

# Take Control *of* Email with Apple Mail

by Joe Kissell

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## INTRODUCTION

The question of which email client to use provokes almost as much fervor as the Macintosh versus Windows debate. Some people are passionately dedicated to Eudora, while others feel that Entourage, Mailsmith, PowerMail, or any of a dozen other applications is the Supreme Tool for electronic communication. And then there are those who simply want to follow the path of least resistance, which often means using whatever happened to come with their computer.

I have my own opinions on the matter, of course. I went through an EMailer phase, then an Outlook Express phase, then Eudora, then Entourage, and now Mail. I also worked at a company that used a Microsoft Exchange server, so I used both Windows and Mac OS 9 versions of Outlook for my business email. And I've tried every other email client that runs under Mac OS X at least briefly—not to mention a wide range of Web-based email interfaces. Moreover, I'm an email junkie by anyone's definition. I use about ten email accounts regularly; I often receive hundreds of messages a day (not counting spam!); I subscribe to dozens of mailing lists; and I save almost every message I send or receive. My email world is also highly automated, with more filters, rules, and scripts than you can shake a stick at. In short: I have high expectations for my email software. So it has come as a shock to some of my geekier friends that of all the applications I could use, I chose Apple Mail.

Early versions of Mail lacked some important features, leading many Mac users to write it off as a lightweight application that no power user would take seriously. Today, after several major revisions, Mail has become a surprisingly powerful, customizable, and extendable application that can make short work of managing even complex email needs. And, of course, it's included free with Mac OS X.

I'll be the first to admit that Mail is far from perfect. It has some bugs; there are also a few things it does poorly, and a few things it can't do at all. But the biggest problem with Mail is that its interface and documentation give little guidance on how to accomplish tasks and solve problems that occur frequently. I've written this ebook to do just that: help you take control of Mail by explaining the things you won't learn by reading the Help.

I've organized this ebook a bit differently from most other Take Control titles, which step readers through specific tasks, such as upgrading to a new version of Mac OS X or handling Mail's Junk Mail filter. Because I assume most readers of this ebook know the basics of sending and receiving email when all goes well, I organized this ebook by topic, and included topics that, in my opinion, most often cause real-world confusion and problems. To solve these problems, you'll need both background information and concrete steps, and I've done my best to provide both.

In order to keep the length of this ebook reasonable, I decided to limit the number of topics. For the most part, I do not cover basic configuration and usage topics that Mail's built-in Help covers adequately. However, I also gloss over (or omit entirely) discussion of some more advanced topics, such as:

- Digital signatures and encryption
- Controlling Mail with AppleScript (including the Script menu)
- Using alternate text encodings and scripts (for multilingual messages)
- Strategies for sorting, organizing, and finding filed messages

In addition, I wrote only four pages about rules—an important topic that could easily fill another document this size. If you are interested in an ebook about Mail's rules, [click here](#) to let me know.

This ebook says little about junk mail. Because spam is such a big topic, I've devoted an entire ebook just to spam: *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail* (<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/spam-Apple-Mail.html>).

Having read thousands of messages about Mail on various discussion boards, I'm keenly aware that users have experienced a great variety of problems—far more than I can address here. Future editions of this ebook (or other Take Control titles) may include expanded coverage of some of these issues.

In my testing, I used Mail version 1.3.9, which is included with Mac OS X Panther versions 10.3.5 and higher. If you have an older version of Mac OS X (and thus an older version of Mail), some of these instructions will not apply to you. I strongly recommend upgrading to

the latest version of Panther if you can. *Take Control of Panther: Volume 1*, from Peachpit Press, or my ebook *Take Control of Upgrading to Panther* can help you with the upgrading process (<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/panther/upgrading.html>).

## Terminology and Conventions

In reading this ebook, you may encounter a few unfamiliar terms and conventions. To get the most out of this ebook, please note the following:

- **Path syntax:** This ebook occasionally uses a *path* to show the location of a file or folder in your file system. Path text is formatted in bold type. For example, Panther stores most utilities, such as StuffIt Expander, in the Utilities folder. The path to StuffIt Expander is: **/Applications/Utilities/StuffIt Expander**.

The forward slash at the start of the path tells you to start from the root level of the disk. You will also encounter paths that begin with a tilde (~), which is a shortcut for any user's home directory. For example, if a user named **joe** wants to install fonts that only he can access, he would install them in his **~/Library/Fonts** folder, which is just another way of writing **/Users/joe/Library/Fonts**.

- **Finding Mail's Preferences:** I often refer to preferences in Mail that you may want to adjust. To display Mail's preferences (not to be confused with the system-wide settings found in the System Preferences application), choose Mail > Preferences. Within that window, click a button at the top to display a pane with that category of preferences. Instead of giving detailed directions each time, I'll refer to each pane using an abbreviated notation such as "go to the Junk Mail preference pane."

## Using the Glossary

This ebook's [Glossary](#) defines several email-related terms, which also appear in the text of the ebook in blue, italic formatting. You can click blue, italic text to move to the glossary page that defines it; you can then return from the Glossary to where you were reading using a menu command or keyboard shortcut, as noted in **Table 1**.

<b>Table 1: How to Quickly Navigate to a Previous Point in This Ebook</b>		
<b>Viewing Software</b>	<b>Menu Command</b>	<b>Keyboard Shortcut</b>
Adobe Acrobat 6	View > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Adobe Acrobat 5	Document > Go To > Previous View	Command-Left arrow
Preview	Go > Back	Command-[

**NOTE** For more tips about reading this ebook online and for suggestions about printing it, see [Reading and Printing Tips](#).

### Version 1.1.1 Change List

This minor update includes the following changes from version 1.1:

- A new [sidebar](#), “Using Other Account Types,” that has info about accessing Hotmail, MSN, and Gmail accounts using Mail
- A [tip](#) about working around a bug in which clicking Reply fails to display a new window
- [Details](#) about a bug affecting rules that color-code incoming messages
- Several minor typographical corrections

## Version 1.1 Change List

This update incorporates the following noteworthy changes from version 1.0.1:

- Changes to reflect new (and improved!) behavior in Mail 1.3.9 (part of the Mac OS X 10.3.5 update). Key areas affected were POP ([Deleting messages on the server](#)) and IMAP ([Message deletion](#)).
- A [tip](#) and an [Appendix entry](#) about Eudora Mailbox Cleaner, a utility that helps you import information from Eudora into Mail.
- A dozen new screen shots to illustrate some of the procedures.
- Clarification that .Mac mail servers do not respond to ping queries.
- Added a procedure for saving “invisible” attachments sent from Entourage 2001. See [Attachments from Entourage 2001 Users](#).
- Clarifications to [Problems and Quirks with Automatic Addressing](#).
- [Clickable Links](#) has additional information about including clickable URLs in your outgoing messages.
- An additional comment about rules that contain many conditions.

## QUICK START TO CONTROLLING APPLE MAIL

You can read this ebook in any order you wish, though for best results I recommend reading the background information on any given topic before trying any of the specific techniques. Start with whichever one of these categories seems most urgent to you.

### **Solve problems:**

- See [Problems and Solutions](#) for an index to troubleshooting steps located throughout this ebook.

### **Manage Mail setup:**

- Learn how to import data into a new account and how to remove an account in [Account Setup](#); then take charge of [Backing up and Restoring Email](#).
- Discover the good, the bad, and the ugly about Mail's handling of incoming and outgoing email in [Learn about Email Protocols](#). Then apply your new knowledge to [Fix Email Transfer Problems](#).

### **Read email:**

- Confused about plain text, rich text, and HTML? Find out how they relate to the display of received messages, and discover cool tips for customizing the Viewer window. See [The Viewer Window](#).
- Handle [Incoming Attachments](#) with ease.

### **Create email:**

- Make sure your messages get to the right destinations by reading [Addressing Email](#).
- Learn how to choose and use the best format—plain text, rich text, or HTML—in outgoing messages in [Formatting Outgoing Email](#); then find out how to put [Quoted Text](#) and [Clickable Links](#) in your message, and how to handle [Outgoing Attachments](#).

### **Make Mail work better:**

- Get a grip on the organizational tools Mail provides. See [Manage Mailboxes](#), which describes not only how to manage mailboxes but also how to repair broken ones.
- Get to the bottom of the mysterious Previous Recipients list. See [Handle Previous Recipients](#).

- Let Mail do tedious filing and sorting for you! See [Streamline Mail with Rules](#).
- Download goodies to make Mail work even better. See [Appendix A: Software Sources](#).
- Keep blank messages out of your In box. See [Appendix B: The Shoot Blanks Script](#).

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Having trouble with Mail? This ebook contains solutions to quite a few problems. Use these links to find answers:

- I can't import email or addresses from my old email application. See [Importing Email](#) and [Importing Addresses](#).
- Messages stay on my POP server even after I delete them. See [Deleting messages on the server](#).
- Mail stalls when trying to download messages from my POP server. See [Can't Retrieve POP Messages](#).
- Mail keeps asking me for my password, even though I know I entered it correctly. See [Password Problems](#).
- I can't send any email! See [SMTP Troubleshooting Checklist](#).
- An Entourage 2001 user sent me an attachment but it doesn't appear. See [Attachments from Entourage 2001 Users](#).
- Messages seem to be missing from one of my mailboxes. See [Fixing a Damaged Mailbox](#).
- I want to delete a message without opening it. See [Use \(or Hide\) the Preview Pane](#).
- I can't enter a clickable URL in my email. See [Clickable Links](#).
- I can't tell whether or not an image will appear in the body of a message. See [Sending Graphical Attachments](#).
- When I print a message, it comes out backward and upside-down. See the tip, [The Backward Printing Problem](#).
- I need to send messages in HTML format. See [HTML Messages](#).
- Address completion is driving me crazy! See [Automatic Address Completion](#).
- All my incoming attachments are Read-Only! See [Opening Attached Files](#).
- I can't create a rule that matches blank messages. See [Appendix B: The Shoot Blanks Script](#).

## ACCOUNT SETUP

I take for granted that you can enter basic account information—your user name, password, server name, and so on—without detailed instructions. Importing email and addresses and removing accounts are more likely to give you pause. Here’s a quick primer on these more advanced topics.

**TIP** When setting up a new account, always fill in the Full Name field on the Account Information tab of Mail’s Accounts preference pane. If this field is blank, the Junk Mail filter may fail to identify spam addressed to that account.

### Importing Email

Mail supports importing email from Entourage, Outlook Express, EMailer, Netscape/Mozilla, and Eudora, as well as the standard .mbox files used by Mail and numerous other applications. If you want to import email from an application whose format Mail does not support, check out Emailchemy (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)), a utility that can convert almost any mailbox format into almost any other mailbox format.

**TIP** If you’re moving to Mail from Eudora, skip Mail’s built-in importing feature and instead use the free utility Eudora Mailbox Cleaner (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)). In addition to being much faster than importing, this utility handles attachments, nicknames, and filters—all in one pass.

You can import email when you launch Mail for the first time, or later. To import email later, choose File > Import Mailboxes and follow the prompts.

**WARNING!** Some email clients store attachments as separate files rather than as part of the message. When you import messages that had attachments into Mail, they contain *links* to these files stored on your hard drive. If you delete the folder containing the attachments, though, you lose them forever—and if you rename it or move the folder or its contents, your links won't work. So leave that folder in place if possible; if not, at least keep track of where it is. In the case of Eudora, you can avoid this problem by using Eudora Mailbox Cleaner (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)).

## Importing Addresses

Although importing email is generally easy, addresses are a different story. Mail doesn't store email addresses itself, but instead relies on the separate Address Book application. Address Book directly imports contacts only in the vCard and LDIF formats, which leaves out many popular email clients. (Choose File > Import > vCards or LDIF in Address Book if your contacts happen to be in one of those formats.) Fortunately for everyone else, Apple has filled the gap by way of an AppleScript. Choose Import Addresses from Address Book's Script menu (the one with an icon that looks like a stylized S) to import addresses from Entourage, Outlook Express, Palm Desktop, Eudora, EMailer, or Netscape. (For Eudora users, an even better choice for converting contacts is Eudora Mailbox Cleaner—see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#).)

If you used another program to store contacts, importing addresses is a two-step process. First, export your contacts in tab-delimited format. Then, use the free Address Book Importer utility (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)) to select the exported addresses and assign each field in the file to a corresponding Address Book field.

## Removing Extra Accounts

In the course of using Mail, you may find that your setup becomes overcrowded with extra accounts. Or, in some cases, you may wish to temporarily remove an account for troubleshooting purposes, even if you intend to keep using it.

If you remove an IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account (see [Learn about Email Protocols](#) for more info on account types), you delete only the locally stored copies of your messages. Because the originals remain on the server, you can see your messages again simply by adding a new account with the same settings; all you lose is the time required to download them again. But for POP accounts, which store all your messages locally, removal is a more serious matter. So if you plan to remove an account—especially a POP account—heed this warning:

**WARNING!** Removing an account in Mail permanently removes *all* stored email for that account from your hard disk—including the In, Drafts, Sent, and Junk mailboxes (but not any On My Mac mailboxes). If there’s even the tiniest chance you may want to retrieve any stored messages from that account later, either back up the account or (better yet) copy the messages to a local mailbox before removing the account.

To remove an account, go to Mail’s Accounts preference pane. Select the account you want to remove, click the – (minus) button at the bottom of the window, and click Yes when the confirmation dialog appears.

**TIP** You can temporarily disable an account without removing it altogether. Disabling an account makes its mailboxes vanish from your Mailbox list, and prevents Mail from checking it for new messages. To disable an account, go to the Accounts preference pane. Select the account you want to disable, click the Advanced tab, then deselect the checkbox labeled Enable This Account and close the Preferences window. Be sure to click Save when prompted. To re-enable the account, go back to the same place and select the Enable This Account checkbox.

## BACKING UP AND RESTORING EMAIL

A number of years ago, my computer suffered a severe hard drive crash that wiped out years of saved email. At that time, I had not yet switched to IMAP, and I backed up my computer perhaps once a year, so most of those messages were unrecoverable. The loss of data was devastating, but the shame was worse: I knew better than to put all my data in one basket, but I had done it anyway. I learned a valuable lesson, and today I back up my email (along with the rest of my files) religiously. If you back up your email properly, you can recover from nearly any disaster; if you don't, your chances are very slim. So please get into the habit of backing up your email regularly.

You can back up email using Apple's Backup application for .Mac members, or Retrospect (Dantz, <http://www.dantz.com/>), or any of a dozen other applications. You can also do it manually. Whichever method you use, back up the following items:

- `~/Library/Mail`: This directory contains all your mailboxes, your rules, and your Junk Mail statistics file.
- `~/Library/Preferences/com.apple.mail.plist`: This is your Mail preference file, which includes all your account settings.
- `~/Library/Application Support/AddressBook/AddressBook.data`: This file contains your Address Book data, including your Previous Recipients list.

*Be sure to copy these files to a volume other than the one where you normally store them. Burn them onto a recordable CD or DVD or store them on an external hard drive or network server; they'll be safer there in the event of a hardware failure. Back up your email as often as you can—once a day is not too often.*

**TIP** If your email contains sensitive or personal information (as it often does), consider encrypting your backups. Otherwise, if your backup media were lost or stolen, someone else could learn a great deal about you! Retrospect, for example, offers a built-in encryption feature, or you can use a separate utility such as PGP Personal Desktop (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)).

If you need to restore backed-up email later, you can use either of two methods. If you want to restore *all* your email and settings at once (for example, after reinstalling Mac OS X), simply copy the files back to their original locations, replacing files of the same name (if any). On the other hand, to restore only a particular mailbox, choose File > Import Mailboxes, select the Mail for Mac OS X radio button, and select the appropriate mailbox (.mbox) file from your backup set.

## LEARN ABOUT EMAIL PROTOCOLS

Read this section to learn more about mail *protocols* and make sure you are using protocols in a smart, trouble-free way.

Counterintuitively, receiving and sending email generally have nothing to do with each other in terms of the protocols (and often the servers) used behind the scenes. I mention this because you may find that you can receive email perfectly well but not send any—or vice versa. If you understand how Mail handles sending and receiving, solving problems becomes much easier.

Although you may not be aware of it, to send and receive email, you actually have two email accounts: one for sending and another for receiving. Your two accounts may share the same user name and password, but that is typically the only formal relationship they have.

Your incoming account fetches email from your mail server and delivers it to you using a mail delivery protocol—such as *POP* (Post Office Protocol) or *IMAP* (Internet Message Access Protocol). Your outgoing account uses a mail transfer protocol called *SMTP* (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) to send outgoing email from your machine to your mail server, and then (usually through a number of intermediate steps) to the recipient's mail server.

**NOTE** All the mail protocols Mail supports offer the option of *SSL* (Secure Sockets Layer) communication. SSL encrypts messages as they travel from the mail server to your computer or from your computer to the server, keeping them safe from hackers who could intercept network traffic. However, an SSL connection affects *only* your computer's communication with your mail server; it does not protect a message all the way from sender to recipient. For this, you must use Mail's built-in encryption feature (which this ebook does not cover) or a third-party tool such as PGP or GPGMail. You can turn on SSL for any incoming or outgoing account with a single checkbox, but many mail servers don't support SSL—check with your network administrator or ISP before turning on SSL.

## **SIDEBAR USING OTHER ACCOUNT TYPES**

If you use Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo! or another service to send and receive email, Mail may be able to access those accounts too—with a bit of help.

### **Hotmail and MSN:**

To give Mail the ability to check Hotmail or MSN accounts (using the HTTPMail protocol), download the free HTTPMail plug-in. (See [Appendix A: Software Sources](#).) However, be aware that as of late September, 2004, Microsoft discontinued Hotmail access via Desktop clients (including this plug-in and Entourage) for users with free subscriptions. To continue using HTTPMail to check your Hotmail account, you must upgrade to a paid subscription—either the \$20 per year Hotmail Plus account or the \$100 per year MSN Premium account. This limitation applies to all new Hotmail users, and will take effect for existing subscribers by April, 2005.

### **Yahoo!, Mail.com, and Another.com:**

If you want to check Yahoo!, Mail.com, or Another.com Webmail accounts, the proxy application MrPostman may do the trick. (Again, see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#) for more information.)

### **Google Gmail:**

Subscriber's to Google's Gmail service can retrieve their messages with Mail using POP, though some of the settings are a bit out of the ordinary. You must first enable POP access (see instructions at <http://gmail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=13273>); then set up a Gmail account in Mail (instructions located at <http://gmail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=13275>). Note that Gmail a subscriber account may be required to view these Web pages.

### **AOL:**

AOL now offers its members access to their email accounts using IMAP. For setup details, see <http://members.aol.com/adamkb/aol/mailfaq/imap/>.

## POP

For years, having an Internet email account almost invariably meant having a POP account. POP remains the default choice for many ISPs and businesses, and every email client supports POP if nothing else. In a nutshell, a POP account works like this: First, your client asks the server for the list of messages in your In box, along with their sizes. Then, depending on your client's settings, it downloads all the messages, selected messages, or all messages under a specified size, to your local machine. Finally (and optionally), your client instructs the server to delete its copy of the messages. The server does not store information about whether or not a message has been downloaded, read, or deleted; only your local client knows these things. For this reason, if you leave some messages on the server and then check your email with a different client (or on a different machine), all the messages will appear to be unread.

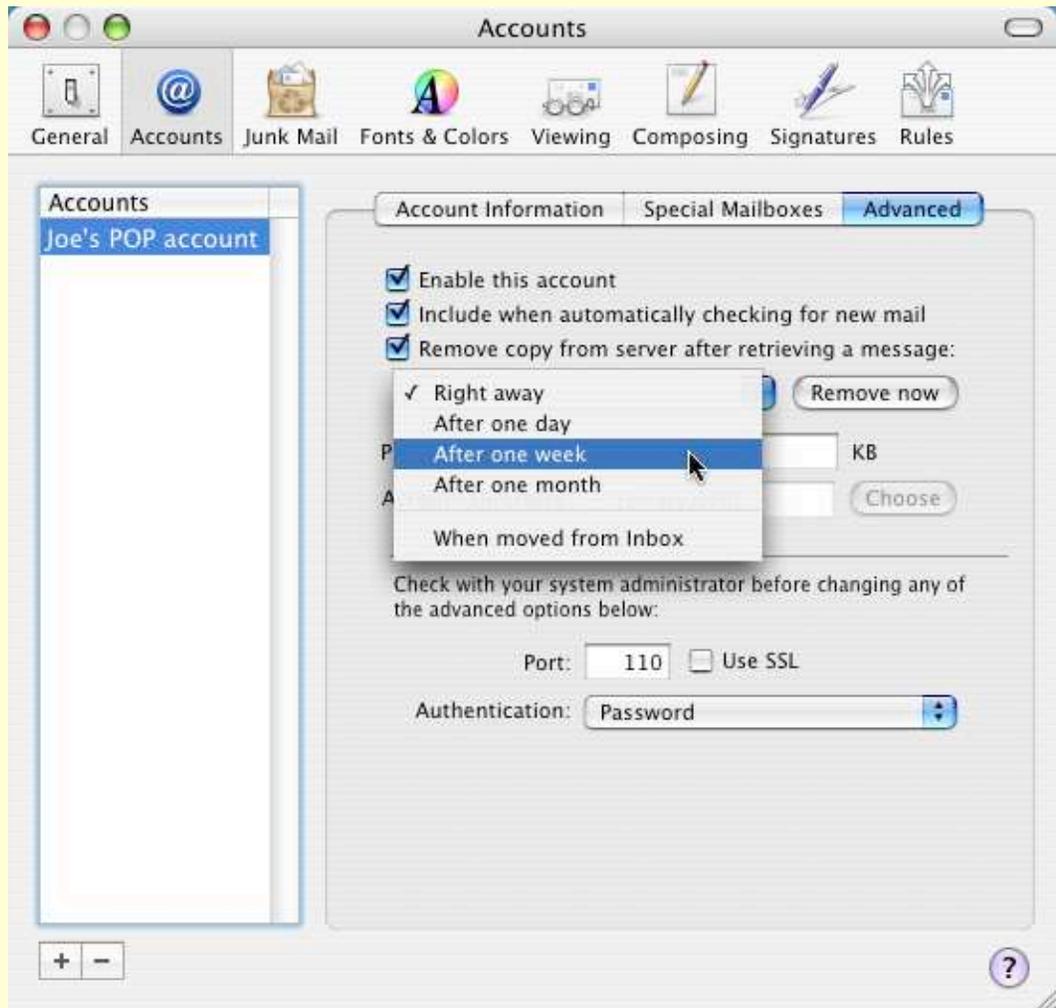
### Deleting messages on the server

POP is a simple and straightforward protocol, but every client handles deletions a bit differently. Mail handles deletions more differently than most, and its failure to delete messages the way users expect has been a source of much discussion. As you read the following, keep this fundamental principle in mind: *Deleting a message in Mail has nothing to do with deleting a message on the server.*

You determine how Mail deals with deleting POP messages on the Advanced tab of Accounts Preferences:

- When Remove Copy from Server After Retrieving a Message is *deselected*, every message you download remains on the server indefinitely, regardless of whether you move it or delete it in Mail. If enough of these messages accumulate, you may reach your mail server quota, meaning that anyone who sends you email will receive a bounced message with a “mailbox full” error! Unfortunately, Mail shows no indication that you have undeleted messages on the server; the only way to tell is to check your email with another POP client. When messages remain on the server, Mail enables you to delete them all at once by clicking the Remove Now button; you can't choose to delete some messages but not others.

**FIGURE 1**



Choose when you want messages to be deleted from your POP server using this pop-up menu on the Advanced tab of Mail's Accounts preference pane.

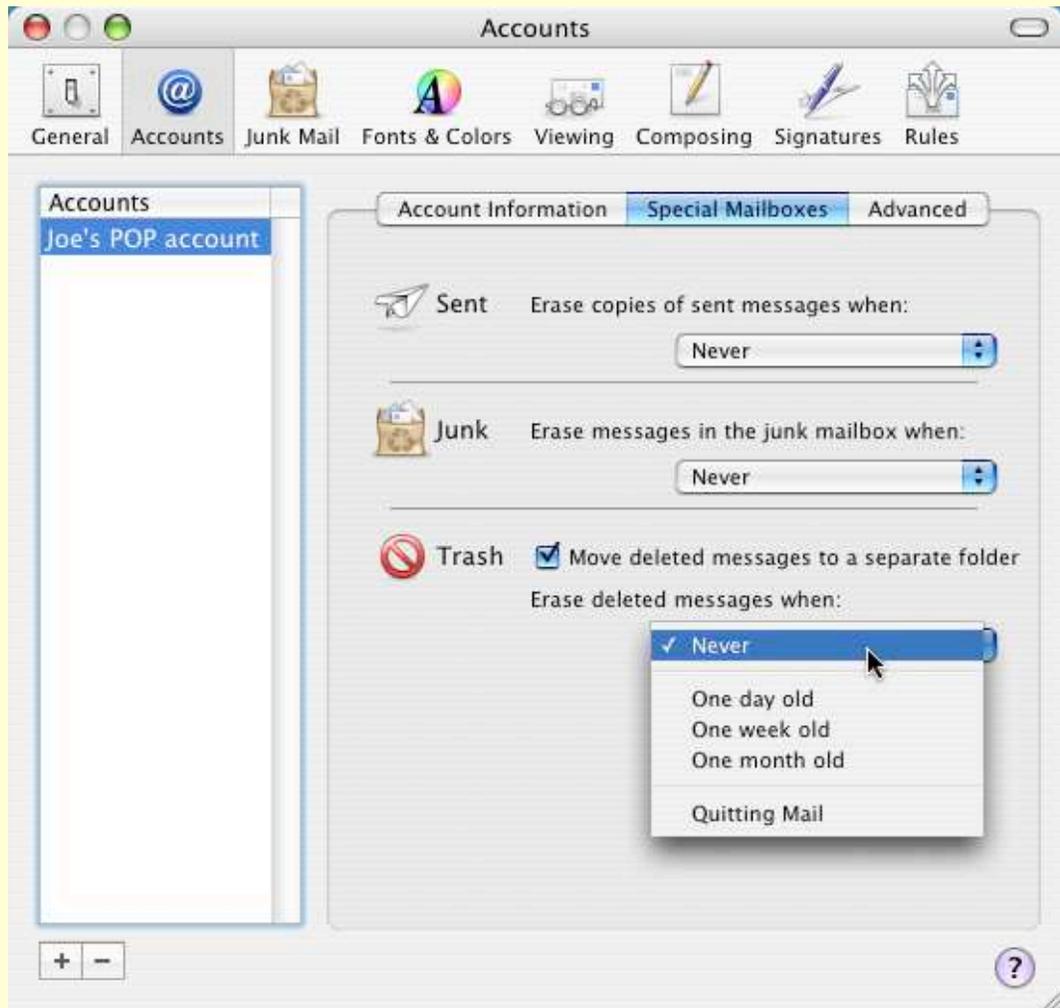
- When Remove Copy from Server After Retrieving a Message is *selected*, a pop-up menu (see **Figure 1**) displays another set of options. I recommend that you choose one of the “After...” options, since those options work well and offer a bit of backup protection if you accidentally delete an important message from your local disk. Here's more information about the options in the pop-up menu:
  - **Right Away:** This option represents the original, standard POP behavior—when Mail finishes downloading a message, it immediately deletes the message from the server. This is the cleanest setting as it prevents the possibility of duplicate messages. It's also the least safe, because once that downloaded message is deleted (intentionally or otherwise), it's gone for good.

- **After One Day, After One Week, After One Month:** If you want the security of knowing your original message is still on the server for a while after downloading it, choose one of these options. But be aware that the server doesn't store the deletion schedule; Mail does. Regardless of what you set here, the messages will remain on the server until the first time *this particular copy* of Mail checks that account after the designated interval has elapsed. In other words, if you choose After One Day, then go on vacation and check your email remotely a week later, your messages will still be there.
- **When Moved from Inbox:** Selecting this option *should* do what it says—delete messages from the POP server when you either file them in a local folder or delete them from your local In Box. For many people, this sounds like the most logical way to delete email. Unfortunately, this setting doesn't work exactly the way you might expect—although it seems possible that Apple will fix it in a later version. With When Moved from Inbox selected, you can move a message to a local mailbox or even delete it...but the message remains on the POP server (and therefore reappears if you check your email using another client). The message is finally deleted after you quit Mail, relaunch it, and then check your email in that account again. (Checking your email again without quitting doesn't do the trick, nor does changing the settings on the Special Mailboxes tab of Accounts Preferences.)

### **Deleting local messages**

In addition to the POP-deletion *server* settings that I discussed just previously, you can change how Mail deletes *local* copies of messages using the Special Mailboxes tab of the Accounts preference pane (see **Figure 2**). You have two choices:

**FIGURE 2**



To configure if and when *local* copies of messages are deleted, use the controls in the Trash section of the Special Mailboxes tab of Mail's Accounts preference pane.

- If the checkbox Move Deleted Messages to a Separate Folder is *selected*, deleting a message sends it to a (local) Trash mailbox; Mail deletes it for good at the time you specify in the pop-up menu. This option helps to prevent a bloated Trash mailbox, but keep in mind that it doesn't warn you before removing deleted messages at the scheduled times.
- If that checkbox is *deselected*, deleting a local message merely hides it. (To toggle the display of these deleted messages, choose View > Hide Deleted Messages or Show Deleted Messages.) To delete these messages for good, select your POP account in the Mailbox list and choose Mailbox > Erase Deleted Messages > In Selected Mailbox (Command-K). If you frequently find yourself

undeleting messages you've previously deleted, this option makes it somewhat easier to locate them.

## **IMAP**

By way of full disclosure, I should mention two things. First, I am deeply, passionately committed to IMAP and would never use POP again if I could get away with it. And second, I converted reluctantly: for a long time I resisted IMAP, thinking it was weird, annoying, and pointless. Only after a POP-related tragedy and weeks of experimenting with IMAP did I finally see the light. So I come by my enthusiasm honestly; if you will forgive my evangelistic fervor for a few paragraphs, I'm going to tell you what IMAP is, why it's a good thing, and why you should consider using it. But I'll also mention some ways in which Mail makes IMAP less of a joy than it should be.

### **How IMAP works**

From a user's point of view, the primary distinction between POP and IMAP is that in an IMAP account, all your messages stay on the mail server even after you have downloaded and read them. As with POP, you can file your message into mailboxes, but an IMAP account stores all those mailboxes on the server as well. IMAP supports server-side searching, meaning your client can ask the server to search your saved messages even if you don't have a local copy of them. (Mail, unfortunately, does *not* support server-side searching; it must download and index IMAP messages before searching them.) In addition, the server—not your local client—keeps track of which messages you have read, forwarded, or replied to, so such status indicators appear correctly even if you check your email from another machine. You can, of course, delete messages you no longer want in order to free space on the server. But unlike POP, IMAP gives you the option of marking messages for later deletion without moving them to a separate Trash mailbox.

The main advantage of IMAP is that you can view your email using any client, on any computer (or platform), and you will always see exactly the same thing. This means that if you check your email from a second computer or an Internet café, all your messages will be there—including sent and saved messages. It means that even if you use just one computer, you can switch or upgrade mail clients at any time—or use several at once, for that matter—without ever having to export, import, or convert email messages. And it means that if you

lose local messages due to a hard drive crash, disk error, theft, fire, or whatever, all your email remains safe on the server.

Some people incorrectly assume that because IMAP keeps your email on the server, you can access your messages only while connected to the Internet, making it a seemingly unattractive option for mobile users or those with dial-up Internet access. But you can set Mail (or pretty much any IMAP client) to download all your messages just as it would for a POP account so that you have a complete, local copy of your email as well. You can then work with your email whether you're connected or not. Another misconception is that IMAP is basically the same as the POP option of leaving email on the server after downloading it. But that option doesn't store any metadata (such as a message's read status) or allow you to organize your messages into mailboxes on the server.

**NOTE** Most (but not all) IMAP servers enable you to create multiple levels of nested mailboxes—for example, you could have a mailbox named Lists to hold messages from mailing lists, with separate mailboxes inside for each individual list. Mail supports hierarchical mailboxes if your server does, but it can't override the server's capabilities. Be aware, however, that IMAP servers do not permit additional mailboxes within the In box.

Many large businesses and educational institutions use IMAP because it permits their users to freely move between machines. For the same reason, Apple's .Mac service uses a form of IMAP for email, as do Microsoft Exchange servers.

IMAP has only two major drawbacks, which may or may not be significant, depending on your situation. First, most IMAP mail servers impose a limit on the volume of email users can store. If you have more email than your account can accommodate, you'll have to move some of it into local mailboxes, at which point those messages will behave as though they were downloaded from a POP account, meaning they won't be available from any other computer. And second, because IMAP operations happen on a server, it can sometimes take longer to copy or file an IMAP message than a POP message.

**WARNING!** If you're using IMAP, pay attention to your ISP's mail server backup policies. If the email stored on the server is not backed up frequently (and easily restorable in the event of a major problem), be sure to keep local copies of all your messages and back them up yourself (see [Backing up and Restoring Email](#)).

You may be unaware that some mail servers allow both POP *and* IMAP to be used for retrieving email from the same account. This is the default setting, for instance, on Mac OS X Server. If you currently access your email using POP, try adding a second account with identical settings, except for an account type of IMAP. If it works, you can remove your POP account and (if you wish) copy mailboxes full of locally stored messages onto the IMAP server. If it doesn't work, contact your ISP to see if they can turn on IMAP as an option. In some cases, this may require you to set up an entirely new email account. On rare occasions, an IMAP account may require an additional fee. If your ISP doesn't offer IMAP and you're interested in switching to one that does, you can find a list of providers here:  
<http://www.ii.com/internet/messaging/imap/isps/#providers>.

**TIP AOL via IMAP:** AOL now offers its members access to their email accounts using IMAP. For setup details, see <http://members.aol.com/adamkb/aol/mailfaq/imap/>.

### **Mail's IMAP annoyances**

As much as I like IMAP, I should be clear that all IMAP clients are not created equal. Mail, in particular, has quirks in its handling of IMAP that can frustrate you if you have used IMAP with other email clients and therefore aren't prepared to think about email the way Mail wants you to.

#### ***Subscriptions***

Mail has no concept of *subscriptions*. Most IMAP clients enable you to subscribe to stored mailboxes individually. Only those folders you've subscribed to appear in your Mailbox list. If you have many folders, not all of which you need to use on a regular basis, Mail's inability to "unsubscribe" may be annoying. This is especially true if your mail server uses hidden mailboxes (prefixed with a period) to store account information, or if you choose to download local copies

of all your messages and keep them synchronized with the server—the more folders, the longer this takes.

### **Message deletion**

Mail 1.3.9 handles IMAP message deletion much better than earlier versions did, though if you're accustomed to using other IMAP clients, you may still find Mail's behavior to be somewhat un-IMAP-like. Normally, when one "deletes" an IMAP message, the client leaves the message in place and simply changes a flag on the server that marks the message for later deletion. The client may display the deleted messages (often in a strikethrough style) or enable you to hide them. When you wish—manually or on a schedule—you can tell the server to expunge the messages marked for deletion, deleting them for good.

By default, Mail prefers to move deleted messages to a Trash mailbox on the server instead of marking them for deletion (parallel to the way files are deleted in the Finder). This makes sense for many users, but if you prefer a more orthodox IMAP behavior, you can simply change a couple of settings:

- On the Special Mailboxes tab of Mail's Accounts preference pane, deselect the Move Deleted Messages to the Trash Mailbox checkbox. Then choose View > Show Deleted Messages to display the deleted messages (in light gray) or View > Hide Deleted Messages to hide them.
- In Mail, the "expunge" command is Mailbox > Erase Deleted Messages > account-name. Mail does not have an option to expunge deleted messages on a schedule; if you want that behavior, leave Move Deleted Messages to the Trash Mailbox selected and choose your desired deletion schedule from the pop-up menu labeled Permanently Erase Deleted Messages When.

There's one thing about Mail's IMAP deletion behavior that you may find confusing. Let's say you set up a new IMAP account in Mail, keeping the default setting, Move Deleted Messages to the Trash Mailbox. And let's assume that you already had a Trash mailbox on the server, which you named (very sensibly) Trash. Mail places a new mailbox under Trash in the Mailbox list bearing the name of your account, and this is where it moves deleted email messages. So far so good...except this isn't your existing Trash mailbox. You'll still see a

mailbox in your IMAP account named Trash, but no new messages appear there.

What's going on? Well, Mail created a new "Trash" mailbox for you named *Deleted Messages*. That's right: even if you already have a mailbox named Trash on your IMAP server, Mail ignores it; the Move Deleted Messages to the Trash Mailbox setting by default uses a mailbox named Deleted Messages! (The same is true, by the way, for sent messages; if you store them on the server, Mail makes a mailbox named *Sent Messages* and uses that to store sent email, even if you already had a mailbox named Sent.) To switch to your original Trash mailbox, you must select it in the Mailbox list and choose Mailbox > Use This Mailbox For > Trash, and then delete the Deleted Messages mailbox.

## **.Mac**

For the most part, everything I said just previously about IMAP accounts is also true of .Mac accounts. In fact, you can use any IMAP client—not just Mail—to connect to your .Mac account. The only surprising (and surprisingly little-known) thing about .Mac accounts is that you can *also* access them using POP if you wish. To do so, simply set up a new POP account, entering **mail.mac.com** as both the incoming and outgoing mail server. In the User Name field, enter just the portion of your mac.com address before the @ sign.

**TIP** .Mac accounts offer a unique feature: the capability to include your photo in outgoing messages. You don't use Mail to select the photo, though; you must log into your .Mac account with a Web browser, click the Preferences icon, and upload a photo there. Then the .Mac mail server automatically inserts your photo in a special header that is visible only if the recipient uses Mail or the .Mac Web interface.

## **Exchange**

If your copy of Mail connects to a Microsoft Exchange server (or if you would like it to), you can work more effectively if you know some background information about Exchange.

Microsoft Exchange servers provide email, shared calendars, and a variety of other network services to many organizations. Under Windows, Outlook is the application of choice for working with

Exchange-based data. Although Microsoft created a version of Outlook for Mac OS 9, they chose not to port it to Mac OS X, and instead, added (limited) Exchange support to Entourage. While terrific for Entourage users, this seemingly meant that Mac users could access their Exchange-based email only by spending money on a commercial application. But then Panther's updated version of Mail solved the problem by adding Exchange support...or did it?

### **When is Exchange not Exchange?**

I'm going to let you in on a little secret: Mail doesn't *really* support Exchange accounts as such. Exchange servers have always used a proprietary protocol, called MAPI, for transferring email and other data. Several years ago, though, Microsoft added an optional feature that server administrators can turn on to provide access to email via the IMAP protocol as well. Mail uses IMAP, not MAPI, to access your Exchange-based email; this works only if your organization's Exchange server has IMAP support enabled. Even then, you get access to just a subset of the information in your Exchange account, because Mail doesn't have nearly as many features as Outlook does. Nevertheless, something is better than nothing, and many users find this level of Exchange support perfectly adequate.

The only way to know whether your organization's Exchange server supports IMAP is to ask your IT department; they can also tell you how to fill in your user name, domain, and other settings (which are often different from what you may expect with regular POP or IMAP accounts). If your organization has not enabled IMAP support for its Exchange server, you can ask them to do so. But I must warn you from personal experience that you are likely to meet with resistance. Although turning on IMAP is fairly easy, some organizations feel it poses a security risk or increases the difficulty of providing support.

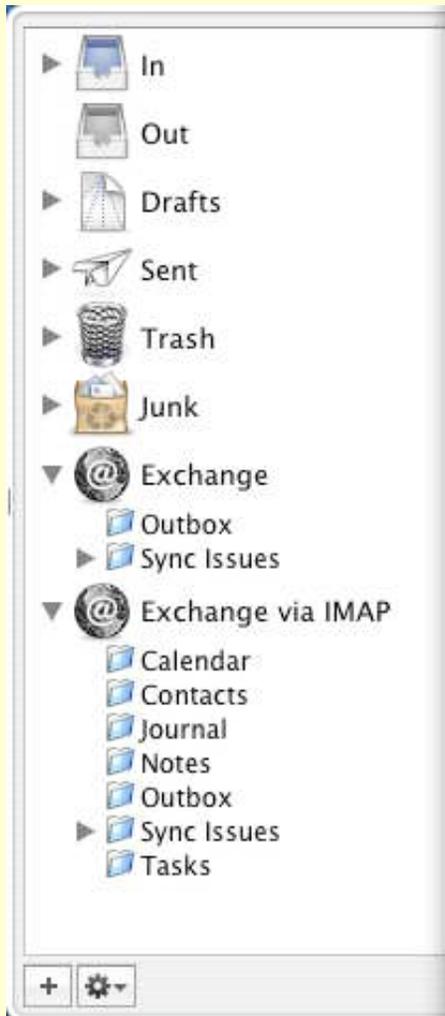
### **Exchange vs. IMAP**

If Mail supports Exchange servers only using IMAP, you may well ask, "Why offer Exchange as a separate account type? What's the difference?" Both IMAP and Exchange account types use IMAP, but Exchange accounts have a subtle difference: they filter out everything *except* email.

In other words, the online mailboxes Exchange uses for Calendar, Contacts, Notes, Tasks, and so on do not appear in the Mailbox list when the account type is Exchange, and in addition, messages other

than conventional email (notably meeting invitations) never appear in your In box. If you connect to the very same server with an account type of IMAP, on the other hand, all these items (and more) appear in your Mailbox list (see **Figure 3**).

**FIGURE 3**



You can use either an Exchange account type or an IMAP account type to access an Exchange account. In this example, both “Exchange” and “Exchange via IMAP” refer to the very same account. The IMAP version displays additional mailboxes, allowing you to access some information that the Exchange version does not.

This may seem backward; why should choosing Exchange give you *less* information from your Exchange server than IMAP? Apple’s rationale is that because Mail does not have integrated calendar and contact features, showing mailboxes and messages you can’t use amounts to unnecessary clutter. However, you *can* use some of the filtered content, such as meeting requests—or you could, if you could see it. In other words, for Exchange users, the IMAP account type is often the better choice. You lose nothing and gain access to information that would otherwise be hidden.

**TIP** If you specify an IMAP account type, you'll be able to see Outlook meeting invitations; they appear as **meeting.ics** files attached to email messages. If you're an iCal user, you can double-click one of these files to add the meeting to your iCal calendar and optionally send a confirmation to the meeting organizer.

## SMTP

Every account type Mail supports uses SMTP for delivery of outgoing email. In most cases, you can simply enter the server information provided by your ISP and not have to think about it again. However, if you encounter problems when sending email, you may have an SMTP-related problem.

Many SMTP-related problems come from efforts that ISPs take to reduce spam. For instance, most ISPs have taken measures to make it harder for unauthorized users to send email through their systems. The unfortunate side effect for upstanding *netizens* is that you may find your efforts to send legitimate email blocked, too.

### Port blocking

Some ISPs configure their routers to block port 25, the “channel” mail servers usually use to communicate with each other. When this occurs, Mail can use port 25 to connect to SMTP servers within the network of the ISP currently providing your Internet access, but not to any SMTP server *outside* their network. That way, the ISP can verify that you, the sender, are a legitimate account holder and not some random ne'er-do-well trying to *hijack* their mail server. Here are two of the most common port-blocking scenarios:

- **.Mac blocked by cable-modem or DSL provider:** If you have broadband Internet access at home, you may be able to send email messages using your provider's server (for example, smtp.my-cable-company.com) but receive error messages when you try to send email using your .Mac account (smtp.mac.com).
- **Home ISP blocked by remote network:** If you take your PowerBook or iBook to a library, Internet café, airport, or hotel and connect to the Internet using their (wired or wireless) net

work, you may be unable to send email using the mail server of the ISP that provides your account at home, even though you changed no settings.

In such cases, your best strategy is to switch to an outgoing mail server that accepts email from your current connection. Alternatively, if your account offers Web-based access, you may be able to send email using your Web browser as a short-term workaround.

[Port-Blocking Problems](#) in “Fix Email Transfer Problems,” ahead, has further details and steps you can follow to deal with port blocking.

### **SMTP authentication**

Another layer of SMTP complexity involves *authentication*, a fancy term for verifying your user name and password. Even though you can connect to a given SMTP server on port 25, that server may still require that your email client send it a valid user name and password before it will accept email for delivery. An SMTP server may also check that the From address belongs to a valid user on its system; this reduces *spoofing* (sending email with forged headers so that it appears to come from someone else’s address). If you do not wish the recipients to reply to you at the From address a particular server requires you to use, you must use the Reply-To field to specify where replies should go (see [Hidden Address Fields](#)).

If you experience problems with sending email that you suspect may be related to authentication, read [Authentication Errors](#), later.

## FIX EMAIL TRANSFER PROBLEMS

The previous section, [Learn about Email Protocols](#), described several issues you may experience with POP and IMAP accounts and explained why they exist and what you can (or cannot) do about them. However, sometimes—even with optimum account settings—Mail runs into other kinds of problems while transferring email. (For what it's worth, anecdotal evidence suggests that Mail is more prone to problems when checking POP accounts than IMAP accounts.)

### Incoming Email Troubleshooting Checklist

If you cannot make Mail download incoming messages, use the following steps to diagnose and solve the problem. The first two items pertain to very specific (and common) symptoms:

1. **Mail stalls while downloading POP messages:** Sometimes downloading simply takes a long time, but if Mail stalls for several minutes, you may have a damaged message in your In box. See [Can't Retrieve POP Messages](#).
2. **You see error messages about your password being rejected:** Find help in [Password Problems](#).

**TIP** If you want to see what Mail is doing behind the scenes, choose Window > Activity Viewer. A small floating window appears, displaying more detail about each activity Mail is performing at the moment. To cancel any task, click the red “Stop” button next to it.

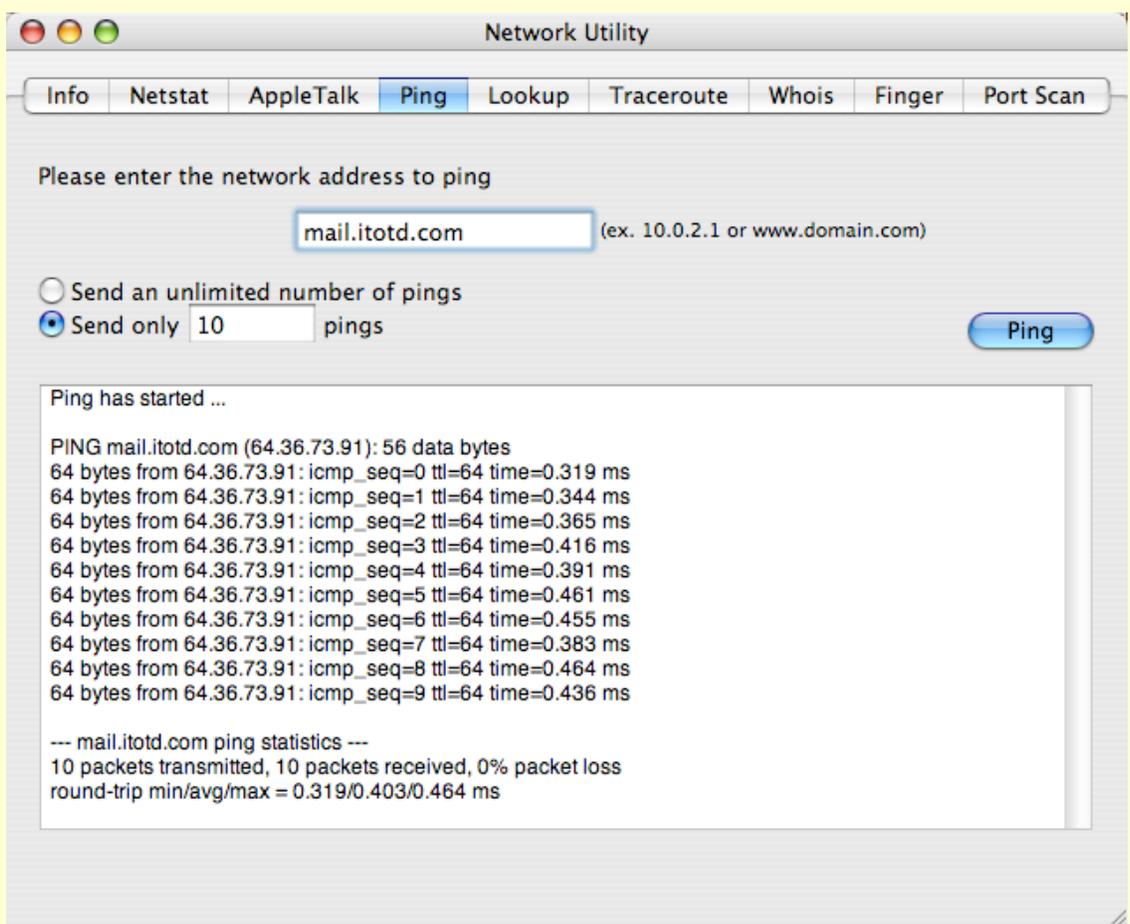
If your problem fits into neither of those categories, continue with the following steps:

3. **Check your Internet connection:** Visit your favorite Web site to make sure your computer can access the Internet. If it cannot, the problem relates to a failed Internet connection. If it can, continue with the next step.
4. **Verify that your account is online:** If Mail cannot connect to an account after multiple attempts, it may take the account “offline”—which means that Mail stops trying to connect for that account. You can tell an account is offline if the account name appears dimmed in the Mailbox list, with a “squiggle” symbol next to it. To reestablish connection, click the squiggle symbol, or choose

Mailbox > Online Status > Take *Account-Name* Online (or Go Online to take all accounts online). If the account remains offline, continue to the next step.

5. **Check mail server availability:** Mail servers occasionally crash or become unreachable due to network problems. If an account remains offline even after choosing Go Online, check your server by *pinging* it. To do so, open Network Utility (you can find it in */Applications/Utilities*), select the Ping tab, enter the domain name or IP address of your mail server, and click Ping (**Figure 4**).

**FIGURE 4**



The Ping tab in Network Utility can tell you whether your mail server is alive and well.

If you see a series of messages along the lines of “64 bytes from xxx.yyy.zzz.xxx: icmp\_seq=0 ttl=64 time=3.309 ms,” your mail server is responding and you should continue to the next step. If not, contact your ISP to see if there’s a problem.

**NOTE** This test proves only that the machine is online, not that the mail server software is running—though usually the former implies the latter. Also, be aware that not all servers respond to ping messages—mail.mac.com, for instance, does not. It’s a good idea to run a ping test when you know the server is working, in order to establish a baseline.

6. **Verify your SSL setting:** Some POP and IMAP servers support SSL, some don’t. If in doubt, leave the SSL checkbox deselected; it’s located on the Advanced tab of the Accounts preference pane.
7. **Try a new user:** Create a new Mac OS X user account using the Accounts pane of System Preferences. Log in as the new user (you can use *Fast User Switching*, if you wish) and configure Mail to check the account experiencing problems. (See Kirk McElhearn’s *Take Control of Users & Accounts in Panther* for more information on setting up and using a troubleshooting account <http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/panther/users.html>.) If it works, one or more of Mail’s preference, mailbox, or support files may be damaged.

To solve the problem, your best bet is to back up all your email (see [Backing up and Restoring Email](#)), delete all potentially problematic files, and reconfigure Mail from scratch. The files you should delete are:

`~/Library/Preferences/com.apple.mail.plist` and  
`~/Library/Mail` (entire folder). After reentering your Mail settings, you will also need to restore (or import) your mailboxes, as described under [Backing up and Restoring Email](#).

8. **Try another client:** If all else fails, try another email client (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)). If it works, Mail may have a bug that interferes with email retrieval. Check the Apple Web site for updates or advice. If another client has the same difficulties, contact your ISP to see if they know of any server problems.

You should now be able to retrieve your incoming email.

## Can’t Retrieve POP Messages

If Mail stalls while downloading email from a POP server, the likely cause is a damaged or severely malformed message—which may

sometimes appear to be completely blank. (In virtually every case, such a message is spam; in fact, I believe that some spam is designed expressly to cause Mail to fail.) You solve the problem by deleting the specific message causing the problem. This “unclogs” Mail, allowing messages queued behind it to flow to your In box. Unfortunately, Mail has no way to tell a POP server to delete a message it has not yet downloaded, but you can work around this problem in any of the following ways:

- If your POP account also offers IMAP access, set up a new IMAP account in Mail with the same user name, password, and incoming mail server as your POP account. Check your email with the IMAP account and delete the problem message. Then choose Mailbox > Erase Deleted Messages > *Account-Name*. (Later, you can remove—or disable—this temporary account. See [Removing Extra Accounts](#), earlier.)
- If your POP account offers Web-based access, log into your account with your favorite Web browser and delete the problem message there.
- If your account is POP-only, you could use another POP client, such as Eudora, to check your email and delete the problem message. You must be careful, however, to leave legitimate messages in your In box so that Mail can retrieve them later. In Eudora, use the following procedure. Choose Eudora > Preferences and click the Checking Mail icon on the left. Select the checkbox labeled Leave On Server For and enter a number (say, 7). Also select the next checkbox, Delete from Server When Emptied from Trash. Now, check your email, delete the offending messages, and choose Special > Empty Trash. Check your email a second time to remove the deleted messages from your server’s In box. Finally, quit Eudora, return to Mail, and check your email again as usual.

**TIP** Eudora, available from <http://www.eudora.com/>, can be used free in Sponsored or Light mode. A highly capable email client in its own right, it’s also a handy tool for Mail users who run into occasional problems.

## Password Problems

If you enter your password on the Account Information tab while setting up an account, Mail automatically stores the password in your Keychain (which is usually what you want). If, for security reasons, you prefer for Mail to prompt you for your password each time you connect, leave the Password field blank.

Sometimes, even after successfully checking your email many times with the password you entered, Mail displays a dialog claiming that the mail server has “rejected” your password. (This occurs most often with .Mac and POP accounts, but every account type is susceptible to this problem.) Worse, you may re-enter your password—and even select Remember This Password in My Keychain—but find that another error message pops up as soon as you click OK. This annoyance may be due to any number of causes, such as these:

- Mail may be exceeding a limit on the number of simultaneous connections set by your mail server. This occurs most often when you check your email using more than one client, or on more than one machine at a time—though under some circumstances, Mail may attempt to open a second connection to a mail server before closing an earlier one. IMAP supports multiple simultaneous connections, whereas POP does not. But even IMAP servers may balk if you have too many connections at once; by rejecting your password, they prevent additional connections.
- Your Keychain—or more specifically, the password for this email account stored there—may be damaged.
- Your ISP may be having difficulties with their mail server, or they may have changed a setting on your account inadvertently. (This happens more often than you might think.)

If Mail suddenly begins prompting you for your password repeatedly, try these steps in order until the problem goes away:

1. Click Cancel, then check your email again in a minute or two. Sometimes the problem goes away on its own. (If your account is offline, choose Mailbox > Online Status > Go Online to connect again and check email in the account.)
2. Check your Keychain. To do so, open Keychain Access, found in **/Applications/Utilities**. Choose Window > Keychain First

Aid. Click the Repair radio button, enter your administrator password, and click Start. If the Keychain file had an error (such as a duplicate or malformed entry), Keychain First Aid can fix it.

3. If the problem persists, return to Keychain Access. Locate your mail server in the list (in the case of a .Mac password, the entry will be your .Mac username), select it, and click the Delete button. The next time you check your email, you'll see another dialog asking for your password; enter it and select Remember This Password in My Keychain; then click OK.
4. If even that doesn't work, your mail server may be at fault. Try connecting and checking your email with another client application (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#) for suggestions). If the other client also gives you error messages, ask your ISP for help.

## SMTP Troubleshooting Checklist

If Mail displays an error dialog similar to the one shown in **Figure 5** when you try to send a message, you have an SMTP-related problem. If you have multiple accounts set up in Mail, you can try to solve the problem by choosing a different server from the Send Message Using pop-up menu and clicking Use Selected Server—but for a variety of reasons that doesn't always work. Besides, if you do that, you'll see the same dialog again the next time you try to send a message. It's better to look for, and address, the cause of the problem.

**FIGURE 5**



A dialog like this one indicates that Mail cannot communicate with your SMTP server. The text of the error does not, however, always indicate the exact nature of the problem.

Unfortunately, the error messages Mail displays regarding outgoing email don't always give enough information to tell what the problem is or how to solve it. As you know from the [SMTP](#) discussion earlier,

most problems with sending email occur because of anti-spam safeguards implemented by your ISP. If Mail complains that it can't send a message, don't panic. Click the Try Again Later button, and then check each of these items in order:

1. **Check your Internet connection:** Visit your favorite Web site to make sure your computer can access the Internet.
2. **Check SMTP server availability:** If you get an error message like "The server 'smtp.domain.com' refused to allow a connection on port 25," it could mean your SMTP server is offline. To check, [ping](#) it. Open Network Utility (in **/Applications/Utilities**), select the Ping tab, enter the domain name or IP address of your SMTP server, and click Ping (see [Figure 4](#), a few pages back).

If you see a series of messages along the lines of "64 bytes from xxx.yyy.zzz.xxx: icmp\_seq=0 ttl=64 time=3.309 ms," your SMTP server is responding, and you should continue to the next step. If not, contact your ISP to see if there's a problem.

**NOTE** This test proves only that the machine is online, not that the mail server software is running—though usually the former implies the latter. Also, be aware that not all servers respond to ping messages—mail.mac.com, for instance, does not. It's a good idea to run a ping test when you know the server is working, in order to establish a baseline.

3. **Verify your authentication setting:** See [Authentication Errors](#), ahead, for more information.
4. **Verify your SSL setting:** Some SMTP servers support SSL, some don't. If in doubt, leave the SSL checkbox deselected; it's located on the Advanced tab of the Accounts preference pane.
5. **Check to see if port 25 is blocked:** See [Port-Blocking Problems](#) for details.
6. **Make sure your account is set to use the right SMTP server:** See [Purge SMTP Settings](#) for details.
7. **Try another client:** If all else fails, you could be looking at a bug in Mail (yes, it happens!). Try sending email with another email

client. If it works, Mail may be broken. If not, contact your ISP to see if they know of any server problems.

In the vast majority of cases, one or more of these steps should have made it possible for Mail to send messages again.

## Port-Blocking Problems

If the network to which your computer is connected blocks port 25, you can take one of several steps to work around the problem and send email. If Mail displays an error message such as “Refused to allow a connection on port 25,” that’s a pretty good indication that port 25 is blocked. However, port blocking could cause a number of other error messages. The best way to tell for sure is to check using Terminal. To see if port 25 is blocked, follow these steps:

1. Open Terminal (in **/Applications/Utilities**).
2. Enter the following (even if the SMTP server you’re trying to reach is not smtp.mac.com):

```
telnet smtp.mac.com 25
```

and press Return. If you see something like the following, then port 25 is not blocked:

```
Trying 17.250.248.48...
```

```
Connected to smtp.mac.com.
```

```
Escape character is '^]'.  
220 smtp.mac.com ESMTP Service
```

However, if the “Connected” line never appears, port 25 is blocked.

3. Enter **quit** to end the telnet session, and then quit Terminal.

You now know whether port 25 is blocked. If it isn’t, skip ahead for other possible causes and solutions. If it is, follow these steps:

1. Determine the SMTP server address for the network to which your computer is connected. If your connection is through a dial-up or broadband ISP, check the support section of the ISP’s Web site or call their technical support department to get this information. If your connection is through a corporate or university network, a commercial wireless service, or another private provider, you may

need to ask a system administrator for this information. While you're asking, check whether the SMTP server requires authentication and/or SSL. If you can't find anyone to ask, a good guess is **smtp.domain-name.com** (or **mail.domain-name.com**), where **domain-name.com** is the domain name of the organization providing your Internet access at the moment.

2. Go to the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane. In the Accounts list, select the account from which you want to send email. Click the Server Settings button at the bottom of the window, and enter the domain name or IP address of the SMTP server for your current network in the Outgoing Mail Server field. If the server requires authentication, choose Password from the Authentication pop-up menu (unless the organization specified a different authentication method), and enter your user name and password in the appropriate fields. *Only if required*, select the SSL checkbox. Click OK, and then close the Preferences window.
3. Try sending yourself a message. If you receive it, you've solved the problem. If not, make sure the address from which you're sending the message (as specified in the Account pop-up menu at the top of the message window) is a valid email address *for the network to which you're connected*. If even that fails, you may need to change the authentication method (see Step 2).
4. If you're still unable to resolve a port-blocking problem, you may be able to log into your email account with a Web-based interface and use that to send email as a temporary workaround.

**TIP** There is yet another way around port blocking: use a different port! The only catch is that your ISP's mail server must also have the alternate port turned on—some do, many don't. Check with your ISP to see if they offer SMTP access on another port, such as 2525. If they do, go to the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane, click Server Settings, and enter the port number in the Server Port field.

You should now be able to send email using your current network. (If you later change your network connection to its earlier setting, you may need to switch your SMTP server back, too. To do this, return to

the Accounts preference pane and select your old SMTP server from the pop-up menu at the bottom of the window.)

**NOTE** If you're away from your home network and find that port 25 is blocked, you may be able to circumvent the problem by using a VPN (virtual private network) connection to your corporate or school network. A VPN sends network traffic through a secure "tunnel" to another network, bypassing any port-blocking restrictions. Your system administrator can tell you if VPN access is available; see Mac Help for information on configuring Panther's built-in VPN client.

## Authentication Errors

When Mail encounters an authentication problem, it usually tells you so fairly clearly—you'll see an error dialog similar to the one shown in **Figure 6**. Here are some common errors and solutions:

**FIGURE 6**



When you see a dialog like this one, it means Mail has encountered an authentication error. The text of the error can give you important clues to solving the problem.

- **The server response was: Authentication required:** Your server requires authentication, but Mail is not set to use any. Go to the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane, click

the Server Settings button, and choose Password from the Authentication pop-up menu. Enter your user name and password, and try again.

- **The SMTP server “smtp.domain.com” doesn’t support authentication:** You selected an authentication method but you don’t need one. Go to the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane, click the Server Settings button, and choose None from the Authentication pop-up menu.
- **The SMTP server “smtp.domain.com” doesn’t support *some-kind-of* authentication:** You chose an authentication method the server doesn’t support. Choose Password from the Authentication pop-up menu in the SMTP Server Options window (see **Figure 7**); if that doesn’t work, try the other authentication methods in the menu until you find one that does.

**FIGURE 7**



Click the Server Settings button at the bottom of the Account Information tab of Mail’s Accounts preference pane to display this dialog. When an SMTP server requires authentication, more often than not Password is the right method—try that one first.

- **The SMTP server “smtp.domain.com” rejected the password for user “username”:** This can mean either an incorrect user name *or* an incorrect password. Go to the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane, click the Server Settings button, and reenter both User Name and Password, then try again.
- **The sender address user@domain.com was rejected by the server:** Regardless of your authentication settings, some servers only accept email when the From address matches the User Name. Make sure your email address matches the account from which you’re sending email.

## Purge SMTP Settings

Often when you edit SMTP settings, Mail adds a new server to its internal list rather than changing the existing entry. As a result, your list of SMTP servers can become cluttered with invalid entries. If you choose one of these accidentally, you’ll be unable to send email. To clean up this list, follow these steps:

1. Make sure you have a record (preferably a written record) of the correct SMTP settings for each of your accounts, then choose Edit Server List from the pop-up menu at the bottom of the Account Information tab of the Accounts preference pane.
2. Look for entries with nothing in the column labeled In Use by Account. Select these and click Remove Server. Read the warning, click Yes, then click Done.
3. In case of serious errors, you may wish to delete *all* the SMTP servers and reenter the information from scratch. After doing so, add them back one at a time, sending yourself a test message each time to confirm that the settings are correct.

Mail’s SMTP server list now contains only valid entries.

## THE VIEWER WINDOW

Mail's main window is called the Viewer window; this is where you list, view, and search for messages. Although this window seems straightforward, it has a few features that may not be obvious, but that are important to understand in order to work effectively.

### Put the Mailbox Drawer on the Left

This has bugged me since day one. Why is the drawer containing Mail's Mailbox list on the right side of the window? It's on the left in virtually every other email application, and that seems much more natural to me. Although Mail's interface obscures this fact, you can move the drawer to the other side easily. First, close the drawer by clicking the Mailboxes button in the toolbar. Then move your entire window near the right edge of your screen. Now click the Mailboxes button again to display the drawer—this time, on the left—and reposition your window wherever you want it. Mail remembers this setting even after you quit.

**TIP** You can open multiple Viewer windows if you wish, each with its own customized list of messages and other settings. To open another Viewer window, choose File > New Viewer Window.

### Use (Or Hide) the Preview Pane

By default, Mail's Viewer window displays a scrolling list of messages in the top portion of the window, with the content of the selected message in a pane (the Preview pane) at the bottom. This arrangement saves screen real estate by keeping everything in a single window; it also enables you to read any message with just one click.

And yet I can think of at least three reasons you may not like the Preview pane. First, if you have lots of messages in your In box, you may prefer to devote as much of the window as possible to displaying the list of messages. Second, you may want to *avoid* seeing the content of some messages (such as advertisements for objectionable Web sites). But to delete a message, mark it as Junk Mail, or move it to another folder, you must select it—and selecting it normally displays its content in the Preview pane! And third, because the Preview pane displays messages immediately, the mere act of selecting a message

marks it as Read; you may wish to select a message (to move it, say) but keep it marked as Unread until later.

One solution is to hide the Preview pane. To hide it, double-click the horizontal bar that separates the message list from the Preview pane. With the Preview pane hidden, you can display any message in its own window by double-clicking it (or selecting it and pressing Return), and simply selecting messages no longer marks them as Read. If you later decide you want to see the Preview pane, double-click the divider bar—which is now at the bottom edge of the Viewer window—and Mail displays it again. (You can also, if you prefer, manually drag the bar downward to hide the Preview pane and upward to reveal it—but remember that it must be *completely* hidden to prevent selected messages from being marked as Read.)

I should mention that there is another way to move messages—even with the Preview pane visible—without displaying their contents or marking them as Read. The trick is to move your pointer over the message in the message list, press the mouse button, and then *without releasing the mouse button* drag the message immediately to another mailbox. Personally, I find this procedure cumbersome, but some people swear by it.

### **TIP COUNTING MESSAGES**

Mail displays the total number of messages in the current list on the Status Bar at the top of the window, and if you use the Search box to find specific messages, the Status Bar shows the number of matches. But what if you manually select a bunch of messages and want to know how many are in the selection? Here's how: after selecting the messages, just drag them slightly (as though you were going to move them). A red badge appears next to the pointer showing the number of messages selected.

### **Consolidate Message Lists**

Ordinarily, the message list displays the contents of the selected mailbox in the Mailbox list. (I discuss the message list in more detail ahead under [Mailbox Basics](#).) If you have multiple accounts and select one of the “consolidated” mailboxes (In, Sent, and so on), the message list displays the contents of all the sub-mailboxes; to display

just one (say, a single account's In box), click the triangle next to the consolidated mailbox icon, then select the individual account name from the list below.

Surprisingly, though, you can consolidate the display of *any* mailboxes. For example, if you want to see the contents of your In box, Drafts box, and a personal folder all at one time, Command-click to select all three in your Mailbox list, and the message list displays the contents of all the selected mailboxes in a single list.

This hidden feature gets even more interesting in conjunction with Mail's Message Threading feature. If you consolidate the display of multiple mailboxes and choose View > Organize by Thread, Mail sorts messages by thread, even though they're actually in different mailboxes. You might find this useful, for instance, to see a series of messages you and a friend exchanged on some topic. If you select your In box (or a mailbox where you've stored your friend's replies) along with the Sent mailbox, you can see messages you've sent and received on each topic threaded together in chronological order.

## Manage Incoming Message Formats

An incoming message may contain more than one copy of its text, each in a different format. Ordinarily, Mail displays incoming messages in the format it deems best. If a message contains an *HTML* version of the text, Mail displays that; second choice is *rich text*, if present, and *plain text* is last. (For more about message formats, see [Formatting Outgoing Email](#), later.)

Because a given message can contain multiple copies of its content in different formats, Mail provides a way to switch among them:

- When viewing a rich text or HTML message, you can switch to the plain text version, if present, by choosing View > Message > Plain Text Alternative (Command-Option-P).
- You can also use the commands View > Message > Previous Alternative and Next Alternative (Command-[ and Command-], respectively) to step through the versions.

Mail does not indicate which format(s) a message contains, or which format you're currently viewing. To find out, check the raw source of the message (View > Message > Raw Source or Command-Option-U).

**TIP** When an incoming message contains a URL, the URL usually appears blue and underlined; clicking the URL opens it in your default Web browser. For Mail to make a URL clickable, though, it must be able to figure out that a particular sequence of characters is a URL, a process that is much more likely to succeed if the sender included the complete URL (e.g., `http://www.apple.com/` rather than just `apple.com`).

You may sometimes, however, receive a message containing a fully specified URL that is nevertheless not clickable. This happens if the message is in HTML format (even though it may look like plain text) and the person or automated system that sent it did not enclose the URL in link tags (`<a href="...">...</a>`).

If this happens, choose View > Message > Plain Text Alternative (Command-Option-P). If the HTML message included a plain text version, that version of the text should contain clickable links. If not, select the URL manually and choose Mail > Services > Open URL.

### **If you prefer plain text**

To force Mail to display the plain text version of any new incoming messages initially, you must turn on a hidden preference. First quit Mail if it's running. Then open Terminal (in **/Applications/Utilities**) and enter:

```
defaults write com.apple.mail PreferPlainText -bool TRUE
```

Now quit Terminal and reopen Mail. Messages display a plain text version, if one is present. As always, use the View > Message sub-menu to view other formats.

### **TIP THE MISSING REPLY WINDOW PROBLEM**

Some Mail users have encountered the following odd problem: An incoming message appears correctly (in the Preview pane or in its own window). When you click Reply, however, the new window that should contain your reply does not appear. If you quit and relaunch Mail, the window does appear, but possibly without your signature or quoted content from the original message. This bug affects incoming messages in HTML format, particularly from certain versions of AOL. The workaround is to force the message into plain text format *before* replying. You can do this either by choosing View > Message > Plain Text Alternative (to affect only the current message) or by following the instructions just previously for changing Mail's defaults using Terminal (to affect all incoming messages).

### **If you prefer HTML without graphics**

For incoming messages in HTML format, Mail provides an option to disable display of embedded graphics. The main reason for this preference is to foil “Web bugs”—images that, when downloaded and viewed, signal the server that you’ve read the message. (For plain text and rich text messages, you cannot turn off inline graphics display.)

To prevent Mail from showing graphics automatically in HTML messages, go to the Viewing preference pane and deselect the checkbox labeled Display Images and Embedded Objects in HTML Messages. While viewing an HTML message with graphics off, to see the graphics, click the Load Images button near the top of the message window. (You can hide the Preview pane entirely to avoid seeing messages before filing or deleting them; see [Use \(or Hide\) the Preview Pane.](#))

### **TIP THE BACKWARD PRINTING PROBLEM**

Occasionally you may print a message and find that the text comes out backward (and upside-down). This is a bug, but there are at least two ways you can work around it:

- Choose Format > Style > Bigger (or Smaller); then try printing again.
- Redirect the message to yourself (choose Message > Redirect, enter your own email address, and click Send). Then print the new copy of the message when it arrives.

## INCOMING ATTACHMENTS

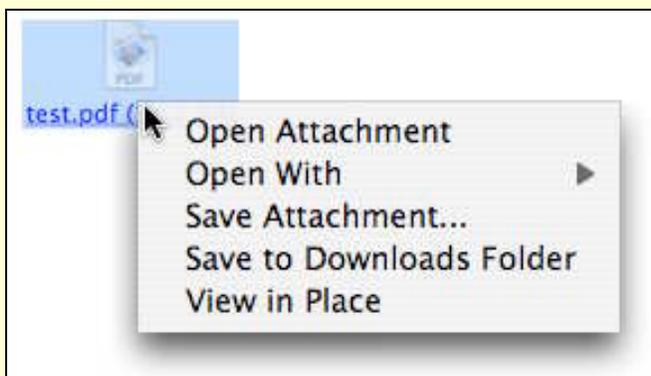
When you check your email, Mail downloads all messages, usually including their attachments. This section explains how to open attached files and how to adjust the way Mail downloads and saves attachments.

### Opening Attached Files

When an incoming message contains one or more attachments, you can open or save them in various ways:

- If the attachment appears as an *icon* in the body of the message, you can single-click it (as though it were a hyperlink) to open it in the default application for that file type. When you do this, however, the file will be read-only unless you save a copy from within the application. (If the file is compressed, single-clicking it causes StuffIt Expander to launch, and StuffIt Expander will prompt you for a location to store the decompressed file.)
- In the case of an attached graphics file that shows as an icon, Control-click (or right-click) its icon and choose View in Place from the contextual menu. (The View in Place command is dimmed if the graphic is compressed.)
- You can Control-click (or right-click) an attachment, whether in icon or inline graphical form, and choose a command from the contextual menu, as shown in **Figure 8**: Open Attachment (in the default application); Open With (any compatible application); Save Attachment (to a location of your choice); or Save to Downloads Folder (which by default is your Desktop folder).

**FIGURE 8**



Control-click (or right-click) an attachment in an email message to display a contextual menu with options for using the attachment.

**TIP** To change your default Downloads folder, which is also used by Safari, open Safari, choose Safari > Preferences, click the General tab, and choose a new location from the Save Downloaded Files To pop-up menu.

- Click the Save All button in the header of the message and browse to the folder where you want to store the files.
- Drag and drop the attachments from the Mail window to your Desktop or folder. But note: unlike other methods for saving attachments, when you drag and drop, Mail makes attachments read-only; you will be unable to modify one unless you select it in the Finder, choose File > Get Info, and choose Read & Write from the first pop-up menu under Ownership & Permissions.

**TIP** Tired of manually changing permissions for attachments you've dragged to the Desktop? Try this idea from MacOSXHints: <http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20031212215917675>. It uses an AppleScript folder action to automatically set every new file placed on the Desktop to read/write permission.

After you copy an attachment to your disk, you may wish to remove it from your message (that is, unless you plan to delete the message anyway). Doing so can save disk space; this is especially helpful for users with IMAP, .Mac, and Exchange accounts. To remove attachments, select one or more messages and choose Message > Remove Attachments. Be aware, though, that some messages are formatted in such a way that Mail cannot remove their attachments.

**NOTE** Mail leaves attachments *inside the message file itself* (part of the `.mbox` or `.imapbox` mailbox files located in `~/Library/Mail/account-name`). Thus, if you open an attachment from within a message, the file you open is stored deep in the catacombs of your Mail folder. If, on the other hand, you save the attachment (using the File > Save Attachments command, say, or by drag-and-drop), you *copy* the attachment. The original stays inside the message until you delete the message or manually remove the attachment. (Mail doesn't exactly *remove* attachments; instead it duplicates the message, omitting attachments, and then it deletes the entire original message.)

## Downloading (or Not) Attachments

For POP accounts, you can choose not to download messages larger than a specified size (including attachment size), but you can't download the text of a message without its attachments. To set the message size threshold, go to the Advanced tab of Accounts Preferences for your POP account and enter a value in the field, Prompt Me to Skip Messages over \_\_\_ KB.

For IMAP, .Mac, and Exchange accounts, you can choose not to download attachments with their messages: Go to Accounts Preferences, click the Advanced tab, and—from the pop-up menu labeled Keep Copies of Messages for Offline Viewing—choose All Messages, but Omit Attachments. Don't be misled by the word "keep"; with this setting selected, Mail does not download the attachments at all unless you explicitly ask it to (see the note just ahead). Remember, however, that the attachments remain on the server with the rest of the message—a consideration if your server imposes storage limits.

**NOTE** If you choose not to omit attachments when retrieving email from an IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account, icons representing the attachments still appear in the message window, and you can download them manually. When you try to save or drag an attachment that has not been downloaded (as indicated by a gray-colored file name), Mail prompts you to download it first. Once downloaded, the attachment remains cached locally until you remove it manually or rebuild the mailbox that contains the message.

## Attachments from Entourage 2001 Users

Entourage 2001 (which is still widely used, even though it was replaced by version X and, more recently, version 2004) contains a bug in the way attachments are encoded. If a message is in HTML format, sometimes—though not always—attachments are not visible when the message is viewed in Mail. Instead, upon opening the message, a Mail user sees the notice: "This message cannot be displayed because of the way it is formatted. Ask the sender to send it again using a different format or email program."

The sender of the message can work around the problem by using Plain Text format or, better yet, upgrading Entourage to a newer version. However, if you receive such a message you can save and view the attachment without imposing on the sender. Follow these steps:

1. With the message selected (or open), choose File > Save As.
2. In the dialog that appears, give the message a name (any name), choose a location (such as your Desktop), and—very important—choose Raw Source from the pop-up Format menu at the bottom.
3. Drop the text file that has just been created onto StuffIt Expander (in **/Applications/Utilities**).

StuffIt Expander produces a *folder* containing several files, among which will be any attachments to the message.

4. You can now work with the attached files. However, note that if an attachment was compressed, you must drop the compressed file onto StuffIt Expander separately to extract the original file.

## ADDRESSING EMAIL

When addressing an email message, you can, of course, just type email addresses into the provided address fields (To and Cc). However, you may wish to easily enter email addresses that you do not have memorized and you may wish to display the hidden address fields, Bcc and Reply-To. In this section, I explain how to handle each of these addressing scenarios, and I discuss sending email to groups.

**NOTE** If you have multiple accounts, Mail's New Message window displays a pop-up Account menu just above the message body. When you choose an account from this list, Mail sets both the From address and the SMTP server to match the settings for that account.

### Address Book

Mail relies on a separate application to store frequently used email addresses. Address Book is, in theory, a great idea: a single, system-wide contact database that any application can access. Most programs continue to use their own address lists, however, and even the integration between Address Book and Mail leaves a lot to be desired. In addition, some quirks in the way Mail handles addresses have caused confusion and aggravation for many a Mail user.

Mail assumes you've already entered all your important email addresses in Address Book. If you have, you can access the addresses through the Address Panel or by using automatic addressing. (If you haven't already filled in your Address Book with your most frequently used email addresses, consider doing so—it will make your life a lot easier.)

**NOTE** If you enter an address in the To field of an outgoing message and then realize you also want to have it in your Address Book, you must add it there manually. In contrast, when you *receive* email, you can add the sender's name and address to Address Book by choosing Message > Add Sender to Address Book—but no analogous command exists for recipients of *outgoing* email.

## The Address Panel

One way to access stored addresses is to display a floating window with the contents of your Address Book. To do this, choose Window > Address Panel (Command-Option-A) or click the Address button on the toolbar of the New Message window. In the Address Panel, you can first select an address or group (or Command-click to select multiple addresses), then to address your message, click the To: or Cc: button or drag the selected items to an address field. Curiously, there is no Bcc: button; to send blind carbon copies to the selected contacts, you must manually display the Bcc field (see [Hidden Address Fields](#), just ahead) and then use drag-and-drop to enter the addresses there.

You can even search for a contact by name or address using the handy search field. However, the Address Panel is not editable. To add or change contact information, you must launch Address Book. (Mail has no menu command or keyboard shortcut to open Address Book; you must do this manually.) If you happen to have Address Book open anyway, you can drag and drop addresses from its contact list into Mail's address fields just as you can with the Address Panel.

**NOTE** The Address Panel contains only the contacts in your Address Book, not the records from any LDAP servers you may be using. See [LDAP Servers](#), ahead, for more information.

## Automatic Address Completion

You can use your address list to address a message, without having to open a separate window and search for a contact, by typing part of the name into the To field. Type the first few letters of a first name—or last name or email address, for that matter—and Mail automatically displays all entries from your Address Book, Previous Recipients list (see [Handle Previous Recipients](#)), and defined LDAP servers (see [LDAP Servers](#), just ahead) that match. Now, use the Up and Down arrow keys to select the one you want, press Return, and you're done.

**TIP** When using automatic completion to enter more than one email address in the same field, use commas to separate the addresses—but be aware that the commas are not visible in address fields when automatic address completion is enabled.

After typing a few letters of a name or address, you can expect a delay lasting up to several seconds as Mail searches for matches in its various lists. This delay can be irritating if you have many addresses to enter. Automatic addressing has a few other problems as well, which I detail in the sidebar on the next page, “Problems and Quirks with Automatic Addressing.” Automatic address completion is on by default; to turn it off, go to the Composing preference pane and deselect Automatically Complete Addresses.

**NOTE** Addresses are considered “objects,” meaning that each entry in an address field appears inside a blue oval, which you can select, drag and drop, or delete with a single click. (Only contacts in your Address Book or Previous Recipients list appear as objects, not addresses you enter manually.) This makes it easier to read long lists of addressees, and clicking an address displays a pop-up menu from which you can choose, among other things, an alternate address for the same contact.

Objects can lead to some unexpected behavior. For example, if you highlight an address in the automatic completion list and type a comma (to indicate that you want to add another address), Mail enters the address you highlighted but does not display the comma in the address field. You can temporarily turn off the object-like display for a single address by clicking it and choosing Edit Address from the pop-up menu. But you cannot turn off object display altogether. Even with automatic address completion disabled, addresses you’ve typed manually appear as objects when you leave the address field if those addresses are in your Address Book.

## SIDEBAR PROBLEMS AND QUIRKS WITH AUTOMATIC ADDRESSING

I've encountered several problems with Automatic Addressing, which I explain here so you can learn how to best cope with them.

- The order in which matches appear when you use Automatic Addressing is somewhat unpredictable. Usually, matches from the Previous Recipients list and Address Book appear before matches from LDAP servers, and matches of an email address appear before matches of a name. But this doesn't always mean you can easily get the address you want. Suppose I want to enter **MJ**, my wife's initials, to send her a message. Since those letters are part of her email address, it appears as one of the options, though not necessarily the first one—my Address Book happens to have six addresses beginning with “mj.” Unless the address I want is the only match (or at the top of the list), I have to pay attention to the choices and scroll until I find the right one—extra steps that make the process harder rather than easier. Mail has no “nickname” feature to specify custom shortcuts for frequently used addresses.
- To further complicate addressing, Mail by default displays just the addressees' *names* in the address fields after you enter them—not their addresses. So if you have a contact with multiple email addresses, you can easily enter the wrong one without realizing it. You can toggle the setting to show both the name and address—the menu command to show addresses is View > Addresses > Show Name and Address, but the opposite of this—show name only—is View > Addresses > Smart Addresses.
- As if to acknowledge the tendency of automatic address completion to steer you wrong, Mail includes a preference to highlight addresses outside domain(s) you specify. That way, if you mistakenly choose John Smith your neighbor instead of John Smith your CEO, you get some warning before sending that confidential financial information. Turn on this feature in the Composing preference pane by selecting Mark Addresses Not in This Domain. Enter the “safe” domain in the field provided; to use more than one, separate them with commas—for example **apple.com, mac.com, xyz.com**. The next time you address a message to *anyone* outside the specified domains, that person's address will appear in red. Color is the only indication of an unsafe domain—if you're color blind or using a grayscale display, you're out of luck.

## LDAP Servers

In addition to consulting your Address Book and Previous Recipients list, Mail can also find email addresses stored on an LDAP (Light-weight Directory Access Protocol) server. If you use your Mac at home or in a small business setting, you probably have no use for LDAP. But if you are part of a large corporation or university, LDAP can save you untold time and aggravation.

In a nutshell, an LDAP server is a centrally maintained address book. So let's say you're a student at a university where 40,000 students each have a unique email address. By configuring Mail to use the university's LDAP server, you effectively add all 40,000 addresses to your local address list instantly. Better yet, the list is dynamic, changing automatically as accounts are added, deleted, or modified.

You can add LDAP servers either within Mail (go to the Composing preference pane and click the Configure LDAP button) or in Address Book (choose Address Book > Preferences and click the LDAP button on the toolbar)—the two applications share the same list. However, only your system administrator can tell you what to enter in the Server and Search Base fields.

The LDAP server(s) that you have configured appear in Address Book under the Directories group. Selecting a server does not cause all the entries on that server to display, but as soon as you type in the Search field (even if only a letter or two), you see all entries that include the string you entered. Matches from your LDAP servers also appear in the automatic address completion list when you type in an address field. However, LDAP servers do *not* appear in Mail's Address Panel.

## Hidden Address Fields

Normally when you send someone a message, you put her address in the To field. You may also choose to put one or more addresses in the Cc (Carbon copy) field, which simply indicates to the recipient that the message is for informational purposes. Two additional addressing options are available: Bcc and Reply-To.

### Bcc

A third address field, Bcc (Blind carbon copy) functions like Cc except that *none* of the recipients (regardless of which field contained their address) will see the Bcc addresses. For example, if you write a message recommending a friend for a job, you might include the friend as

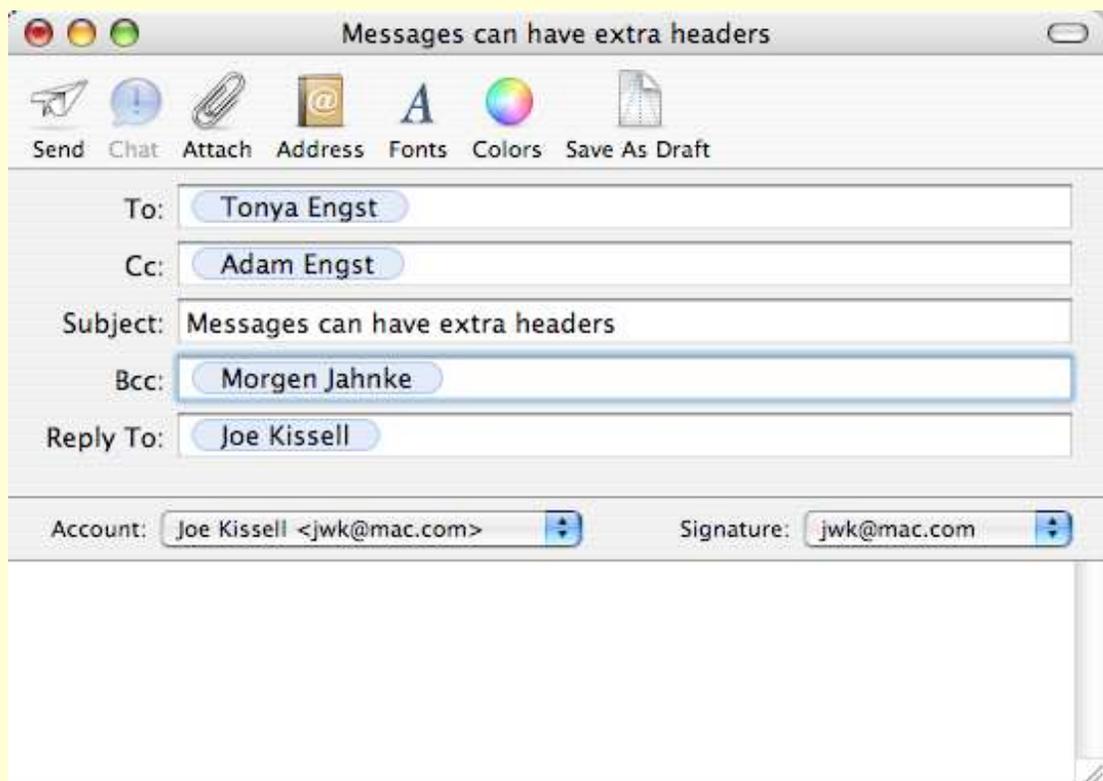
a Bcc recipient, so that she can read the nice things you wrote about her without the prospective employer knowing that she also received the message. The Bcc field is off by default; to display it, choose View > Bcc Header. This setting applies to all new messages you compose.

**WARNING!** Use Bcc only when you're certain the person you're copying understands how it works. If your Bcc recipient replies to the message using Reply To All, the original recipient will receive the reply—and will know who you sent the copy to!

## Reply-To

Yet another hidden address field, Reply-To, enables you to specify that replies to this message should go to a different address than the one you sent it from (see **Figure 9**).

**FIGURE 9**



You can add a Bcc or Reply To field (or both) to the headers of all new outgoing messages using commands on the View menu.

For example, if you send a message from your personal account at home but want the recipient's reply to go to your work account, put your work email address in the Reply-To field. To display the Reply-To field, choose View > Reply-To Header. (As with Bcc, this setting

applies to all new messages.) Be aware, however, that not all email clients honor the Reply-To setting, and the recipient can also choose to override that address manually.

**TIP** Although you can easily set up Mail to display Reply-To and Bcc *fields* for every new message, those fields are blank, requiring you to enter the appropriate addresses for each message. If instead you want to specify a default Reply-To, Bcc, or custom header to be included in all outgoing messages, the easiest way to do so is to download and run a tiny AppleScript application, made available for free by “Cricket,” a member of Apple’s Mail development team.

<http://homepage.mac.com/cricket/.cv/cricket/Public/Applescripts/Add%20Headers%20to%20Outgoing%20Email-binhex.hqx>

Note that the addresses you add using this application do *not* appear in Mail’s Reply-To or Bcc field, but the headers are still inserted in the outgoing messages as they’re sent.

## **Sending Messages to Groups**

If you want to send email to a given set of people repeatedly—say, all the members of a committee, your Monday night quilting club, or your company’s sales force—you can define a group in Address Book to simplify this process. To make a group, click the + (plus) button at the bottom of the Group list in Address Book and enter a name for your new group. Then drag contact names from the All group, an LDAP directory, or another group to the new group icon.

To send a message to all the people in that group, drag the group name from the Address Panel into an address field, or type the first few letters of the group’s name and let automatic address completion do the rest for you.

But what if contacts in a group have multiple email addresses? By default, Mail sends messages to whichever address appears first in a given contact’s Address Book record. To change this, open Address Book and choose Edit > Edit Distribution List. Select a group name to display its members. If a member has more than one email address, the one currently used by Mail appears in bold, while the others appear in light gray. Click one of the gray addresses to select it for use

when sending email to this group. Then click OK. (The only way to create a group that includes two or more different addresses for one person is to create a separate contact for each new address.)

Prior to Panther, if you put a group name in the To or Cc field of an outgoing message, Mail automatically expanded it, listing each group member's address in the field. (So each recipient saw all the other addresses—a *faux pas*.) Mail 1.3 “corrected” this problem, but created a new one. Assuming default settings, only the group name appears in an address field. When each recipient gets the message, however, it will appear to have been addressed to *group-name@outgoing-server-name* (for example, *classmates@mac.com*). Such an address is almost certainly invalid and it may lead the recipients to assume incorrectly that they can use it to reply to all the other recipients. To avoid this problem, do one of the following:

- To be sure all the recipients *do* see each other's addresses, click the group name in the address field and choose Expand Group from the pop-up menu. (To turn on automatic group expansion for all new messages—reverting to Mail's former behavior—go to the Composing preference pane and select the checkbox labeled When Sending to a Group, Show All Member Addresses.)
- To ensure that recipients *don't* see each other's addresses and also don't see a bogus “To” address, enter the group name in the Bcc field instead of To or Cc. The “To” field in the message each recipient gets will say “undisclosed-recipients: ;” (even if the group is expanded into individual addresses). If you don't see a Bcc field, choose View > Bcc Header (Command-Option-B).

**NETIQUETTE** When sending email to a group of people, use Bcc (or turn off automatic group expansion) to keep addresses private and minimize scrolling for the recipients.

## FORMATTING OUTGOING EMAIL

An important aspect of message preparation is choosing a message format—although you can select a format individually for each outgoing message, you will probably want to pick one to use most of the time and stick with it. Your built-in choices are plain text and rich text, though it is also possible to send HTML-formatted messages with a bit of effort.

- **Plain text:** *Plain text* is ideal when readability is paramount, or when you aren't sure what kind of software the recipient is using.
- **Rich text:** *Rich text* is appropriate when you want to provide basic formatting and are certain the recipient's email client can show styled text. (See **Table 2**, on the next page, for the capabilities of popular email clients.)
- **HTML:** *HTML* may be a good choice if you need to include nicely formatted tables, bulleted or numbered lists, or compact clickable links—and you're sure your recipient will be able to view them. (See [HTML Messages](#), just ahead.)

### NETIQUETTE USE PLAIN TEXT WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Tempted to use rich text or HTML? In many cases, you can convey your message just as well using plain text. Consider whether your aesthetic desires outweigh the simplicity and universality of plain text. To this day, every time I get a message written entirely in, say, green, 10-point Copperplate Oblique—and believe me, it happens—I just cringe. However nice the sender may have felt the text looked, it takes so much effort to read it that I wonder if I should bother. I know what fonts, styles, and sizes are easiest to read on my computer, and I dislike receiving messages that override those choices without my consent.

As you might have guessed, I strongly believe that plain text is the path to world peace!

### Setting Your Default

To choose a new *default* format for outgoing messages, go to the Composing preference pane and choose Plain Text or Rich Text from

the Format pop-up menu. To toggle the format of the *current* message, choose Format > Make Rich Text (or Make Plain Text).

**Table 2: Capabilities of Popular Email Clients**

<b>Application</b>	<b>Sends HTML</b>	<b>Displays HTML</b>	<b>Sends Rich Text</b>	<b>Displays Rich Text</b>	<b>Displays Inline Graphics</b>
AOL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>
Entourage <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Eudora	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
GNUMail <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
GyazMail <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	No	No <sup>5</sup>	Yes
Mail <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mailsmith <sup>1</sup>	No	No	No	No	No
Mozilla	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Mulberry	Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes	No
Netscape	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Outlook <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	No <sup>6</sup>	Yes	No <sup>7</sup>
Outlook Express <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pegasus Mail <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
PowerMail <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Thunderbird	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup>Mac only   <sup>2</sup>Windows only   <sup>3</sup>Windows and Mac OS 9

<sup>4</sup>In current version, user must select inline display manually for each image.

<sup>5</sup>Converts Rich Text into HTML, which can then be viewed in a browser.

<sup>6</sup>What Outlook calls "Rich Text" is Rich Text Format (RTF), not "text/enriched."

<sup>7</sup>Only (and optionally) for messages sent in HTML format.

## NETIQUETTE MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

Email is an informal medium, but that's no excuse for sloppiness. Show your recipients that you take them seriously by using proper capitalization and punctuation, checking your spelling, and writing in complete sentences. To check your spelling for an entire message, choose Edit > Spelling > Spelling; or choose Edit > Spelling > Check Spelling As You Type for an interactive spelling checker.

## HTML Messages

For reasons only Apple knows, Mail can't compose messages in HTML format. Although I personally prefer plain text any day, Mail's inability to compose HTML email baffles me because almost every other modern email client can do it, whereas only a few still use rich text for outgoing messages (see **Table 2**, on the previous page).

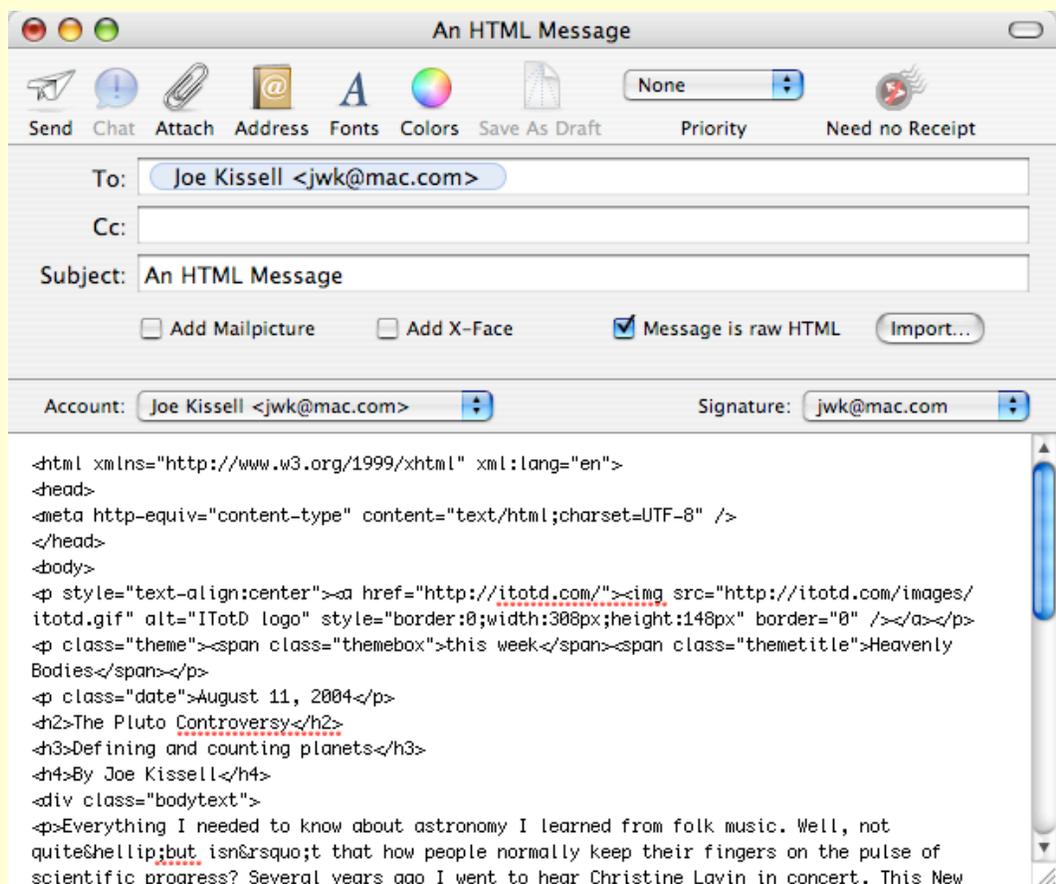
**NOTE** Although Mail can *display* HTML messages without difficulty, if you use Mail to forward (or redirect) an HTML message you've received, the HTML will be broken and the recipient will get unreadable gibberish. If you need to forward an HTML-formatted message to someone else, your best bet is to use a different email client to do so. You *could* work around this problem using the MailPictures plug-in (see instructions just ahead). To do this, open the HTML message, choose View > Message > Raw Source, select only the HTML portion of the source, and paste that into a new message window with MailPictures activated (and Message is Raw HTML selected). But that's a lot of work, and there's still no guarantee the message will look exactly like it did when you received it.

Steve Jobs announced that the version of Mail to be included with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger (when it ships in the first half of 2005) *will*, at last, include HTML composition capabilities. In the meantime, if you want to send HTML-formatted email, you have several options. You can coax Mail into sending email in HTML format if you install the free MailPictures plug-in (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)). Although primarily designed to permit inclusion of your photo in outgoing messages, MailPictures has an obscure option that enables HTML format in the New Message window. There's just one catch: you must hand-code the HTML (or paste it from another program);

MailPictures provides no graphical user interface for composing HTML. To use MailPictures for HTML messages:

1. Download and install MailPictures.
2. Go to the MailPictures preference pane. (If the MailPictures button is not visible on the toolbar, click the » icon on the right side of the toolbar and choose MailPictures from the pop-up menu.)
3. Make sure the Enable Mail Pictures checkbox at the top of the window is selected. Then click the Advanced tab and select Show Options in Compose Window.
4. When you compose a new message, extra controls appear below the address fields. Select Message Is Raw HTML (see **Figure 10**).

**FIGURE 10**



The MailPictures plug-in gives you the option of sending HTML-formatted messages: select the Message Is Raw HTML checkbox; then type or paste HTML code into the message body.

5. Type the HTML code into the body of the message or click Import to choose an HTML file you created in another application.

When you send your message, Mail delivers it in HTML format. Note, however, that such messages do not include a plain-text alternative, and will be unreadable in some email clients.

**TIP** If you plan to send a lot of HTML messages using MailPictures, consider composing the messages using a graphical authoring tool such as Adobe GoLive or Macromedia Dreamweaver, and then pasting the HTML code it generates into Mail.

**NOTE** Andreas Amann, who created the outstanding Mail Scripts package (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)), devised an AppleScript-based strategy for sending HTML-formatted messages with Mail. See his solution at <http://macintouch.com/mail.appo7.html#apro8>.

If coding your own HTML sounds like a bit too much fun, many email applications offer a proper graphical user interface for composing HTML email. In my opinion the best choices are Mozilla, Netscape, and Thunderbird, all of which share the same basic email engine. Besides offering HTML formatting, they enable you to choose, for each recipient, whether the message should include HTML only, plain text only, or both. And you can't beat the price—free. (Eudora and Entourage also offer the option of HTML format.)

If you're trying to send a newsletter or other high-volume HTML message, you can find applications that give you mail merge-like substitution features. Examples are Mail Magic, MaxBulk Mailer, and Newsletter; see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#) for details. It goes without saying that you should never, *ever* use such applications to send unsolicited commercial email (otherwise known as spam).

## QUOTED TEXT

You may find that the *quoted text* in your replies and forwarded messages has ugly or excessive line breaks. Or, you may find that the left margin has a ridiculous number of quote marks. This section explains how to fix these problems.

According to Internet convention, quoted text is marked with a > character:

> This is a sentence from an earlier message that I'm quoting  
> in the current message.

In Mail, however, a vertical bar appears in place of the > to indicate quoted text. (If you reply to a reply or forward a message that was forwarded to you, an extra bar appears for each iteration.) The bar is purely cosmetic; Mail maintains the > characters behind the scenes, and that's what your recipients will see unless they use Mail or another email client that opts for bars. (By the way, if you dislike the bars, sorry—Mail offers no way to turn them off.)

The rationale behind the bars is that they are flexible with respect to line *wrap*. Some email clients force text to break to the next line at a certain number of characters per line (usually 60–80), while others—including Mail—don't. So the idea is that you can resize your window to any width, and text in your paragraphs dynamically *rewraps* to a new line width, all the while showing the proper level of quoting, without > characters mixing into the text.

**NOTE** Mail displays bars instead of > characters at the beginning of each line followed by a space. A few email clients omit spaces when quoting text, and in those cases Mail displays the > signs just as in the original.

Unfortunately, in practice, automatic rewrapping of quoted text works only if your correspondents use Mail or another email client that treats quoted material similarly. If a sender uses an email client that inserts *hard line breaks*, Mail leaves them just the way they were. As a result, when you forward or reply to such messages—especially if you include only a portion of the quoted text—you're left with ugly, ragged paragraphs that are difficult to read.

## Fix Unwanted Line Breaks

Some email clients thoughtfully include a command to rewrap paragraphs that have hard line breaks; such a command works by replacing return (line break) characters with spaces. Mail has no such command, and manually deleting return characters is tedious at best.

Fortunately, a free solution is available. Word Service, from Devon Technologies, provides several text-formatting commands for any application that supports the Services menu. (See [Appendix A: Software Sources](#).) One of these commands, Reformat, fixes ragged paragraphs. After installing the software, select a range of text in an outgoing Mail message and press Command-⌘. Poof! Rewrapped paragraphs. This works even if the text was badly quoted—though you may have to adjust the quote level of the entire paragraph afterward (read later on this page to find out how to adjust the quote level).

### **NETIQUETTE** QUOTE ONLY RELEVANT PORTIONS OF A MESSAGE IN A REPLY

When answering a question or commenting on a statement, include just enough of the original text to provide context for your reply. And for best readability, put your reply after the quote. For example:

| which brings us to the present. So having read my life's story,  
| where do you think I should go on vacation?

Hawaii. But watch for falling coconuts. You don't want another concussion.

Some email clients, notably Microsoft Outlook, put replies above the quoted text by default. An email signature I've seen nicely expresses the problem with this approach:

A: Because it reverses the natural flow of conversation.

Q: Why is top-quoting frowned upon?

## Manage Quote Characters in the Left Margin

To change the level of quoting for a portion of text (especially useful when sending a message that has received a series of replies), choose Format > Quote Level > Decrease (or Increase, as the case may be). And if you want to paste text into your email message with quote bars already inserted, choose Edit > Paste as Quotation (or press Shift-Command-V) instead of pasting normally.

## CLICKABLE LINKS

Countless Mail users have observed that when incoming messages contain URLs, they usually appear as blue, underlined links; clicking them opens the page in a Web browser. Yet, typing or pasting URLs into Mail does not appear to create clickable links (as occurs automatically in some other email clients) and no command seems to make this possible. If you want to send someone a link she can click, how do you do it?

For *plain text* and *rich text* messages, making links clickable is a function of the email *client* on the receiving end, not the format of the message or the application used to send it. Mail does this on the fly for incoming messages; so do most other email clients. Mail refrains from making links appear to be clickable as you type them because it cannot guarantee the recipients will be able to click them; to suggest they will be would be misleading. But have faith: as long as the recipient uses a modern email client, the link will indeed be clickable on the other end. (To test this, send yourself a message with a URL in it.)

**NOTE** If your recipient uses an email client that ignores Mail's flowed text and inserts hard line breaks, any URLs longer than one line will not be clickable. (The same is true of some Web-based email systems.) One way to work around this problem is to create a special, short redirect URL using the free TinyURL service (<http://tinyurl.com/>).

When typing a URL, be sure to include the *scheme* (**http:**, **https:**, **mailto:**, or whatever). Without a scheme, the recipient's email client must guess whether it is really a URL. If the address begins with **www** and ends with **.com**, chances are the client will consider it a URL—but many URLs have a different format.

**NETIQUETTE** If you want to be especially kind to your recipients, enclose all URLs in angle brackets, like this: `<http://itotd.com/>` or this: `<mailto:jwk@mac.com>`. Doing so gives email clients an additional hint as to where URLs start and end; this can be helpful if a URL breaks across lines or if it is followed by punctuation, which the client may incorrectly interpret as being part of the URL.

One thing you can't do with Mail is make the text of the link different from the underlying URL—for instance, you can't have the text “Apple” appear as a link to <http://www.apple.com/>. Doing this requires the use of HTML format, which Mail does not support for outgoing messages. (Though a few third-party add-ons do make it possible to send HTML messages through Mail; see [HTML Messages](#), a few pages earlier, for more information.)

## OUTGOING ATTACHMENTS

You can make sure the vast majority of your attachments arrive intact for the vast majority of your recipients by following a few guidelines and learning more about how to send graphics as attachments.

### Guidelines

Follow these guidelines for successfully sending attachments:

- **Always include file extensions:** Extensions never hurt, and they often help (even when your recipient is a Mac user). To make sure an individual file has an extension, select it in the Finder, choose File > Get Info, and look in the Name & Extension section. As far as Mail is concerned, it doesn't matter if a particular file has Hide Extension checked; as long as the extension exists, it comes through on the recipient's end. To save yourself the bother of checking each file (at the expense of slightly less beautiful file names), choose Finder > Preferences, click the Advanced button in the toolbar, and select the Show All File Extensions checkbox. That way you'll always know at a glance whether a file has an extension.

### NETIQUETTE NEVER ATTACH WHAT YOU CAN TYPE OR PASTE.

I once worked for a company where a lot of the senior management (and, more importantly, their secretaries) still thought that internal communication revolved around printed memos. I often received email messages whose entire content was: "See enclosed memo." So I dutifully opened the attached documents in Word, where I invariably found a paragraph or two of text in the company's standard memo template that could just as easily have been typed (or pasted) directly into the email. This backward approach to communication annoyed me mightily, because the senders' failure to use email properly forced everyone else to jump through hoops to read a simple message.

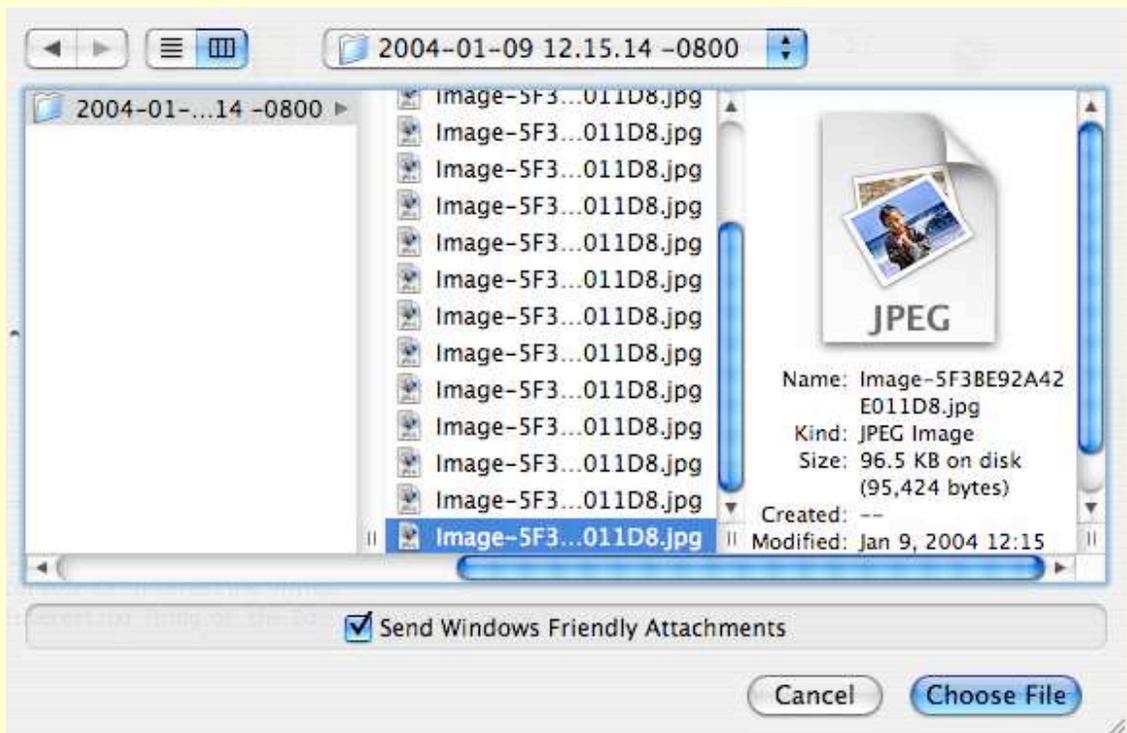
The moral? Use attachments only when they add something you can't convey in the body of a message. If you must attach a document from a word processor, consider *also* copying the text into the body of the message. This will enable your recipient to scan the content quickly and easily, without having to open the attachment right away.

- **Always use Windows-friendly attachments:** Sending attachments in "Windows friendly" format usually makes them friendlier

for Macs too. (See the sidebar just ahead, [Behind the Scenes with Windows-Friendly Attachments](#).) To tell Mail to use Windows-friendly encoding for *all* new messages, choose Edit > Attachments > Always Send Windows Friendly Attachments. (Although this command appears on a menu, it's saved as a preference.) Oddly, the command is disabled when you compose a new message.

You can also toggle Windows friendliness for individual messages: When you attach a file using the Attach button on the toolbar or by choosing File > Attach File (Command-Shift-A), notice the checkbox at the bottom, Send Windows Friendly Attachments (see **Figure 11**). If it's selected, *all* the attachments for this particular message are sent in Windows-friendly format. Unfortunately, Mail offers no convenient way to toggle Windows friendliness for attachments added to your message by drag-and-drop or copy-and-paste.

**FIGURE 11**



When you attach a file using the Attach File command (or the Attach button on the toolbar), a file selection dialog like this one appears. If the checkbox Send Windows Friendly Attachments at the bottom is checked, *all* the files attached to this message will be stripped of their resource forks—usually a good thing.

- **When a problem comes along, you must zip it:** If file extensions and Windows friendliness still result in attachments the recipient can't read, try compressing them (the files, not the recipients). Zipping covers a multitude of sins by wrapping up one or more files—including *resource forks*, if any—in a compact, cross-platform-compatible package. Under Panther, you can zip a file or folder in the Finder by selecting it and choosing File > Create Archive of *filename*.

#### **SIDEBAR BEHIND THE SCENES WITH WINDOWS-FRIENDLY ATTACHMENTS**

The Windows Friendly Attachments feature has nothing to do with extensions and does not add them for you. So, what does it do?

By default, Mail assumes your recipient is also a Mac user and therefore includes the *resource forks* (if any) of attached files. Normally a Mac user sees such attachments as a single file, whereas a Windows user sees two individual files—one containing the *data fork* of the file and the other containing the resource fork.

When you choose “Windows Friendly” attachments, Mail strips the resource fork so that Windows users receive just one file, not two (one of which would be unusable anyway). In most cases—at least for files created with modern applications—all the crucial parts of files are in the data fork, so as long as the filename has the correct extension, Windows users can open it.

The term “Windows Friendly” seems to imply that using this option makes your attachments “Mac Unfriendly.” Mail’s documentation reinforces this worry by stating that Mac users may be unable to open files correctly if the Windows Friendly option is used. But in practice, just the opposite is frequently true. The Mac version of Eudora, for example, sometimes cannot decode perfectly ordinary Mac files, such as Word documents, if they were sent *without* using the Windows Friendly setting. In other words, a wiser design would have been to make “Windows Friendly” the default behavior, with an option to make attachments “Mac Friendly” on those rare occasions when you truly must.

## **NETIQUETTE AVOID ATTACHMENTS IF POSSIBLE**

Even if you get the filename and encoding right and compress the files, attachments can still cause problems:

- Attachments sometimes take a long time to download—especially for users with dial-up connections.
- Many ISPs also place strict limits on users' mailbox sizes.
- Because of the proliferation of malicious files sent as email attachments, many ISPs strip some (or even all) attachments from email messages automatically as a security measure.

If you must send someone a file (especially a large one), check with the recipient first. Alternatively, place the file on your iDisk or an FTP or Web server and simply send a URL. Or send the file via iChat for a direct, real-time file transfer.

## **Sending Graphical Attachments**

When you attach a graphical image to your message, the recipient sees the image inline (that is, in the body of the message) if her email client supports inline display (see [Table 2](#), earlier in “Formatting Outgoing Email”). If it does not support inline display (or the recipient has turned off the inline display option), the file appears as an attachment that must be opened in a separate program.

On the one hand, an inline image is easier for the recipient to see, because all she has to do is look at it. On the other hand, inline images can be frustrating to scroll through.

If you do not wish to send a graphical image inline, you must compress the file before attaching it—Mail, unfortunately, lacks a built-in compression option. Under Panther, the easiest way to compress a file (in Windows-friendly Zip format) is to select the file in the Finder and choose File > Create Archive of *filename*.

**NOTE** When you compose a new message, Mail always shows attachments in the body of your message. You can manually drag them somewhere else, but many email clients display all attachments in a separate list, regardless of where you place them in the message body.

If you *paste* an image into a message or *drag and drop* an image from another window (say, a Web browser), Mail converts the raw image data to an attachment in TIFF format. On the other hand, if you drag and drop the *icon* of an image file (or use the Attach button to locate the file using the file browser), Mail leaves the attached image in its original format. This difference is significant, because although most email clients can display JPEG images just fine, support for TIFF—especially in non-Mac email clients—is less common. If possible, I suggest attaching image files as opposed to pasting or dragging in raw image data.

## MANAGE MAILBOXES

Mail becomes easier to use once you understand the basics (and a few oddities) of the way Mail organizes its mailboxes, what to do if more than one person wants to use Mail on the same computer, and how to respond to typical mailbox problems.

### Mailbox Basics

Each account in Mail automatically has several *mailboxes*—Mail’s term for the folders that organize your messages—including In, Out, Drafts, Sent, Junk, and (optionally) Trash. You can also add your own personal mailboxes. The Mailbox list appears in a drawer on the side of the main Viewer window.

If you have more than one account, Mail consolidates (or “merges”) all mailboxes of a particular type under a single icon in the Mailbox list. For example, if you have three accounts, Mail displays a single In box icon; select this icon to list the incoming messages for all three accounts. If you click the triangle next to the In icon, each account appears individually; click any one of these icons to display the contents of just that account’s In box. The same holds true for the Out, Drafts, Sent, Junk, and Trash mailboxes.

### Local and Server-Based Mailboxes

If you use POP accounts exclusively, all new personal mailboxes you create are stored *locally* and appear at the top level of the Mailbox list. However, if you have at least one IMAP, .Mac, or Exchange account, Mail gives you the choice of storing new mailboxes locally (grouped under an icon labeled “On My Mac”) or on the server. Click the triangle next to the icon with your account name in the Mailbox list to see its online mailboxes.

For the most part, the way Mail consolidates mailboxes and distinguishes between local and server-based mailboxes makes perfect sense. This system begins to get confusing, though, when it comes to mailboxes such as Sent that have a special meaning to Mail. For example, let’s say you have a POP account and an IMAP account, each of which has its own Sent mailbox. Mail stores the POP account’s Sent mailbox locally, whereas it stores the IMAP account’s Sent mailbox on the server. Mail groups both accounts’ Sent mailboxes under a single Sent icon in the Mailbox list—with no indication that one of them is

on your computer and the other on the server. The only way to be sure whether a given message is stored on the server or not is to select the IMAP account under the Sent icon and check if the message appears in that list.

## Multiple Users

Mail was designed to be used by a single person, who in turn may have one, two, or dozens of different email accounts. But unlike Entourage, Mail lacks anything resembling *Identities*, which enable multiple users to have individual mailboxes, address books, and so on that don't overlap. If you add an account to Mail for your spouse, child, or roommate, your mailboxes, rules, preferences, addresses, and so on will all intermingle. The officially sanctioned way to keep this data separate for multiple users is to set up a Mac OS X account for each person in the Accounts pane of System Preferences, and then configure each user's copy of Mail for his own email account(s).

There are cases, however, when switching between users, even with *Fast User Switching*, is too inconvenient. If this describes your situation, use the \$10 shareware utility MailSwitch (see [Appendix A: Software Sources](#)), which swaps preference files, email folders, and optionally even address books, without requiring a separate user to log in. One downside: user settings are not password-protected. So MailSwitch offers convenience but not genuine privacy.

## Fixing a Damaged Mailbox

If a mailbox file on disk becomes damaged, Mail may exhibit any of several symptoms, including:

- Missing messages
- Incorrect message counts, in which the number of unread messages shown next to the mailbox name in the Mailbox list differs from the number of unread messages you see when you look inside the mailbox
- An empty mailbox, even though you know it contains messages
- Failure to move messages into the mailbox (manually or by using rules)

If you suspect that a mailbox contains errors, the standard cure-all is to rebuild it. To do this, select the mailbox and choose Mailbox > Rebuild. Rebuilding a mailbox means recreating the table of contents file that stores a record of its messages. For IMAP accounts, rebuilding a mailbox goes further, deleting all local copies of messages and downloading them again before recreating the table of contents.

**TIP** If you want to examine the contents of a mailbox manually (using, say, a text editor such as BBEdit), look in your `~/Library/Mail` folder. Locally stored mailboxes have the extension `.mbox` and are stored inside the Mailboxes folder. POP mailboxes also have the `.mbox` extension and are stored in a folder named `POP-account-address`. IMAP mailboxes have a `.imapbox` extension and are stored in a folder named `IMAP-account-address`. In each case, select the file, Control-click (or right-click) it and choose Show Package Contents from the contextual menu. For `.mbox` archives, the file you want to open in a text editor is called `mbox`; for `.imapbox` archives, each cached message is stored as a separate, numbered text file in the `CachedMessages` folder.

In extreme cases, if errors persist even after rebuilding a mailbox, you may need to replace it altogether. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Choose Mailbox > New to create a new mailbox; make sure it's stored locally (On My Mac).
2. Select all the messages in the problem mailbox, and drag them into the new mailbox.
3. Select the old (and now empty) mailbox in the Mailbox list and choose Mailbox > Delete. Confirm that you want to delete it.
4. Choose Mailbox > Rename to rename the new mailbox so it has the same name as the one you deleted.

Mail now stores your messages in a fresh, new mailbox.

## HANDLE PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

Every time you send an email message, Mail updates an internal list of Previous Recipients with the address(es) you sent it to. Mail's Previous Recipients list serves two primary functions:

- It works in conjunction with the Junk Mail filter, preventing any message from being marked as junk if it comes from an address on the list. (Mail quite reasonably assumes that you would not send email to someone from whom you did not wish to receive a reply.)
- It works with automatic address completion to facilitate addressing new messages: type a few letters of a name or address, and if they match an entry in your Previous Recipients list, Mail fills in the rest of the address automatically, just as if the address were in Address Book.

In Mail 1.3.9 (included with the Mac OS X 10.3.5 update), the Previous Recipients list functions more or less as it should. However, versions of Mail prior to 1.3.8 had a logical flaw in their implementation of the Previous Recipients list that could cause you to inadvertently “whitelist” spammers, thus allowing future messages from them into your In box. Even if you've upgraded to a newer version of Mail, your Previous Recipients list could still contain problematic entries. You can clean up your Previous Recipients list so that it becomes as useful as possible, or you can change Mail's settings so that it effectively ignores the list. Either way, some background information will help.

Try an experiment right now. Choose Window > Previous Recipients to display the Previous Recipients list. As you scroll through this list, ask yourself what percentage of the addresses you recognize. The first time I did this, I was shocked to see hundreds of addresses that were not remotely familiar—addresses I was sure I had never used. If your experience is similar, you may encounter excess spam, have difficulties in addressing outgoing messages, or even find that some outgoing email never reaches its destination.

Where did all those addresses come from? Here's what happens in versions of Mail prior to 1.3.8. When you move a message from your In box to a mailbox other than Trash or Junk—whether manually or by a rule—Mail adds both its addressees *and its sender* to the

Previous Recipients list. (Marking a message as Not Junk Mail also adds the sender's address to the Previous Recipients list—even in Mail 1.3.9.) Thus, “previous recipients” was a misnomer, because the list could include addresses to which you never even contemplated sending a message.

**NOTE** Having a clean Previous Recipients list is even more important when it comes to reducing spam. In *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail*, I discuss the Previous Recipients list as one of numerous factors to consider when optimizing your Junk Mail filter.

<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/spam-Apple-Mail.html>

Thankfully, Apple fixed this problem, but there are some others:

- If you mistype an address (causing the message to bounce, or to go to the wrong recipient), it still appears on the Previous Recipients list. So the next time you send a message to that person, you could easily make the same mistake again, if you are using automatic addressing.
- If you delete or edit an address in Address Book, the old address remains unchanged in the Previous Recipients list. So despite your best efforts to keep your records current, you can easily find yourself sending email to an outdated address.
- You can select an address in Previous Recipients and click Add to Address Book to add that address to your contact list. However, doing so always creates a new record; if you have selected a secondary address for someone already in your contact list, you will have to merge the records manually—even if the names corresponding to the two addresses were spelled identically.
- Automatic address completion matches addresses in the Previous Recipients list alphabetically, not according to which one was used most recently. So if you once sent a message to your friend Phil using the address phil@aaa.com, then later discovered that his correct address was phil@zzz.com, the first (incorrect) address remains the default choice every time you type **phi1** in the To field from now on.

If you find the Previous Recipients list valuable for spam filtering or address completion but wish to minimize the problems it causes, you can take steps to make it as useful as possible.

### **Clean up the Previous Recipients list:**

The value of the Previous Recipients list increases with the number of legitimate addresses on it and decreases with the number of inappropriate addresses. You can improve the list's utility by making sure it contains the right entries. Here are some specific tips to help you clean up the list of Previous Recipients:

- If you haven't already done so, use Software Update to install Mac OS X 10.3.5 (or higher). Mail 1.3.9, part of this update, behaves better with regard to the Previous Recipients list than some earlier versions.
- Purge all addresses you don't recognize from the Previous Recipients list. (To delete an address, select it and click Remove from List.) If you should inadvertently delete a legitimate address, don't worry: removing something from this list affects neither the contacts in your Address Book nor sent messages you've saved.
- Click a column head to sort by that column; click a second time to reverse the sort order. (Often, addresses in spam messages don't include a Name field. If you sort by name you will group together all the entries with a blank Name field, making such entries easier to find.)
- Entries with an address card icon next to the Name field also appear in your Address Book. (You can even sort by this column, if you wish.) If you see an address for someone you expect to correspond with again—but without that icon—select it and click Add to Address Book.
- After adding entries to your Address Book, check there for duplicate contacts. You may need to copy and paste multiple email addresses for a given contact into a single record manually (then delete the extra records).
- Be aware that if you're using Mail 1.3.7 or earlier, filing messages adds their senders' *and recipients'* addresses to your Previous Recipients list. If you file a message but want to keep those addresses from being ignored by the Junk Mail filter, open the

Previous Recipients list and delete the addresses immediately after filing a message. (You can sort the addresses by date to help you find recently added entries.)

- Remember that even in Mail 1.3.9, marking a message Not Junk also adds its sender's address to the Previous Recipients list. If you don't want it there, remove the address manually.

### **Turn on address display:**

To minimize the chance of using the wrong address when using automatic address completion, you can change Mail's preferences so that the email addresses always appear in the address fields along with the name. To do this, choose View > Addresses > Show Name and Address. Before sending a message, glance at the address fields to be sure you have selected the correct address.

### **Disable Previous Recipients:**

I know of no way to prevent Mail from adding addresses to the Previous Recipients list. You can, however, avoid using the list for junk mail filtering. To prevent the Junk Mail filter from using Previous Recipients, go to the Junk Mail preference pane and deselect Sender of Message Is in My Previous Recipients.

To avoid having addresses in the Previous Recipients list appear when you address a message, you must disable address completion entirely; you cannot choose to exclude previous recipients from the address completion list. To disable address completion, go to the Composing preference pane and uncheck Automatically Complete Addresses.

## STREAMLINE MAIL WITH RULES

Rules are one of my favorite Mail features; I can't imagine living without them. The majority of my rules file messages into mailboxes so that my In box remains relatively clear, but rules can do much more than this. You can not only specify complex conditions to check for, but also set up a rule to take almost any conceivable action when the conditions are met—thanks in large part to Mail's support for AppleScript scripts.

A thorough discussion of rules would require another entire ebook ([click here](#) if you are interested in reading such an ebook). Because rules are so important, however, I want to touch on a few important tips for working with them, along with some limitations (and work-arounds to overcome them). Although most people can put together basic rules without even looking at the documentation, some features are less than obvious. (If you're completely new to rules, choose Help > Mail Help and search for the topic "Automatically processing email" or simply [click here](#).)

### Rule Tips

From personal experience, I'd like to offer two general words of advice about working with rules. First, make your conditions as narrow as you can. The more general your conditions are, the greater the likelihood that your rules will match messages they shouldn't. For this reason, it's almost always safer to use conditions that look for address information (To, From, Cc, and so on) than words in the subject; words in the body of a message are least reliable. Second, go slowly. After making a new rule, test it for a day or two to make sure it has no unexpected side effects. Then add new rules one or two at a time. The vast majority of rule-related problems in Mail result from rules that conflict with each other (or interfere with the Junk Mail filter); careful testing can eliminate many such aggravations.

### Process repetitive messages

Although this may sound like a no-brainer, I've seen lots of people do exactly the same thing over and over again with certain kinds of messages. If you find yourself filing, flagging, or deleting a certain type of message at least once a week, you can save time and effort by setting up a rule to do it for you. Examples are mailing lists, utility bills, bank statements, newsletters, travel discount offers, and jokes

forwarded by friends or family members. Remember that filing a message does not necessarily mark it as unread.

### **Let Mail fill in conditions for you**

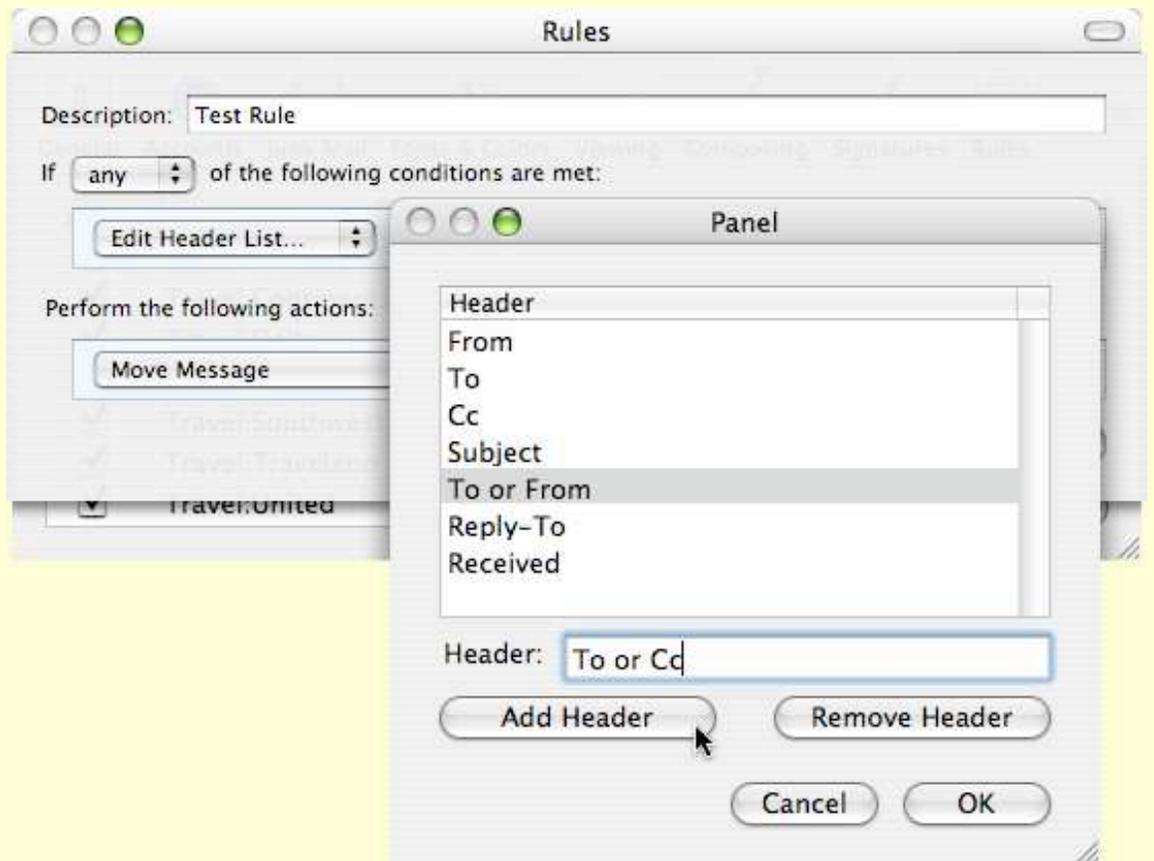
Most rules are based on header attributes of incoming messages, such as the To or From address or the Subject. If you've just received a message and want to create a rule to match future messages like it, you may be tempted to copy the To or From address (or whatever) and paste it into the rule's condition field. Save yourself a few key-strokes: just select the message in your message list before adding a new rule. Whenever you choose a header from the pop-up list, Mail fills in the value of that header for the current message automatically.

### **Add an "OR" condition for headers**

This tip is more advanced. Suppose you want a certain rule to apply if either the To *or* the Cc address contains a certain string. You could enter two separate conditions (**To contains xyz** and **Cc contains xyz**) and use the "Any" option. However, this limits your flexibility if you want to use other conditions in your rules. For example, it precludes you from saying something like "If either the To or Cc field contains xyz *AND* the Sender is in my Address Book..." because that requires using the "All" option to make sure both conditions apply.

Mail provides a little-known way around this problem. In the first pop-up menu for one of your conditions, choose Edit Header List. In the window that appears (see **Figure 12**), enter **To or Cc** in the Header field, then click Add Header. Click OK, then go back to the same pop-up menu and choose To or Cc. Amazingly enough, Mail interprets this not as referring to a single "To or Cc" header, but to *either* the To *or* the Cc header. You can use this technique with any set of headers—"To or From," "Cc or Bcc," "From or Reply-To," and so on.

**FIGURE 12**



You can tell a Mail rule to look for something in more than one header with a single condition—just add a custom header with the word “or” between the names of two headers that you want to match against.

### **Use different actions for different conditions**

Sometimes you want one of two actions to occur, depending on which set of conditions a message matches. For example, if a message from a certain mailing list address mentions “Apple,” file it in the Apple mailbox, but delete all messages from that list without the word “Apple” in them. A single rule can’t do both, and if a rule files all messages it matches in a mailbox, no other rule can apply to those messages. The solution is to have two rules. Use a negative condition in the first one, and use the second one to move or otherwise process messages not matched by the first.

In this example, Rule 1 might say:

If **All** of the following conditions are met:

**From contains mailing-list-address**

**Content does not contain Apple**

Perform the following actions:

**Delete message**

This rule weeds out the messages to which the second rule should not apply. Rule 2, then, might say:

If **All** of the following conditions are met:

**From contains mailing-list-address**

**Content contains Apple**

Perform the following actions:

**Move message to mailbox: Apple**

### **Avoid using too many conditions**

Because of the way the rules dialog is designed, the number of conditions you can add to any given rule is limited by the height of your screen—add too many, and you will no longer be able to see the entire dialog or edit the actions. If you find that a rule uses more than a few conditions, try splitting it into more than one rule.

### **Rule Limitations and Workarounds**

Rules run on only two occasions: when a new message arrives in your In box, or when you manually choose Message > Apply Rules. This design has several implications:

**Rules can't apply to outgoing messages:** Mail offers no way to apply a rule automatically to outgoing messages. Thus you cannot, for example, automatically file copies of all email you send to your friend John in a mailbox named **John**. You can make a rule that matches messages with your friend's To address and moves them to a particular mailbox, but to use the rule, you must select (some or all) messages in your Sent mailbox and choose Message > Apply Rules.

- **Rules stop when a message leaves your In box:** Mail provides no way for a rule to activate when a message appears in some mailbox other than the In box. Once a rule has moved a message out of your In box, *no further rules act upon it*—including the built-in Junk Mail rule. So if you have multiple rules that could match a particular message, make sure the rules with other actions (changing color, setting Read status, sending autoreplies, and so on) are ordered *before* any rule that moves the message to another mailbox (or deletes it). In addition, keep in mind that no matter how many rules you have, your rules can move a given message only once.
- **Mail always uses the entire list of rules:** Mail examines each incoming message to see if it matches the first rule on your list, then the second rule, and so on until (a) the message is moved or deleted, (b) a matching rule contains the “Stop evaluating rules” action, or (c) all rules are exhausted. Although you can reorder rules or globally disable certain rules, you must apply *all* active rules at once; Mail offers no way to invoke just one particular rule manually. I’ve often wished I could manually select certain messages and apply a special rule that is not part of the main list, but Mail can’t do this. If you know some AppleScript, however, you can create a script that performs the action(s) you want and apply that script to selected messages manually using the Script menu.

**TIP** Mail provides no convenient way to create a rule that matches completely blank messages. If blank email messages frequently clutter your In box, try setting up the AppleScript solution described in [Appendix B: The Shoot Blanks Script](#).

- **Color-coding bug:** Take Control author Jeff Tolbert pointed out an interesting bug in Mail 1.3.9 that affects those who use rules to color-code incoming messages. If a rule changes the color of an incoming message, that color disappears if you later reply to the message. The problem may be related to the way Mail updates the message list to include the icon indicating that a reply has been sent. To reapply the color, you must select the message in the list and choose Message > Apply Rules. (Remember that doing so applies all your rules to the selected message.)

## APPENDIX A: SOFTWARE SOURCES

This appendix provides sources and a brief description for the third-party software that can enhance or supplement Mail. For more Mail-related software, visit MacUpdate (<http://www.macupdate.com/>) or VersionTracker (<http://www.versiontracker.com/macosx/>) and search for “Mail.”

### Mail Add-Ons

#### Address Book Importer:

<http://www.roydesign.net/addressbookimporter/> (free)

If you need to import contact information from an application that Address Book does not directly support, export the data as a tab-delimited text file and use Address Book Importer to convert them.

#### Emailchemy:

<http://www.weirdkid.com/products/emailchemy/> (free)

This utility converts almost any mailbox format (from any platform) into almost any other mailbox format. It’s useful for importing email into Mail from a variety of applications.

#### Eudora Mailbox Cleaner:

[http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/Eudora\\_Mailbox\\_Cleaner.html](http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/Eudora_Mailbox_Cleaner.html) (free)

If you’re moving from Eudora to Mail, this utility painlessly converts your mailboxes and messages (including attachments!), nicknames, and even filters to work with Mail and Address Book.

**GPGMail:** <http://www.sente.ch/software/GPGMail/> (free)

GPGMail is a plug-in that enables Mail to work with PGP authenticated and/or encrypted messages. It requires Mac GNU Privacy Guard [Mac GPG], available from <http://macgpg.sourceforge.net/>.

**HTTPMail:** <http://sourceforge.net/projects/httpmail-plugin> (free)

This plug-in enables Mail to check (paid) Hotmail accounts.

**ICeCoffEE:** <http://web.sabi.net/nriley/software/> (free)

This utility by Nicholas Riley enables you to open URLs in many applications, including Mail, by Command-clicking them (useful when composing new messages with URLs). It also gives you access to the Services menu in contextual menus for text selections.

**LiSA:** <http://www.speakingassistant.com/> (\$15)

LiSA, the Liquid Information Speaking Assistant, announces incoming messages using a recorded female voice. Each address can have a different announcement—such as “You have a message from your boss” or “You have a message from a hot blonde.” This stand-alone application works alongside Mail or any other Mac OS X email client.

**MailEnhancer:**

<http://home.insightbb.com/~n9yty1/MailEnhancer/> (free)

This Mail plug-in that adds several new features, including a updating the badge on Mail’s Dock icon to show unread messages in *all* mailboxes, not just the In Box, and enabling Mail to select a signature automatically based on the address from which you send a message.

**MailPictures:** <http://www.nikwest.de/Software/> (free)

This plug-in was originally designed to provide an easy way to include your picture in outgoing messages. But as a bonus, it also enables Mail to send HTML-formatted email. Be sure to download version 3.0, which was in beta as this went to press.

**MailPriority:**

<http://home.tiscalinet.ch/david.frank/projects/mailpriority/> (free)

This plug-in enables you to set priorities for outgoing messages, color-code messages easily, and request receipts when messages are received.

**Mail Scripts:**

[http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/Mail\\_Scripts.html](http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/Mail_Scripts.html) (free)

Andreas Amann’s Mail Scripts are a set of applications, written in AppleScript Studio, that appear on Mail’s Script menu and add very useful new features. My favorite: a command to schedule a message to be sent at the time of your choice in the future.

**MailSwitch:** <http://www.boxorox.com/mailswitch/> (\$10)

This shareware utility enables multiple users to maintain separate preferences and mailboxes in Mail without switching to a different Mac OS X user account.

**MrPostman:** <http://mrpostman.sourceforge.net/> (free)

This Java application allows any POP client to access email stored on Web-based services such as Yahoo! Mail, Mail.com, and Hotmail. It works as a proxy—MrPostman masquerades as a Web browser when connecting to the Webmail sites, and then you set up Mail to fetch

the messages from MrPostman. It's not the most Mac-friendly application, but it does work. (Hint: Double-click the MrPostman.jar file, and then choose Help > Using MrPostman for instructions on configuring your email client.) If you need only Hotmail access, though, HTTPMail is much easier to use.

**PGP Mail** (part of PGP Personal Desktop):

<http://www.pgp.com/products/desktop/personal/> (\$50)

PGP Mail is a Mail plug-in that provides encryption and digital signature features—for both the message text and attachments.

**Word Service:**

<http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/freeware.php> (free)

This collection of text-formatting commands works with any application that supports the Services menu. My favorite: a Reformat command to rewrap paragraphs. Note: Devon Technologies *also* makes a product called AntiWordService. Be sure to get the right one!

## Anti-Spam Software

For a thorough discussion of these products, read *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail*:

<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/spam-Apple-Mail.html>.

**Junk Matcher:** <http://junkmatcher.sourceforge.net/Home/> (free; donations accepted)

**SpamSieve:** <http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/> (\$25; get \$5 off via a coupon in the back of *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail*)

**Spamfire:** <http://www.matterform.com/?page=spamfire/> (\$25–\$40)

**SpamSlam:** <http://www.ilesa.com/> (\$25)

**SpamCop Bundle:**

<http://www.subsume.com/assembled/SpamCop.html> (\$5)

## Other Email Clients

**Entourage:**

<http://www.microsoft.com/mac/products/entourage2004/entourage2004.aspx?pid=entourage2004> (part of Microsoft Office 2004; \$399)

**Eudora:** <http://www.eudora.com/> (Paid Mode: \$50; Sponsored Mode: free, but must view ads and SpamWatch feature disabled; Light Mode: free, no ads, but fewer features)

**GNUMail.app:**

<http://www.collaboration-world.com/cgi-bin/project/index.cgi?pid=2>  
(free)

**GyazMail:** <http://gyazsquare.com/gyazmail/>  
(\$18 shareware; supports POP only)

**Mailsmith:** <http://www.barebones.com/products/mailsmith/>  
(\$99; includes free SpamSieve; supports POP only)

**Mozilla and Thunderbird:** <http://www.mozilla.org/> (free)

**Mulberry:** <http://www.cyrusoft.com/> (\$36)

**Netscape:** [http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/internet\\_utilities/netscape.html](http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/internet_utilities/netscape.html) (free)

**Outlook Express:** <http://www.microsoft.com/mac/otherproducts/outlookexpress/outlookexpress.aspx?pid=outlookexpress>  
(free, Mac OS 9 only)

**PowerMail:** <http://www.ctmdev.com/> (\$49)

## **Bulk HTML Email Applications**

These applications enable you not only to send HTML-formatted email (after a fashion), but also to personalize each message in a manner similar to your word processor's mail merge feature.

**MailDrop:**

<http://www.freshlysqueezedsoftware.com/products/maildrop/> (\$59)

**Mail Magic:** [http://en.infinisys.co.jp/product/mail\\_magic/](http://en.infinisys.co.jp/product/mail_magic/) (\$18 )

**MaxBulk Mailer:** <http://www.maxprog.com/MaxBulk.html> (\$40)

**Newsletter:**

<http://homepage.mac.com/julifos/soft/newsletter/> (free)

## APPENDIX B: THE SHOOT BLANKS SCRIPT

The version of Mail that originally shipped with Panther had an annoying bug that caused a crash whenever you marked a blank email message as Junk Mail. Apple fixed this problem in Mail 1.3.7, which was part of the Mac OS X 10.3.3 update. Nevertheless, some Mail users continue to receive completely blank messages—without even a subject or a From address—and Mail’s Junk Mail filter frequently overlooks them. Worse, there’s no foolproof way to create a rule in Mail that matches these blank messages and deletes them for you.

There is an elegant solution, however, thanks to David Simerly (<http://homepage.mac.com/beowulf/beoblog/>). David devised a clever AppleScript that deletes blank messages, and you can trigger the script with a rule. The net result is that you never see such messages again. David graciously agreed to let us reproduce his solution here. To eliminate blank messages:

1. Download this AppleScript from David’s Web site:  
[http://homepage.mac.com/beowulf/.cv/beowulf/Public/Shoot Blanks.scpt-binhex.hqx](http://homepage.mac.com/beowulf/.cv/beowulf/Public/Shoot%20Blanks.scpt-binhex.hqx).
2. StuffIt Expander should de-binhex the script automatically. After it does, move the file **Shoot Blanks.scpt** into `~/Library/Scripts/Mail Scripts`. (You should create the Mail Scripts folder if it does not already exist.)
3. Go to the Rules preference pane and click Add Rule.
4. In the New Rule window, name the new rule **Shoot Blanks**.
5. Under Conditions, choose Every Message from the pop-up menu.
6. Under Actions, choose Run AppleScript from the pop-up menu, then click Choose to select that script you downloaded in Step 1 above. (The path should be `~/Library/Scripts/Mail Scripts/Shoot Blanks.scpt`.)
7. Click OK to save the rule, and then drag it to the top of your Rules list so that it’s the first rule in the list.

This rule now deletes all blank email messages automatically. Note however, that some messages may *appear* to be blank but really aren’t—meaning this script will not delete them.

## GLOSSARY

**authentication:** Authentication is the process of confirming your identity for the purpose of being allowed to use a service. For example, when you log in to an account on your Mac, you authenticate yourself. Similarly, when you supply your user name and password to a mail server, you are authenticating.

**client:** A program that works with a *server* program is a client. For instance, an email program like Apple Mail is a client that connects to a SMTP server program to send email and to a POP or IMAP server program to retrieve email. The computer running client software is often referred to as a client as well.

**data fork:** Although this is less common in Mac OS X than in previous versions of the Mac OS, Macintosh files can be composed of two portions, a data fork and a *resource fork*. In general, the data fork holds data for the file—text, graphics, video, and so on—that could be relevant to any platform, whereas the resource fork stores information that’s relevant only when the file is used on a Mac. (Often this information is ancillary, but other times it is quite important. For example, Classic versions of Nisus Writer store formatting in the resource fork.) It’s important that the data fork of an email attachment transfer properly to the recipient, either along with the resource fork (when the recipient uses a Mac) or not (for recipients who use other platforms).

**Fast User Switching:** Fast User Switching is a feature in Mac OS X 10.3 Panther that makes it possible for multiple users to log in to a single Mac and to switch quickly between logged-in accounts. Turn on Fast User Switching for an account in the Accounts preference pane in System Preferences: click the Login Options button at the lower left; then select Enable Fast User Switching. Once you do this, you’ll notice a new menu at the far right of your menu bar.

**hard line break:** In typical typing situations, including Mail, when you press Return, you insert a hard line break. This causes the insertion point to move down to the next line, where you can begin typing a new paragraph. Technically speaking, a “hard line break” consists of one or two (usually) invisible characters: By default, Windows uses a

carriage return (CR) and a line feed (LF) character, Mac OS 9 uses just CR, and Unix and Mac OS X use just LF.

**hijack:** Hijacking occurs when someone secretly takes over a computer, either directly over a network connection or via a program that performs tasks for the hijacker. Most hijackers take over computers in order to use them as servers for distributing spam, pirated software, viruses, or pornography.

**HTML:** HTML, or Hypertext Markup Language, is a tag-based system of formatting text for display in a Web browser. For example, the HTML code `<b>Mail</b>` would cause “Mail” to appear in bold on a Web page.

Most ads—and a lot of spam—use HTML, but HTML is also the default format for several email clients. In these email programs (not Mail), the formats you apply to messages by clicking buttons or choosing menu commands go to recipients as HTML. (Typically, you don’t see HTML when you work in these programs.) Also, some email programs (including Mail) can display HTML-formatted messages in a similar manner to a Web page. In practice, HTML implementation in email programs to date has often been poor.

**IMAP:** IMAP, or Internet Message Access Protocol, is an increasingly common way to receive email from a mail server on the Internet. IMAP typically stores email on the server, making it particularly useful if you wish to access your email from more than one computer.

**local:** Think of local as meaning “part of your computer.” If you save an email message to your Mac’s hard disk, you are saving it locally. In contrast, you can view a message locally (that is, on the computer in front of you) but save it *remotely* on a mail server, which could be down the hall or on the other side of the globe.

**netizens:** A term for citizens of the Internet.

**ping, ping:** A method of communicating on a network that can be used for several purposes including troubleshooting. A ping is a short message sent to a computer on a network (such as the Internet), basically saying, “Are you there?” If all is well, the computer responds, saying, with another short message saying, “I’m here.” You

can use a ping to find out if a server is available and to find out how long it took to reach the server and get a reply. Pinging on the Internet is similar to using sonar pings to locate underwater objects.

**plain text:** Text that lacks formatting. If a program saves information that you typed as plain text, any formatting, such as margins or bold, is lost. Plain text is the *lingua franca* of computer-based text: almost everything can understand it. Plain text makes sense for email because you can count on virtually every email program to be able to display it. Many people prefer plain text to HTML or rich text because the recipient has total control over how it looks. (Most email clients enable you to set a default typeface for plain-text messages.)

**POP:** POP, Post Office Protocol, is a common way of receiving email on the Internet. Generally speaking, POP-based email accounts store email on the local computer; whereas IMAP-based email accounts may store email elsewhere, on a *remote* server.

**protocol:** A formal language by which different programs, such as an email client and email server, communicate. SMTP, POP, and IMAP are common protocols in the world of email.

**resource fork:** Although this is less common in Mac OS X than in previous versions of the Mac OS, Macintosh files can be composed of two portions, a *data fork* and a resource fork. In general, the data fork holds data for the file—text, graphics, video, and so on—that could be relevant to any platform, whereas the resource fork stores information that’s relevant only when the file is used on a Mac. (Often this information is ancillary, but other times it is quite important. For example, Classic versions of Nisus Writer store formatting in the resource fork.) It’s important that the data fork of an email attachment transfer properly to the recipient, either along with the resource fork (when the recipient uses a Mac) or not (for recipients who use other platforms).

**rewrap:** When text rewraps, it adjusts to a new window or margin size. For instance, when you are working in Mail, if you change the window size of a message, the text may rewrap, to better fit the new window size. See *wrap* for more information.

**rich text:** In contrast to *plain text*, which stores just the characters you type but no formatting, rich text also stores formatting such as type style, colors, and paragraph alignment. Behind the scenes, formatting tags (similar to *HTML* tags) are inserted into the text and decoded automatically by the recipient's email client. A properly composed rich-text message includes a plain-text version, so that it appears correctly on clients without rich-text support.

Despite the similar name, rich text in Mail is not the same as Rich Text Format (RTF), a file format invented by Microsoft and used by applications such as TextEdit. However, some email clients, including Microsoft Outlook, use RTF for outgoing email (Content-Type: "text/rtf") and call it "Rich Text." And, still other applications use "Rich Text" to refer to HTML messages! Without detailed investigation, you rarely know what you're getting when you use rich text.

**NOTE** If you view the source of a rich text message by choosing View > Message > Raw Source, you will see a MIME Content-Type of "text/enriched".

**scheme:** The first portion of a URL, the scheme, indicates a type of Internet service. For example, **http** indicates a Web service and **mailto** indicates an email service.

**server:** A program that sends information to *client* programs. Email servers, for instance, work with email clients to send and receive email. A computer running server software is also typically referred to as a server.

**SMTP:** SMTP, or Simple Mail Transfer Protocol, is the *protocol* used for sending email on the Internet.

**spoofing:** Spoofing is the act of sending email with faked header information, making it appear to come from someone other than yourself. In the days of Internet yore, spoofing was most commonly used for jokes. Lately, though, it has become a serious problem, because spoofing can be used to sneak spam by spam filters and to more easily spread viruses.

**SSL:** SSL, or Secure Sockets Layer, is a security protocol that secures Internet-based transactions at the program level. For example, most Web sites use SSL to protect credit card transactions.

**subscriptions:** In IMAP-capable email programs, the capability to view only selected mailboxes instead of every mailbox on the server.

**wrap:** Wrapping happens when a line of text runs into the right edge of a window. Because it can't continue to the right, the text wraps down to the next line. That's good: if the window size changes, the text rewraps to align properly with the new window size. However, if a person (or program) inserts *hard line breaks* at the end of each line, then the text can no longer rewrap nicely if the window size changes.

## READING AND PRINTING TIPS

This ebook was designed to be read onscreen or printed. These tips help you get the most out of reading online and provide advice about printing.

### **Onscreen reading tips:**

We carefully designed the Take Control ebooks to be read onscreen, and although most of what you need to know is obvious, note the following for the best possible onscreen reading experience:

- Blue text indicates links. You can click any item in the Table of Contents to jump to that section. Cross-references are also links, as are URLs and email addresses.
- Work with the Bookmarks tab or drawer showing so that you can always jump to any main topic by clicking its bookmark.
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## ABOUT THIS EBOOK

Read this section to learn more about the author, the Take Control series, and the publisher.

### About the Author

Joe Kissell is the author of several books about Mac software, including *Take Control of Upgrading to Panther*, *Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail*, and *50 Fast Mac OS X Techniques*. He has worked in the Macintosh software industry for the past ten years, including positions managing software development for Kensington Technology Group and Nisus Software.

Joe holds the honorary title “Curator of Interesting Things” at alt concepts, an Internet publishing and consulting company. He invites you to read his popular Interesting Thing of the Day column at <http://itotd.com/>.



When not writing computer books or articles about interesting things, Joe likes to travel, cook, practice t'ai chi, and imitate the “ba-deep” sounds his TiVo makes. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, Morgen Jahnke.

To contact Joe about anything in this ebook, send him email at [jwk@mac.com](mailto:jwk@mac.com) and be sure to include the words **Take Control of Apple Mail** in the subject of your message.

### Author's Acknowledgements

The entire group of Take Control authors and editors offered numerous suggestions and tips that made this a much better ebook. I especially want to thank Tonya Engst, whose editorial expertise and long hours of work made this ebook possible.

## Shameless Plug

Interesting Thing of the Day is my virtual museum of interesting things. Every day, I post a new article that provides a detailed, entertaining, and educational look at something interesting.

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- *Take Control of Upgrading to Panther*, by Joe Kissell  
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## About TidBITS Electronic Publishing

Take Control ebooks are a project of TidBITS Electronic Publishing, which has been publishing online since 1990 when publishers Adam and Tonya Engst first created their newsletter, *TidBITS*, about Mac- and Internet-related topics. *TidBITS* has been in continuous, weekly production since then. At the *TidBITS* Web site you can subscribe to *TidBITS* for free, participate in TidBITS Talk discussions, or search 15 years of news, reviews, and editorial analysis (<http://www.tidbits.com/>).

Adam and Tonya are known in the Macintosh world as writers, editors, and speakers, and they have written innumerable online and print publications. They are also parents to Tristan, who is 6 years old and thinks ebooks about trains, ships, and dinosaurs would be cool.

## Production Credits

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...a special thanks to Renee for all that she does and to Chris for pitching in on Wednesday morning.

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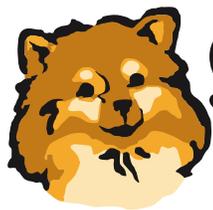
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