

Setting Up and Using Email

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Introduction

This lesson introduces the student to email, describes how it works, and teaches how to setup and use email. Students will also learn about and discuss important concepts such as netiquette, password protection, spam, and advertisement supported email. The student will demonstrate the new skill by sending the teacher an email and answering a quiz.

Objectives

The student will:

- learn about email, the parts of an email message, and how email works
- learn how to setup and use a particular email application (depending on the tutorial chosen by the teacher)
- think critically about how email shapes communication, including the social rules (netiquette) that guide email communication
- demonstrate proficiency in email by sending the teacher an email message

Lesson

Exercise

1. *Provide Background Information*
Explain to the students about email, drawing from the background material below.
2. *Have students setup email account, go through tutorial on application*
There are two ways to use email – using web based email, and using a separate application (such as Eudora, Pine, or Outlook) to send and read mail. Tutorials are available for both.

Have the student follow a tutorials, based on what email application they will use. In the appendix there is a tutorial for setting up and using Free Email on the Web. The “online tutorials” of this lesson lists tutorials for specific applications.
3. *Discuss Social Issues*
Present and lead the class in a discussion of the “Social issues” described below.
4. *Quiz Students on Knowledge, skills learned*
Either as part of the discussions, or as a final quiz, have the students answer the “Questions for Students” below.
5. *Add extra material as appropriate*
The teacher should also browse through the resources included in the “Other Resources” section, and integrate them into the class as appropriate.

Online Tutorials

- “Building Global Understanding Through E-Mail Exchanges”:
The Stereotypes Project <http://encarta.msn.com/alexandria/templates/lessonfull.asp?page=454>
- Microsoft Outlook
 - Outlook Tutorials from LearnLots.com
http://learnlots.com/webskins/subcategory.cfm?ll_style=1&subcategory_id=4
 - Microsoft’s In and out of the Classroom Outlook 2000 Lesson
<http://www.microsoft.com/education/tutorial/classroom/email/default.asp>
 - FreeSkills Outlook Lesson
<http://www.freeskills.com/listcourses?cobrand=freeskills&category=60>
 - Free-Ed.net Outlook Lesson
http://www.free-ed.net/fr03/lfc/course030104_02/lessonmain.asp?cNum=7
 - Montana State University, Billings, Page of Outlook Tutorials & Resources
<http://www.msubillings.edu/support101/Faculty/OutlookTutors.htm>
 - Lynchburg College of Virginia – Outlook Tutorial
<http://www.lyncburg.edu/userguide/tutorial/outlook98/out98tut.htm>
- Qualcomm’s Eudora
 - Eudora Lesson from LearnLots.com
http://learnlots.com/webskins/subcategory.cfm?ll_style=1&subcategory_id=136
 - Reach for the Sky’s “Introduction to Email” (Background info, with pictures from Eudora) <http://www.learner.org/courses/rfts/b3web.htm>
 - “Configuring Eudora: A New Users Guide”
“<http://www.imaginarylandscape.com/helpweb/mail/eudora.html>”
- Lotus Notes

- Lotus Notes Tutorials from LearnLots.com
http://learnlots.com/webskins/subcategory.cfm?ll_style=1&subcategory_id=139
- Free Email
 - See the Appendix for a brief tutorial on setting up a free email account.
 - About.com's Web Page on Free Email
<http://email.about.com/internet/email/cs/freemail/index.htm>
 - Sample Free Email Providers:
 - www.Yahoo.com
 - www.altavista.com
 - www.excite.com
 - www.netzero.com
 - www.hotmail.com

Questions for Students

1. What is email? How does email work?
2. What are the parts of an email message?
3. What is spam? Why would people send spam? What should you do when someone sends you spam?
4. What are some examples of Netiquette? Why does netiquette exist?
5. Is email private? Why or why not?
6. What do you think about getting free email service in exchange for the company selling your information and showing you advertisements?
7. How could email change how people interact? When is that a good thing? When is it bad?

Background on Email

What is Email?

Email, which stands for 'electronic mail', is how most people send each other messages over the Internet. Email is like a postcard – it allows people to write text messages. However, email can do more than a postcard. With email, a person can attach documents and pictures, use a spell checker (on some software packages), and send the message to multiple people at once. There are numerous programs that allow people to write and send email messages, including Outlook, Eudora, Hotmail, and Pine.

How does Email Work?

First, the user types a text message into their email program, and tells the email program who should receive the message. Then the user tells the program to send the message, and it travels from the user's computer through their modem, local network, or DSL connection to the computer that provides their Internet service. The ISP's computer then sends the message into cyberspace, and the message hops from computer to computer until it reaches the recipient's email server. When the server is found, the server stores the email message and informs the recipient that s/he has email.

The recipient's email address is used to determine where the email goes. Email addresses are made up of a domain name, such as "domain_name.com" and an account name, such as "my_name_123", making the email address: my_name_123@domain_name.com. The domain name is usually the name of the company where the person works or the name of their Internet service provider. The account name is often the name of the person, and tells the company's or organization's email server whom exactly the message belongs to.

Components of an Email Message

To create a basic email message, the user must enter the name of the person she is sending message to, and the message she wants to give them. These two parts are called the "recipient", and the "message body". The "recipient(s)" is one or more email address(es) of people who should get the message. The message body is the text message for those recipients. The message body can be blank, but that would make a boring email message.

There are other optional parts in an email message; these parts are labeled the "subject", "attachments", "CC", and "BCC". The "subject" is a short line of text to explain to the recipient what the email message is about. The subject can be blank, but most people like to receive email with a meaningful, short, subject line. "Attachments" are files that you want to include with message to give to the recipients. Attachments can be music files, documents, pictures, or anything else. You can include more than one attachment with an email message; however, large attachments or multiple attachments take a long time to send and receive, so users should be courteous about sending them.

"CC" and "BCC" stand for "carbon copy" and "blank carbon copy". The "carbon copy" field tells your email software that other people should receive copies of your email message. To send other people copies of the email, simply put their email addresses in the "carbon copy" field, separated by commas. "Blank carbon copy" means that someone will receive a "secret" copy of the email message. When you enter someone's email addresses in the "BCC" field, they will get a copy of the message, but their address will be hidden, and no one else will know that they got that message. (The term "carbon copy" comes from a technique to make copies of physical documents, similar to a copier machine).

In addition, your email program will always stamp your message with your name and email address as the "sender", to tell the other person who the message is from. Also, your email server will put the current date and time on the message, to indicate when the message was sent.

Mailboxes

Many email programs provide "mailboxes" to help the user organize their messages. Mailboxes are places to store email, and can be named anything the user wants. By

default, many email programs have three mailboxes – an “In” box for messages the user has received, and “out” box for messages the user has sent, and a “trash” box for messages to be deleted. The user can add additional mailboxes such as “work” for email about work, “jokes” for humorous messages, and “friends” for personal messages.

Email Addresses and Identity

Email addresses often provide a great deal of information about their user. The domain name, the section of the email address after the “@” symbol, has two parts, both of which provide valuable information. The first part indicates where the person works, goes to school, or what company they are using to get Internet access. This followed by a three or two letter code. The code, which can be .com, .edu, .gov, .org, .net, or a country code like .ca for Canada, is called a “top level domain”. The top level domain can indicate what country the person is from or what type of organization the person works at or gets Internet service from. For example, a top level domain of .za could indicate that the person is writing from South Africa, and a top level domain of “.org” could indicate that the person works for or gets Internet service from a non-profit organization.

The account name, or part of the email address before the “@” symbol, (the “john” of john@aol.com), can indicate almost anything. Often, the account name is based on the person’s name (john_rosenfeld@thisdomain.com), but it could also be their favorite hobby (snowboarder@thatdomain.com), or something else entirely (a95@something.net). The account name must be unique *with respect to the domain name* – in order words, there can be a john@aol.com and a john@bridges.org, but there cannot be two different addresses of john@bridges.org.

Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee that an email address indicates a person’s true identity or anything else about them – John Doe may take the email address “Mary”, or even “Bill_Clinton”. John may work at HotStartUp.com, but use an email address from AnotherCompany.net. In many cases it is very difficult to find out who is truly behind an email address, since people can get free accounts that effectively don’t require the person’s name. Email addresses can thus be a means to hide one’s identity and post messages anonymously. For more information, please see the lessons later in this guide on “Anonymity and the Internet”, and on “Reputation and Accountability”.

Passwords

The password to your email account is *very* important. If you forget it, you won’t be able to check your email. If someone else knows your password, then can read you email and send bogus email in your name.

You should almost never give your password to anyone else. If you receive an email saying that someone (even if they say they are with your Internet provider) needs your password to set something up for you, they are (almost always) lying. If you are using an online email service, like yahoo or hotmail, check the company’s website for an address to report these messages. (For yahoo, its abuse@yahoo.com.)

Social Issues of Email

Email and Communication

Many people think that email is reshaping the way we communicate. Where previously people had to pick up the phone, write a letter, or physically go meet each other to communicate, now many people use email instead. Email is often cheaper, faster, and less intrusive than other ways of communicating. Email can allow people in distant parts of the world to communicate, and has led to a greater interconnection of people in different locations. It allows distant family members to keep up to date with each other without paying heavy long distance phone bills. It also allows distant scientific and business colleagues to share ideas and coordinate their work.

However, some say that email can't and shouldn't replace traditional conversation. Emails provide a much narrower interaction between people than talking in person or on the phone. The person reading the message can't hear the nuances of the other person's voice, or see their meaningful facial expressions. The subtle and emotionally powerful parts of a conversation can be lost over email. Emails also often appear more shallow or insulting than they are intended. Since emails are "faster" to write, people usually put less thought and consideration into their emails than they do when writing a letter.

Other people are concerned that our growing dependence on email hurts our societies and communities. They believe that email contributes to the accelerating pace and complication of our lives. Whereas people were forced to take time out of their work day to communicate, email allows people to be constantly working and uninterrupted. In addition, some say that people are increasingly wrapped up in their computers and emailing each other, and are less inclined to build friendships and a strong community with people around them.

Spam

"Spamming" is when someone sends unsolicited email to many many people. Often these messages are commercial – the sender is trying to promote a product or service – and are fraudulent. Spammers send out these emails in the hope that out of the thousands (or tens of thousands) of people that get the message, a few will be interested. In the process though, they waste everyone else's time. Most people *hate* spam, because these messages often are completely uninteresting to them, and clutter up their email. Spamming is also forbidden on many email servers, and people can lose their email accounts if they spam other people.

When a person receives spam email, it is usually a bad idea to respond to that message. If the person responds, the spammer will know that the email address is still valid, and

may continue to spam it. Unless the spammer is someone you personally know, the spammer is unlikely to stop sending messages just because you ask them to.

For more information on spam, see

<http://email.about.com/internet/email/library/weekly/aa090197a.htm>.

Netiquette

The Internet has developed a set of intricate *social* rules of etiquette, or netiquette, to ensure appropriate behavior. These rules aren't laws – they are simply considered good behavior. Many of these social rules, such as 'no spamming' are meant to keep people from abusing the Internet and wasting other people's time.

Similarly, it is good practice to write a *meaningful* subject line on email messages that describes what is in the message, so the recipient can quickly filter through their email without reading through the entire message.

Other social rules, such as NEVER WRITE IN ALL CAPS BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING, are meant to guide new users away from common mistakes, and create a common basis to understand each other's writings.

Some common netiquettes are listed in About.com's "Email and Netiquette" article at <http://email.about.com/internet/email/library/weekly/aa051797.htm>. About.com also has a section on Netiquette geared towards children, "Netiquette: minding your P's and Q's online: Email" located at <http://kidexchange.about.com/kids/kidexchange/library/weekly/aa032699.htm>

Email Privacy

In terms of privacy, email is more like an electronic *postcard*, than electronic mail. Like a postcard, anyone between you sending the message and its destination could, theoretically, read the message. Others could keep a copy of your message and read it (or use it against you) in the future.

There are technologies to make emails more private, to make it difficult for others to read. We will examine these technologies in greater detail in the lesson on privacy.

Free Email and Privacy

In recent years, many companies have started offering "Free" email where people can check and send messages just by pointing their web browser to the company's site and entering their password. How can they do this? These services aren't completely free – they ask you questions about yourself, and often then sell that information and your email-address to advertising agencies or anyone else that wants it. They also get money

for advertisements that they place on the top (or bottom) of the web page while you're reading your email. We will discuss free email and advertisements in detail in the privacy lesson.

Common Problems in Teaching and Learning this Lesson

Students need an Internet Connection

In order to send and receive email, the user must already have a working connection to the Internet. Please consult your system administrator if the students can not connect to the Internet

Passwords are Required

Users must be very careful to remember their password. Without their password, the user will be unable to read or write email with their account.

Email Addresses must be typed in Exactly

Users must enter the recipient's email address exactly. Spelling mistakes in the recipient's email address are the most common reason that an email fails to work. The user must also remember to enter the full address, including the "@" symbol and the domain name when entering the recipient's email address.

Invalid Email Address Errors

One of two types of problems commonly occurs when sending email. First, the user may get an error message from their email program when they click the send button. This message will (hopefully) explain the nature of the problem. More often than not, the error message will say that the recipient's email address is invalid – that the user did not enter a complete email address or the domain name does not exist. Check the email address and type it again. In other cases, the error message might indicate that the user is not currently connected to the Internet.

Bounced Email

The other common problem that occurs when sending email is that the user will receive an email message from their mail server (or the recipient's mail server) that a message has failed to go through. This problem, called a "bounced" email, can occur for a number of reasons, but the reason is always explained in the email message from the server. It usually occurs because the recipient's email was invalid. It can also occur because the recipient's mailbox is full.

Age and Free Email Services

Note, when a person signs up for free email on the web, their age is often important. Most sites will not give out email to children under 18 without permission from an adult.

Other Resources

- Related Lessons:
 - Protection of Privacy and Data Security in a Networked Society
 - Anonymity and the Internet
 - Reputation and Accountability
- Other Resources for Tutorial:
 - “Learn the Net” – numerous tutorials on email
<http://www.learnthenet.com/english/section/email.html>
 - Penn State’s Center for Academic Computing, Links to Lots of Email Application Tutorials
<http://cac.psu.edu/training/outlines/>
- General information on Email:
 - About.com’s Email Page – Background Information, Tutorial Links, etc.
<http://email.about.com/internet/email/>
 - Internet Navigator: Communicating over the Internet (Email & Newsgroups)
<http://www.lib.utah.edu/navigator/Module2/index.html>
 - Polaris’s Introduction to Email
<http://www.provide.net/~bfield/polaris/topnoframe/top0100.htm>
 - PBS Using and Understanding the Internet - Email
<http://www.pbs.org/uti/guide/email.html>
 - WebTeacher.org’s Information on Email (Click on “Electronic Mail” under “Web Tutorial”)
<http://www.webteacher.org/winnet/indextc.html>
- Netiquette
 - Polaris’s Introduction to Email “Culture”
<http://www.provide.net/~bfield/polaris/topnoframe/top0130.htm>
 - <http://email.about.com/internet/email/cs/netiquette/index.htm>
- Spam
 - <http://email.about.com/internet/email/cs/spamgeneral/index.htm>

Appendix: Setting up Free Email

1. Sign Up for Email

- a. Go to www.yahoo.com [Note, there are many companies out there, and you can use whatever one you like – but for this class session please use Yahoo so the instructions will make sense]
- b. Click on “Yahoo! Mail” in the top right corner.
- c. Since you are a new user, click on “I’m a new User, ‘Sign me up””
- d. Yahoo wants you to enter what name you want for your email address, and your password. (No spaces, or funky characters are usually allowed.)
- e. At the bottom of the screen, Yahoo wants you to enter your name, job (if any), and hobbies. Its your choice what you enter – but think about it first. Remember the lesson on anonymity – is it a good thing or a bad thing? why?
- f. Look where it says “People Search Listing” – if you check that box, Yahoo will list your name for other people to see. *ALWAYS* watch out for the little boxes like that whenever you are giving personal information. Read carefully – the company is usually telling you what they want to do with your information, and what choices you have. Also, take a look at the “Terms of Service”! (link on the bottom of the screen)
- g. Click Continue. Yahoo will ask you to fix any errors. Click “OK”
- h. All right – you’ve set up your account. Write down your email address and password.
- i. Click “Continue With Yahoo! Mail” to start using your email account.

2. Send & Receive Email

- a. Look over the website Yahoo has given you. It tells you what you can do – On the left hand side, you can click on “Check Mail” to look at mail in your in box.
You should have one piece of email – a message from Yahoo. Under the “Sender” column, you can click the name of the sender to read your email (click on “Yahoo!”)
- b. Click on “Compose” (ie write & prepare to send email) on the left hand side.
- c. Write someone else in the class a message – ask them their address and enter it in the “To” Box. (It should be something like janedoe@yahoo.com).
You can send me email at steve@bridges.org
- d. Enter the subject of your message, like “hello, dddd”.
- e. Under “CC”, enter the email addresses of other people who you want to get this message. (CC stands for ‘Carbon Copy’, an old type of copying)
- f. In the big box in the center, type your message.
- g. If you alike, you can include attachments (click on “edit attachments”), or check your spelling (click on “check spelling”), or save the message for later without sending it (“save draft”).
- h. When you are ready to send, click on “Send”.
- i. You’re done! You’ve sent email!

- j. Now try experimenting with the different options – the different links that are available. Try looking at your Address Book (click on “Addresses” on the left hand side). Or attachments a graph you found & saved to disk.
- k. At any time, you can go back and check you email by clicking on “Check Mail”

3. To Get Your Email in The Future

- a. On a computer with access to the Internet, go to www.yahoo.com and click on “Yahoo!Mail”.
 - b. Enter your email account (without the @yahoo.com) and your password.
- 4. For help, you can click on “Help” (it should be at the bottom or top of the screen), or go to help.yahoo.com/help/us/mail/index.html**
- a. Also, feel free to email me at steve@bridges.org