

The WebMail Gotcha

Many people use webmail for their email. A common webmail account would be like Hotmail, Yahoo and AOL.

Webmail is great because no matter where you are all you need is a connection to the internet to retrieve and respond to email messages.

Most all hosting accounts include free email which can be accessed in two ways; webmail and mail client software.

A mail client application would be like Outlook or Thunderbird. Also called “client-side” email this refers to the relationship between your laptop or desktop to an email server from which the email is retrieved.

Conversely, webmail is server-side which means you are accessing email directly from the server.

If you use both it is important to remember that a mail client like Outlook typically downloads the email from the server and then deletes the email from the server.

So if you are vacationing and your computer is on and connected at the office, it might retrieve some email messages before you get to see them from the hotel’s internet.

Also, if you login to your webmail you can delete messages that will never get to your computer because you got to them first.



If you use webmail a lot, you have probably invested some digital assets in this account like a list of contacts and folders where you store emails that you would like to reference again in the future.

By upgrading your storage you have essentially made a bigger bucket to fill. And fill it does...

Over time you may find that you have several megabytes of messages stored, perhaps gigabytes.

What if...you want to move to a different email service?

Or free up some more space?

All of the webmail applications that I have encountered usually have a button for importing or exporting your contact list (address book). That's great but, what about your folders where you keep important email messages.

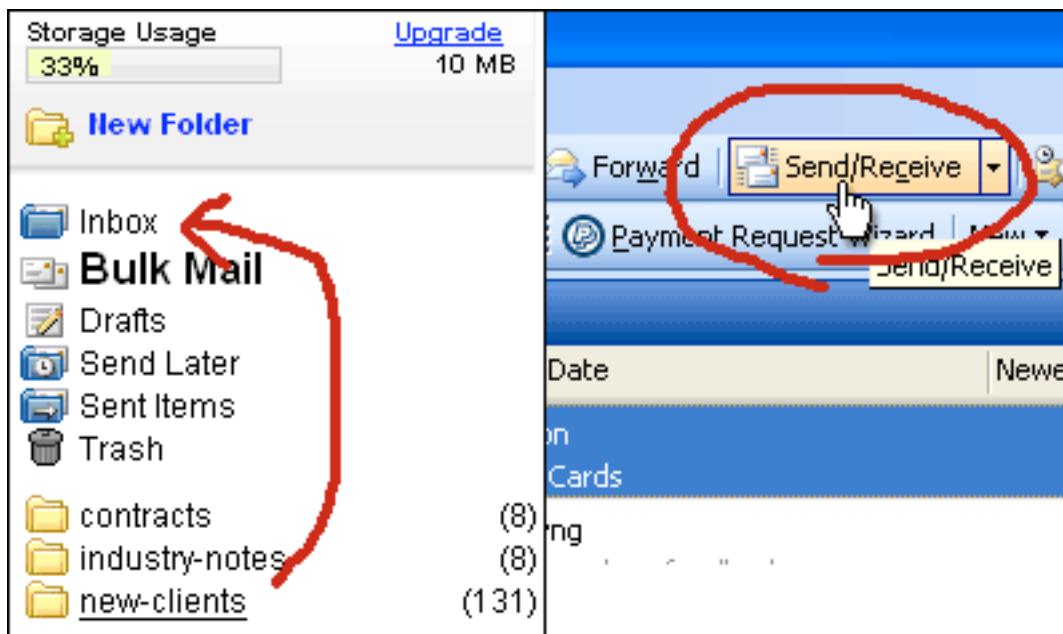
This is the Gotcha!

I don't know why but, they do not usually have a button for downloading your stored messages. While researching this topic online for several weeks, I have come across other obscure applications that mention that you can download your folders but, it isn't very common.

There is one way that I have found to manage this problem but, it does take a bit of time to do if you have a lot of folders.

When you train another webmail account or client-based email application on your old webmail account you are only downloading what is in the inbox. So what I tell people to do is open a folder and move the email messages into the inbox on the old account.

From the new account hit the "Send/Receive" or "Get Mail" button to get the messages. Then simply create a similar folder and move the contents of the new inbox into it.



Once you are done transferring files from a folder, delete the folder in the old webmail account. This way you can see what is left to transfer.

When you run out of folders on your old account you are done.

Auto Archive

One method of keeping a copy of your messages is to forward messages from the main email account to a secondary account like yahoo.

I could not find a way to download stored messages from Yahoo either.

So you might want to setup an email account for the purposes of forwarding but instead of using another webmail account have a mail client automatically retrieve the forwards for safe keeping.

In terms of both Outlook and Thunderbird, because they are mail clients, you can easily move folders of stored messages from your email software to a place on your hard drive or onto a CD.

POP3 and IMAP

I know it is getting geeky again. POP3 stands for Post Office Protocol - Version 3.

POP3 deletes mail on the server as soon as the mail client has downloaded it. You can, however, make some adjustments to specify that mail be saved for some period of time. POP can be thought of as a “store-and-forward” service.

IMAP (now at version 4) stands for Interactive Message Access Protocol. You can access IMAP email from a mail client too but, the difference is that you are only seeing the subject line and who sent it. If you decide to read the message then it will download. IMAP is considered to be the more sophisticated of the two.

I have never used IMAP before myself but the Apple users do when they use Mac mail. With Mac Mail you create mailboxes that appear like folders and they can be shared.

A representative from the Apple store said that Mac Mail can be synced to your desktop/laptop as well as your iPhone. This means there are multiple copies of saved messages both locally on your computer and on the server as well until deleted.

I have always used POP email with Outlook and recently I've been playing with Thunderbird too.

The disadvantage with POP is that you don't have access to messages if you are away from your computer. That is OK with me. I enjoy getting a break from the computer every now and then.

Domain Email

Another reason that I use POP so much is that I have always wanted to express my domain for branding purposes like fixit@sitemechanix.com

However, I have seen many people use the alias portion of the email to produce something like this: SiteMechanix@Yahoo.com

You can also use domain emails with Mac Mail and you can also register Mac Mail email like Frank@Mac.com.

With a new web site comes new domain emails and we routinely set up email accounts for our clients and make adjustments for forwarding or spam filtering.

Enterprise Level Webmail

I also started using what I like to call collaborative webmail with this outfit in New York called [BlueTie](#). It allows you to share files and calendars with a group.



I feel like I am in good company with BlueTie because some big companies are using it like Earthlink and Kodak.

BlueTie is constantly evolving and getting better all the time. One feature that I like is "[Secure Send](#)" which allows me to send a 100mb file but not as an attachment but better yet as a link. This way the recipient can download the file when ever they want and it won't clog up their email account with a big attachment.

The calendar is hooked up to Orbitz so you can compare and book flights if you are the type the travels a lot.

Each email account comes with 10gigs of storage and they have a service that allows you to get a backup of stored email on a CD.

eFax is coming as a new feature in a few weeks.

If you would like to know more about this military grade webmail [click here](#). It is only 4.99 per month.

Email Strategy

Contact [Site Mechanix](#) to discuss your email strategy and learn how your web site can play a role in connecting you with your customers.

Posted on March 16th, 2008 by Karl Knelson