to be downloaded at some later time).

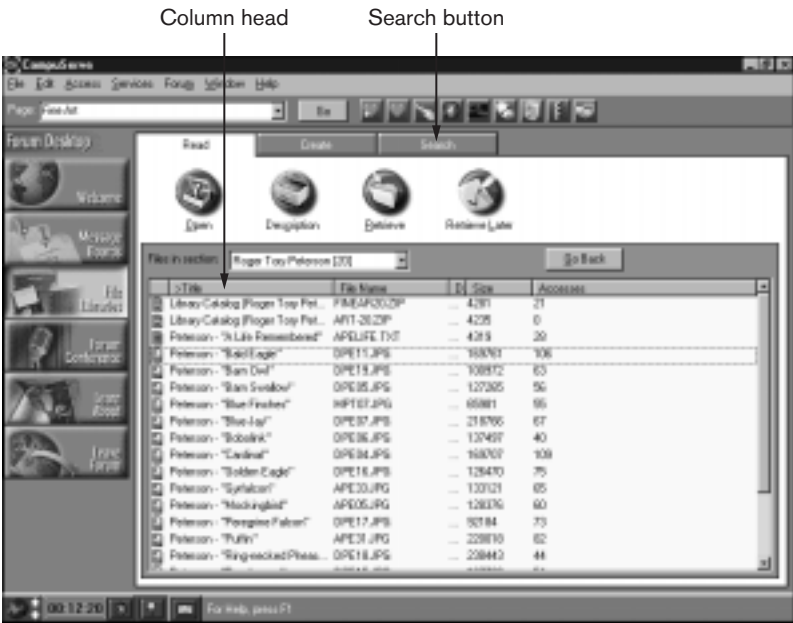


Figure 6-4 A forum library contains files for you to download.

Unfortunately, there's no way to sort the list by type of file. The list might contain programs, photos, text documents, and other types of files mixed in with the sound files you're looking for. But you can search the library by choosing the Search button, which opens the search page shown in Figure 6-5. At first, the page contains only two controls, but you can click the More button to add more search controls to it, as shown in Figure 6-5. The More button becomes a Less button, which you can click to return to the original set of two controls. CompuServe builds a list of files that match the search. You use the list just like the library list.



Figure 6-5 You use this page to search a forum's libraries for files.

Sounds on mIRC

You don't have to forego sound just because you prefer chatting on Internet Relay Chat (IRC) instead of an online service. IRC clients such as mIRC by Khaled Mardam-Bey make chat sounds fun and (almost) easy. You'll find a copy of mIRC on the CD-ROM at the back of the book. It's a Windows-only shareware program — you can try it out for 30 days. If you decide to keep it, the shareware registration fee is \$20. This book's CD-ROM contains the 32-bit version of mIRC. If you use the 16-bit version of Windows, you can download your version of mIRC from the Web site at:

<http://www.mirc.co.uk>

The mIRC client cannot access the Internet by itself. You must first sign on to the Internet via whatever access software you usually use. If you use the 32-bit version of mIRC provided on this book's CD-ROM, your Internet access must also be a 32-bit program.

**Note**

You'll find a link to an excellent IRC client for Macintosh in Appendix E, "Some Handy Internet Sites," on the CD-ROM.

Configuring sounds on mIRC



Before you try to use sounds, take a minute to check your sounds options. Choose the General Options icon, shown here, to open the mIRC Options window. Then select the Sounds tab to open the dialog box shown in Figure 6-6. The most important option is right at the center top of the box. "Accept sound requests" controls whether your computer responds to the sounds that other people play. When it's disabled, only your own sound requests work on your computer. Enable it to hear the sounds that other people play, too.

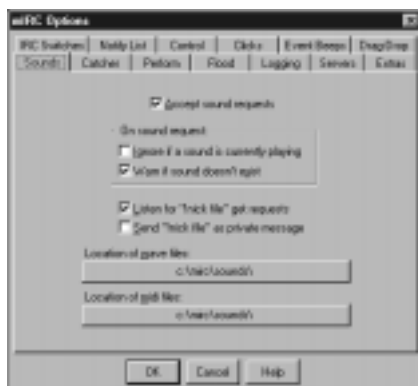


Figure 6-6 Use this mIRC Options dialog box to configure your mIRC sound options.

Assuming that “Accept sound requests” is enabled, the other options determine what happens when someone sends a sound request. If you have a file with the same name in your sounds folder or its subfolders, and if no other sound file is currently playing, your file plays on your computer. It may not be the same sound file that other people hear — only the name must be the same. mIRC looks on your computer for the sound file in the folder identified by “Location of wave files” or “Location of midi files.” It also searches all subfolders of the specified folder. In the Sounds dialog box, the current pathname appears on a button that you click to browse for another folder. In the example in Figure 6-6, both buttons contain `c:\mirc\sounds\`.

If a sound is already playing when you receive (or send) another sound request, the option called “Ignore if a sound is currently playing” controls what happens. When this option is enabled, mIRC ignores the new sound request. When it’s disabled, mIRC kills the old sound to play the new one. If you don’t have the sound file, and “Warn if sound doesn’t exist” is enabled, you’ll see a message like this:

```
* Sound request: can't find 'amigos.wav'
```

You can ask someone to send you a sound file with a special message that this dialog box refers to as a *!nick file* request. (*!nick file* requests are explained in the next section.) If the option called “Send ‘!nick file’ as private message” is enabled, your request will be sent as a private message. Otherwise it appears in the channel chat, which others may find distracting, especially if several people are collecting files so that the chat screen clutters up with *!nick file* requests.

Of course, people can ask you for sound files, too. Here’s some good news: You don’t have to waste your chat time responding to all those requests. Enable “Listen for ‘!nick file’ get requests,” and mIRC handles all requests automatically. It searches your sound folders for the indicated file and then sends it to the requester.

Enjoying mIRC sounds

Use the `/sound` command to send a sound request, as in the following examples:

```
/sound hiya.wav
```

```
/sound mytheme.mid
```

You can direct the sound to a specific person, instead of the channel at large, by including their nickname in the command:

```
/sound jazzman mytheme.mid
```

You can even direct it to someone in a different channel by adding the name of the channel to their nickname, separated by a slash. For example, to play `grandslam.wav` for `twohearts` in the `#bridgeplayers` channel, you would enter:

```
/sound twohearts/#bridgeplayers grandslam.wav
```

You can also add a message to the command, whether it's directed to the entire channel or an individual:

```
/sound mytheme.mid ::: Judi's theme plays as she glides  
smoothly into the room :::
```

```
/sound jazzman coolblues.wav Did you record this?
```

Use the `/splay` command to preview a sound file. `/Splay` plays it on your system only:

```
/splay mytheme.mid
```

The `/sound` command can also be used to turn sound requests off and on. This is the same as disabling and enabling the “Accept sound requests” option:

```
/sound off
```

```
/sound on
```

Trading sound files

When someone else sends a sound request, you see the message `[nick SOUND]` in the chat screen, where *nick* is the name of the person who sent the sound request. You don't see the name of the sound file, just the word “sound.” If you don't have the sound file,

you still see the message even though you don't hear the sound. It follows the `can't find filename` message shown earlier. If you want the file, you can request that the sender send you the file by sending a message in this format:

```
!nick file
```

where *nick* is the sender's nickname and *file* is the name of the file. (This is the famous *!nick file* request mentioned earlier.) For example, you can ask wavmaven to send you newtopic.wav like this:

```
!wavmaven newtopic.wav
```

You can add a chat text to your request, like this:

```
Hey !BeatNick parsnips.wav ← I hope you don't mind my asking
```

Unless the sender ignores your request, you should soon receive an mIRC DCC Get message such as the one shown in Figure 6-9. Choose Get! to download the file to the folder indicated in Save As.



Figure 6-7 The mIRC DCC Get dialog box appears when someone sends you a file via mIRC's DCC commands.



Caution

Never accept candy from strangers. Sound files cannot contain viruses, but program files and some documents can.

When someone asks you for a file, mIRC sends it automatically if you have enabled the “Listen for ‘!nick file’ get requests” option. You’ll see a DCC Send request dialog box on your screen—just minimize it for a while. You can close it when the file has been sent or the request canceled.

Using WaVGeT to manage sound files

If you become addicted to sounds on mIRC, you’ll probably want a program to help with sounds. I have included a popular mIRC add-on called WaVGeT on the CD-ROM that accompanies this book. It organizes your sound files and makes it easy to play and trade them. Here are some of its features:

- It generates a sound request when you select a sound file from a list. You can add a message to the request or let WaVGeT randomly select a message from a list.
- It builds a list of who played what sounds that you don’t have. You double-click an item on this list to generate a *!nick file* request.
- WaVGeT can generate *!nick file* requests automatically for files that you don’t have.
- It can send automatic thank you messages to people who send you files.
- It can automatically play a sound after you receive it.
- It lets you organize your sound files into catalogs. You might, for example, create Rock, Jazz, Toons, Movie Clips, and Sound FX catalogs.
- It queues and manages other people’s requests for you to send them files.
- It can interrupt a WAV.
- It can play sounds at random to one or more channels. You specify the time interval, the channels, and the list of sounds to choose from.

- It lets you play MP3, RealAudio, and other types of files that you couldn't ordinarily play in mIRC.
- It stores and accesses sound files in multiple directories.
- It lets you search for sound files in multiple directories.
- It can check new downloads for validity.
- It also organizes and "plays" text macros.

I can't devote an entire chapter to WaVGeT, so I'll just explain a few of its functions. Once you're comfortable with these functions, you should be able to learn more by exploring its Help library.

WaVGeT is shareware, and you may try it as long as you like. If you decide to keep it, the shareware fee is \$10. (It nags you often to pay the fee.) WaVGeT for 32-bit Windows is on the CD-ROM for this book. Yes, you also can download a 16-bit version for Windows 3.1 from the WaVGeT Web site:

<http://www.wavget.com>


Playing sounds

After you install WaVGeT, you start it in the usual Windows ways:

- Open Windows Explorer or My Computer, open the folder containing WaVGeT, and then double-click the WaVGeT program icon.
- If you added it to your Start menu, open your Start menu and select it.

Or you can start mIRC first and then enter this command in any mIRC window:

```
/wavget
```

 Figure 6-8 shows the main WaVGeT window, which acts as a sounds control panel. On the right is the list of sound files in your current catalog. Double-click a sound to preview it. To play it in the current channel, select it and then choose the speaker button, shown here.

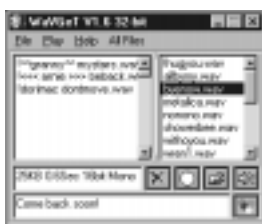


Figure 6-8 *The main WaVGeT window acts as your sounds control panel.*

Notice the All Files item on the menu bar. That's the name of the current catalog. Clicking it opens a list of all your catalogs so you can select a different one. All Files is the default catalog that comes with WaVGeT and includes all the files in all your catalogs.

How to create a catalog:

1. Choose Play ⇨ Catalog Manager to open the Catalog page in the WaVGeT Setup Dialog Box.
2. Choose Add to open a dialog where you can assign a name to your new catalog.
3. Choose OK to close the dialog box.
4. Open the All Files catalog.
5. Select the files that you want to copy to your new catalog.
6. Right-click the file list to pop up your list of catalogs.
7. Choose your new catalog to copy all the selected files to it.

Configuring play messages

When WaVGeT generates a sound request, you don't see the usual /sound command in your chat window. Instead, you see a message like the following:

```
* yourname [trek.wav 334KB 31.0Sec 8bit Mono 11.0KHz]
```

You can configure the contents of the message, along with other options, in the WaVGeT Setup window, shown in Figure 6-9. Choose File ⇨ Setup to open the window. The buttons near the top determine which page of options appear in the window. In Figure 6-9, I have clicked the Play button to display the options affecting sound requests.



Figure 6-9 You configure options in the WaVGeT Setup window.

WaVGeT can generate a random message to go along with the sound request. It comes with two default messages, which you can see in the window. The sender's nickname, the filename, and WaVGeT's version number are filled into the message so that it appears like this:

* Grammy ! plays whoohoo.wav with WavGet V1.6

(The |8 and 4 in the message are font commands for yellow text on a red background.)

The other message ends up looking like this:

* Grammy ! waves with WavGet V1.6

(<http://www.en.com/users/pbeuger/wavget.html>)

You don't have to send out an advertisement for WaVGeT with every sound request if you don't want. The three buttons beneath the list box let you add new play messages, delete the selected message, and edit the selected message. If you want to select just one message rather than letting WaVGeT select them randomly, disable

“Select random Play message” and select the message you want to send. You can disable play messages altogether by enabling “Do NOT send a Play message.”

You can also attach a play message directly to a file in the main WaVGeT window. Select the file and type the message in the bottom box before sending it. WaVGeT remembers the message and shows it every time you play that WAV.

Sending file details

You can include file details like the following in your sound requests. These details help others decide if they want to ask you to send the file.

```
[explode.wav 293KB 54.5Sec 4bit Mono 11.0kHz]
```

To include the file details in your sound requests, choose File ⇨ Options, choose the Options button, and enable these two options: “Send file size” and “Send WaV info.”

Getting sound files

The left-hand box in the WaVGet window builds up a list of the sounds that have been played that you don’t have, along with the person who played them. Double-click a sound to generate a *!nick file* request to that person. Choosing File ⇨ Setup and choosing the Get button opens the dialog box shown in Figure 6-10, where you can configure the Get options.



Figure 6-10 You configure your Get messages in this dialog box.

As you can see, WaVGeT sends a message along with your *!nick file* request if you wish. You can use the messages provided by WaVGeT or create your own. To send the same message every time, select it from the list. To let WaVGeT randomly select messages, enable “Select random GET message.” If you don’t want to send a message, enable “Do not send a GET message.” You can edit the list of messages by choosing the Add, Delete, and Edit buttons.

If you enable Auto GET, WaVGeT automatically generates a *!nick file* request for every sound you don’t have. This can be a useful option in a channel where someone plays a sound every once in a while. But in a channel where people are playing sounds fast and furiously, you’ll drive yourself and everyone else crazy with this option. Use the slider below the option to limit the number of GET sessions that you can have going at once. I have it set to 7 in the figure, but 3 or 4 would be more reasonable.

**Tip**

If you use Auto GET, create a catalog named Trash! – the name is important, be sure to include the ! – where you store sounds you *don’t* want. When you store a file in the Trash! Catalog, WaVGeT deletes it from your hard drive but remembers the name so it will never request it again.

Sounds on Microsoft Network

The Microsoft Network (MSN) employs Web browser technology in its interface. Basically, it uses Microsoft Internet Explorer 4 (MSIE), although it replaces the usual MSIE window with the MSN Program Viewer (unless you request otherwise). This means that any type of Internet sound is possible as you travel around the service. When you access an area, you might hear a sampled sound file, synthesized music, and/or a streaming file or live broadcast. You’ll also find it easy to preview and play sounds in an MSN chat room. Perhaps most exciting of all, you can add sounds right into your e-mail and newsgroup messages, but that subject is covered in Chapters 9 and 10.

The MSN sound events

MSN registers two sound events with Windows. Quick View Notification occurs when MSN pops up notices from the Quickview icon in your system tray (the inset at the right end of your taskbar). The default sound file is MSNNotif.wav, a soft chime—it sounds like a grandfather clock—which is stored in the C:\Program Files\OnMSN folder. Friends Online New Message occurs when one of your Friends Online sends you a message. Its default sound file is Folmsg.wav, a two-note chime, which is stored in the same folder. You can change the sound assigned to either of these events in the usual Windows ways. Some few sounds, such as the menu sounds, are built into the MSN Program Viewer and can't be replaced, although you can turn them on and off.

Sounds in chat rooms

You can play WAV files in an MSN chat room such as the one shown in Figure 6-13, either in text view or in comic view as shown in the figure. The Play Sound tool pops up the Play Sound dialog box where you select the sound you want to play. Choosing Test plays the sound on your computer so you can preview it. Choose OK to play the sound in the room. Other people hear the sound only if they have WAV files of the same name. They hear their own WAV files, which might be different from yours.



Figure 6-11 *The Play sound tool opens the Play Sound dialog box so you can select a sound to play.*

Your sound files must be located in the sounds folder specified in your MSN options. This is your Windows\Media folder by default, but you can change to another folder if you prefer.

How to change the MSN sounds folder:

1. Choose View ⇨ Options to open the Microsoft Chat Options window, shown in Figure 6-12.
2. Choose the Settings tab to open the Settings page, as shown in the figure.
3. Type the desired pathname in the Sound search path box at the bottom of the page.

You can also turn your chat sounds off by disabling the “Play sounds” option.



Figure 6-12 *You can change your chat room sounds folder in the Chat Options window.*

What's on the CD?

Ted's Sounds is a large collection of WAVs that are appropriate for AOL sound events, chat rooms, and many other uses.

What's Next?

Now that we've finished exploring sound files, it's time to look at a method of efficiency playing them over networks — streaming. Chapter 7 explains streaming media and shows you how to use them.