

# A short guide to email



# What is email?

- Electronic mail allows users to send messages to each other over a computer network like the internet.
- Email can be accessed via a browser (webmail) or via an 'email client' (using POP3 or IMAP – more on these later).



# How does it work?

- Two main methods of accessing email are webmail and email client. Two main uses of email are sending and receiving, I will cover each scenario.
- Sending email:
  - Via email client:
    - The user opens their email client on one of their own devices (e.g. PC or phone).
    - The user composes a message, filling in the 'to', 'subject' and 'body' fields (the body is the main content of the message).
    - The email client sends the message from the user's device to their mail server, which then sends it to the recipient's mail server over the internet.
  - Via webmail:
    - The user logs onto their webmail provider through a browser on any internet-connected device, then composes their message as above.
    - The webmail system sends the message to the recipient server as above.

# How does it work?

- Receiving email:
  - Via webmail:
    - The user logs onto their provider through a browser.
    - Received emails are viewable in their inbox.
  - Via email client:
    - The user opens their email client, and (manually or automatically) performs a receive/fetch operation.
    - Any received mail on the user's server is downloaded to their device and is viewable in their email client.
    - POP3/IMAP (in brief): when using POP3 (Post Office Protocol), email you download to your device is deleted from the server (so is no longer accessible from another device). When using IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol), email remains on the server so can be accessed again from another device.

# Popular free email providers

- Gmail (@gmail.com) – 15GB of storage for free, closely integrated with other google services.
- Outlook.com (@outlook.com) – 5GB free storage, integration with MS Windows and Office apps.
- Yahoo! Mail (@yahoo.com) – huge 1 TB (1000GB) of storage.
- iCloud Mail (@icloud.com) – 5GB free storage, integration with Apple devices and services, only for Apple device owners.
- Lots of others! Your Internet Service Provider (ISP, e.g. BT) probably provides email too.
- All of the above have a webmail interface, or can be accessed through an email client.



# Popular email clients (for Windows)

- Windows Mail & Calendar – built into Windows 10
- eMClient – limited free version for personal use only
- Outlook – full featured product, part of Microsoft office
- Thunderbird – free, open source offering from Mozilla
- Lots of others! Different options also exist for mobile devices such as Android and iOS.
- Depending on how you prefer to access your email, you may not want or need any of these.



# Webmail vs Email Client

- Why use webmail:
  - Access on any device/computer with a browser.
  - Your PC is shared and you don't want to store email locally.
  - You can't install a software client on your PC, e.g. at work or school.
- Why use an email client:
  - You have multiple email addresses and you want to manage them all in one place.
  - You have limited online storage and/or want to access your emails offline.
  - You need integration with other desktop apps such as a calendar or to-do list.
- Important note:
  - Even if you use an email client on your main device, it may not collect emails from your mail server that are marked 'junk/spam' or otherwise hidden. This way it is possible to miss important emails if they are marked incorrectly. It is worth logging into your webmail interface every once in a while to check.