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AOL debuts new portal for mobile devices

Las Vegas (NV) - AOL fans no longer have to ditch their trusty portal page when using their mobile phones: The company today introduced a new [mobile](#) portal for Sprint Nextel [mobile phone](#) users. The site combines searches for web, shopping and local content along with AOL favourites like Instant Messenger and AOL Mail. Text and pictures will be formatted to fit on mobile phone screens.

The new [portal](#) promises users to be a "one-stop-shop" that integrates search, messaging, mail and even picture services into a mobile phone portal. In addition, [AOL](#) will be including other staples like news, entertainment, sports and weather content. Sprint customers can also use a mobile version of AOL's Instant Messenger with either a downloadable java application or via the web portal.

Converting desktop web pages into a mobile friendly format is tricky business. Various scripts and cookies, along with large pictures and text often do not render correctly, if at all, on mobile phones. To solve this issue, AOL is partnering up with InfoGin to deliver the web pages in friendly format. According to InfoGin, the company's Intelligent Mobile Platform (IMP) identifies the main content on a webpage and then scales down the pictures and reorganizes the text into basically a big top-down scrolling list.

In a related announcement, Mapquest.com, an AOL subsidiary, has launched two separate direction finding applications for mobile users. The first and most feature-rich application is MapQuest Navigator which hooks into the [phone's](#) GPS unit and provides voice guided turn-by-turn directions. The second application is a mobile phone-friendly Mapquest website that will find places and give directions. The text and pictures are scaled down to fit easily on mobile phone screens.

The AOL mobile portal is currently available to Sprint Nextel customers. MapQuest Navigator will be available later this year, while the mobile Mapquest site can be accessed now at wap.mapquest.com