SRA Ramble Instant Messenger™

An Instant Messenger Client for the Research In Motion BlackBerry Handheld

SRA Ramble Instant Messenger™ v 1.0 Beta User Manual

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There are no security features inherent in the Ramble Instant Messenger software application. The information you send via the application travels across a secure wireless network onto a public Instant Message network provided by AOL and will be subject to AOL's privacy policy

Changes to this privacy policy

SRA reserves the right to change, modify, or update this statement at any time without notice.

Contents

Ramble Instant Messenger Features

Real-Time America Online (AOL) Text communication

Ramble is an instant messaging and chat room client built for BlackBerry hand-held devices which allow the user to talk to other individuals on the AOL ® and AOL Instant Messenger™ network. As a completely wireless client, users can take AOL conversations anywhere within their cellular network's coverage. In addition to Instant Message capability, Ramble supports private chat rooms, chat invitations, Buddy List editing, audible event alerts, and buddy info/away status.

Blackberry Operating System Integration

The Ramble Instant Messaging software was created for the Blackberry hand-held user. The Instant Messenger user interface was created with the idea of being user friendly, fast, and convenient.

First, the Ramble software has been built to tolerate the variability of cellular network coverage. If the connection with the network temporarily drops out, or the software is unable to connect to the server, it will notify the user and actively attempt to reconnect. If it is unable to reconnect, the software will automatically log off, and present a login screen. All Ramble screens also have a signal meter in the upper right-hand corner that can be referenced when using the software.

Second, since the BlackBerry device does not support multiple "windows" for different applications, the Ramble application is designed to run in the background and notify the user when a message has arrived. When a message arrives and the Ramble application is running the background, an alert will pop-up on the BlackBerry and prompt the user for a response which can be accepted or declined.

Finally, the Ramble software takes advantage of the alerting capability of the BlackBerry and lets the user customize how and when he/she would like to be notified of Instant Messaging events. Users can create audible alerts, vibration, both audible and vibration, or no notification at all.. The Ramble software also has a convenient 'Mute' function that eliminates all alerts until the user re-enable them.

BlackBerry Browser Integration

The Ramble software has also been integrated with the powerful BlackBerry web browser software to allow for even greater functionality. When links are sent via instant messaging, Ramble will invoke the BlackBerry browser (if available) to display the website. Ramble also can handle special links that allow it to place phone calls right from the device.

Buddy List Display and Modification

Just like the AIM ™ desktop instant messaging client, Ramble allows users to see their Buddy List and make modifications to it on the go. Users can add new buddies, remove old buddies, and receive messages from buddies not yet on their buddy list right from the BlackBerry. The Ramble software also allows users to look up Buddy Info on their buddies and displays the results in the BlackBerry browser.

Getting Started

System Requirements

- SRA Ramble Instant Messenger requires an AIM or AOL account. If you do not have an account you can create one for free at www.aim.com.
- BlackBerry Handheld System Code version 3.6 or higher
- BlackBerry Service with MDS Capability
- ~65KB of handheld storage space
- BlackBerry Browser Service (*Optional*)

Downloading Ramble Instant Messenger

The Ramble software can be downloaded from the SRA Wireless Integration Services website at http://wireless.sra.com/Ramble/. The download is available for desktop or Over-The-Air (OTA) installation. Users can also download this guide as well as any other documentation.

Before downloading the software, SRA requires the user to enter their email address and accept the license agreement. All information gathered is for internal use and will not be distributed or shared outside SRA. Users can view the full privacy policy at the SRA Wireless website.

Installing Ramble Instant Messenger

The method of Ramble installation the user selects will depend on the way the software was downloaded. If the user chooses to download the software directly to the BlackBerry, the installation will occur automatically. If the user chooses to download the software do the desktop first, installation will require the use of the Desktop Manager Application Loader.

Using Ramble Instant Messenger

Opening Ramble Instant Messenger

Ramble can be started in the same way that most BlackBerry applications are started. Simply scroll to the appropriate icon (shown in Figure 1 below), and click the track wheel or press enter. Alternatively, users can simply press the 'i' key from the ribbon to activate the instant messaging client.

Figure 1 Ramble Instant Messenger Application Icon

Logging-In:

After activating the application, if the user is not currently logged in, he/she will be presented with a login screen similar to the one in Figure 2. Users will enter their AIM login information in the login and password fields. Users can then begin logging in by scrolling down to the 'Submit' button and clicking the track wheel. Once submitted, users will be shown a dialog while the process completes (see Figure 3).

If this is the first time running the application, users will be prompted by the operating system to allow the application to connect to the internet. Please select the 'Allow connection to sockets' option, and also select 'Remember this decision'.

Figure 2 Login Screen

Figure 3 Logging In Dialog

Buddy List and Message Window

To keep track of buddies, use the Ramble buddy list to determine who is online, who is idle, and who has sent messages. An online buddy will have an asterisk displayed beside their username and be displayed in the automatic 'Online' buddy group. Other buddy groups are displayed as tree items that can be expanded or collapsed so users can view individual group members (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Buddy List

In addition to viewing online and offline buddies, users can modify their Buddy List by adding or removing buddies through menu options. Users can also do things like set away status, mute all alerts, lookup information on buddies and log out of the application (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5 Buddy List Menu Options

An online but currently away buddy will have an "a" to the left of their name. An idle buddy will be shown in gray, and will display the number of idle minutes (see users MiniTOC2 and MiniTOC3 in Figure 6).

Figure 6 Idle and Away Buddies

Pending Messages

Users can identify how many messages are pending by identifying those buddies which are in red and the number of pending messages next to their screen name (see user MiniTOC1 in Figure 7 below). Also, users who are engaged in a conversation are able to see incoming instant messages via a popup window.

Figure 7 Pending Messages

Messaging

Users can start a message by scrolling with the track wheel to the buddy he/she wishes to instant message. Once the desired buddy is highlighted, press the track wheel button to view the options menu. By default 'Instant Message' (see Figure 8) will already be highlighted, simply select that option and the window will appear for the selected buddy.

Figure 8 Instant Messaging

Time Stamp

When IM'ing users can enable or disable the display of a Time Stamp for each message. This can be useful to tracking conversations over time. Users can see an example of a message with a timestamp in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9 Time Stamp in Conversations

Chats

The chat feature of AOL Instant Messenger allows multiple users to talk at the same time. Ramble supports this capability by allowing users to request new chats and to respond to chat invitations. Chat invitations will show up as a dialog like the one below in Figure 10.

Figure 10 Chat Invitation

After accepting the chat invitation, a Chat Room group will be created in the Buddy List. Individual chat rooms will show up under the chat room group (Figure 11) and can be 'entered' by clicking the trachwheel and selecting 'Instant Message'.
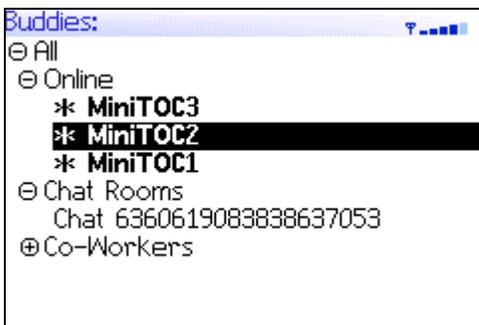

Figure 11 Chat Rooms

Once in the chat, users can invite additional buddies into the chat or choose any of the other options available in the chat menu (Figure 12 below).
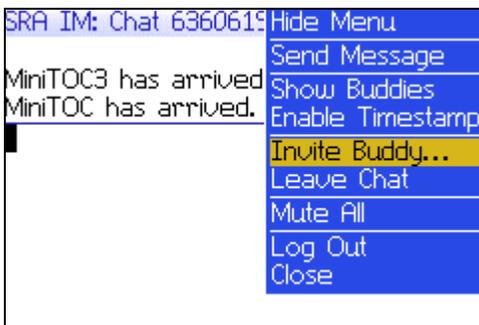

Figure 12 Chat Room Options

To leave a chat, simply select the 'Leave Chat' option from the menu, and the user will be returned to the Buddy List and the Chat Room will be removed. To return to the buddy menu from a chat without leaving the chat itself, select 'Show Buddies' from the menu or simply click the 'Escape' key on the BlackBerry.

Configuration Options

The SRA Ramble configuration menu can be found under the BlackBerry System Options Icon panel from the ribbon.
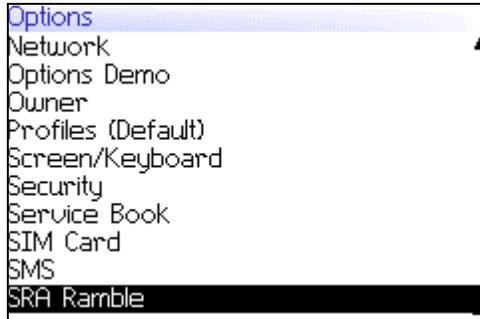

Figure 13 Options Screen

Select the SRA Ramble item from the menu to open the Ramble configuration screen. From this screen users will be able to configure Ramble sounds and dialogs.

Ramble has two sets of configurations: one to be used when the BlackBerry is in the holster and one when the BlackBerry is out of the holster. Users can select a notification tone, a vibration, and a combination of the two to signal events that occur in the application. Users can configure alerts for message receipt, buddy sign-on, and sign-off.
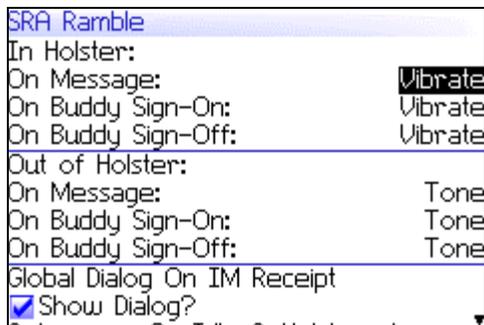

Figure 14 Ramble Configuration Screen

Other configuration options include "Global Dialog On IM Receipt", "Auto-away On Idle & Holstered", and "TOC Host and Port". TOC Host and Port should be changed only upon notification from an administrator. Global Dialog On IM receipt allows users to configure whether or not they would like to have a dialog displayed when a message arrives and are not in the application. Auto-away On Idle & Holstered lets users determine whether or not Ramble should automatically set the away status when users have been idle for 10 minutes or more and the device is in the holster.

Troubleshooting

1. Connection Problems

   If you are experiencing problems connecting to the AOL Instant Messenger service, make sure that you have a valid Instant Messenger account with AOL, and make sure that you enter that data correctly in the login screen. Passwords are case-sensitive.

2. Application Closes or Instant Messages not received

   If the application returns you to a login screen or your buddies don't seem to be receiving your messages, it is likely that you are experiencing poor cellular coverage or a temporary interruption of service. If you are returned to the login screen, simply log back into the system. If buddies aren't receiving your messages, and the signal meter in the upper-right corner of the application shows a good signal, try resending your message, or log out, then log back into the application.

For Additional Information

Please contact Wireless Integration Solutions, a business solutions offering from SRA International, Inc.
wireless@sra.com

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