Webmail vs Client Based Email

When new to the internet, the difference between web mail and email clients can be confusing to a person. You may have been shown how to use one way but don't know how to use the other. We'll explain here the difference between web mail and email clients.

Both web mail and email clients use the internet to read and send mail. What may be confusing is how each of these work.

When someone sends you an email it is stored on a email server. The email server can belong to a company that offers web based email accounts, your ISP provider or your web hosting provider. How you "pick up" your email will depend on what type of email account you have.

If you are only using web mail, then the emails that you don't delete are stored on the email server. With an email client the emails are stored on your computer.

Web Mail

With web mail, you read or send email through your browser and the web mail interface.

Some examples of web mail are:

- Yahoo! Mail
- Gmail
- Hotmail
- The web mail service provided with your web hosting
- The web mail service provided with your ISP (Internet Service Provider) account
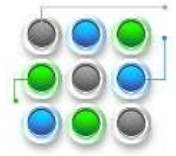
Accessing Web Mail

When you access a web mail account you use your browser.

1. You will be given a web address to access your web mail. We'll use Yahoo! mail as an example. The web address to access Yahoo! mail is: https://login.yahoo.com/config/login_verify2?&.src=ym.
2. Next, you will need to login. This requires your user name and password. Continuing with our example, enter your Yahoo! id and password, then left click, Sign in.
   If there is an option to remember your login information, avoid this, particularly if you are using a public computer. The login information is saved to a cookie on the machine. The next person who uses the computer will have access to your web based email account if you use the Remember me feature.
3. Once logged in, you can now read the emails sent to your web based email acount and send emails from this email address.

Web Based Email Tutorials

Here at Basic Computer Information we have some tutorials for web based email accounts:

- Gmail
- Yahoo! Mail

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You can also set up some web based email accounts to be picked up via your email client. e.g. Gmail, your website email accounts.

A lot of people who have been taught to use web based email find using an email client intimidating, but really, it's easier than using web based email.

If you are running a business and only know how to use web based mail, it would be a good idea to learn how to use an email client on your computer. This way you could back up the emails from the computer for safe keeping, should your web based email's server goes down and looses all those important emails.

Email Client

An email client is a piece of software on your computer that you use to read and send emails from your computer. The advantage of using an email client is that the emails are stored on your computer and are accessible faster than using a web based email interface. Also, with an email client you can read the messages you already received without being connected to the internet (a cost savings if you are on dial up). You can also compose email while offline. Once connected again to the Internet, the emails can be sent.

There are various email client programs available. Some of the more common email clients are:

- Outlook Express – This comes with Windows for free.
- Outlook – part of the Microsoft Office collection of programs
- Thunderbird – comes with the Firefox browser
- Contact management software – may use Outlook Express to send email from the contact management software
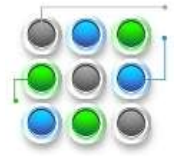
Using an Email Client

To use your installed email client you will need to click the desktop icon for it or look in your Programs list for the shortcut.

An email client needs some setting up before you can use it:

1. Create an email account
   - Create an email account in Outlook Express or Outlook
2. Edit the email account

   If your email client has used the url for the email account as the name in your account list, you can edit the account name and other elements of the account.

   - Edit account name property in Outlook Express or Outlook
3. If you are a travelling type person who takes a laptop with you, you can set your email client on the laptop to leave a copy of emails on the web mail server. This way, when you get back home/to the office, the email client on your home/office computer can pick up the email. This saves you transferring or emailing yourself important emails once you get home.

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- Leave a Copy of Email on Email Server

4. Like web based email, you can organize and sort email in your email client.

- Sort Order of Email in Outlook Express – Outlook
- Organize Outlook Express Emails
- Organize Outlook Emails

5. You can also create email signatures in your email client.

- Create an Email Signature in Outlook Express
- Create an email signature in Outlook

So now, you know how to use web based email and an email client. It's handy to know how to use both of these methods of reading and sending email. E.g. A business person might want to check their email from home or while away from the office. They can use web mail to check emails and leave the messages there to be picked up at the office upon their return or set up their email client at home/on the laptop to leave the emails on the email server so they can pick up the mail at work.

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