

# EMAIL BEGINNERS GUIDE

## A Little History:

The year is 2004 and three email services dominate the market. They were Hotmail, AOL and Yahoo mail. After extensive testing, Google decides to branch beyond being only a search engine and launches Gmail on April 1<sup>st</sup> (April fool's Day). Gmail was met with a lot of skepticism, especially because it offered 1 GB of free storage space at a time when other companies offered in average 100 MB.

Initially, only a limited group of 1000 opinion leaders were invited into the Beta test version of Gmail, and allowed to invite their friends and family. Then users from Blogger.com were also sent invitations, and within a short time, the invitations had become precious commodities. Some were being sold on EBay for as much as \$150 and websites that swapped invitations started appearing all over the web.

Soon Gmail started allowing its users to invite as many as 50 people, and it started growing exponentially until almost anyone who wanted to join could easily get an invite from someone they knew.

In 2005 it had increased its mailbox size to 2 GB, a huge amount of storage by 2005 standards and had become available in many languages beyond English. It has since continually added new features and finally, in 2009, it removed the "Beta" status from its name. Gmail is now one of the top email services in the world. Google now offers 15 GB of free storage shared across Gmail, Google Drive and Google+.

## Why Choose Gmail:

- It has an ever increasing amount of storage space instead of a set amount like Hotmail, Yahoo and AOL.
- It has created an interface that they believe works more naturally than the folder system used by the other 3 major services. It consist of stars and labels (more on that later)
- Gmail can be used as an account for a whole plethora of Google services
- Gmail Labs adds many features not commonly found on your average email account (more on that later)
- Certain features such as Google Drive (Cloud storage), Calendar and Chat work seamlessly among Gmail users.
- It is a powerful, reliable and feature rich email service. **And it's free!**

- It is web based email and works off of Google's servers rather than being downloaded to your hard drive which makes it much more difficult to get a virus.
- It's compatible with most mobile phones.

### **Creating an Account:**

When you do create a Gmail account, it automatically becomes your Google account with access to all of Google's services using your user name and password.

1. Go to <http://www.gmail.com>
2. Click the button that says "Create an account" on the bottom right box.
3. Carefully fill out all the fields on the form
4. Click "I accept. Create my account"

### **What do you get with a Google Account:**

Click on the block with 9 little squares in the upper right hand corner of your email. It will take you to other Google services.

### **Gmail's Interface:**

Most of Gmail's email functions are similar to the ones you might have used in other email services.

### **Compose Mail:**

It is what you would click to start writing an email. You can either type the full email address or start typing the first few letters and Gmail will search through your contact list and give you email address options to choose from. You can also click on the "To" button to be taken to your contact list where you can choose the email you want to use. When writing your email, by putting your mouse over the buttons on the compose panel, you can tell what each button does, be it change color, font, insert image or link.

### **Inbox:**

It is where you will find the email you have received and also where you will find replies you have written to those emails. Gmail stacks the messages sent back and forth between 2 or more people so you can view them all as a single strand, and easily

follow conversations – this is called the conversations view. This can be turned off if you want to see the emails individually.

### **Important:**

These are the emails that either you or Google has determined to be important to you.

### **Chats:**

This includes any chats you have done.

### **Sent Mail:**

All the email you have ever sent someone can be found by clicking the “Sent Mail” button. It will separate the emails you have sent from the ones sent to you so you can clearly see only the ones you sent yourself.

### **Drafts:**

Gmail will save a copy of the email you are writing as you write it as a “draft”. It will do so approximately every 4 seconds, but if you decide to save it yourself, you can always just click on the button that says “Save Now” on the bottom of the compose window. When you do that, a copy gets saved on the Draft folder so you can continue to write it later if you prefer. Once you send the message, they automatically disappear from the Drafts folder.

### **All Mail:**

This includes all mail that has not been deleted.

### **Spam:**

Gmail does great job keeping spam out of your inbox, but if you do receive some, or there is some insistent company that keeps emailing you even though you asked to be removed from their mailing list, simply select that email and click on “**Report Spam**”. It will make any emails from that address go straight to spam, and it will help Gmail recognize it in the future.

If you subscribe to something new you should click on the down button next to “**Reply**” and check “**Add to Contacts**”. Anything that is in your “**Contacts**” list will not go to Spam.

***I highly recommend that you look at your Spam folder before emptying it. Google does such a good job of determining Spam that sometimes good mail***

*goes there. If something that doesn't belong there goes into your Spam, put a check mark in the box next to it and mark it as "Not Spam". It will then go into your Inbox.*

### **Trash:**

Your Trash Folder includes everything you have selected to delete. You can empty your trash by simply clicking on **Empty Trash Now**. Google says that trash more than 30 days old will be automatically deleted.

### **More:**

The "More" button opens a series of options such as your "Spam" and "Trash". You can drag those labels in and out of the more button to customize how you want to view the main buttons on your email, so if you decide you want to have your "Trash" button readily available under the inbox, just drag it there, and if you decide you want your "Drafts" under the "More" button, just drag it there.

### **Report Spam:**

Gmail does great job keeping spam out of your inbox, but if you do receive some, or there is some insistent company that keeps emailing you even though you asked to be removed from their mailing list, simply select that email and click on "Report Spam". It will make any emails from that address go straight to spam, and it will help Gmail recognize it in the future.

### **Delete:**

Because your storage space with Gmail is constantly growing, it is unnecessary, for most people, to ever need to delete emails. If you just don't want to see a certain email on your inbox anymore, check the box next to that email and click the delete button. It will be moved to your trash folder. If you permanently want to remove your email, delete it out of your trash folder as well.

### **Organizing your Gmail:**

Over time, you may receive thousands of emails, and trying to find a certain email can become a difficult task. That is why it is important to organize your emails so you can easily find important ones in the future. Below are some useful features to help organize all your emails and contacts.

## **Contacts:**

There are several ways to add and organize your contacts. Click on the “Contacts” button on the left hand corner bar.

One very useful thing about Gmail is that you don’t really have to add your contacts by hand in the long run. Gmail will automatically add the emails of everyone you replied to or have written to.

Gmail will, by default, show you initially the most used contacts you have. To view contacts that don’t appear on that list, either use the search feature or click on the button that says “All”.

By clicking on the single little person with a + sign on the upper left hand side, you can add individual contacts.

By clicking on the multiple little people with a plus sign, also on the upper left hand side, you can create a group. You can move several people to each group, so when you need to email them you don’t need to select them one by one. For example, when I am working on a project with a certain number of people, I create a group called “Project Whatever Name” and add to it all the people who are part of that project. That way, when I need to send them all an email, all I need to do is select that group on the email address field and they will all receive the email.

You will notice that Gmail has already created a few groups for you if you decide to use them. They are the “Friends”, “Family” and “Coworkers” groups you see to your left of the screen.

On the upper right hand corner you will notice the import and export buttons.

You can import your contacts formatted as CSV files from Outlook, Outlook Express, Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail, Eudora and some other apps. Gmail also supports importing vCard from apps like Apple Address Book.

The Export button is used if you want to do the opposite, export all of your contacts to use in another program or as a backup.

You can also print contact information if you prefer the hard copy.

Gmail will also help you manage your duplicate contacts by merging them or removing old contacts.

## **Stars:**

Stars function in Gmail as a way of marking emails that you would like to pay attention to. You can star an email simply by clicking on the little star icon on the left hand side of any email when on inbox preview. When you decide to look for them again, you can simply click on the “Starred” button and it will retrieve all the emails you have chosen to mark with a star.

## **Labels:**

Labels are a much more elaborate way of organizing your emails. They work in a very similar manner to folders in other email clients. You can create labels by selecting an email, clicking on the button on top of the messages that says “Labels” and select a label that has already been established or create a new label.

## **Advanced Settings:**

There are many settings to choose from with Gmail. Some control basic features, some add features to the emails, some determine how you reply, who you receive emails from, and how you use your Gmail services. Below is a brief guideline for some of those settings. You can access them by clicking on gear in the upper right hand corner and then the “Settings” button.

There are 11 tabs under Setting which include:

General Settings, Labels, Inbox, Accounts and Import, Filters, Forwarding and POP/IMAP, Chat, Labs, Offline, Themes and Multiple Inboxes.

Details of these setting are covered in another seminar.