

What is Email?

E-mail is short for electronic mail. Instead of using pen and paper, your message is written (typed) on a device like a computer, smartphone or tablet, and then sent over the Internet to a recipient.

An email consists of multiple components including the **recipient** (who the email is being sent to), the **subject** (a brief description, 1 – 8 words, about the purpose of the email), and the **message body** (the main message of the email). An email can be addressed to a single individual or to multiple recipients. Typically, an email will reach the recipient's email account within 5 minutes, possibly faster. After receiving and reading an email, you can reply, save, print, delete, or even forward the message to another recipient along with an new introductory message at the top.

Email is often necessary to conduct business or correspondence over the Internet. Email addresses are required to create accounts with online organizations and businesses. To shop online, sign up for government programs, or apply for a job, you will need an email address -- and therefore, an email account – first.

How to create an Email Account

To create an email account, you first need to decide on an email provider. Some example email providers include:

- Gmail – google.com
- Outlook – outlook.live.com

After going to the website of your chosen email provider, you will then follow the prompts to create a username and password. You will also be asked to provide basic information like first name, last name, age, and phone number. Your phone number can be used as an additional method of contact in case you are locked out of your account. It is helpful to have a username and password in mind before you begin setting up your email account. As you will need need both the

username and password to log in every time you want to review your email, it may be helpful to write both pieces of information down and store them in a secure location. If you lose or forget your username or password, you may not be able to recover your account.

Creating an Email Address/Username:

An email address is like your home address, there is can only be one of each address. This helps to make sure you are the only person who gets your mail!

Your username must be also be unique – no other person can have the same username for their email account (at least not with the same email provider). If you have a common name, it is likely that most combinations will already be used. You may have to include numbers, punctuation, or words to create a unique username.

There are no spaces in an email address and an email address uses the @ symbol (called the ‘at’ symbol) to denote the email provider. Capitalization does not matter, so normally email addresses are written or typed all in lower case.

If your name was Bob Thomas Smith, some username ideas could be:

- bob.smith
- bsmith1967
- smithbt

If you were creating an email account through Gmail and ‘smithbt’ was an available username through their system, your full email address would be: smithbt@gmail.com.

You do not need to use your first and last name in your username, but it is a good idea if you are using the account a job search or other professional purposes.

Creating a Password:

A password can be absolutely anything that you will remember; it can even be complete nonsense. Your password should made up of words that are unique and easy for you to remember, but hard for others to guess. It is not advisable to choose something like your street name, pet’s name or favorite color. The strongest passwords are lengthy (10+ characters) that include a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and some symbols such as

exclamation points and asterisks. Most websites or online accounts have requirements for your password – like containing a certain number of characters and including both capital and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols – so make sure you are following their requirements or the password you are trying to create will not work. Please note - it is recommended that you create a different password for each of your online accounts, including your email, to keep your account as secure as possible.

Some password examples:

- If you own a 2002 Toyota Corolla, you could use **T.Corolla2002!**
- If you were born in Milwaukee in 1958, you could use **Milwaukee.1958**

Important: Passwords are ‘case-sensitive,’ meaning capitalization matters. Once you create your password, you must always type it in the exact same way, using the same upper and lower case letters you did when creating the password.

Email Addresses vs. Website Addresses

As mentioned, an email address always includes the @ symbol while a website address does not. Information in your email account is private (only you can access it with a password), while public websites can be viewed by anyone. To visit a website, you type in the website address in the address bar at the top of your Internet Browser. To check your email, you first type in the website address for your email provider/server (such as gmail.com) and then type in your username and password in the sign-in boxes that appear on the webpage.

Email Safety

- Use common sense when you're on the Internet and maintain a healthy dose of skepticism. Use caution when revealing personal information such as your physical address or banking information to anyone you meet through email, even if they claim to be someone of authority. If the information that the company is asking for does not make sense, you can always call the company to verify the need for the information. Using extreme caution is best until the request can be verified.
- Always remember to sign out of your email account, especially if you are using a public computer.

- If you are using your personal computer, make sure you have up to date security software to protect your information from malicious software.
- Never reply to unsolicited emails if you do not know the sender. Be careful of false emails; some scam artists send emails that look very convincing.
- Be wary of opening attachments if you do not know who sent you the email. Attachments can include computer viruses.