

MANAGING YOUR EMAIL

Have several email accounts to suit different purposes.

I've divided things up so that I have one account for personal emails and pressing communications, usually work-related. Another account for people or sites I want to learn from, which I'll get to only when I can.

Then, there are emails related to my online presence that I care about immensely. These I can set up additional accounts for too, but I make sure that they are routed to one account on my desktop.

And if I happen to be part of a group effort, I make sure that one of those accounts is an online one as well, like Google's Gmail or Yahoo. That way other designated people can access the email, bringing the group email directly into their own private accounts so the email-responding responsibility is shared.

Create folders that put like-minded activities together.

This can mean a folder for receipts no matter where they come from, for friends and family, for medical issues, and so forth. But I also go beyond this, and use [David Allen's Getting Things Done \(GTD\)](#) strategy or [Lifehacker](#) to get focused on some real time savers.

The GTD approach is a complete system which has you handling things only once by deciding if an item is a) something you can handle immediately and therefore quickly, b) something which requires an action but will take some time, and c) something that you would like to get to someday, but isn't critical to handle right away.

Creating folders like this makes it possible to parse out your

attention intelligently. The system encourages an empty email box each day.

Lifhackers covers productivity in a more general sense, not just with email. But they have a great search box, and you can decide the area where you are lacking and dive in. Type "email" or "project management" and you'll get some great new ideas.

Don't let vacations or intense time demands screw you up.

Use [AwayFind](#) to auto-respond when you are away and for designating the important senders of information within your network so that their important messages get through to you via an address that pops their message into your mobile. [AwayFind](#) essentially singles out the important, must respond to messages eliminating the need for staying glued to checking your email box all day.

Take advantage of mobile email capabilities.

I like using things like [JOTT](#) that can take my voice messages and turn them into email messages or turning calendar information into email reminders. You can go overboard on reminders but this I make sure to limit where I can. For example, when I set up my Google calendar/send to configuration, I limit what calendars or To Do lists I really want reminders for.

Google Gears also simplifies things where email is concerned.

If you have gmail, you can set up Google Gears. This enables your viewing of Gmail offline, which makes access much easier.

Make sure you have committed to a plan for backup.

I've just wiped clean a PC laptop and quite frankly, my method of turning my email categories into pdf files (via "Save as PDF" plugin within Outlook) took me hours. Instead, check out some better option.

Use a better client program, for instance. Postbox is impressive to me so far mainly because it lets you find things by types of items, e.g. attachments or visuals, etc. so you don't have to remember what folder something is in. This not only helps you get the most important stuff backed up but obviates the need for searching multiple folders and accounts, and makes it easier to transfer the most important things over.

Of course, it's not bad to have a [backup strategy such as this one for the PC](#) or develop [a plan for transferring from your PC info to your Mac](#).

Again, the important idea here is to have a plan. Don't wait until your boxes become loaded down with 500 to 1,000 emails per folder.

And if you know you'll never monitor your email, go the route of having an online backup system in place from the start, like [Mozy](#). This will eliminate your fear of losing data, a huge relief. But, going this route, you'll also be a little bit poorer and not have addressed the root of your problem, organization, as a result.