FROM SMOKE SIGNALS to Email: Keeping in Touch From the Stone Age to the present, people have shown a desire to send messages to one another over long distances. And text messaging on cell phones is also increasing, so people can, in effect, be in constant touch with people who are long distances away. The first email message took place in 1971, and according to its sender, Ray Tomlinson, it was probably the following: "QWERTYUIOP." What was significant about that? Nothing, really. This is just the top row of keys on an English-language keyboard. Tomlinson was just testing out the system and using a nonsense message. He had no concept that he was going to start a revolution in communication. Tomlinson was one of a group of scientists who were working on developing better computers. The scientists at his site were able to send a message to a "mailbox" on the computer on their site. Because the local dialect alternates in these tones, the sender is able to simulate speech with the drums. In ancient times, according to one story, a chain of fires on mountaintops was used to relate the news of the fall of Troy to people in Greece. In the past, native people in the Americas used smoke from fires to transmit messages. The ancient Greeks established lines of signal towers at mountain-tops. They developed a code--in which certain combinations of smoke rising had special meanings.