SETTING UP AND USING A GMAIL ACCOUNT

This document demonstrates how to setup a Google email account (known as Gmail). It goes on to show you how to use the main features of the account, step by step.
Setting up and using a Gmail account

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Email is one of the main services used on the Internet. This document will cover how to setup and use an email account. We will be using ‘Gmail’ – the email service provided by Google.

Amazingly, this service is free! Google make money by placing advertisements on any web pages that they provide.

This document makes some assumptions:

- It assumes you have basic PC skills. If this is not the case, please read the accompanying document entitled ‘A short introduction to computers’
- It assumes that you are using Internet Explorer, version 8. If you are using a different web browser, things might look and behave slightly differently to the way described here!

**An overview of how email works.**

Email is a service carried via the Internet. In many ways, sending an email is similar to sending a letter through the conventional postal system:

- You write your email
- You address your email
- You ‘post’ your email

**Where does the email end up and how does it get there?**

When you send an email, it ends up in the receiver’s ‘inbox’. The receiver’s inbox is not on their computer at home; it is situated on an ‘email server’, a specialised computer that is always on and always online (connected to the Internet). There it remains until the receiver ‘logs in’ to their email account and looks in their inbox.

Some home computer users have an ‘email client’ – a piece of software that downloads their emails from the server to their home computer. But increasingly, people access their email account via their web browser. They look at their account on the server and don’t download their emails. This method has a distinct advantage; your emails can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection so you don’t need to be at home to read them.
How do I setup a Gmail account?

Go to mail.google.com. You will see the page on the left. Once your account is setup, you can login to your account by entering your username and password and then clicking the sign in button. But before that you will need to click the ‘Create an account’ button to setup your Gmail account.

This will take you to the signup page:

The signup page is essentially a form which you will need to fill in. Most of it is self explanatory but there are few things you will need to understand.

- There are some explanations on the page, telling you about the form and what the various options mean. Read these tips if you are unsure of anything.
- To type in a box, click inside the box first.
- You cannot type straight into some boxes. Instead, they are filled in by choosing from a list of options. For example, the ‘security question’ looks like this:

  Security Question: Choose a question ...

With these sorts of boxes, you click the blue arrow to display the options:

Choose from the menu, then write the answer to the question you have chosen in the ‘Answer’ box. If you choose your own question, a new box will be displayed, where you can write your own question:
The ‘Desired Login Name’ box is important as it will form part of your email address. Your email address will be your login name followed immediately by ‘@googlemail.com’. So if you choose johnsmith as your login name (also called a username) your email address will become johnsmith@googlemail.com. Your username can contain letters and numbers and dots but it must not have any spaces and it must not begin or end with a dot. So you could choose john.smith as your username but not .john.smith because it begins with a dot! Type in your desired username then click the ‘Check availability’ button to check whether someone else has already taken the username you want. The screen will tell you whether your desired username is available or not. If it is, continue filling in the form. If it is not, type in a different username and check availability again. Repeat until you are informed that your desired login name is available.

Your password has to be a minimum of 8 characters. You can use letters and numbers but again, spaces are not permitted. A good way of choosing a strong but memorable password is to choose a phrase or a line from a favourite song or perhaps the address of your first home. Examples of such passwords include ‘singingintherain’, ‘15highstandoverkent’ or ‘practicemakesperfect’ (without the quotation marks).

Make sure the ‘Stay signed in’ box is not ticked. If it is ticked, click in the box to remove the tick.

The ‘Word Verification’ part of the form (known as a ‘captcha’) is to ensure a human being (rather than an automated program) is filling in the form. Look carefully at the letters and type them into the box:
• If you wish, read through the terms of service. Then click the ‘I accept. Create my account’ button.

• If there are any problems, the form will be displayed again, with any errors or omissions in red. Correct the form and then Click the ‘I accept. Create my account’ button.

You will then see this page:

Click the link that says “I’m ready – show me my account”. Your inbox will be displayed.

Now that the account is setup, we will sign out of the account. You should always do this if you are using a public computer, for example, at the library or in a cybercafé. The sign out link is in the top right hand corner of the page:

After clicking the sign out link, you will be returned back to the sign in page:
• Click in the ‘Username’ box. Type in your username. Your username is the part of your email address before the ‘@’ symbol. The email account I am using is leedssilversurfer@googlemail.com so the username is leedssilversurfer.
• Click in the ‘Password’ box. Type in your password.
• If you tick the box labelled ‘Remember me on this computer’, the details you have just typed in will be saved. Only do this on your home computer. If you are using a public computer (in an Internet café, for example) leave it unticked.
• Click ‘Sign in’
• Your Gmail inbox will be displayed:

![Gmail inbox](image)

**Make your Gmail account easy to use – Add contacts**

The key to making your account easy to use is to add the email addresses of your friends and family at the beginning. That way, your contacts will be stored in your Gmail account and you won’t have to remember people’s email addresses.

• To add a contact, Click ‘Contacts’ – see the left hand side of the illustration above.
• The Contacts screen will be displayed:

![Contacts screen](image)
- Click the ‘Add contact’ button. This is the first of the two buttons with the ‘+’ sign; see Figure 3, above. A form will be displayed (Figure 4):

![Form Image]

- Click in the ‘Name’ box. Type in the contact’s name.
- Click in the ‘Email’ box. Type in the contact’s email address.
- You can fill in the other fields of the form, but this is not necessary.
- The form will now look similar to this:

![Form Image]

- Click the ‘Save’ button.
- Your contact is now saved. Your contact screen will now look similar to this:

![Contact Screen Image]
• Repeat this process to add further contacts.
• The other ‘+’ sign is there to create ‘groups’. You can learn how to create a group on page 19.

How do I send an email?

• Click ‘Compose Mail’ – The navigation for your email account is in the top left hand corner of the page. Links to all the most important parts of your account (Inbox, Compose Mail, Contacts etc) can always be found there.
• The ‘Compose’ window will be displayed:

![Compose Mail window]

• You should see the ‘insertion point’ flashing in the top left hand corner of the ‘To’ box. The insertion point is a flashing vertical line where your typing will be entered. Whenever you want to type something on-screen, you will need the insertion point or some selected text. If you don’t have an insertion point, click to place it there.
• We are going to send an email to ‘Mark at Age concern’, the person we have just added to our contacts.
• Type the first letter of the contacts name, in this case ‘M’.
• All your contacts whose name or email address begins with ‘M’ will appear on screen. We have only added the one contact so far, so only that contact appears:
Click ‘Mark at Age Concern <amobuk@yahoo.com>’. The email address will be entered into the ‘To’ box. Your email is now addressed:

Now click in the ‘Subject’ box to place the ‘insertion point’ there. Remember, your typing goes where the insertion point is flashing. It is important to be aware of this otherwise the wrong information will go in the wrong box. The result? Your email won’t work! The subject gives the recipient of the email an idea of what it’s about before it has even been opened. It is not essential to put a subject in the subject box – it is simply ‘netiquette’ – good Internet manners if you like!

Now click in the big white box below the subject box. Type your email. The screen should now look similar to this:
• Click the ‘Send’ button. Your email will be sent and your screen will return to displaying your ‘inbox’. You should receive an on-screen confirmation that your email has been sent:

Your message has been sent. View message

• If you want to view the message you have just sent, click ‘View message’. Alternatively, you can always read messages you have sent by clicking ‘Sent Mail’ in the top left hand corner of the page.

How do I read and reply to an email?

• When you receive an email, it will arrive in your ‘inbox’ at the top of the list. Emails that you have not read will appear in **bold print**. We have received a reply to the email we sent to Mark at Age Concern:

The email we have just received is the one at the top of the list – it says ‘me, fletcher (2)….Party on February 18th’. The first column tells you who the email is from – in this case ‘fletcher’ or ‘Mark at Age Concern’ as we know him! The second column is the ‘subject’ column – ‘party on February 18th’. The third column shows the first few lines of the actual...
email. To read the email properly, click on it. You can click anywhere to the right of the small blue star. Clicking the email will display it:

- When you email somebody and they send a reply, Gmail groups these related emails as 'conversations'. In the above example, you can see the email that Mark has sent in reply to our party invitation. The email that we sent to him (and that he is replying to) is just behind the email currently being displayed. To display it, click the text to the right of where it says 'john smith' in the above example. The original email and its reply is then displayed:

- To reply to an email, click the word 'Reply' which can be found at the bottom of the incoming email. A new screen will be displayed:
• When you reply to an email, there is no need to type the email address in the ‘To’ box – it is entered automatically. In the example above, you can also see that the insertion point is displayed so you can just start typing your reply. A copy of the email you are replying to is displayed below where you type – this is normal!
• Type your reply. Your screen should now look something like this:

• To send your reply, click the ‘Send’ button.
• You will receive an on-screen confirmation that your email has been sent:
Instead of replying to an email, you can ‘forward’ it – send it on to someone else. To do this, follow exactly the same procedure as when you reply to an email except click ‘forward’ instead of ‘reply’. When forwarding an email, you will need to type the email address of the person you are forwarding the email on to into the ‘To’ box.

**How do I deal with email attachments?**

**Sending an email with an attachment**

Emails are simple text documents. However, you can use emails to send ‘attachments’. Attachments are things such as pictures, documents, files etc – in fact anything that you have stored on your computer. We are going to look at how you can send an email with an attachment – in this case a holiday photograph.

- Follow the instructions beginning on page 7 entitled ‘How do I send an email?’, but don’t send it. Instead, look at the illustration below. Note the blue writing that says “Attach a file”. It is just below the ‘subject’ box and has a picture of a paper clip next to it:

- To attach a file, click the words “Attach a file”.
- A new ‘choose file’ window will be displayed:
• The picture that I want to attach is in the ‘Holiday pics’ folder which is in the ‘My Pictures’ folder which is in the ‘My Documents’ folder. I need to navigate to the ‘Holiday pics’ folder. To do this, first I click ‘My documents on the left hand side of the window. The window then looks like this:

![Image of file explorer window]

• Note that the ‘Look in’ box at the top of the window now says ‘My Documents’. The big box below the ‘look in’ window shows the contents of the ‘My Documents’ folder. The folder called ‘My Pictures’ is amongst the contents. Double click the ‘My Pictures’ folder to see its contents:
- Inside the ‘My Pictures’ folder is another folder called ‘holiday pics’. Double clicking this folder will display its contents:

- Note that the files may not be displayed as above (thumbnail view). They could look similar to this instead (tile view):

- The way pictures are displayed is controlled by the ‘views’ button. When choosing pictures it is best to set the ‘view’ to ‘thumbnails’ –
small versions of the pictures themselves. The views button is the last
button to the right of the ‘Look in’ box. You can change the way files are
displayed by clicking the views button then choosing the view you want:

- Double click the picture you want to attach to the email.
- Your screen should now look like this:

After a few moments, it will look like this:
Your picture is now attached. You can attach a second picture by clicking ‘Attach another file’ and repeating the above procedure. Don’t attach more than 3 or 4 pictures though. There is a limit to how much information one email can have attached!

- Click the ‘Send’ button.
- You will receive a confirmation that your email has been sent, as before.

Receiving an email with an attachment

- We have received a new email, with an attachment:

![Email with attachment](tropical_island.jpg)

The email with a subject of ‘My favourite beach’ has an attachment. You can tell if an email has an attachment because it has a picture of a paperclip on the right hand end of the line – see the illustration above.

- To open the email, click on it. The email will be displayed;

- If you just want to look at the picture, click ‘View’ and it will be displayed at its full size. What program it will be opened by depends on how your computer is set up.
• If you want to save the picture to your computer so that you can print it out or use it in other ways, click ‘Download’. A new window will be displayed:

![File Download Window](image)

• Click ‘Save’. A new window will be displayed:

![Save As Window](image)

• This window allows you to specify where on your hard disk you want to save the picture. We need to follow a similar procedure to the one we followed previously by navigating to the folder where we want to save the picture. In short, click ‘My Documents’ then double click ‘My Pictures’. The window will now look like this:

![Save As Window](image)
Click the ‘Save’ button. The picture (called tropical_island.jpg) is now saved in the ‘My Pictures’ folder.

To view the picture, click the ‘Start’ button at the bottom left hand corner of your screen, then click ‘My pictures’. In the window that opens, double click the file called ‘tropical_island.jpg’. The picture will be displayed.

You can now delete the email if you wish as the attachment is saved on your hard drive separate from the email. To delete the email, click the ‘Delete’ button above the email.

How do I create a group in my address book?

Sometimes, you may wish to send an email to several people at once. You can do this by adding more addresses in the ‘To’ box, like this:

Another way is to create a group in your contacts. If you are likely to want to send emails to the same group of people, creating a group will save you time.

1. Click ‘contacts’.
2. The Contacts window will be displayed:

Let’s imagine that Paul, Phil, James and I are in a book club. We will create a group for this book club so that we can send a single email to all members.

1. Click the ‘Add Group’ button:
2. The ‘Add group’ button is the second of the two buttons with the ‘+’ sign on it.
• You may see a small, yellow warning sign near the top of the browser window, like this:

![Warning sign image]

• Click the warning sign and a new message will be displayed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporarily Allow Scripted Windows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Click ‘Temporarily Allow Scripted Windows’
• Now click the ‘Add group’ button again.
• A new window will be displayed:

![Explorer User Prompt]

• Type the name for your group. Mine is called ‘Book Club’:

![Explorer User Prompt]

• Click ‘OK’.
• You will now see ‘book club’ in your list of contacts:

![Contacts]

Group “book club” has been created.
• The group is now created but it has no members! To add members, click in the ‘Add to this group’ box:

![Image of contacts window]

• The box will now look like this:

![Image of contacts window with + button]

• I will now add Paul, Phil and James to the group. I type ‘p’ and all my contacts starting with ‘P’ are displayed:

![Image of contacts window with contacts listed]

• I click on the contact called ‘Paul’ and his details are added to the group:

![Image of contacts window with contact added]

• Repeat this process to add further members to the group:
Now we have created the ‘book club’ group, we can email the group (send the same email to all members of the group)

- Click ‘Compose Mail’
- The ‘Compose’ window will be displayed:
- In the ‘To’ box, type ‘b’. The screen will show ‘book club (group)’ as one of your contacts:

Click “Book club” (group). The email addresses of the members of the book club group will be entered into the ‘To’ box:

Complete the email in the usual way, adding a subject and some text in the body of the email:
Click ‘Send’. Your email will be sent and you will get a confirmation of this:

![Email confirmation](image)

Your message has been sent. View message

When you have finished using your email account, click ‘sign out' in the top right hand corner of the page:

![Sign out button](image)