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'Email tips & tricks'

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Ways to set-up and back-up your mail

Here are a few tips to consider in the way you set-up, backup and use your email.

These set-ups are designed to help someone who already has or is considering using email.

Topics covered will include…

- **How should I use email?**
- **Which program should I use?**
- **Where do my files get stored and how do I back these up?**
- **File and Folder Organisation.**
- **Size limitations.**

Overview

When we get an Internet connection, be that dial-up, ADSL, cable, wireless broadband, satellite or another form of connection, we are usually supplied with an email address. If we are lucky, this is our name or something meaningful, often it is anything but intelligent and the only meaningful part is the I.S.P.'s (Internet Service Provider's) domain name at the end of the address, i.e. @something.com.au.

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Anyway, here are some thoughts to consider…

- ➢ We do not need to own a computer or have an Internet connection to set-up an email address; we could use a friend's system or an Internet cafe.
- ➢ It is easy to set-up an address or as many as we like for FREE.
- ➢ We can change our address and password easily, although this may affect our connecting device if it has been programmed with these settings.
- ➢ We can register a domain name and choose our own email address.
- ➢ It is easy and beneficial to backup all our email and address lists real-time.
- ➢ Email transmission does have size limits as to how much we can send and receive.
- ➢ There are many different programs to choose from to handle our mail.

How should I use email?

Typically, we set-up either Outlook Express or Outlook on our P.C. and off we go sending and receiving happily for many years until a problem strikes, which occurs occasionally if you keep doing this long enough. How we set-up the mail system depends on our lifestyle and requirements. If we are a business, then we need reliability and backup measures built in, if we are just using it at home for fun, then it may not be a big issue even if we do lose all the data.

Broadly, there are two major ways of handling your mail. Firstly and most commonly is P.O.P (meaning Point of Presence) which is typically set-up on the P.C. and this is where it ends. If my hard disk crashes I simply lose my last five years of correspondence and all my addresses and contacts.
Alternatively, I can set-up on a remote server and view my mail through Internet Explorer or another browser. AOL, Hotmail, Yahoo and G-mail are examples of this type of set-up and at the higher end of town; businesses that use Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes also simulate this type of environment, where I go to the post-office and read and reply to may mail, but it is always there and not actually in my P.C. after the exchange. Managed Exchange is a professional server dedicated to your mail.

Which is better for us? I always go for ownership and prefer my mail to be in my control as much as possible. Due to this, you'll notice that I prefer to own my own domain (read our article, "Yourname.com") and still use a custom version of the former method, which you might like to try for yourself.
What I like to do, is set-up two copies of my email on two different computers.

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I have one overpowered office system that gets all our mail, but I have ticked a box instructing the mail program to leave a copy on the server, so that our notebook then reproduces all my mail again when I go to use it. Why? I never lose my mail & addresses. I also back up to a third external Hard Disk, giving me three copies and I use TPG at this point, who whilst providing me with a super fast and cheap Internet connection, automatically remove any viruses and have an excellent spam filter, which I can modify the settings with online. Another excellent spam filter is matador by mail frontier, which I will email you direct if you need help to remove junk email. You can find this setting in virtually any mail program. I set-up a friends Mac using Entourage in exactly the same way the other day, so that we could use his notebook as a redundant email server. Here is how to do this in Outlook Express and Outlook…

Outlook Express

1. Left click on Tools.
2. Left click on Accounts (click on your mail account – call ISP if not set-up).
3. Left click on Properties.
4. Left click on Advanced.
5. Left click on "Leave a copy of messages on server".
6. Left click on O.K. and close the boxes.

Now at this point, there are a couple of ways we can proceed. If we just leave this set-up in this way, we can go and get a second copy of all our mail online. I.e. if I am with Bigpond, I can go to www.bigpond.com and log in with my username and password and check all my mail, even after it has been downloaded to my computer. This is useful if you travel a lot, as when you get home, your P.C. will still have a comprehensive track of all the mail too!
Otherwise, you can set-up a second P.C. or even a second mail program on the one P.C. to duplicate your mail. You simply set-up the account and tick the same box. Here is how to do this in Outlook 2003.

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Outlook 2003

1. Left click on Tools.
2. Left click on Email Accounts (click on your mail account – call ISP if not set-up).
3. Left click on "View or Change existing email accounts".
4. Left click on Next. More Settings and then advanced.
5. Left click on "Leave a copy of messages on server".
6. Left click on O.K. and close the boxes.

Which program should I use for email?

If you are wanting more than a travelling account with Hotmail, Yahoo, G-mail or others, which are FREE and you can use from pretty well any Internet connected computer in the world, then we will need a mail client or program to read and send email.

Entourage (For Mac users), Outlook Express, Outlook, Thunderbird, Eudora, Pegasus and Incredimail are some to check out.

Managed Exchange, Microsoft Exchange and Lotus Notes are great for serious business users. The wonderful part of these programs is the ownership they give you of your business. They make it very hard for people to take your data, although not impossible. With Managed Exchange, I could change a password and an employee could be real-time locked out of my business data and addresses in a split second.

I notice that our top technicians use either Managed Exchange with Webcentral, Thunderbird or G-mail by Google. Fun people use Incredimail and I still use Outlook Express as I like simple and fast, although I am keen to get everything over to Thunderbird at some point. Why? Great security and solid reliability, as opposed to my Outlook Express, which can not handle the 3.5GB inbox and crashes regularly even though I have reformatted and tried to help it out and with Outlook, sometimes the data file can suffer from a split if it gets too big (typically 2GB and up) and lose it all.

You choose what you like and are comfortable with. I only have problems because I get so much email. Take a look at what's out there!

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Where do my files get stored and how do I back these up?

This is really important for you to understand. Outlook stores in two important areas. The Office Data file (which is important if you still want Peter's address to pop up when you type "P" for example) is in: -

C:\Documents and Settings\Mike\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook

To simplify the computer programming, just keep clicking on each section as follows... (You will need to show hidden folders, see the "Speed up Your Computer" article)

1. Left click C:
2. Left click on Documents and Settings.
3. Left click on Mike (Your profile name – Owner or Whatever).
4. Left click on Application Data.
5. Left click on Microsoft.
6. The Outlook Folder is the one you need to backup (typically right-click and send to CD or copy and paste on a different external backup drive).

The main mail file called a .pst file is stored somewhere else: -

C:\Documents and Settings\Mike\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook

7. Left click C:
8. Left click on Documents and Settings.
9. Left click on Mike (Your profile name – Owner or Whatever).
10. Left click on Local Settings
11. Left click on Application Data.
12. Left click on Microsoft.
13. The contents of the Outlook Folder are what you need to backup, Outlook.pst and archive files if they are there. The reason we don't do the whole folder is because we have just backed up a folder called "Outlook" and we don't want to overwrite it – so just take a copy of the pst files please.

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Outlook Express also uses two data areas, one area for the address book: -

C:\Documents and Settings\Mike\Application Data\Microsoft\Address Book

And one area for the mail data: -

C:\Documents and Settings\Mike\Local Settings\Application Data\Identities

Some of you, may find your mail is in another area and if so, I recommend using the search (Start, Search) tool in Windows and locating the mail by searching for *.pst or inbox or address book until you find your data (right click on the folder and left click on properties to discover the size of these folders. This will be a clue as to where you mail is). Make sure you have the "Search Hidden Files and Folders" box ticked.

File and Folder Organisation.

A couple of last thoughts for you. If you split your inbox files into smaller folder groups, like "family", "bank", "work", "soccer" etc. you will have a much more stable experience if your inbox does get bigger. A recent conversation with the top technicians of Thunderbird's mail program revealed that the size of their mail could go on indefinitely, if people uses this approach of breaking the mail down into smaller folders and I guess this will also be the case for Outlook Express.

Be careful you Outlook users – keep an eye on that .pst file and backup regularly if it is over a couple of Gigs!

Size limitations

Just another short note about your I.S.P.
They usually only allocate about 5-10MB of space for your mail and therefore if I decide to send you a 90MB AVI movie of me playing golf, you will never get it, it will just stop your mail working and you will need to ask your I.S.P. to delete the mail remotely before it will all work again. Therefore, if sending lots of photos, a movie or another large file, like a program, do everyone the honour of posting this on a CD please. They'll appreciate that you took the time and everyone's email will run better for your wise decision!

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Please support Mike Williams and 2UE for letting us give you this advice for *FREE*. Every time you ask for me back, I promise I will give you a free article.

Kind Regards,

Mike Bloomfield

You may contact me at mike@apcgenius.com or give me a call! - Thanks, Mike Bloomfield.

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