

# 3 Steps to Managing your Inbox

By Stuart Reid

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## Three Top Ways to Organize your Inbox

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Your Inbox can easily become cluttered and hide important mail before you get a chance to see it. You've probably already noticed this, right?

Luckily there are three easy ways you can save yourself a lot of time and effort, WITHOUT resorting to filter software.

### 1. Multiple eMail Accounts.

There are literally thousands of eMail providers who will give you a web-based or POP account for free. Take advantage of this! Most ISPs will also let you have multiple accounts but its best to keep these for important mail.

Hotmail is useful because of its 'Exclusive' filter mode. If you want to use a hotmail account as a junk account then use this to delete ALL incoming mail. Any mail you want to let through simply add to the Allowed list.

If you need to confirm memberships simply switch off the Filter, reply to the mail, then turn the filter back on. This keeps your hotmail box clean and more importantly, empty.

Here's a suggested setup:

- . Personal Account - supplied by your ISP or Webhost. You may need multiple personal accounts for Business, Opt-In List, Friends etc.
- . Subscriptions Account - to receive opt-in messages from eZines

you subscribe too. Check every day.

. Junk Account - to sign up to bulk lists such as Safelists, FFAs etc. Use a filtered Hotmail account as mentioned above.

. General Account - to sign up to everything else. Don't set to delete but clean out regularly.

## 2. eMail Software Filters

NOT Spam Filters but the feature allowed in nearly all mail programs to filter incoming mail - such as move it into separate folders, mark it (highlight the message), or even send auto-replies. eMail Software differs on how this is achieved, but it's usually a matter of clicking a message, selecting "Create Filter", then set a "RULE" for the message.

Rules are quite easy to use. You can normally set a Filter Rule to look at Subject, Incoming Address etc. For example you can have a rule that moves all mail with the subject "New Subscriber" into a Subscribers folder.

## 3. Regularly clean your accounts

It's important to check your accounts every day if possible. It needn't take a long time. If you let them fill up you may end up just deleting the whole lot in despair!

Using filters will greatly reduce your workload. Other tips include:

Scan file sizes. Larger files (especially in your Subscriptions account) are usually eZines and smaller ones usually ads.

Look at the FROM addresses. Strange number sequences are usually spam and can safely be deleted.

Check the TO addresses. If it's not your own address, or a bulk address such as allsubscribers@ezine.com you can probably delete it, but check first.

Organize your mail boxes by date, and work your way from new to old. Make sure your mail program marks you mail as 'read' or 'unread' as soon as you click the message, not after a message is open for 30 seconds!

With a little forethought and experience your inboxes can be easily managed yet still allow all your mail through. One final tip - use PocoMail! It's a very useful mail program that's free to try and I find it much more intuitive than Outlook.

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