

eMail Tips & Tricks By Tom Kreuzer

Use the following info, tips, and tricks to take control of your eMail and make life easier on all your devices. Top US eMail providers – #1 Google Gmail 130 million, #2 Yahoo! 42 million, #3 Microsoft Outlook/Hotmail 35 million, #4 Aol 20 million, and #5 Apple 5 million. I recommend Gmail as your main eMail. Limit your use of Comcast, Centurylink, a company, a school, or an organization because you do not have lifetime access to these accounts.

I will be talking about and showing Gmail, but most providers and apps have similar features and functions.

eMail Fields

- From – Senders eMail address which is made up of a user name (can include letters, numbers, and some special characters), @ (at) symbol, and the eMail provider's domain. This address can be easily faked by scammers, so do not trust.
- To - eMail address of people you want it to go to. Can be a single, multiple, or group of people.
 - CC – Optional "Carbon Copy". A person(s) copied as an FYI who does not have to respond or do anything. Everyone in the To and CC can see who is in the CC and if you "Reply All" they all get a reply.
 - BCC – Optional "Blind Carbon Copy". A person(s) copied as an FYI who does not have to respond or do anything. Everyone in the To and CC do NOT see who is in the BCC and if you "Reply All" the BCC do NOT get a reply. Used for long distribution lists, keeping eMail private, or where you want to hide who else gets the eMail.
 - Contacts/Address Book – Create entries for family, friends, and businesses you communicate with. This will also affect the name show. Create a Group for multiple contacts as needed.
- Subject – Topic of the eMail, keep it short and to the point. Limit to 50 characters or less even though the Gmail limit is 998 characters. Change the subject for a Reply or Forward when the original subject is no longer valid or too general.
- Body - Rich text, font, size, color, spacing, bullets, numbers, indents, emoji, images, and attachments.
 - Attachment file size limit in Gmail is 25 MB. Try to keep as small as possible. Send links to Google Doc file, YouTube Video, Photo Album link, or other large files. For photos reduce size or use share options on your phone/tablet. Use a format like PDF or JPG that the people receiving can open easily.
 - Most eMail is not encrypted, so never include passwords or other private info.
 - Do not use acronyms unless you are 100% sure everyone your sending it to knows what it stands for.
 - Keep it Short Stupid "KISS" – Be clear and concise.
 - Signature – Appended at the end of all eMail. Google supports multiple, so you can have a longer one for new eMails, short for a reply/forward, and even a formal business one if needed.
- Date and time sent – When was it sent. You can schedule to send your eMail at a latter date/time so people do not see it was the middle of the night or you want it sent days or weeks in the future.

Folders, Labels, & Categories Tips

Folders, Labels, Categories, Tabs, Tags, and others are used to organize your eMail. Providers like Gmail automatically attempts to organize your eMails into Folders like Important, Social, Updates, Forums, and Promotions. For most people this attempt does not work well and makes it harder to find your eMails. It is best to create your own Folders to get exactly what works best for you. To turn off this auto feature in Gmail, open a Browser and go to Gmail and turn off in "Settings/General/Smart features and personalization" so it does not automatically attempt to organize your eMails.

All providers start with standard Folders (Gmail calls them Labels):

- Inbox - eMails you receive that have not been automatically organized in Spam, Important, Social, Updates, Forums, and Promotion by your eMail provider automatic organization attempt.
- Sent - Copy of what you sent to other people. Kept forever. Once a year, delete old sent messages. In Gmail if you Reply to an eMail and then delete the original it will delete the eMail Reply in the Sent.
- Drafts - eMails that you started to compose, but never sent. You can finish latter and send or delete if no longer needed.
- All Mail - All eMail you have received from all Folders except the Sent. Use this to search when you do not know which folder has your eMail.
- Spam or Junk - eMails your Provider thinks are spam or junk based on who they came from, what the subject is, or you have marked similar eMails in the past as spam. You should always check this folder for eMails that were marked as spam, but really are not spam "False Positives". Open up the spam eMail, and mark it "not Spam".
- Trash - eMails you have deleted. Gmail permanently deletes them 30 days after you delete them.

Folders that you find in some providers and some apps or sites:

- Starred – eMails you have starred or highlighted.
- Snoozed - Postpone eMails from your inbox until you want to show up. The eMails will show back up on the date and time you set.
- Important - Assigned by Gmail based on adaptive understanding of your interests and priorities. If you no longer wish to view messages with the Important label, you can either re-train Google, hide the folder, or turn off Smart features and personalization.
- Scheduled – Will be sent at a future date and time you set.
- Outbox – eMails waiting till you have an Internet connection and then will be sent.

Most phones and tablets eMail apps do not allow you to create, delete, or rename Folders. You usually need to use a Browser and click on links like “Manage labels”, “Create new label”, or go to the Settings for your eMail account.

- Folders you should consider and create: 00 To Do Week, 01 To Do Month, Family, Health-Retire, Promotions, Receipts, Registration, Stationary, ZZ Other, Newsletters, Friend Name, Event Name, and Project/Club/Group.
- Zero Inbox Method - Read your Inbox every day and move an eMail to a Folder if it needs to be kept, else delete it. Do not leave any read eMails in the Inbox, delete or file it in a folder. Whenever an eMail requires you to do something, if it takes less than 2 minutes, do it right away. If it takes longer than 2 minutes, put it on your “00 To Do Week” or “01 To Do Month”.
- Once a year go thru your Folders to delete old eMails or Folders no longer needed. This includes the Sent Folder.

Google Gmail Settings - Tips

To change setting in Gmail, open a Browser and go to <https://www.Gmail.com>. Many of the settings apply to your eMail on any device. Most eMail apps for your smartphone or tablet have limited settings that apply just to that device.

General:

- Maximum Page Show – Default 50 change to 100 to show more on a page.
- Undo Send – Default 5 seconds change to 10 seconds to give more time if you make a mistake.
- Images – Ask before displaying external images. It will speed up viewing. You can then turn on based on who sent or just as needed. Also, can help if you have a limited phone data plan.
- Smart features and personalization - Off turns off a number of automatic options including auto Folders organization. Also turns off; Auto Spelling correct, Autocorrect, Grammar, Smart Compose, Nudges, Smart Reply, and Desktop notifications.
- Conversation View – Conversation view off. Conversation view combines eMails received and your replies back into one eMail entry to view. I prefer to see each eMail received showing in the date and time it was received instead of one showing the last date and time a response was received.
- Signature – Setup text that gets appended at the end when you create a new eMail or reply to an eMail. Keep it short and limit graphics. You can create multiple if needed. When creating a “New Message” use the pen icon on the bottom right to pick one if you have saved multiple. I recommend you change the iPhone “Sent from my iPhone” to anything else like “Thanks Jane Smith”.
- Vacation responder/Out of Office – Auto respond with an eMail with info on who to contact or when you will respond. Use the option to only send to people in your Contacts, so it is not responding to spam or junk.

Labels:

- Choose what you see or hide for Folders, Labels, and Categories.
- Create, delete, and manage your Labels.

Inbox:

- Importance markers – No markers.

Accounts and Import:

- Send mail as – Set to what you want your name and eMail address to show.

Filters and Blocked Addresses

- Filters – Create rules on automatically organizing incoming eMails based on info in the eMail. I create one to never mark any eMail as Important. In the “Doesn’t have” box type a garbage string like “abcdefg Disable Important”. Click “Create Filter” and then select “Never mark it as important” then click the “Create Filter” button. Now no eMails will be marked as Important.

Create an eMail - Tips

- On a phone or tablet you can use the Share option to create an eMail that will link or send the thing you are currently viewing like a photo, video, or text message.
- Send URL link vs copy screen or text.
- Watch format, fonts graphics, paste as plain text. On PC right click for plain text option.
- If sending an eMail to multiple people, all questions should apply to all people. If not write to one person at a time.
- If there are multiple parts to the eMail, try to break it up into sections. Use a string of 20-30 characters like “-“ or “*”.
- Use groups or a distribution list when you send to multiple people. Setup your groups in your Contacts.
- Use “Reply” to send a message along with the original message back to the eMail that sent you the message. Use “Reply All” to send a message along with the original message back to the eMail that sent you the message and any eMail(s) in the CC “Carbon Copy”. Both Reply and Reply All allow you to add or delete anyone to the To, CC, or BCC. Use “Forward” to send a message along with the original message to people not To or CC.

General - Tips

- Do not expect an immediate reply to eMail, many people only read eMails once or twice a day.
- Only work or school eMail account from Gmail support the feature of “Request read receipt” that lets you know when your eMail has been read.
- Use a Text/SMS message instead of an eMail for a short communications that can be done in one or two messages, to 1-4 people, and is time sensitive.
- Use a phone call instead of an eMail for a communication with 1-2 people and is time sensitive.
- Unsubscribe from eMails from legitimate/Good Companies or newsletters you never read or want. The cleanest way to get off a list is to use the built-in unsubscribe option usually at the bottom of the eMail. Gmail puts its own unsubscribe link at the top of the message, right next to the address of the sender's eMail. If the unsubscribe does not work, you can Block a sender or create a Filter to move incoming mail to the Trash folder. Only unsubscribe from honest and legitimate companies that are not from hackers or spammers.
- Never try to unsubscribe from spam eMails. Spam is usually from illicit senders trying to get you click on a link or button. Clicking on the unsubscribe will only make your situation worse with more spam eMail or a virus. A click from you marks you as a target. Instead mark the message as spam and delete them.
- Create filters for eMails to delete them or send it immediately to a folder. The Gmail filters criteria are From, To, Subject, Has the words, Doesn't have, and Size. Examples: Create a filter to delete eMails that you can not unsubscribe from. Create a filter to move Amazon purchases to a Receipt Folder.
- When Searching for something, it only searches within the Folder you have open. Open the “All Mail” to search your Inbox, Trash, Spam, and all other Folders except Sent. In the search click the filter button to show the advanced search option you can use Date within, Has the words, Doesn't have, and also lets you pick which Folders to search. If the basic Search does not find what you want or finds too many you can click the Advanced Search.
- When viewing your eMail you can “Archive” a message. The message will come back to your inbox when someone replies to it. I do not recommend or use archive. If you need to keep it, put it into a Folder.
- When viewing your eMail you can “Snooze” a message to temporarily remove the eMail and come back at the date and time of your choice. I do not recommend or use snooze.
- When you mute a message, any replies stay out of your inbox. You can search for the conversation if you want to find it again. I do not recommend or use mute.
- Gmail gives each user 15 GB of free space for mail, photos, and documents. Keeping eMails with large file attachments or thousands of eMails will consume your 15 GB. You can buy more space starting at \$1.99 month for 100 GB.
- Some software and apps give you the option to get your eMail by either IMAP or POP:
 - IMAP allows you to access your eMail wherever you are, from any device. You aren't downloading or storing it on your device; instead, you're reading it from the eMail service. This requires you have a connection to the Internet to read your eMails. I do recommend this, because most of us use multiple devices and this lets you read them on any device and keep in sync.
 - POP works by connecting to your eMail service and downloading all of your new messages from it. Once they are downloaded onto your device, they are deleted from the eMail service. This means that after the eMail is downloaded; it can only be accessed using the same device. If you try to access your eMail from a different device, the messages that have been previously downloaded won't be available to you. I do not recommend this, because most of us use multiple devices.

- If you have multiple eMail accounts you may find it handy to auto forward eMail from one account that you rarely check to another eMail that you check more often. This can also be used to monitor a parent's account. In Gmail you can go to "Settings/Filters and Blocked Addresses/Forwarding and POP/IMAP" and add a forwarding address. The eMail will remain in the original account and a copy will show in the forwarded account. If you do not want all the eMails to auto forward, you can create a filter to just forward eMails that match your rule.
- Create an extra eMail accounts that you use for signup to sites that are not important to you and that may send you spam. This can keep your main account cleaner. An extra eMail can also be used as a security backup for the main.
- Create Templates or Canned Responses for anything you send over and over.
- Turn off Notifications. I check my eMail at most 2-3 times a day and do not want to get notified whenever something comes in.
- Years ago you may have used eMail software like Outlook which ran on your computer and downloaded your eMails to your computer. This solution worked well when we had a slow limited Internet connection, usually dialup, and only used your eMail on one device. Today you should be using web-based "Internet" eMail to keep all your devices (computer, smartphone, tablet, and smart devices) in sync.
- I use the "SMS Backup" app to backup, recover, and view text messages SMS, MMS, and call log in my eMail account from my phone.

Additional Links and Information

Questions or comments can be sent to TCKreuzer@gmail.com