

HOW BEST TO HANDLE YOUR EMAILS

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NOTE: These tips apply specifically to Microsoft Outlook Express V6 on XP. Your OE version may be different but the basic principles are much the same for all versions- GE

First a joke – Recently Russian archaeologists discovered traces of copper wire 1000 metres below the ground and concluded that Russians had invented the phone network 1000 years ago.

Two weeks later US archaeologists discovered traces of fibre optic cable 2000m down and concluded that American Indians had been using cable internet 2000 years ago.

Three weeks after the US announcement, Irish archaeologists announced they had dug to a depth of 5000m and discovered absolutely nothing. So, they concluded, Irishmen were using wireless technology 5000 years ago.

Before you do any emailing – secure your computer

- **Use and update anti-virus software.** Remember to make sure your anti-virus software is always turned on and set to scan incoming and outgoing email.
- **Use and update anti-spy ware software** (it may be combined with your anti-virus software). Spy ware is software takes information from your PC without your knowledge and gives that information to a third party. Spy ware is used to collect personal information about you such as your banking and credit card details and other private information.
- **Protect yourself against spam.** Spam is the Internet equivalent of junk mail in your letter box. Spam not only fills your inbox with annoying, unwanted messages, but also costs you time deleting them.
- Do not allow Outlook Express to automatically open incoming messages. Set it up so that you decide whether to open each message. Go to **View>Layout** and make sure the **Show Preview pane** option is NOT ticked.

Ways to reduce spam attacks

- Activate any spam filtering options that your Internet service provider (ISP) offers—check their website
- Activate any spam filtering function provided by the email program you use. Alternatively install a special spam filter—you will find spam filters using a search engine like Google
- Block unwanted emails from known pests. When you block an e-mail address, any mail received from that address is automatically shunted to your Deleted Items folder.

To block a sender, first **highlight their e-mail** message to you, click the **Message** menu, and then click **Block Sender**. This instantly adds the sender's e-mail address to your Blocked Senders List.

- Delete unread all emails from people you don't know or whose address seems suspicious. You can find out more about an email by right clicking on it (don't open it), then select **Properties >Details>Message source**.
- If you ever receive a suspect email, delete it permanently immediately. (Press the Control and Delete keys together, so your PC doesn't just move the suspect email to your Deleted Items file.)
- If you receive a suspicious spam email, do NOT use the 'remove' or 'unsubscribe' link or click on any button in the email such as Quit. These links tell the spammer your account is "live" and can result in even more spam being sent to you
- Don't rush to open an attachment just because it appears to have come from someone you know. If you receive an attachment that you are not expecting, don't open it. At least, first read the email and make sure that the attachment is most likely legitimate.
- If the source seems genuine, and an email appears to promote a legitimate Australian business but you are not interested, contact the business and ask them to take you off their emailing lists.
- Do not open attachments in any messages if the source of the message is unknown or is suspicious.

Delete and do NOT forward any email that...

- ... says something like, "Send this email to 10 people and something really amazing/cute etc will happen." It won't or, if it does, you may find it hard to get rid of
- ... says you will get 10 years of bad luck if you don't pass them on to others
- ... warns you of a dreadful virus. Check it out first! Most 'Virus Alerts' are junk mail that's been around for years. Consult urban myth on-line authorities such as the home page of your anti-virus software supplier or independent sites like www.snopes.com and www.hoax-slayer.com . It's easy to find out if the threat is real or not. If it's not real, don't pass the email on.
- Finally, guard your Internet connection. A fast Internet connection is attractive to spammers and criminals. Therefore always turn off your external broadband modem (usually the switch is on the back panel) or otherwise close your connection to the Internet when you aren't using it.

Set up an alternative email account for “public” use

Use freebie email accounts like Gmail or Hotmail for all those “free” subscriptions you sign up for. No matter what they tell you, you will get unsolicited mail as a result at some point in the future.

Free email accounts are designed to be Web friendly and thus are very useful when you go travelling and have to use strange computers. (BTW, banks don’t like their clients using free internet accounts.)

To sign up for Gmail go to www.google.com/accounts select Gmail and follow the prompts.

Supply your name and a login name. Make your login name something others can understand such as “JohnJBrown” rather than “Heavenly hunk”).

Invent a strong Gmail password based on using the first letters or numbers in a personal phrase containing capital letters and numbers. An example - if your phrase is ...

I joined Gmail in June 08

then your password becomes

IjGmiJ08

SENDING EMAILS

Send e-mail to a group

If you often send the same e-mail message to a number of people, such as your family or friends, consider creating a group. Then you can address a single email to the group name and all members of the group will receive it.

To create a group, follow these steps:

- Click the **Addresses** button on the toolbar to open your address book.
- Click the **New** button on your Address Book toolbar, and click **New Group**.
This opens the New Group Properties dialog box, in which you can name the group and select members from your existing contacts.
- Click the **Select Members** button to add contacts to your group. When you are finished, click **OK**.

Remember when sending e-mail to groups everyone receiving the message will see the e-mail address for each member on the list.

If you don’t want this to happen, type your own name in the **To** section to send it to yourself and type the group name in the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) section

(If you can’t see the BCC sections when you select a new message go to **View** and click **All Headers**).

- Do respond to group email appropriately. If someone has sent you a group email that requires a response, just reply to the sender, not everyone.

Sending attachments

Keep your attachments small. If you are sending a large attachment to someone, whether they have a free email or not, they probably have an inbox size limit.

Stay at good terms with them by only sending attachments no larger than, say, 100 Kilobytes, unless they've requested it of you.

If you want a lot of friends and family to see all your 400 holiday photos or your fascinating 10-minute movie of your three-year-old granddaughter having breakfast, upload the material to a Web page. Don't try to email it.

Many ISPs provide free Web space for their clients.

If you see **something on-line** that you want to share, you are better off sending that particular Web address to your friends rather than sending a copy of the actual page as a huge attachment.

Sending photos

Invariably, photos need to be reduced in size before emailing.

If you use Windows XP just select a photo, **RIGHT** click it, and select **Mail Recipient**. Select **Make my pictures smaller** – click **OK**.

(Clicking on the line "Show more options" will give you a choice of sizes).

Alternatively go to www.microsoft.com/ then select **Windows**> downloads for **Windows XP** > **Power Toys** > **Power toys for Windows XP** and select **Image Resizer**.

Download Image Resizer and install it on your computer. You will now find a new **RESIZE** option when you **RIGHT** click on any photo. Choose whatever size you think is appropriate.

How to forward Email

- When you forward an email, **DELETE** all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). You **MUST** click the "Forward" button first. If you don't you won't be able to edit the message at all.
- Whenever you send an email to more than one person, do **NOT** use the **To:** or **Cc:** fields for adding email addresses. Always use the **BCC:** (blind carbon copy) field for listing **ALL** the email addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own email address.
- Remove any "FW :." in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish.

- Have you ever received an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book.

The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. The completed petition is actually worth a couple of dollars to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein.

So if you want to be careful, DO NOT put your email address on any petition. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter.

General hints about sending emails

Use quotations. When you respond to an email, the original email is quoted. Cut the most relevant sentence from the message to which you are responding, preface it with a '>' (if it's not already there) and paste the quote above your response. Delete the rest.

Be brief. Do not send very long emails if at all possible. Try to summarise your information so that your recipients are more likely to read the email and respond.

Stay clean. If you suspect you have a virus on your computer, run a virus checker (with an updated virus database) immediately. If possible, try to notify people on your contact list. Many viruses perform the explicit purpose of harvesting email addresses from your computer, then spamming them using your name. You get the blame.

Be careful. Email is not private; it can be intercepted anywhere en route to its recipient. In addition, it can live on for years in recipient email boxes, later to return to its sender in choice quotations. Think before sending any email you will later regret.

So don't use email when you are angry. While most of the time email does not convey your emotions it somehow seems to transmit anger - even when you don't intend it to come through. So if you think that something you've written might be misunderstood, either re-write it, delete it or use an appropriate smiley like :-) or ;- >

Get clarification. If someone sends you an email that upsets you, make sure you haven't misunderstood. Instead of responding angrily, in your response, quote the portion of text that you are unsure of and ask the sender to clarify. Indicate what you think it means, if you like, then ask if you've misunderstood.

Stick to plain text for emails. When you start a new email if you click **Format** you will see you have a choice of **Plain Text** or **Rich Text**. Rich Text allows you to use type in different fonts, sizes and colours as well as underlines, italics and alignments.

These extras all make your emails larger and more likely to cause trouble if received by a different PC.

Experiment by all means but be aware Plain Text is quicker and safer.

RECEIVING EMAILS

Act at once if possible.

Don't move anything from your main inbox into a folder if you haven't read it yet. It's likely to stay that way. Read it, respond, and file it. That way, your main inbox holds only unread messages.

Code your publicly-displayed emails. *Spam bots* are web applications that scour websites for recognisable email addresses. If you have a website or display your email on anyone's webpage, "code" your email. It should still be recognisable by a human. For example, if your email is bob.davis@bigpond.com, then try something like "bob-dot-davis #at# bigpond-dot-com", or something similar.

Make folders for emails of the same type. e.g. emails from the family.

To do this go to **File**, select **New**. In the **Create folder** box, highlight **Local Folders** then type a name for your folder (eg *Family*) and then hit **OK**.

A folder called Family will now appear in your folder list.

Managing e-mails with rules

You can use rules in Outlook Express to **automatically sort incoming messages into different folders**, automatically reply to or forward certain messages, and more.

To create a rule for e-mail messages

1. On the **Tools** menu, point to **Message Rules**, and then click **Mail**.
2. Select the Mail Rules tab, click **New**.
3. Specify the actions for your rule by selecting the desired check boxes in the **Actions** section. (You must select at least one condition.)
4. Click the underlined hyperlinks in the Rule Description section to specify the conditions or actions for your rule.

You can click contains people or contains specific words in the Rule Description section to specify the people or words you'd like Outlook Express to look for in messages.

If you enter multiple people or multiple words per condition, use the Options button in the Select People or Type Specific Words dialog boxes to further customize the condition.

5. In the Name of the rule text box, select the default name or type a new name for your rule, and then click **OK**.

Find a lost message

If you can't find a message, click any column header to sort your messages quickly. For example, if all you remember is that you received a message last Wednesday, click the **Received** column heading to list your messages by the date they were received.

By clicking repeatedly you will list your emails by either the oldest first or the newest first.

If you remember the subject of the message, click **Subject** to sort messages by their subject line.

Add a signature to the bottom of your messages

You can use e-mail signatures to include your phone number, mobile, and any other information at the bottom of your messages. Think carefully though before including your full street address.

You can create a signature once and add it to your messages whenever you want.

- Click the **Tools** menu, and then click **Options**.
- In the Options dialog box, click the **Signatures** tab.
- Next, click the **New** button to add a signature. After you have typed the info you want to appear as your signature, click the **Rename** button and type a name for your signature. (You can leave it as *Signature #1* if you like)
- To use your new signature, create a new message and place your cursor in the message where you want your signature to appear. Now, click the **Insert** menu, and then click **Signature** to place the signature into your message.

How to back up your Outlook Express Address Book

You do this by copying the Windows address book (.wab) file.

The easiest way is to open your address book, go **File – Export – Address book (WAB)** and save it under a new name in My Documents. You can then copy this new file to a flash drive, CD or DVD.

You can also create a hard copy of your email addresses by opening the Address Book and selecting the Print button. You have three choices of printing styles.

Happy emailing!

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