



Common frustrations with emails

Email is great but ...

Email is now a ubiquitous part of everyday life, whether at home or at work, chances are that everyday you'll be using email. Email has provided us significant benefits including being able to communicate with family and friends in far away locations, and the ability to receive information in a convenient and environmentally friendly way. However, have you ever stopped and considered that perhaps emails have also increased frustrations and lowered productivity levels?

Many people now dread the thought of opening their emails on Monday morning not only because there is already so much stuff there but the knowledge that even more stuff will soon arrive. This deluge of information, if not handled correctly, places a significant burden on the way people work, making them less productive and costing the business money. The major issue is that no one really shows people how to use email. They are simply expected *to know!*

The 5 Most Common Frustrations

1. Constant notifications

When an email arrives in something like Outlook you receive more than just a single notification. Firstly, your computer will normally make a 'ding' sound to announce the arrival of a new email. Next, it will display a brief summary of the email in the lower right hand corner of the screen. Finally, it will display an unopened envelope in the task bar in the lower right of the screen. That single email certainly makes sure it gets your attention doesn't it? Now what happens when you receive 10, 50, 100 or more emails a day? Your email starts demanding your almost undivided attention doesn't it?

By default, do we really need to know when every email arrives in our inbox? Such constant notifications are actually harming our productivity because they distract us from what we are currently doing. Once distracted it takes time to recover as the following highlights:

Dr. Thomas Jackson of Loughborough University, England, found that it takes an average of 64 seconds to recover your train of thought after interruption by e-mail. So people who check their e-mail every five minutes waste 8 ½ hours a week figuring out what they were doing moments before.¹

¹ http://news.cnet.com/8301-13846_3-10037909-62.html?part=rss&subj=news&tag=2547-1_3-0-5

Unfortunately, by default, Outlook is configured to provide notifications every five minutes. So potentially you could be wasting up to 8 ½ hours per week being interrupted by emails that arrive from any source. This means that you have allowed anyone from your boss, to your colleagues, your partner to a spammer to distract you from your work. Your email notifications are not very smart or helpful are they? So why do you use them? For most people it is simply because they don't know how to change or turn them off.

2. Immediate sending

Ever written an email and a microsecond after you pressed the send button you wished you hadn't? Everyone has sent an email that on reflection they wish they didn't. The problem is that once you press send the email is dispatched immediately and there is no way to recall it. Suddenly, what you have written not only ends up with the recipient but could be forwarded on to anyone else without your knowledge. That email is also archived somewhere forever. The simple act of being too rash with the send button means your oversight will last for eternity.

Most email programs are configured by default to send emails immediately, yet there is no reason why they should be and why that can't be changed. Inserting a small delay between the time you press send and the time the message actually leaves your inbox can allow you to delete an email before it is actually sent. A simple configuration like this can allow you to minimize the chance of an oversight living for an eternity.

3. Overflowing inbox

When new messages arrive they are delivered by default to your inbox. With the growing tide of emails the contents of your inbox continues to grow until it becomes beyond your capacity to deal with. What options do you have then? Allow the messages to fester or maybe perform a bulk delete? That may provide a sort term solution but the real problem is that the inbound email tide never ceases and everyday more and more emails arrive in your inbox. Unless you are able to deal with them effectively it is only a matter of time until your inbox is out of control again.

Most email programs give you an extensive set of tools to deal with incoming emails. They can be configured to sort inbound emails into sub folders for example. This allows emails to be automatically categorized and filed in a way reducing the volume of information you have to process. You can also usually configure automatic archiving features to save old emails and reduce the size of your inbox. Unfortunately, if you don't take steps to manage your inbox it will run wild and be a never ending source of frustration.

4. Recreating similar emails

If you examine the emails you send you'll probably find that many are almost identical. It would certainly make life easier if you could create common email templates that would save you the time of having to compose each response individually. Email presents countless opportunities for you to provide better and faster communication to boost customer service, sales, employee relations or project implementation. Many times, however, the email management and response process can become encumbered by repetition and human error.

Email templates save time, increase efficiency, and provide an easy way to deal with repetitive tasks. Instead of typing similar messages over and over again, or cutting and pasting from other documents, simply use a template. Are you wasting precious time by not using templates?

5. Locating information

Given the bulk of email that arrives every day, how can you be expected to locate something inside a single email somewhere in your mailbox? More importantly, how can you keep track of information in email as it flows between you and a recipient? Unfortunately, more and more of the information we deal with everyday now ends up in our inboxes yet we seem unable to locate what we need quickly.

Every email program has many different methods of organizing, indexing and displaying information. They also have many different ways of locating the information you need quickly. If you depend on an ability to locate information quickly then it is important you know how to use your email program to find what you want quickly. The faster you can find what you are looking for the better you can do your job.

A Solution

In most cases you can easily remove these major frustrations by simply re-configuring your email program. The problem is that no one ever shows you how to do this! The Computer Information Agency has two solutions that can help remove these frustrations and allow you become immediately more productive with email. You'll be amazed at the difference.

Enhanced Email productivity quick start booklet

We can provide all the information needed to configure your Outlook 2007 or Outlook 2003 email program to overcome these five major frustrations in a simple and easy to understand format. Not only that, we'll also throw in five additional configuration and usage techniques that make you even more productive with emails. All this is set out with comprehensive screenshots of each step in the configuration process. Nothing could be

simpler or cheaper for overcoming the five most common sources of email frustration and with an additional 5 techniques included, every employee should have one.

Enhanced Email productivity seminars

If your business wants employees to be more effective and efficient then consider our productivity seminars. Delivered at your office, these sessions demonstrate how to be more effective with email as well as other common technology. We'll work with you and your staff to ensure that you not only understand Outlook better but you'll also understand how to deal with emails more effectively.

Our seminars go beyond dealing with frustrations and examine issues of etiquette, formatting, when not to use emails and how to process email less and get more real work done. The seminars are tailored to suit your organizations needs and include comprehensive documentation and on-going support.

Special offer

Available till March 31, 2010

The enhanced email productivity seminars normally start at \$599 ex GST for a half day seminar but as part of this offer we'll give you a **15% discount** off the price of any seminar we conduct if you quote code PROZF76-2. For more information about our enhanced email productivity seminars please go to <http://www.ciaops.com/smarterproductivity> or contact director@ciaops.com to discuss your requirements.

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