



Tech Savvy Seniors

INTRODUCTION TO EMAIL

PART 1 BEGINNERS GUIDE

TOPIC: INTRODUCTION TO EMAIL - PART 1

WELCOME TO EMAIL

Email is one of the fundamental internet technologies, a tool used by nearly every person with an internet connection. It allows you to –at no cost – send a letter of unlimited length to one person, or many people at once. It arrives almost instantly, and they can reply straight away. Setting up your own email account will allow you to communicate with people you know in ways you never thought possible.

WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

While you will have heard of email, you may not know exactly how it works, what you need to get set up, or how to use it. You won't have an existing email account, either... but you will after this workshop!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

An internet-connected laptop or desktop computer; either your own or supplied by the workshop organisers. You may need to share a computer with others in the workshop.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

This workshop covers the basic steps you need to help keep in touch with your family and friends using email. It will explain how to set up an email account, how to send an email, and how to read and reply to emails that have been sent to you.

TIMETABLE

We've broken down today's workshop into seven parts, with a 10-minute break in the middle. Remember to ask questions – this works best as an interactive exercise.

Subject: What is email and how does it work? Duration: 10 minutes



Subject: A guide to email addresses: what does the '@' mean? Duration: 10 minutes

Subject: A demonstration of email in action Duration: 15 minutes

Subject: Setting up your own email account with Gmail. Duration: 30 minutes

Break. Duration: 15 minutes

Subject: Reading email you've received. Duration: 20 minutes

Subject: Addressing and sending an email. Duration: 15 minutes

Subject: Replying to and forwarding emails. Duration: 15 minutes

Subject: Summary. Duration: 10 minutes

Total. Duration: 140 minutes

SUBJECT: WHAT IS EMAIL AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Time: 10 minutes.

OVERVIEW:

Email is the modern way to send letters – you can send a message to the other side of the world and get a reply in minutes!

Email is short for electronic mail. An email is a letter that is sent over a computer network instead of being sent through the post. You can attach documents and photos to emails, just like you can include a photo or a document with a letter. You can also attach computer files, such as programs and spreadsheets.

Sending and receiving email is generally free, and you can actually send an email to as many people as you like.

Each person on email has a unique email address, which is how you direct an email address to a specific person.

You can even send emails to yourself. This sounds kind of silly, but people do this to send themselves reminders and also to transfer files from one place to another.

All your emails come into your Inbox, which is like your virtual letter box. Later in this session, we'll talk about how you set up your own Inbox.

Email has its own writing conventions, which may take a little getting used to. Not many people start an email with Dear sir, or end it with Regards.



It's a lot less formal than that. There's nothing wrong with being formal, of course, but some readers might think it strange.

There are also abbreviations and things called emoticons that you might find useful to learn. Emoticons use punctuation marks and letters to help indicate the tone of an email.

The dark side of email is that anybody can send email to anybody, and because it's free to send you can end up with a lot of junk (e)mail. That's called spam, and there are tools that can filter spam out from your Inbox.

You can have multiple email addresses if you like. You don't have to limit yourself to just one!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMAIL

Email is actually older than the internet, having been developed in conjunction with the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) in the late 1960s and early '70s. ARPANET was the precursor to the modern internet that was built as a research project by the US Department of Defence.

Original emails were text only, didn't support having documents, photos or video attached to them, or even different fonts. It was only in the 1980s when ARPANET morphed into the current internet that email started to look like it does today.

SUBJECT: A GUIDE TO EMAIL ADDRESSES

Time: 10 minutes.

WHAT DOES THE '@' MEAN?

An email address always has an @ symbol (pronounced at). Australian email addresses often finish with .com.au – although if you use a web mail service like Gmail (which we'll be walking you through later), you can also end up with a .com address.

If you get confused between email addresses and website addresses, remember that website addresses begin with www.

An example of an email address is mary@domain.com.au. It would be read aloud as mary at domain dot com dot au (you never add another dot to the end of an email address).

Every person's email address is completely unique. If you email a person who works at a company, you'll probably see that their email address includes the company name.



For example, a person named Joe who works at Telstra might have an email address `joe@telstra.com.au`. If a person uses a free web mail service (like we will later in this workshop), their address will have that service's name after the @ symbol. For example, `myname@gmail.com`

SUBJECT: EMAIL IN ACTION

Time: 15 minutes.

OVERVIEW

To give you an idea of how email works, your presenter can provide a quick walkthrough of how to send an email:

- First, a new email is created
- Then, recipient addresses are filled in
- Next, a subject line is entered
- Then the content of the email is typed in
- And the email is sent.

We'll walk through these stages slowly, step by step, later in the workshop. But first we have to create an email account for you!

BEHIND THE SCENES: EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you attended our Introduction to the Internet workshops, you might have a little background on the idea of domain names. Those are unique web addresses, like `telstra.com.au` that identify websites.

Email addresses use these exact same domains. When you send a mail to `joe@telstra.com.au`, the internet knows to send that email to the computer located at the `telstra.com.au` address. Then that computer looks at the name before the @ symbol and directs it to that particular person's Inbox.



SUBJECT: SETTING UP YOUR OWN EMAIL ACCOUNT WITH GMAIL

Time: 30 minutes.

OVERVIEW

Now it's time to create your own personal email address.

We'll be using a free service called Gmail (short for Google Mail) for this workshop. This is not the only free email provider, but it is a very good one.

As an added bonus, creating a Gmail account also gives you a Google login, which can be used to access other Google sites and services, such as YouTube and the Google Play store where you can download movies, music and apps.

When we're done, you will have a unique, private email address that looks something like myname@ gmail.com (where myname is your name).

SETTING UP A GMAIL ACCOUNT

The first thing we have to do to get our Gmail account up and running is to register a new account. Go to www.gmail.com in your web browser. This takes you to the Gmail login page (you can also use gmail.com but this first page will look different).

We don't have an account yet, so it's time to create one. Left-click on the Create an Account button.

This takes you to the Google Account Sign-up page.

You have to fill in the fields. One by one, move your mouse pointer to the empty boxes (called fields) and left-click on them, then type in the answer. In the appropriate fields, you need to enter:

- Your first name
- Your last name
- A username for your email address (your email address will be username@gmail.com, where username is the name you enter into the field). Read more about this on page 9.
- A password (which you need to confirm by retyping it). Your password can be anything you like. You just need to remember it!



Your username

Choosing a username is often difficult, since so many of the common ones are already taken. Unless you have a highly unusual name, it's likely that your name is already taken. You can try nicknames and various alternate spellings. If your name is Joe Blo, you could try JoeBlo, Jblo, JoeyBlo, Jblo24 and so on until you find one that isn't taken.

If a username is already taken, Google will immediately let you know if it is, and suggest alternatives (which are usually whatever you entered with a string of numbers at the end).

Click Next to go the next page.

- Your birthday
- Your gender.
- You don't have to fill in the fields with:
 - Your mobile phone number
 - Your current email address (since you don't have one)

Keeping clicking the blue arrow to get to the end of the terms and conditions, then click I agree. You might have to solve the captcha (that's the box with the hard-to-read words in it) by typing in the words you see in the box into the field just below it. Thankfully you only have to do this once – it's to prove that you're a real person, not another computer trying to make fake email addresses.

Now click Next to work through Gmail's introduction which explains a few things. Then click Go to Gmail.

And that's it – you've created an email account for yourself. It's yours forever.

You can log into your email at any time by going to www.gmail.com (although it's faster to just type gmail.com which takes you directly to the login page). Instead of clicking on Create Account, however, you now type your username and password into the login fields.

A GUIDE TO PASSWORDS AND USERNAMES

A strong password is 12 characters or more and uses a random mix of letters, numerals, symbols and capitals.

You could also try typing out three or four words, what's known as a passphrase, mixed with some capitals and punctuation.

It may be tempting to take a joke username, but remember that this will be your email address forever! Everybody you mail will see this address, and strangers may not get the joke or may be offended by it.

This is very important TOO: make a note somewhere of both your username/email address and password. You'll need these to access your email in the future!



PC EMAIL SOFTWARE

We're using webmail for this workshop. Webmail is an email inbox that you can access using a web browser. You don't need anything installed on your PC apart from your web browser.

You can get software for your computer that allows you to send and receive email without using a web browser. Such software is called an email client, and examples include Outlook, Mail (built into Windows 10) and Mozilla Thunderbird. Setting them up can be a technical challenge, however, so we advise you just to use webmail for now.

SUBJECT: READING EMAIL YOU'VE RECEIVED

Time: 15 minutes.

READING EMAILS

Now that we have gone through the process of setting up an email account, it's time to get to the good part: sending and receiving mail.

Let's first look at the Gmail interface (this is, in fact, what nearly every email service looks like) Click on Inbox and you'll see a welcome email from Google.

From left to right in that main section, you'll see some strangely shaped boxes (they're used for email management; don't worry about them for now), the name of the sender of the email, the subject of the email (along with some of its contents in grey) and the time that it arrived in your Inbox.

On the left are your navigation items: Inbox, Starred, Sent Mail and Drafts, with a big red Compose button above them. These move you to different sections of your email. For now, the important one is the Inbox.

Next to Inbox you'll see a number. For example, Inbox 1. That means you have one new or unread email waiting in your Inbox.

Now to read your email: simply left-click on the subject of the email.

The email will open up, and you'll see its full contents.

Above the opened email, a new bar will appear, with controls for that email. Some of those we'll cover in the Introduction to Email Part 2 and Part 3 workshops, but for now two are important:

- the Back arrow, which takes you back to your Inbox.
- the Trash can, which deletes this mail from your Inbox



To go back to your Inbox, left-click on the Back arrow. You can also click on Inbox on the left to go back to the main Inbox view.

You'll notice that now you've read the mail, it will no longer be in bold, and the number next to Inbox on the left will have dropped by one. Only emails that you haven't yet read are bold. Whenever you receive a new email, it will appear in your Inbox immediately, and in bold.

SUBJECT: ADDRESSING AND SENDING AN EMAIL

Time: 20 minutes.

COMPOSING AND SENDING AN EMAIL

Now that we know how to read emails, it's time to figure out how to send one.

First, you will need a recipient's email address. You might be able to use the address of someone else attending this workshop.

If you don't have someone's address to send to, you can actually send an email to your own address.

In Gmail, click on the Compose button on the left. A New Message window opens at the bottom right.

Now it's time to address the email: in the To field type in the email address of the recipient. It has to be exact: if even one character is wrong, it won't get to its destination.

Next in the Subject line, give the email a subject. This can be anything, but the idea is to give a quick overview of what the email contains. It appears in the recipient's email Inbox, so they know what your letter is about without having to open it.

For this first email, you can just type something like This is my first email! And finally, in the big empty box at the bottom (called the body of the email), you can type the main contents of the email.

If you want to get fancy, there are formatting buttons, like in a word processor, as well as a spell checker. But for now, let's keep it simple. Type something like Hi there. This is the first email sent from my new email account! Hope all is well. Cheers! The email can literally be as long as you want, five words or thousands. As a rule, though, you don't need to write a whole long letter with each email. Remember that emails are free and instantaneous: they're more like phone texts than written letters. You don't have to write a whole long screed to make it 'worth it'.

When you've finished and you're ready to send the email, click on the red Send button.



The email will be sent off into the ether, and you will be returned to your Inbox.

If you're practising with somebody else in the workshop, they can go to their Gmail Inbox straight away. The email from you should arrive in seconds. If you entered your own email address into the To field, it should arrive in your Inbox.

You'll also see one other thing: Gmail keeps a complete record of every mail you send. If you click on Sent Mail on the left side of the window, you'll be able to see a record of the mail you just sent. You can click on it to see the contents of the mail, just as if you were opening it on your Inbox. (If you do this, you can return to your inbox again just by clicking on Inbox).

SUBJECT: REPLYING TO AND FORWARDING EMAILS

Time: 15 minutes.

OVERVIEW

You've read and sent your first emails. Just one more lesson for today: replies and forwards. A Reply is a response to an email you've received. It goes back to the person who sent the original email.

People can reply back and forth indefinitely.

A Forward is when you take an email you've received and send a copy along to somebody other than the original sender.

SENDING A REPLY

Go to your Gmail Inbox.

Open up any mail you've received (although it's best that it's a mail from somebody you know).

Underneath the email you'll see buttons saying Reply and Forward. You'll also see short scripted responses like "Me too!" for when you just want to fire off a quick reply. Click on Reply.

Alternatively, just at the top right of the email there's a little arrow pointing left (see inset image above). That also starts a Reply.



A Reply window will appear, which looks just like the Compose email window, except that the recipient will already be filled in for you (it will be the person who sent you the email originally).

By convention, you're expected to type in your reply to the email in the space above the original letter (so that it's the first thing the recipient sees when they open the email). Don't worry about the amount of space – as you type, the original email will be pushed down.

When you're done, left-click on Send.

The person who sent the original email should get your reply straight away. The subject line will be the same as before, but with a re: at the beginning of it, indicating that it's a reply.

Again, if you're in a workshop with multiple people, you can practice sending replies back and forth.

FORWARDING AN EMAIL

Forwarding an email is a lot like replying.

Go through the same steps as above, except instead of clicking Reply, click on Forward below the opened email.

You'll notice that the process looks nearly identical to Reply, with one notable difference: the recipient in the To field isn't filled in for you. You have to type in the name of the person you want to forward the email to.

Again, if you have anything to add to the email, it's expected that you type it above the original contents.

Click on Send when you're ready to forward the email on.

When that person receives the email, the subject line will have Fwd: at the beginning (indicating that it's a forward).

SUMMARY

Now we've created an email account and sent our first emails. You can leave Gmail at any time just by closing the web browser window or tab. None of your data will be lost. You should now be able to:



Time: 10 minutes.

RECAP

- Create an email account (not that you have to – you can keep on using the one you created here)
- Read emails that have been sent to you
- Compose an email, including filling in the recipient's email address, subject line and email contents
- Reply to somebody else's email
- Forward an email on to a third party.

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS

As you can probably see from all the extra widgets and gadgets in Gmail, there are a lot more things you can do with email. In Part 2 and Part 3 of our Email workshops, we look at:

- Organising and archiving emails
- Dealing with junk mail
- Sending group email
- Creating address books so you don't have to remember email addresses
- How to avoid email scams
- Some of the stranger conventions of emails.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Gmail: mail.google.com

Google Mail (Gmail), is one of a number of free, web-based email services you can find online.

It's very simple to set up an email account. Gmail support: support.google.com/mail

This includes guides on how to use all the features of Gmail, as well as how to set up a dedicated email program like Outlook or Mozilla Thunderbird to access Gmail.

Mozilla Thunderbird: www.mozilla.org/thunderbird

A standalone email program. It saves you from having to start up a web browser to access your email, but can be a little technical to set up.



GLOSSARY

Term: BODY. Explanation: The main (letter) part of an email.

Term: EMAIL. Explanation: An electronic message that is sent over the internet or a private computer network.

Term: EMAIL ADDRESS. Explanation: The unique address of an email recipient. It looks something like mary@mycompany.com.au.

Term: FIELD. Explanation: A box on the screen that you type information into.

Term: FORWARD. Explanation: Sending an email you've received onto somebody else.

Term: GMAIL. Explanation: A free web-based email service.

Term: INBOX. Explanation: Where new incoming emails appear.

Term: INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP). A company that provides access to the internet, for example Telstra is an ISP.

Term: OPEN (EMAIL). Clicking on an email to see its full contents.

Term: REPLY. An email sent in response to a previous email.

Term: SUBJECT. A special field containing the topic of an email.

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