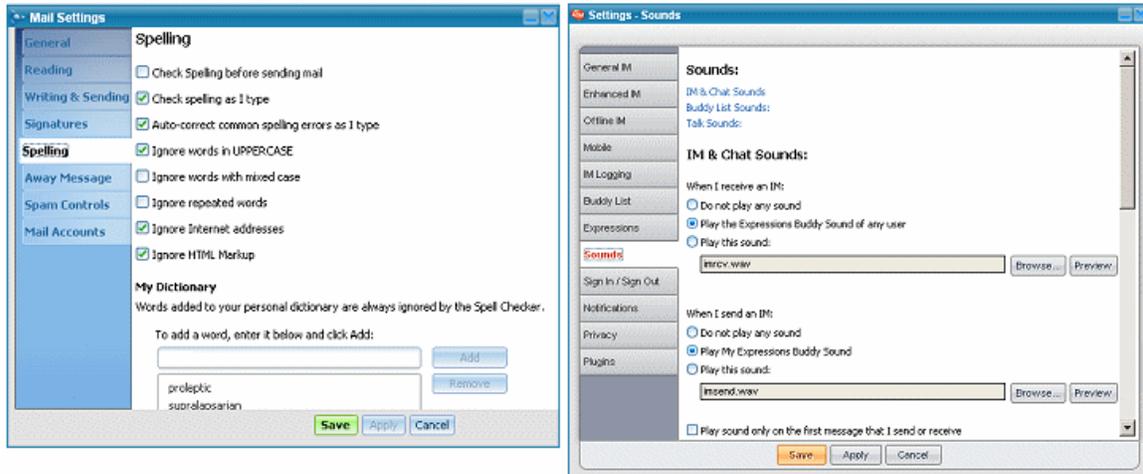


The other main inconsistency in Helix is that the Web and Mail settings follow one visual format (shades of blue), while the IM settings follow another (light gray & blue):



Presumably due to origins in two different production teams, the differences offer nothing to users and should be eliminated.

B. Additional Consistency Issues in Helix Tabbed Windows

There are some additional issues that should be noted in the Helix settings panels.

Three components – web browser, mail, and IM – each have a drop-down menu item for **Settings**, which summons the relevant panel as a highlighted tab in a dialog that also includes tabs for the other applications. Thus, if you are in the Mail application, you can call up settings for Mail but then easily switch to settings for web browsing or IM – as well as a fourth tab labeled simply “AOL.”

The four tabs and their displays are shown as follows:



While this mechanism works well enough, there are some inconsistencies:

(a) While three of the tabs are accessed from their respective applications (web, mail, and IM), the fourth one, "AOL" settings, appears to be accessible only by selecting one of the other three first. Unlike the other three panels, the AOL tab has no side tabs, and it omits the Save, Apply and Cancel buttons found on the other three.

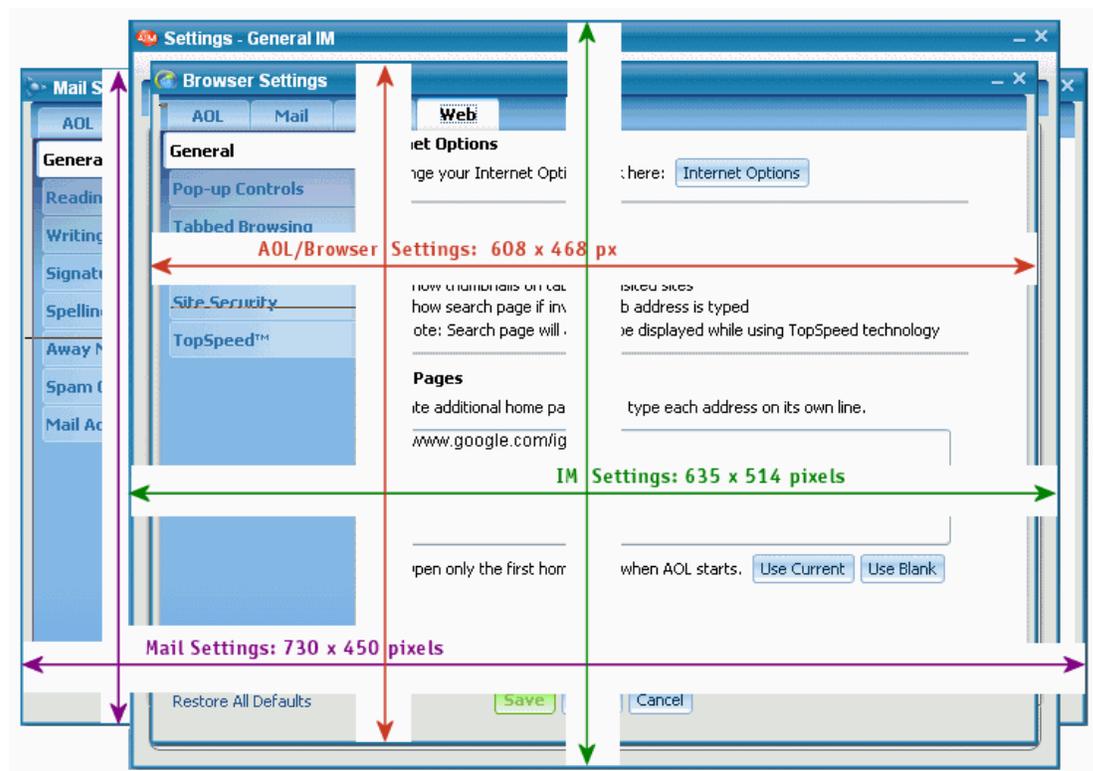
(b) The word order used in the window titles is inconsistent, with the term "Settings" coming first in two cases ("Settings - AOL") and last in the other two ("Mail Settings").

(c) Window titles are not always consistent with tab labels:

- Tab says "Web" but window title reads "Browser Settings."
- Tab says "AIM" but window title reads "General IM."

(d) The four panels use three different sizes:

- AOL and Web settings: 608 x 468 pixels
- Mail Settings: 730 x 450 pixels
- IM Settings: 635 x 514 pixels

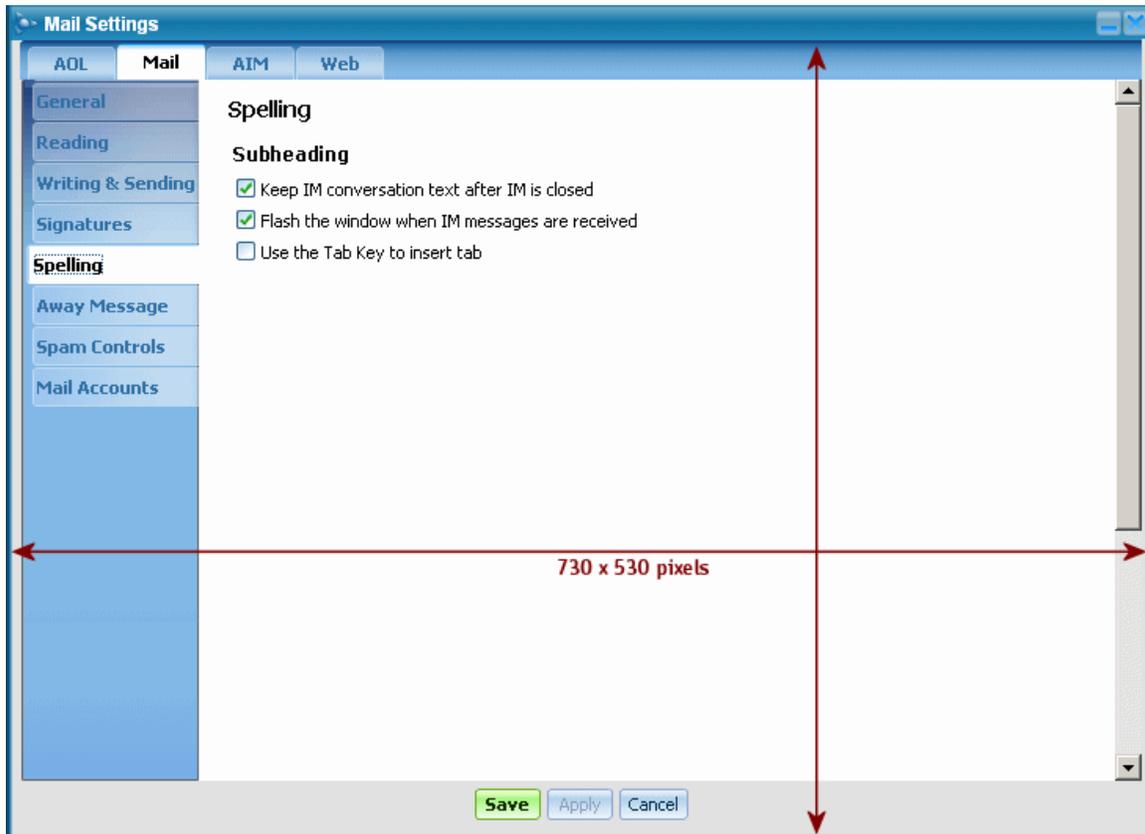


(The variations were less obvious in previous Helix version, which lacked the tabs allowing users to jumping from one application group to another.)

These inconsistencies, while not beyond the abilities of normal users to overcome, create an impression of a lack of polish, as if all details had not been thought through completely. The program will appear more integrated if these variations are eliminated.

Recommendation

The simplest solution would be a window large enough to accommodate all settings as they exist now, or about 730 x 530 pixels:



As it happens, the width of 730 pixels works well to the addition of “banner” format ads, which have a standard size of 728 x 90 pixels (see below).

Using a standard height of 530 pixels leaves the window a little shy of the 600-pixel height of the standard “tower” ad.

For more on ad formats and placement, see below.

C. Save versus Apply

The behavior in the **Save** and **Apply** buttons is worth considering in terms of both inherent consistency as well as monetization opportunities. The buttons at the bottom of all Settings panels work as follows:

- **Save:** Save changes, and close the panel.
- **Apply:** Save changes, but don't close the panel.
- **Cancel:** Close panel without saving any changes.

In many Windows and Mac programs, **Apply** is an optional command: you can “apply” changes right away so you won't forget later, or you might see the result immediately, without closing