

## Microsoft Comic Chat

### Introducción -- ¿Qué es el Comic Chat de Microsoft?



Comic Chat is a new kind of graphical chat program, developed at Microsoft. In recent years, a number of graphical chat programs have appeared for online services and the Internet. Comic Chat takes a different approach to other graphical chat programs, by using a visual representation of conversations based on comics conventions. As users type text into Comic Chat, a comic strip unfolds showing the various participants in the conversation as comics characters, and their utterances in word balloons.

Inside of each Comic Chat client is a small, fast expert system for comics generation. On the fly, each Comic Chat client automatically determines a number of aspects related to comics generation. These include:

- Which characters to place in each panel
- The gestures and expressions for these characters
- Where the characters should be placed, and how they should be oriented
- The outline form of each word balloon
- The layout of word balloons in the panels
- When to move on to a new panel
- What zoom factor to use for each panel
- Additional semantic panel elements, to reflect the conversation

These decisions take less than a second a panel, and the result is an aesthetic comic strip, representing the conversation.

### Advantages of Using Comic Chat

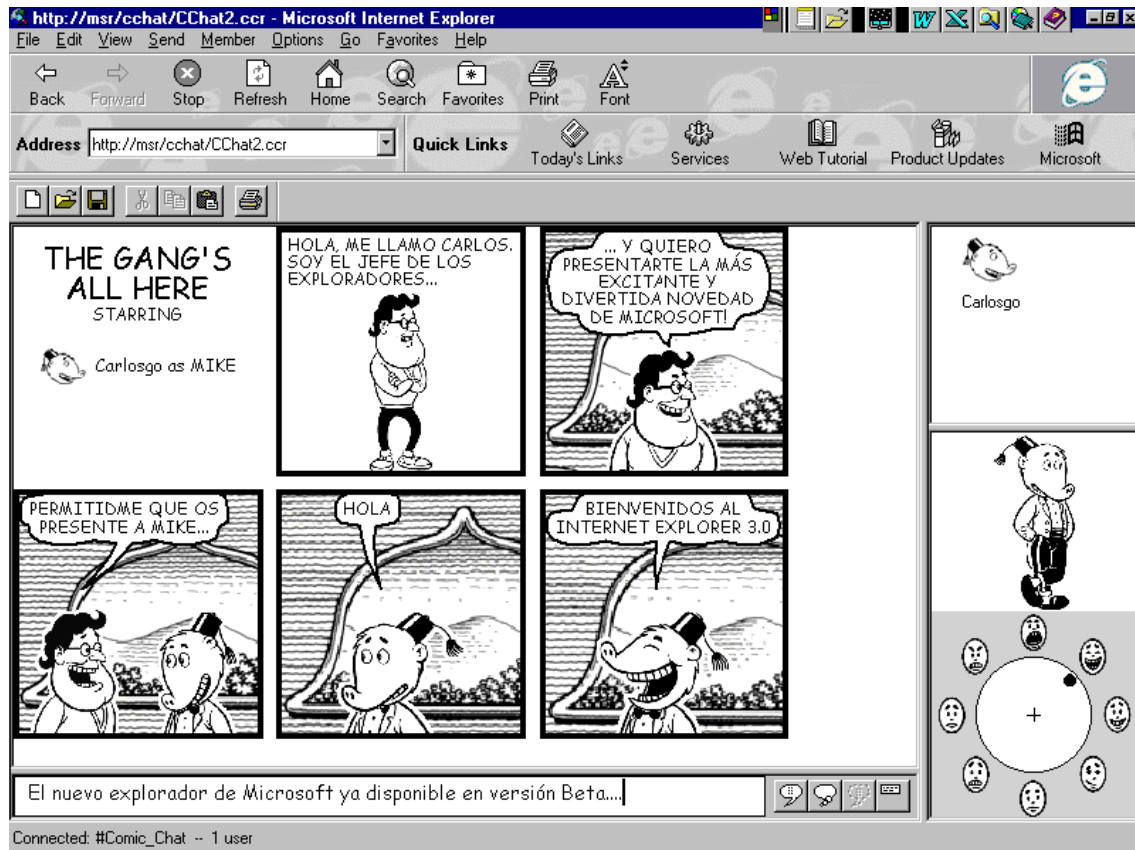
- **Graphical History** - Graphical chat programs allow users to communicate by gesturing and changing their expressions, as well as by typing text. Since gestures and expressions are a first class form of communication in these Chat programs, it is important to present a graphical history in addition to the traditional textual history. This is especially important because people tend to interleave chatting with other activities, such as editing documents, taking care of the kids, compiling programs, and participating in other chat programs. Comic Chat is the first graphical chat program with a graphical history.
- **Dynamically Varying Presentation** - In other graphical chat programs, the point of view is always the same (unless explicitly changed by the user). For example, some graphical chat programs give you a point-of-view shot, others give you an over-the-shoulder view or a view of the entire room. Comic Chat determines what to show in each panel, and this is automatically varied to keep things interesting.
- **Automated Decision Making** - To keep the users focused more on chatting and less on controlling their character, Comic Chat automates a number of processes. It automatically chooses a default gesture and expression based upon the text that is typed. It figures out who should be in each panel, and where to place them. There is no need to wander around, looking for people to participate in a conversation. If somebody speaks to a user, the user need not turn around and try to find the speaker.

- **Comics Representation** - Comic Chat is the first chat program to be based on the comics representation. People tend to find comics enjoyable, and comics are read internationally.

## Platforms

Comic Chat runs on Windows 95. It uses the Internet Relay Chat protocol, the most popular chat protocol on the Internet. Comic Chat runs on standard IRC servers, as well as the MIC server being developed by ISBU (formerly the MSN Systems Group).

The Windows NT 4.0 version will be available soon.



## Interesting Chat Rooms

After you install Comic Chat, you may want to visit one of several notable chat rooms. You can do so by selecting a link from the following list:

- The Comic Chat Room - A place where other dog-fooders like yourself hang out
- Eliza Room - This is the place where Eliza, the psychoanalytical chat bot, resides. When entering the this room you will be greeted by an automated chat companion who will push all of your buttons.

Expect to see additional rooms here shortly.