

How to Guide: Zoom Host Basics

E-mail is a wonderful tool for communicating. You can communicate with literally anyone in the world that has an e-mail address. The following information discusses basic concepts of e-mail and features that practically all e-mail programs possess.

Same Program, Different Time

Most e-mail programs have the same basic features, but they use different keystrokes, icons, or words. For example, to create a new e-mail message, some programs use a Write Mail icon, others a Send Mail, New Message, or Compose icon, etc. You must determine exactly how to use the features listed below on your particular e-mail program.

Lowest Common Denominator

The idea behind e-mail is that it can be transmitted to any computer in the world through any phone line in the world. As a result, it must use the most basic information. E-mail, for all practical purposes, can only transmit letters, numbers, and punctuation characters. These are called ASCII characters.

Characters other than ASCII characters are called BINARY characters.

Attachments

Technically, if a message has any characters other than ASCII characters, it cannot be sent through e-mail. If a message contains BINARY characters, it must be ATTACHED to the original e-mail. Picture, audio, word processing, program, and other files all contain BINARY characters. Learning how to attach and unattach files to an e-mail program will greatly enhance your e-mail capabilities. Almost all programs allow you to attach and unattach BINARY files.

E-Mail Addresses

E-mail addresses have the general format: username@server. For example, my e-mail address is johng@ext.msstate.edu. Johng is my username. Ext.msstate.edu is the e-mail server name, which is the computer that receives and sends e-mail, which contains my mailbox.

E-mail addresses are not case-sensitive. You may use all upper case, all lower case, or mixed case when entering the address. For example, JOHNG@EXT.MSSTATE.EDU, johng@ext.misstate.edu, JOHNG@ext.misstate.edu, and JoHnG@ExT.MsStAtE.EdU will all work.

NEVER PUT A SPACE IN AN E-MAIL ADDRESS.

You can enter multiple addresses on the To: field of an e-mail program by separating the addresses with a comma. For example, entering johng@ext.misstate.edu, johndoe@yahoo.com, janedoe@AOL.com would send the e-mail message to three different persons.



Sending Mail

All e-mail programs allow you to send mail. Most programs automatically make a copy of all mail that is sent. This mail is usually sent in a Sent Mail folder. Some programs allow you to set an option to make a copy of sent mail or not.

Receive, Reply, and Forward

Every program allows you to receive e-mail. Most often your mail is found in an Inbox. Click on a message in the Inbox and you can read it. After reading it you can delete it, reply to it, forward it, or store it in a folder.

When you reply to an e-mail, the message goes back to the person that sent it. Some programs have an option commonly called Reply All. In this option, the reply goes back to the person that sent it and to all the people that received it. For example, if I sent an e-mail to you and three other people, choosing Reply would send mail only to me; choosing Reply All would send mail to me and the other three persons to whom the e-mail was addressed.

Choosing Forward allows you to send a copy of the e-mail message to another person or persons. Most programs allow you to edit the original message. Some will not allow you to edit the original message, it is attached to your forwarded message. All programs allow you to add information to the original message. For example, if I received a message with a question that should be answered by someone, I would forward it to that person and add a message telling him/her that this message would best be answered by him/her.

Deleting Mail

All programs allow you to delete a message. It can be deleted once it has been read or even before it has been read. Most programs, by default, put the deleted messages in a Trash folder. You could then retrieve the message if you accidentally deleted it. Most programs keep this deleted mail until it is manually deleted. Some delete it after a certain length of time. Many programs allow you to set an option to not keep deleted messages or to automatically delete these messages once you exit the program. You could go back and retrieve the deleted message if you had not exited the program.

Folders

Often, I need to keep a copy of a message. In this case I would store the information in a folder. Practically all e-mail programs allow you to create folders and keep messages in them. Learn how to use folders to manage mail you want to keep.

In a web-based program, the folders are stored on the web computer. In a computer-based program, the folders are stored on your computer.

You can reply or forward messages stored in a folder, just like you would one from the Inbox.



Address Books

Most programs allow you to create an address book. This allows you to easily address messages from the book simply by clicking on the correct name. Many programs also allow you to set special names for addresses (usually called aliases). For example, you might enter your father's e-mail address and set an alias named Daddy. Then when you address the e-mail, you can simply enter Daddy and the program will substitute your father's address when the message is sent. The address books also allow you to quickly send a message to multiple people by clicking on multiple addresses.

Mailing Groups or Lists

In the Address Book, you can usually create mailing groups or lists. For example, you might have an e-mail address for your father, mother, brother, and sister. You could great a mailing group called Family that contained all these addresses. Then by addressing the message to the group Family, it would be sent to all the addresses in the group. If you often send a message to a group of people, learning to use groups or lists will save a lot of time and trouble.

Signatures

When you send an e-mail, you should always add your name, title, postal address, phone number, and full-email address at the end of the message. However, most of us are too lazy or busy to do that. Most programs allow you to create a signature that is automatically added to the end of each message sent. This is an easy way to add the information to a message. Learn to create and use a signature.

Other Features

E-mail programs can contain many other features. However, the features listed above are available in almost all e-mail programs. Learning to use them will greatly enhance your e-mail attempts.

E-Mail Security

There are a few ideas to keep you safe through your e-mail.

1. Have a strong password
2. Always beware of spam and phishing. Spam is unwanted e-mail. Phishing is e-mail that tries to get your personal information.
3. Do not share sensitive, personal information.
4. Always scan attachments for malware, i.e., harmful programs.
5. Never click on a link in an e-mail.
6. Use disposable addresses, i.e., addresses that do not matter is they are compromised.

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