

Managing your email

Most of us suffer from email overload. Here are some things to do to try to get your email under control. The first section is generic. The next sections are specific to various email clients. It is impossible to cover every possible email provider, but the instructions should help with an email provider that isn't covered such as Comcast or AOL. It will at least let you know what can be done, then you just need figure out how to do it.

Clean out old mail

If you have email you want to keep you need to be able to find it. If you have 20,000 emails in your inbox you will never find anything. It is a good idea to keep your inbox minimal. Either delete or sort your email to get your inbox under control. Most email providers have a limit on how much mail you can have. If you exceed the limit, they start by deleting your oldest emails first, which might include some you really want to keep. It is also a good idea to periodically look at older email you have kept and delete things that are no longer relevant.

To delete an email select the email or emails that you want to delete. Most providers have a *trashcan* icon that you can click. You can also, usually, right click the message and select delete or use the delete key on your keyboard.

Most email clients allow you to delete batches of email. Sometimes there is the ability to check a box at the top of a column and select all the emails in that column. You can then uncheck those you wish to keep and delete the rest. You can also, usually, click on one email, then hold down the shift key and click on a different email. This will select a batch at a time so you can delete a little more quickly. Some email clients allow you to sort emails into read and unread. If you have large batches of unread email that you don't intend to read, you can use this and select large batches at a time to delete.

Sort your stored emails.

To make it easier to find old emails it helps to have them sorted. You can do this by creating folders to move things to, so that all your grandkid's emails are in one place and emails from your doctor are all stored together. If you just want a place to save things in general, many email providers have an archive folder.

Sometimes you may want a folder to be readily available, but it is farther down when listed alphabetically. A trick to solve this is to name it starting with a number e.g. *1 Zoo*. This will move it to the top of your folder list.

If you would like to have all messages of a certain type such as sender or subject, sent to a specific folder you can set up filtering. A filter will determine if an email meets certain criteria and then automatically move it. A filter set for an email address, such as one of your kids, could automatically send messages from them to the Kids folder while another folder could automatically delete emails.

Empty the trash

Trash is not where to save things you want – create folders and move wanted emails to those folders. You should keep your trash emptied as the trash folder counts against your total storage. Some email providers, such as Gmail, will empty your trash folder of anything that has been in the trash for 30 days. Emptying the trash is final and there is no way to recover any of these messages.

Dealing with spam

We all get lots of mail from companies and individuals that we don't want to hear from. There are several things which can be done to decrease the amount of spam you have to deal with.

For legitimate companies that send you email you can use the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the email. Only do this for companies that you know to be legitimate. Unsubscribing from a Nigerian Prince just lets them know that your email address is valid and they can sell it to another spammer.

For email that you don't feel safe unsubscribing from, you should set a rule (filter) to have it go into a spam or junk folder, whichever your email provider calls it.

It is a good idea to check your spam folder regularly. Sometimes legitimate mail may end up there, usually because it was sent to a large group but also because of subject matter or contents. An email from your doctor describing treatments for ED could conceivably end up in spam. You can tell your email provider that email from that source is not spam. After you have checked your spam folder you should delete all the unwanted mail there.

Some people create a new email account to use with websites that demand an email but that you don't want to be bothered by. If you do this, you should still check it occasionally to make sure it really is all junk.

One way to limit spam is to uncheck the frequently prechecked box about sending you messages when you sign up with a new website. Legitimate companies will honor this and not flood your inbox.

One additional way is to create a "disposable" email address. This is usually an extension to your regular email address such as *myrealemail+vendor@gmail*. This will allow you sort out future junk email and know who sold your name when the *vendor* name in the email address shows up as the to address from other companies. An example of this might be that you create a disposable address for Macy's such as *myrealemail+macys@gmail.com*. Then, if you start to receive email from other companies sent to that address you will know that Macy's sold your address. You can then create a filter to delete all mail sent to that address.

Deal with email once

When you open an email, you should deal with it immediately. Reply, delete it, or move it to a folder the first time you open it, otherwise it just builds up in your inbox and you start to feel overwhelmed again and you may not get back to it in a timely manner, if ever. About the only time to let mail sit is if you are angry. Cool down before you reply so that you don't say something you later wish you hadn't.

Vacation or Out of Office response

Most email clients support a vacation or Out of Office response feature. If you are going to be away from your email for an extended time you may choose to use this so that your correspondents won't think you are ignoring them. The ideal option is to limit the response to people in your address book because the Nigerian Prince doesn't really care that you are on vacation. Sometimes caution is advised. A response message that says "I will be out of the country for the next month" could be dangerous if it falls into the wrong hands, a clear invitation to someone to stop by and help themselves to your possessions.

Gmail

Clean out old mail. Gmail will show you 100 messages in a column. To see the next batch of 100 click on the > next to the message *showing 1 to 100 of 243*. The fastest and most efficient way to clean out your mail is to move through until you have the oldest mail showing. If there is mail you want, move it to a folder. Once there is nothing there you want, click in the checkbox above the first email in the list. This will select all 100, or however many are left in the column, and then delete them.

Sort your stored emails. To create folders in Gmail (which Gmail calls labels) scroll to the bottom of the list on the left side of the screen, clicking on *more* if necessary, until you see *Create new label*. Click on that and give it a name. Then select *Nest under* if you would like it to be a subfolder of an existing folder. If you have a folder called family you could then create a sub folder of that for individual family members. The sub folder will appear below the parent folder. If you don't nest it, it will appear below your *inbox* in alphabetical order.

Empty the trash. To empty the trash, click on the *trash folder* on the left side of the screen. This will show you all the messages currently in the trash. At the top click on *Empty Trash Now*. Remember that this is final and there is no way to recover any of these messages. Gmail automatically deletes trash after 30 days so don't use the trash folder for long term storage.

Spam. Gmail does a fairly good job of detecting spam and sending it to your Spam folder. If you have unread spam messages in the spam folder, it will indicate it by showing a number next to the spam folder. To have a sender automatically sent to spam click on the report spam icon above the email. As an alternative, click the 3 dots and select *Filter messages like these*. There you can choose from a number of things to filter for, then click *create filter* to tell it what to do with the message, then click *create filter* again to complete the process.

To use a disposable address you don't have to do anything in Gmail. Just enter *yourrealemail+something@gmail.com* in the email address box of the website you don't want to give your real address to.. Any future mail sent to this address can be filtered, as above.

Vacation or Out of Office response. To create a Vacation responder click on the *gear* icon then *See all settings*. Near the bottom of that page, you will see the options for the *Vacation responder*. You can select start and stop dates, the subject, your message and a checkbox to only send to contacts.

Yahoo which includes ATT.net, Pacbell.net and Sbcglobal.net

Clean out old mail. To delete messages, click the check box in front of the email and click the *Delete* icon. You can select many at one, time rather than having to delete them one at a time. If you want to delete all the messages on the screen you can check the checkbox above the first message to select all of them. If you want to delete almost all of them, you can check the box and then uncheck the ones you want to keep. A nice feature of Yahoo is that you can sort by year, making it easier to find older messages.

Sort your stored emails. To create folders in Yahoo, scroll down in the left column until you find the *+ New Folder* item. Click on this and it will give you a popup to enter the name of the folder. To create a sub folder, click on the folder that you want to have a subfolder for. Then click the down arrow next to the folder name and select *Create subfolder*. To move items to a folder, click the checkbox in front of the message or messages you want to move and then click the *move* icon in the toolbar. Select the folder to move to from the list.

Empty the trash. Select the Trash folder and you will see a trashcan icon. Click on this and you will get a message to confirm this is what you want to do. If you only want to delete some messages you can select the by clicking the checkbox in front of them and click on the *Delete* icon on the toolbar. This is final and there is no way to recover any of these messages.

Spam. Select the offending email or emails and click the *Spam* icon on the menu bar. This will send them to the Spam folder. Yahoo will also remove spam emails that it recognizes as such. It is a good idea to check your spam folder occasionally to be sure there is nothing there that you want because Yahoo doesn't notify you that there are messages in the Spam folder. If you want to stop messages from a certain sender, select the message and click the *three dots* at the top, and select *Filter messages like this*. You can designate a folder for messages to be sent to or you can click on more options to add

additional choices of what should be filtered such as contents or subject. From that same drop-down menu, you can select *block senders* to block as well as delete all previous messages from them. To create a disposable address in Yahoo, you must first create it, Click the *gear* icon, then click *Settings*. Click on *... more settings*. Select *Mailboxes*. Under *Disposable email address* select *add*. In the Create disposable email address box add the identifying word, called a keyword. Add a display name (what the recipient will see) and, if you wish a description of what the address is for. Click *Save*. After clicking save you are offered the opportunity to add a filter for any messages sent to that address.

Vacation or Out of Office response. To set up a vacation response click the *gear* icon and then select *more settings*. You will find *vacation response* in the left column. Turn it on and you can set the dates and message. Unfortunately, there is no way to limit the response to just your contacts.

Sonic Webmail

Clean out old mail. Sonic doesn't have a checkbox to select multiple mail items. You can still select a batch by clicking on the first mail in the group and then holding down the shift key while clicking on the last mail in the bunch. To help find groups of messages with something in common you can sort your email inbox. Click the *small gear* icon above the first mail and select how you want to sort in the *sorting* column. For example, you could put all the messages from a particular sender together. You can then use the click select method to select a group of messages to delete at once. Sonic shows fifty messages at a time so you can use the *>* or *>/* to move to the oldest messages to begin deleting.

Sort your stored emails. To create a folder in Sonic webmail, click the *gear icon Settings*. Select *Folders* and then the *+* icon at the bottom. Enter a name for the folder, and if it is a sub folder choose the Parent Folder from the drop-down list below the name. To move messages into a folder, click on the *... more* and select move to, then pick the desired folder.

Empty the trash. To permanently delete messages, click on the *Trash* folder on the left. Right click it and select empty. This will give you a popup to confirm emptying. This is final and there is no way to recover any of these messages.

Spam. Sonic uses Spam Assassin to filter out spam. To turn Spam Assassin on go to *Member tools* and then log on. Go to *Email* and then *spam filtering* and *spamassasin configuring*. Check the boxes for *Use Razor 2* and *Use DCC*. Spam Assassin will now filter out spam emails. Sonic refers to spam as Junk so that is the folder where spam goes. Sonic does not have an easy way to label something as spam, however you can set up filters to send recurring spam to the junk folder. To create a filter, click the *Gear icon Settings*. On the left column click on *filters*. Choose the criteria for the filter and the action to take and save it. To send a single message to spam choose the *... more* icon and then choose *send to*. Select the junk folder to send the message there. Alternatively, you can just delete it. Sonic will show if you have messages in the graymail folder which Sonic uses to designate suspected spam.

Sonic does not support disposable email addresses so you would need to use a third-party service such as Burner Mail.

Vacation or Out of Office response. To send what Sonic calls an autoresponse go to *Member Tools*. Highlight *email* and then *Forwarding and autoresponse* and select *Email Autoresponse*. Click on *enable*. When enabled you can select the dates and enter the message you want to send. Sonic does not provide a way to limit responses to your contacts. Be sure to turn it off when you return.

Outlook

Outlook and Thunderbird are email clients rather than email providers. They allow you to collect your mail in a program rather than from a website. One advantage is that they can get mail from more than one account if you have multiple email addresses. Depending on how they are configured they can

either store your messages on your computer or just keep them on your providers server. Generally, they will work with any email provider if you know all of the necessary settings.

Clean out old mail. Outlook doesn't have check boxes to easily group a batch of messages. You can sort your messages by clicking the *drop-down menu* above the messages. Sort by Date, From or To. From this menu you can also separate unread mail from read mail to simplify getting rid of old mail that you never read. Once sorted, you can select a group of messages by clicking on the first one and then holding down the shift key while clicking the last one in the group. When through selecting, click the *Delete* icon or use the delete key on your keyboard.

Sort your stored emails. To create a folder in Outlook right click the Inbox and select *New folder*. Type in the name for the new folder and hit enter on the keyboard. To create a sub folder, right click the parent folder and select *New Folder*. Give the folder a name and hit enter on the keyboard. To move messages to a folder, select the message(s) and click on *Move* in the Home Toolbar. Select the folder to move to. Outlook refers to filters as rules. To make a rule for email click the *Rules* icon on the Home toolbar, then *Create Rule*. From the pop-up box make selections of what rules to apply. Alternatively, you can use one of the predefined choices of *Always Move Messages From* or *Always Move Messages To* as the basis for the rule.

Empty the trash. To empty the trash folder, click on the Empty Trash Folder icon on the Home Toolbar, then confirm that you want to permanently delete it. This is final and there is no way to recover any of these messages.

Spam. Outlook use the Junk folder for spam messages. If your email provider is blocking spam, you may almost never see anything show up in junk. Instead, it will be in the graymail folder indicating that your email provider considers it junk. To mark an email as spam right click the email and select junk. Make a choice of *block sender* (blacklist), or one of the *never block* options (whitelist) for mail which is mistakenly sent to spam. Go to *junk mail options* to refine how junk mail is handled.

Creating a disposable email address to use with Outlook would be done through your email provider.

Vacation or Out of Office response. If you are not getting company mail through an Exchange Server (most of us) it is very difficult to set up an Out of Office reply. To find out how to create a rule to do this go to <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-rules-to-create-an-out-of-office-message-9f124e4a-749e-4288-a266-2d009686b403?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us>