

otherwise unblemished service, after he posted a note on the online computer service in which he identified himself as "Tim," whose marital status was "gay" and whose screen name was "Boysrch."

In a separate settlement, America Online, the nation's largest online computer service with 12 million users, has apologized to McVeigh for violating his privacy and has agreed to pay him damages. The company acknowledged that it had confirmed to a Navy investigator that McVeigh was the owner of the profile.

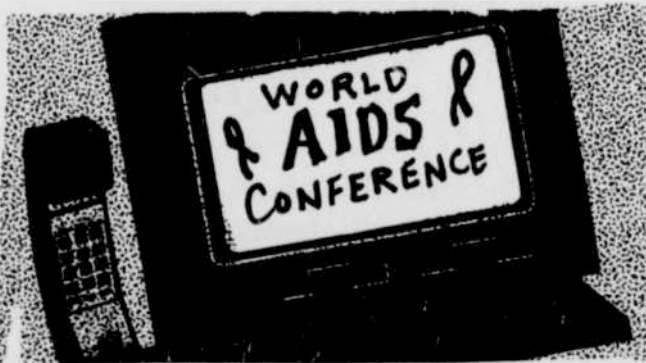
Under the settlement, both sides agreed not to reveal the amount of money paid to McVeigh by America Online. As a result of the case, the company has also announced new policies intended to guarantee the privacy of its users.

The policies will require that all of the company's nearly 5,000 customer service representatives be provided with special "scenario training" to ensure they do not give out private information about users without the user's consent or a court order. The company has also rewritten its privacy policy to make it easier to understand and has made the new policy available online to all customers.

### WORLD AIDS CONFERENCE BROADCAST ON WEB

People around the world will be able to view actual sessions from the 12th World AIDS Conference via the World Wide Web, according to organizers of this global meeting.

The Webcast ([www.webcast.aids98.org](http://www.webcast.aids98.org)) will be available all day and night and will contain the presenters' voices along with their slides.



Each day of the six-day conference, slated for June 28 to July 3, will have up to 50 new presentations together with a summary of daily highlights.

"For the first time, thousands of people who are passionately interested in new aspects of AIDS research, but unable to travel to the conference, will be able to participate in the meeting," says Dr. Bernard Hirschel, conference chair. "We hope that this unprecedented global sharing of knowledge will stimulate new thinking in the battle against HIV disease."

The World AIDS Conference takes place every two years and is the largest international HIV/AIDS forum for sharing new clinical, scientific and social data.

More than 10,000 delegates are expected to attend this year's meeting in Geneva. All selected presentations will be available for review online within eight hours of their initial public viewing in Geneva. In addition, daily summaries of the entire conference will be available for review and print.

### QUEER COMMUNITY GAINING ACCEPTANCE

A study released in late May by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute concludes that U.S. citizens overwhelmingly oppose sexual orientation discrimination in housing and employment, and support spousal benefits for same-sex couples. Support, the report shows, is increasing on other issues like same-sex adoption and marriage.

"In its opposition to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality, it is the right wing that is out of step with mainstream America," insists NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "This report empirically and objectively proves that while the voice of the anti-gay right wing may be loud in its opposition to equal rights, its claim to majority public opinion is unjustified."

According to the report, authored by Columbia University political science doctoral candidate Alan Yang, 84 percent of people in the United States support equal employment rights for sexual minority citizens; 81 percent support housing rights; 66 percent support gay men and lesbians in the military; 62 percent support inheritance rights; and 57 percent support social security benefits for same-sex couples.

Additionally, while a majority of U.S. citizens—56 percent in 1996—still seem to disapprove of same-sex relationships, the numbers are dropping from an all-time recorded high of 75 percent in 1987.

The full report, deemed the most comprehensive analysis to date of trends in public opinion about gay men and lesbians, may be viewed at [www.nglftf.org](http://www.nglftf.org).

### LOTT SLANDERS HOMOSEXUALITY

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said June 15 he believes homosexuality is a sin, and that gay men and lesbians should be assisted in dealing with it "just like alcohol...or sex addiction...or kleptomaniacs."

The Mississippi Republican made the remarks while taping an interview for a cable television program. When asked whether he believed homosexuality is a sin, Lott replied: "Yeah, it is. You should still love that person. You should not try to mistreat them or treat them as outcasts.... There are all kinds of problems, addictions, difficulties, experiences of things that are wrong, but you should try to work with that person to learn to control that problem."

Lott was immediately criticized by an official of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest lesbian and gay political organization.

His comments show "how the extreme right wing has a stranglehold on the leadership" of Congress, charges Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's political director.

Conservative leaders like Dr. James C. Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, have met in recent weeks with Lott and other congressional leaders, urging them to push to reduce taxes for many married couples and pursue other conservative priorities, reports The Associated Press.

"It also may explain why he hasn't scheduled time for the nomination of James Hormel," Stachelberg adds, referring to the San Francisco philanthropist and Democratic Party donor whom President Clinton nominated last year to be ambassador to Luxembourg. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the nomination in November, but it has been stalled ever since.

Earlier this month on CNN, Lott said for the first time that he opposes Hormel's nomination, viewing him as an aggressive advocate of the gay lifestyle. As majority leader, Lott largely controls the Senate's agenda.

Compiled by WILL O'BRYAN and INGA SORENSON

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