

## "Simulchat" Interview

Date confirmed in "[The Baltimore Sun](#)" ([archived](#)) ("Aug. 17 [1995]")

Michael Jackson. "Simulchat" transcript with introduction ([mirror](#)) ([archived mirror](#))

On the evening of August 17th, Michael Jackson joined together with the Internet, Compuserve, America Online, Prodigy and his fans from around the world in a simulchat. MTV televised the simulchat as well.

The following is a transcript of that historical event. Over 16,000 people attended the chat on America Online alone, not to mention the others on Prodigy, Compuserve, and the Internet. The event took place in the boardroom of The Museum Of Television & Radio in midtown Manhattan. Michael was seated at the long boardroom table surrounded by representatives from all of the online services - who were seated in front of their laptops dialed-in to their respective services. Questions were selected on a 'round-robin' basis from each of the services, Michael would answer the questions, and a (high-speed!) typist would enter his answers onto the service.

Michael thoroughly enjoyed the event - as did all of the participants in the room! Here is a transcript of the event - which was compiled by Sony from all of the services' transcripts to provide as accurate a document as possible (Michael sometimes talks quite fast - which made typing a challenge!). Enjoy!

**Compuserve Question from ORLANDO, FL: [76711,475] Janice Maki Brandon:** I have been a long time fan and I just want to know how, after all the bad press, you can keep going and doing the best job that any rock star can do? Is it the fact you have such a wonderful wife supporting you, or are there other reasons you stay so damn great?

**Michael Jackson:** Despite of what the press says about celebrities and myself in general, I move ahead. I don't pay attention to that tabloid junk - it's garbage. I have my dreams I am a visionary and I am very resilient. I feel as if I have a suit of armor around me, like a rhinoceros skin. I am here to do what I am supposed to do. Thank you for asking the first question.

**Compuserve Question from MANCHESTER, NH: [102331,3335] Brett Mallard:** If you could be any super hero... like Batman, Superman, et al.. whom would you choose to be and why?

**Michael Jackson:** I like Batman a lot... If I could choose one, it would be Morph, from the X-Men. He can become anything ... He constantly transforms himself. I think he can even teleport, which is interesting and exciting to me. He's not as popular as the others, but that makes him exciting.

**Prodigy Question from Darkan:** Are you ever going to tour America?

**Michael Jackson:** I'm not exactly sure, we kind of play it by ear, kind of spontaneous. It would be nice, but I'm not sure.

**Internet Question from Brian:** Is your new album doing as well as expected? Go MJ!!

**Michael Jackson:** Yes, I am overly excited about how well the album is doing. It is the fastest selling album in my career. Despite what the press is saying. Unprecedented 7 million worldwide sold in the first week!

**Prodigy Question from Spin Cycle:** Michael, thanks for coming. What is your favorite song on your newest CD?

**Michael Jackson:** Probably Earth Song, Stranger in Moscow, Little Susie. I love songs with heart.

**AOL Question from Jocelyn:** When will the 3T album be in the store?

**Michael Jackson:** The 3-T are expected around this Christmas. They're going to be very successful.

**Prodigy Question from Bruce Ross:** How has your marriage to Lisa Marie changed your life?

**Michael Jackson:** I think I find it more fun to appreciate what family really means. The fact that even though there were 10 of us Jacksons and we were always doing things at different times and I am really learning the real meaning of love. Giving 100% of yourself all the time. Putting up with one another. So far it has been pretty joyous.

**Compuserve Question from KANSAS CITY, MO: [102563,674] Jim Shea:** Do you ever wish you could walk into a public place and not be mobbed by your fans?

**Michael Jackson:** I have every disguise you can think of... that is why I wish I could be Morph so I could change places and just enjoy life. I would love to do that.

**Prodigy Question from Ally W:** Hi Michael. You have an amazing voice. Whose music has helped influence your music most?

**Michael Jackson:** Thank you for the compliment. That is very nice. To be honest, my first love and appreciation for music was classical, in kindergarten. I used to listen to Tchaikovsky every day. The great writing of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, and many others. I love the showtunes.

**AOL Question from Marlie14:** In your interview with Diane Sawyer, you mentioned moving out of the country. Is this in your future plans?

**Michael Jackson:** Yes it is.

**Prodigy Question from Rros:** Where is the most favorite place in the world that you have traveled to and where would you most like to travel to?

**Michael Jackson:** My most favorite place that I've traveled to probably would have to be between South America and Africa. Because I love the people, and I love the culture. The plight of the children is very interesting and I would love to continue to travel...to see more things and to help more people.

**Compuserve Question from ENCINITAS, CA: [102002,547] Gary M. Richards:** MICHAEL WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SONG THAT YOU HAVE RECORDED? AND DO YOU STILL HAVE THE PET MONKEY NAMED BUBBLES, WHO WAS SHOWN IN YOUR GENESIS VIDEO GAME, MOONWALKER?

**Michael Jackson:** If I had to pick one song... that's very difficult. Probably Ben, Got to Be There, Heal The World, one of the oldies. Bubbles is still alive and still my pet chimp. He's bigger, likes to eat a lot...lots of pizza, ice cream...He loves snacks! [Michael laughs]

**Internet Question from MJJ:** You have accomplished so much in life. What else would you like to accomplish in life?

**Michael Jackson:** I love movies my dream is to make films, not only act and sing but to produce them as well. And I love animation.

**Prodigy Question from SiBiS:** In Oprah's interview, you said that you wanted to raise a family one day..Do you plan to do so??

**Michael Jackson:** Yes, that's my dream for a long time. My own children, I want to adopt them. Not only my own, but children all over the world. I think we should be less territorial about it.

**Compuserve Question from LOMBARD, IL: [75152,1114] Kurt A. Lentsch:** How did you like working with your sister Janet on the "Scream" Video and also working with your beautiful bride, Lisa Marie. PS Best of luck to you two, don't listen to all the BS going around!

**Michael Jackson:** That is a great question! The press creates all of these negative stories so that people will buy their magazines or read their columns and you must not believe everything you read or see on television. Most of it is false and it is tabloid garbage and I want everyone to be aware of what the tabloid media is like. I have had so much fun working with my sister and working on the set everyday. I haven't seen her in quite some time and she is busy and I am as well and it is like a reunion. Because of all the family members I am closest to Janet and we became very emotional on the set. We gave each other presents but every day on the set sometimes she would come to me sad because of some crazy story that some tabloid said. I told her that she would have to become resilient because it is there and I want the public to know. And Yes I had fun with Lisa Marie on the set. She wanted to perform in the video. I had a lot of fun with Lisa Marie on the set. But when the director said "Action," she became very shy. I was giving her a little bit of a hard time, too!

**Prodigy Question from Gemseeker:** When did you learn to Moonwalk? I think it's so cool.

**Michael Jackson:** Thank you sooo much. I've always loved illusion dancing, where you can create an illusion with the body. There's a new step working on called Skywalk. I've been working on it.

**Prodigy Question from blondie101:** What inspired you to write the song "Beat It"?

**Michael Jackson:** Quincy Jones, for the album THRILLER, asked me to write a song with a rock edge to it. I said yes, I can do that. So the very same day, I went to the recording studio, and I literally just started to sing that song. It literally came that fast. Every song is different. The gestation process for BEAT IT was so fast, it was amazing. I thought about what I'd do in that situation... A confrontation with a gang... I wouldn't do what these people would do. The way I was raised I would turn the other cheek without creating a war or being a coward either.

**Compuserve Question from VANCOUVER, WA: [76730,1036] Brandon:** I come from a large family is it hard for you to see the animosity between your sister LaToya and yourself. you seem to be above all the petty gossip that others love to spread. I just want to give you two thumbs up on your maturity.

**Michael Jackson:** Gee - thank you very much! I love you. Thank you.

**Prodigy Question from Curveball:** Will there be a next album?

**Michael Jackson:** I am not sure. This might be my last album I ever do. I will always create music but am not sure if I'll create another album.

**Prodigy Question from Midway Gal:** How did you get into music?

**Michael Jackson:** I don't think I can answer that without sounding philosophical. We never had music or dance lessons in our house, ever. We were a family that sang all the time. We watched television. We would entertain ourselves... We would take all the furniture out of the living room and dance. I think you're pretty much born with a gift and you are compelled to create. That is what I have always felt. I remember making up songs when I was really little. I remember when I was little there was rain outside and we would make up songs. Janet and I would have a

songwriting game while we washed the dishes...while we were cleaning. I think most kids don't do that these days. It was our destiny.

**AOL Question from EvenBeevu:** Do you come up with the ideas for all of your videos?

**Michael Jackson:** A lot of them I do come up with. A lot of the concepts do originate with me. After singing Thriller I knew that I wanted to do a short film. A simple guy goes out on a date and confesses to her that he's different. I wanted to transform into different things. It was fun. I had so much fun making that. Beat It is another concept that I came up with. Confrontation -two gangs - West Side Story. I wanted real gang members. I wanted to see real truisms...in the walk, in the character in the clothes. and I think it came across.

**Prodigy Question from Pelon:** What has been your proudest musical achievement?

**Michael Jackson:** One of them it is really a difficult question to answer because I am not a woman but writing a song is like conceiving a child... I love all the songs . We are the World is one of the most favorite things that I've done. I am proud of that... it has reached a lot of people, it has touched a lot of people. My Secretary called when I was in the car and said pull over. And it was like a prayer when all of the radio stations played it. I had tears.

**Compuserve Question from MELBOURNE, FL: [74671,465] Firefly:** Michael, I was wondering if/when we will see more of the old-style video's and mini-movies like "Thriller" and "Moonwalker?"

**Michael Jackson:** I love that. That's what I want to get back to doing. Well those types of short films are my favorite because it is not just a video in the sense of videos and images and graphics...it's a short story. But to do those takes us up to 4, 5, 6, 7 months sometimes and that has become a problem. We are going back to that. That is my dream. I'd like to make this announcement: My nephews are in here and want to sit in and listen!

[nephews are entering the room]

**Compuserve Question from SEATTLE, WA: [76550,2570] Natalie Ringland:** You seem to be interested in many cultures. Have you ever studied the North? I live in an Inupiat Eskimo village at the top of Alaska. Life is different here. If you ever visit, the land and people here might inspire you. Do you travel for inspiration? -- Natalie

**Michael Jackson:** Yes I do travel for inspiration and I would love to come to Alaska someday. I have flown over Alaska and I do love to travel. Maybe with your extended invitation I might be able to come!

**Prodigy Question from Frogbelly:** In your song "Childhood" you sing about how you've never really known the joys of youth. What is the one thing you missed the most?

**Michael Jackson:** Probably the simple little things that kids do like having a friend over or going to the park or even trick-or-treat or Christmas or birthday and when we were little we didn't have any of those things. We had to hear about them. Some of the kids who take them for granted. I haven't celebrated my birthday yet. Maybe someday I will.

**Prodigy Question from Diva:** Michael, I love HIStory and think it's the best yet. When are you going to release the videos as a complete set?

**Michael Jackson:** Thank you for the compliment. I worked very hard. This Christmas I think we are going to have a complete up to date of the shorts on one volume.

**AOL Question from Applehead:** It's one of Apple head's friends, guess which one...hint Family Matters...what is your favorite song on HIStory? Tell Lisa Marie and Janet I said hi!

**Michael Jackson:** I know exactly who that is! [laughter in the room] My favorite song is probably "Childhood" "Earth Song". But nice to hear from you Bryton, hope I get to see you soon. Tell all my other relatives I said hello.

**Prodigy Question from Mr Potter:** Do you ever wish you could play small rooms with intimate audiences instead of mega-productions?

**Michael Jackson:** Yes. I think that is the mark of a true performer, to be able to reach any audience around the world, any size. If you can directly relate to a small group, magic starts to happen. I started out playing those kinds of concerts. This Christmas, I'm doing an HBO special (Dec 10), and it is intimate. It's close-up. It will allow me to do a lot of things I've never done before.

**CompuServe Question from EXTERNAL NETWORK: [100526,154] Sam Clarke:** Story in UK press this morning claims quickie divorce on the cards? Is it true?

**Michael Jackson:** Never believe the tabloid garbage. Don't waste your time, don't waste your money. No, it's not true. If you hear it from my lips, then you can believe it. But no, it's not true.

**Internet Question From MJJ:** What is your process from going from creating a rhythm on your human voice-box to the album version, such as in songs 'Who Is It' and 'Tabloid Junkie'?

**Michael Jackson:** The process is creating a vocal rhythm to a click track - which is a sound, a timed beat. And you're doing these mouth sounds to that beat. These sounds can be looped according to how you sample it in the computer again and again. This is your foundation for the entire track - everything plays off this. It's the rhythm, like the beatbox rhythm. Every song I've written since I was very little I've done that way. I still do it that way.

**AOL Question from Smufetty:** I love you and have enjoyed your music since I could hear and see..just one question: how can you keep going when the media makes everything so hard?

**Michael Jackson:** Thank you for your compliment, I appreciate it. I believe in my work, like I said, I have great confidence in my dreams. When I have a great idea I have an iron will, Even though the media creates such negative stories they do it just to sell more papers. If you look throughout history, and I'm not trying to put my name with the names of the past it's been pretty much the same. Ghandi, Christ and I'm not saying I'm Christ, I don't want to hear the press saying that. Some of the worst attentions had to do with ignorance on the part of the people because of the press. If it happened to them, it can happen to me.

**AOL Question from DanielStein:** If you could meet someone dead or alive and talk with them for an hour who would it be and why. P.S. Rock on with your bad self!

**Michael Jackson:** It would probably be Michelangelo because I think he is a phenomenal artist and I love art I think I understand what he was trying to say and do even though he got criticized. He was a true artist to the point of true artistry. I would love to just sit down and have a talk.

**Prodigy Question from Tristene:** Who is your best friend?

**Michael Jackson:** Pretty much the same as I've said...the children of the world...for their innocence, their simplicity, and their love. It's the same kind of innocence that I find in animals. They just want you for your love, and I love that.

**CompuServe Question from BOUNDBROOK, NJ: [76235,646] AL & MEG:** WHAT WAS IT THAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED IN HELPING AS MANY CHILDREN AS YOU

DO? I THINK WHAT YOU DO FOR CHILDREN IS JUST WONDERFUL. YOU ARE WHAT THESE CHILDREN NEED TO KEEP THEM GOING WHEN TIMES ARE SO TOUGH.

**Michael Jackson:** I truly care about children, and about the future for our children. I'm a little frightened about what the future is going to bring. I truly, truly love them and care about them. I will always help them. When I go on tour, I visit hospitals, terminally ill children. At my ranch at Neverland, we have many terminally ill children as our guests. We do this every few weeks. You do it because you truly love them and you care.

**Internet Question From MJJ:** It is rumored (I know you hate that word) that you are doing another book... Do you plan another book, if so, what will it contain?

**Michael Jackson:** I wrote a book called DANCING THE DREAM. It was more autobiographical than Moonwalker, which I did with Mrs. Onassis. It wasn't full of gossip and scandal and all the trash that people write so I don't think people paid much attention to it, but it came from my heart. It was essays, thoughts, things that I've thought about while on tour. I'm not planning to write another book anytime soon. If you want to know how I to feel, you can check out HIStory. It's a musical book.

**Prodigy Question from Gemseeker:** When & How did you learn to moonwalk? I think it's sooooo cool! :->

**Michael Jackson:** Thank you soooo much! I've always loved illusion dancing when you can pretty much create a step or an illusion with the body. There's a new step that looks like you defy gravity that I've been working on for along time. One of my favorite movers is Marcel Marceau. But a lot of the steps that I do come from my heart. A lot of the steps come from the black community. From tap dancing, to the cake walk, to the Charleston. All these dances come from the black community to go all over the world.

**Compuserve Question from COMPUSERVE REROUTED: [70004,3543] Jamie Ballengee:** Mr. Jackson, What advice would you give someone who is in a similar position with the bad things from the press? My little sister Andrea Ballengee lost her Miss VA crown. :-(

**Michael Jackson:** You don't pay attention to it. You become strong, you move ahead. The best advice I can give is to believe in yourself, know there's a tomorrow, walk tall...don't pay attention to the garbage...it's complete ignorance.

**Internet Question From MsMittens:** Oh... before I forget... someone from the internet who couldn't access this site asked me to ask you how you are doing and why you are doing the simulchat tonight?

**Michael Jackson:** I'm fine, doing all right. [laughs] I'm doing this simulchat because I love my fans, and I want to talk with you! I think this is incredible technology, just amazing, and I think we're pioneering here! Can I say hello to a couple of my friends? Hello, Lisa Marie...Hello, Paul McCartney...Hello, Mrs. Disney... Hello to my friends in Gary, Indiana...I can't think of a good joke to say... I want to say I love all of you, all of my fans around the world I love you dearly and don't listen to all the garbage that you hear.

**AOL Question from VanishR29:** How do you feel about technology like the internet and it's effect on society?

**Michael Jackson:** I think it is wonderful. It is a wonderful way to correspond it's growing and this is the tip of the iceberg. In the next year we will see some amazing growths in technology

and I hope that I'm around to see it. I pray that we continue to serve the world in a positive way not a negative way and not hurt anyone because it is wonderful.

**Internet Question From MJJ:** How involved are you with the other groups on the MJJ label?

**Michael Jackson:** I'm very much involved, not to the point of always being there, but listening to tapes, collaborating on the telephone, picking artists recommending ideas. The new 3T album which I just heard I think is going to be a big success. I do believe that. I want to say hi to Bill Bellamy in LA - he's a great guy. Thank you! Good night everybody. Talk to you soon. Bye!  
[Claps in the room. Michael shakes everyone's hand, thanking them, and leaves.]

["Orlando Sentinel" \(July 13, 1995\) \(archived\)](#)

The ethereal Michael Jackson is searching for new fans in an equally ethereal place - cyberspace.

The singer, whose HIStory album has topped the music charts for the past two weeks, has scheduled a live chat event for Aug. 3 at 10 p.m. (Ed. Later scheduled to August 17, 1995) Jackson will sit in front of a computer, probably at a Los Angeles record studio, and answer questions directly from fans.

But as befits the gloved one's hunger for marketing hype, this won't be an ordinary chat event. It will be a "simul-chat," meaning it will be broadcast simultaneously on the Prodigy and CompuServe online services and via Internet Relay Chat, which can be accessed by Internet users throughout the world.

Officials at America Online, the country's largest online service, said they were talking to Epic Records, Jackson's record label, about carrying the chat, but no deal had been struck late Wednesday.

"It's going to be big," said Carol Wallace, spokeswoman for Prodigy. "It's going to be a huge audience from around the world. And it gives him an opportunity to talk directly to his fans, which is a rare occurrence."

Prodigy is expanding the size of its chat "auditorium" to hold more than 5,000 subscribers, Wallace said.

"This event could break the online chat audience record for any celebrity in a single auditorium." Jackson already has launched at least one experiment to promote himself in cyberspace. The HIStory album already has its own homepage on the World Wide Web.

["The Baltimore Sun" \(July 31, 1995\) \(archived\)](#)

Say what you will about Michael Jackson, the word "small" is not in his vocabulary.

While most celebrities are content to hitch their wagon to one on-line service provider for a cyberspace promotional event, the self-styled King of Pop has corraled all three major service providers -- plus the general Internet -- for an evening of moonwalking.

The event, to be held at 7 p.m. Aug. 17, is the first chat simulcast. Although other artists -- notably Aerosmith -- have appeared on all three services in one week, Mr. Jackson will be the first to appear on all at the same time.

"Leave it to Jackson to have engineered it," says Judy Tashbook, an America Online spokeswoman. "To him, the excitement was the possibility of meeting everyone at once."

Even various scandals and the heavily hyped "HIStory" compilation have not dampened the singer's star power enough for any of the services to protest Mr. Jackson's request for a simulcast.

"In this situation, all of us would have liked to have had him for ourselves," says Carol Wallace, a Prodigy spokeswoman. "But we're more than happy to oblige him."

Ms. Wallace says the biggest challenge facing Prodigy was expanding the capacity of its chat room -- a virtual area that users log into to post questions and read responses -- to 5,000. All three services predict that the event will be the largest on-line chat ever -- predicted to draw almost 20,000 users.

Besides the capacity of about 5,000 people on each service, which has never been reached for any celebrity, the Internet Relay Chat area will accept questions from users of the general Internet.

Mr. Jackson will answer questions from each of the services in a round-robin from a Sony studio. Typists from all the providers will transcribe, so that each service will see questions and responses from every group.

Officials say if the event is successful, the services may consider more simulcasts. But it's unlikely, Ms. Wallace says, that anyone else would be able to pull it off.

"If he can't do it, no one will," she says.

To participate in the event on AOL, keyword: Centerstage. On CompuServe, Go Chat. On Prodigy, Jump: Chat.

#### ["Entertainment Weekly" \(September 8, 1995\) \(archived\)](#)

However wobbly his standing as the King of Pop, Michael Jackson can now lay claim to a new title: the Czar of Cyberchat. Although Jackson's live on-line debut last month didn't significantly boost *HIStory's* sagging sales, it drew more than 25,000 participants worldwide (besting Sandra Bullock's record of 2,035) in an event marketed as the first "simulchat" (hosted by on-line services America On line, CompuServe, and Prodigy; and accessible on the Internet). MTV concurrently aired Jackson videos, occasionally splitting the screen to show AOL's transcript text. Judging from the glitches this time, however, simulchats have a long way to go before becoming truly interactive.

For slightly more than an hour, Jackson fielded questions about his music, his marriage, and the media. Each service had two typists with Jackson in a room at New York City's Museum of Television & Radio, selecting questions and sending out Jackson's dictated responses. "The only rules were that there were no rules," says Barry Johnson, head of New Technologies for Epic Records Group, Jackson's label. "There was no rehearsing, no prepping." Even so, most of the questions were painfully tame. The most provocative query came from Britain, where the *Daily Mirror* reported that wife Lisa Marie Presley was seeking a divorce. Jackson responded, "No, it's not true" before the story appeared in U.S. papers the next morning.

Although the on-line services knew that Jackson would draw, they weren't prepared for the size of the crowd. "It's like they expected to go out for a swim and got hit by a tidal wave," says Jonathan Carey, managing director of Prospero Systems Research, which provided the software for Sony's Net chat. Tech problems tripped up AOL, whose on-line and MTV feeds started 10 minutes later than the others', killing any notion of a simultaneous event. Plagued by

typos, transcripts were worded differently on each of the services, and AOL's session carried only 24 questions, while Prodigy had 39 and CompuServe, 37.

While some on-line users were disappointed by the chat's brevity, the services aren't complaining: Subscribers spent \$3 to \$5 each to be part of the event. "It wasn't completely seamless, but we've learned a lot," says AOL chat producer Amy Arnold. "The experience for the members isn't the same. They would like to be with the celebrity the whole time themselves." If there's a next one, says Arnold, it would be only with someone as well-known as the King of Pop. And maybe next time it won't be such a royal pain.