



Computer Corner

Is Your E-Mail Inbox Out Of Control?

(NAPSA)—If you're like most people, you probably feel overwhelmed when you check your e-mail each morning at work. Most online users maintain one or two e-mail addresses, and nearly one-quarter use three or more personal e-mail accounts at least once a month.

The good news is that it's easy to take control of your inbox if you find a system that works for you.

"The most productive way to manage e-mail is to consolidate if you have more than one e-mail account," says Lisa Pollock, senior director, Yahoo! Mail. "The easiest way to do this is with POP Access and Forwarding, a feature that centralizes all your e-mail accounts by automatically forwarding e-mail from one or more accounts to a single e-mail account for easy access."

Whether your e-mail account is for personal or professional use, organizing incoming messages can help keep e-mail under control.

Consider the following tips:

- **Organize by folders**—Create folders and sort e-mails according to person, project or even by month and review them according to importance. Establish filters that automatically sort incoming mail into designated folders.

- **Review messages immediately**—Try to handle messages as soon as you receive them, reading, responding, filing or deleting them as they arrive. This helps keep your inbox—and your mind—free from clutter.

- **Have a backup plan**—If you aren't able to review a message immediately, be sure your e-mail provider offers tools to flag the message so you don't overlook it. The "flag for follow up" feature marks a message to indicate that it requires further action, which can help you better manage your "to-do" lists. An alternate system is to label an e-mail as new, called



Finding a system that works for you—and sticking with it—can help you take control of your e-mail inbox.

"mark as unread."

- **Stomp out spam**—Unwanted "junk mail" can quickly clutter up your inbox. Make sure you have an e-mail account that provides good spam-fighting tools. An automatic filtering solution keeps unwanted e-mail out of your inbox, reducing time spent sifting through e-mails. Tools that provide the ability to customize filters and block addresses give you additional control to further protect your inbox. To stop those potentially offensive images, choose an e-mail service that offers a "block html" option, so you can preview e-mail before loading the images.

- **Extra storage options**—E-mail accounts quickly fill up with important messages that need to be saved. Messages with large attachments such as photos and files take up space in your inbox. Having the ability to scale your storage space is important. Most service providers offer extra storage levels so you can choose which level is right for you.

The more you rely on e-mail as a way to communicate, the more important it is to keep these tips in mind.

What is your e-mail personality?

Find out how you can apply strategies and tools to help manage your e-mail.

The Packrat—Are you afraid of deleting e-mails because you think one day you'll need them? If so, it's time for spring cleaning! Take a few minutes to review your inbox for e-mails that you honestly don't need anymore and hit the delete button. If you just can't let an e-mail go, set up folders and file them away so at least your inbox is organized. And, you can always buy extra storage space to keep those e-mails for as long as you want.

The Read and Deleter—Do you check your e-mail regularly and immediately delete e-mails you don't think you'll need and then turn around the next day and wish you had kept them? While you don't want to become a packrat, it's probably best to keep selected e-mails for a certain amount of time because you never know when you'll need to refer to them. Consider setting up folders to which you can send pertinent e-mails for later reference.

The Procrastinator—Do you drag your feet when it comes to reading or deleting your e-mails? Are the number of e-mails in your inbox so overwhelming that you'd rather keep putting it off? One way to stay on top of your e-mail is to sign up with a service that provides access via phone. Also, make sure your e-mail provider has a built-in spam filter, which will decrease the amount of junk e-mail infiltrating your inbox.

The Part-Timer—Are you one of those people that seems to forget you have an e-mail address and only check it once every few weeks? By the time you get to your inbox, it takes a lot of time to filter through it all. Take the time to quickly check your e-mail every day or every other day. This simple task only takes a few minutes if done frequently. And this way, checking your inbox won't seem like such a chore.

No matter what your personality type, Yahoo! Mail offers tools to help keep your e-mail organized.

