

Email Basics



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contact webmaster@bvres.org

Introduction

Email is a method of composing, sending, storing, and receiving messages over electronic communication systems. It provides a way to keep in touch with anyone who has an email account on the Internet. Since it is easier to type a few lines and click on the send button than it is to write a formal letter, many folks find that they are now communicating more often with friends and relatives. Also, since it is just about as fast to send email to someone half way around the world as it is to send a note across town, people are now communicating internationally more than ever.



NOTE: Please add **highlighted** words to your vocabulary.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Email Basics.....	1
Email Addresses.....	1
Internet Connections.....	2
The BVCC web mail host.....	4
Email read-write software.....	4
Multiple email addresses.....	6
Empty your trash.....	7

Email Addresses

To send and receive email, you first have to know the **email address** of the person you want to send email to. You also have to have an email address of your own. A typical email address will look like the following:
schoolmaster@bvres.org



The first part of the email address is the **user name**, in the above example **schoolmaster**. The characters after the user name, in this case **@bvres.org**, are the **domain name** of the **web mail host**. The last three characters in the address, the **name extension**, give a hint as to the type of **web mail host**. The extension **org** usually (but not always) indicates a non-profit organization, **com** usually indicates a commercial organization, and **net** usually indicates an organization set up primarily for email.

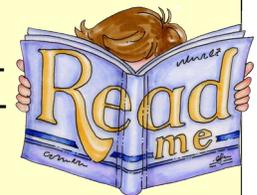




When you obtain an email address from a web mail host, you will be provided with a **password**. Whenever you want to access your email account, either for sending or receiving messages, you will have to enter your **user name** and **password**. This minimizes the chance that someone else will use your account or read your mail.

NOTE: There are many different passwords used with computers. In some cases, you have to enter a password to get the computer to start operating. You may use particular web sites, like bank account web sites, that require a password to enter. Keep in mind that your email password is different from the other possible passwords used with your computer.

As soon as you create a new user name and password, **make a note** in a place where you can find it 6 or 7 months from now. You will be creating different user names and passwords for different applications. Most applications requiring passwords allow for storing them on your local computer so that you do not have to enter them each time you start the program or app. If you forget a password for a particular application, it will be next to impossible to use that application. If an incorrect password is entered, the application will usually give you another chance, but sometimes entering too many wrong passwords can lock you out of the application for a time. There was a recent report of a toddler playing with an Ipad and locked the user out of the system for 47 years by entering too many wrong passwords.

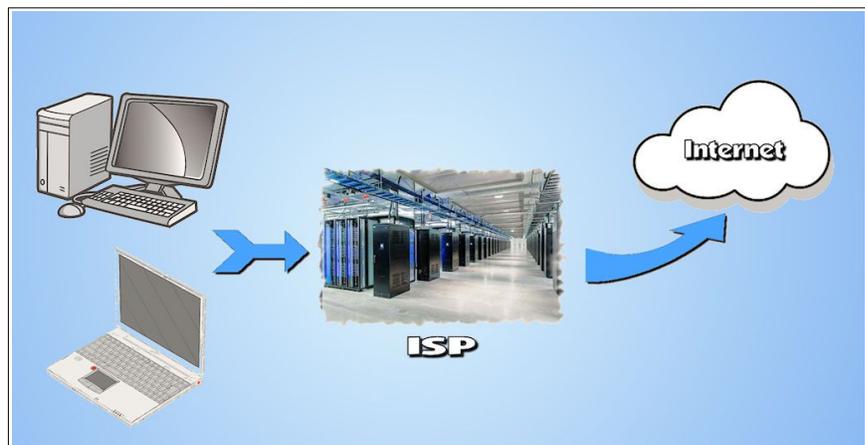


You might be surprised at how many people discover they need to enter a password for a particular application and cannot remember what user name and password they created way back then. Passwords for email accounts are very difficult to retrieve or change, otherwise they would be as useful as having a lock with the key attached to it.

To protect yourself from future blue bruises on your forehead, create a written log of all your user names and passwords and keep it in a place you can remember.

Internet Connections

Sending and receiving email requires that you have access to a computer that is connected to the Internet. Computers are connected to the Internet through an **Internet Service Provider**, or **ISP**. A thing to keep in mind is that the web mail host and the ISP are two different things. A point of confusion is that many ISP's also provide a web mail host service. For example, earth-





link will, for a fee, act as an ISP. Earthlink also provides as part of their typical service contract a web mail host option. To add to the confusion, earthlink also provides an email software option. (More about email software a little later.)

People can send and receive email without paying for an ISP as long as they have access to an Internet connection and have a web mail host. There are a number of free web mail hosts available such as **Yahoo mail** and **Gmail**. At Bristol Village, since January, 2008, residents can set up an email account by joining the Bristol Village Computer Club. Membership entitles you to a web mail host service. Email addresses through the Bristol Village Computer Club web mail host may have the form lastname.n@bvres.org.

Once you have an email address, you can send and receive email through any computer connected to the Internet. The Bristol Village Computer Club maintains a number of public computers that can be used for email. Many public libraries throughout the USA have computers available for public use. As you travel around, you can find free or low cost computer Internet access at many hotels, motels, fast food outlets, and government operated visitor centers. For example, I once used a computer at a visitor center in Shelburn, Nova Scotia, to access my email. My wife was able to access her email from a library computer in Wuhan, China.



Computers can be connected to the Internet either through wires, like Ethernet cables, phone lines or TV cables, or through **wireless access points**. Most new laptop computers include wireless capability. This makes it possible to send and receive email using a portable laptop computer. The point is that once you have an email address, there are many different ways to send and receive email. The thing to remember is that to send and receive email you must have three things:

- **1. An email address supplied by a web mail host.**
- **2. A computer connected to the Internet through an Internet Service Provider (ISP).**
- **3. A computer program, (email software, or App) that enables you to compose, send, and read email messages.**

Many people sign a contract with an **ISP** that also provides a **web mail host** service, and may also provide **email software** for composing and sending email messages. Some people use email software, such as Microsoft Outlook, that come with the Windows operating system installed on their computer.

On the other hand, it is possible to have a web mail host separate from an ISP, and to use email software that is not supplied either by an ISP or the operating system in use.

NOTE: If you would like help with email from a BVCC member, you need to know the three things listed above for your situation. If you have not yet obtained an ISP or web mail host, you can try out email in the BVCC Computer Room.





The BVCC web mail host

The **Bristol Village Computer Club** provides a web mail host service for members. A bvres.org email address can be used with **any** ISP and with **any** email software. This means that if you change your ISP, you do not have to change your email address.

Note for folks who already have a web mail host and email address. It is possible to maintain any existing email address you might have and to have any email addressed to a bvres.org email automatically forwarded to your existing email address.

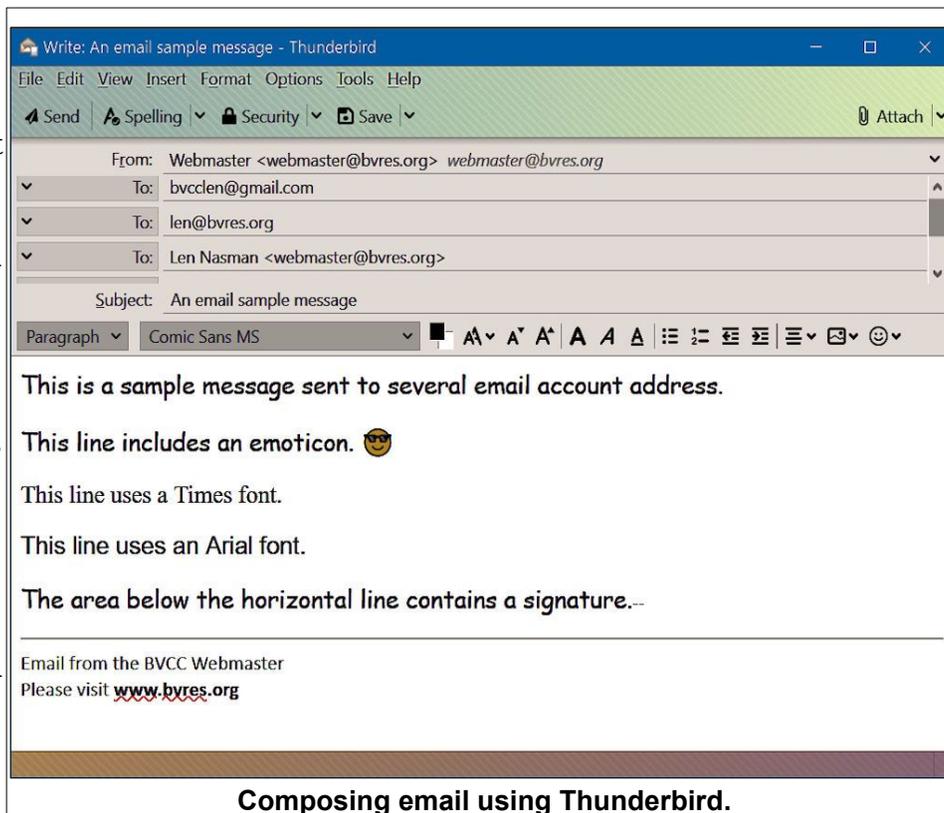


The Bristol Village Computer Room.

Email read-write software

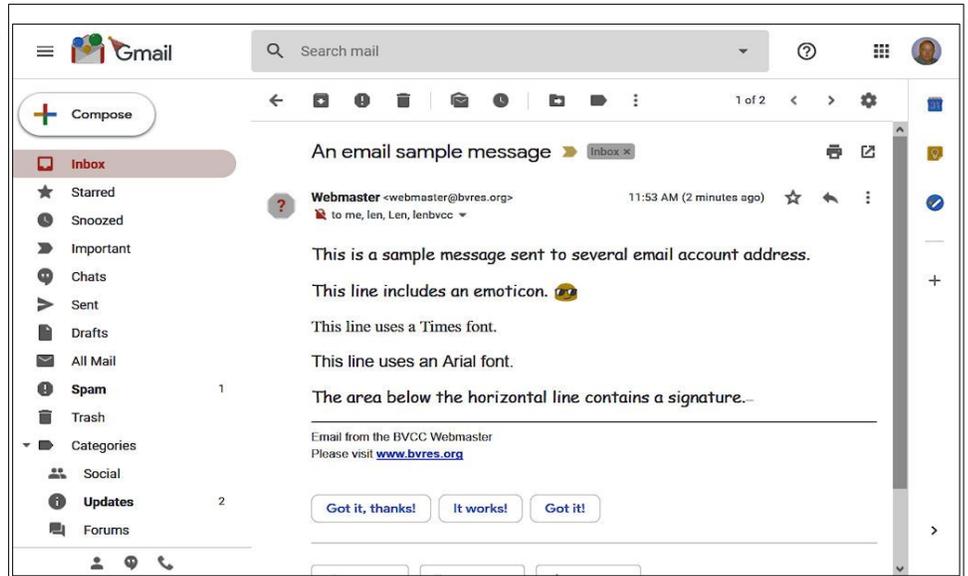
The third thing on the above list of email requirements mentions the need for a program to read and write email messages. Many web mail hosts provide such a program. However, there are independent software options, such as Thunderbird, for reading and writing email. Here are some examples from different email apps.

Thunderbird is a free program that looks and feels a lot like a typical word processing program. It can be configured to work with any email address. Messages can be composed and sent using HTML coding. (HTML coding allows text formatting using different font styles and options such as bold colors to be recognized by different apps on different computers.) Thunderbird has options for multiple address books, and message storage. Messages can be stored either in the cloud or on the local computer.



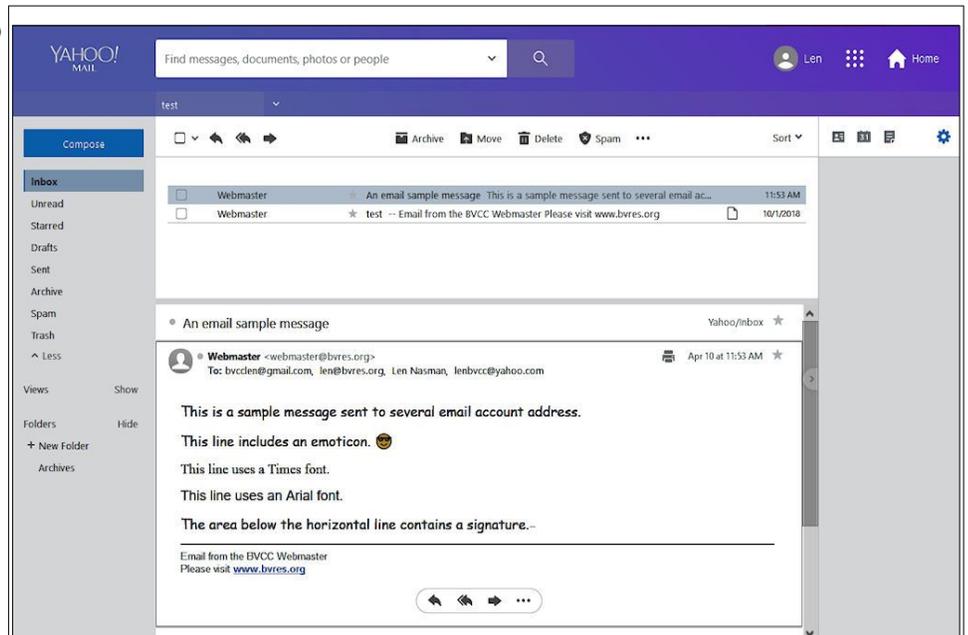


Gmail is a free web mail host. It can display messages using HTML coding. It has its own unique email compose interface that is unlike average word processing software. Maintaining multiple address books or contacts lists is not easy. Messages are stored in the cloud.



Message received by Gmail.

Yahoo mail is a free web mail host. It can display messages using HTML coding. It has its own unique email compose interface that is unlike average word processing software. Maintaining multiple address books or contacts lists is not easy. Messages are stored in the cloud.



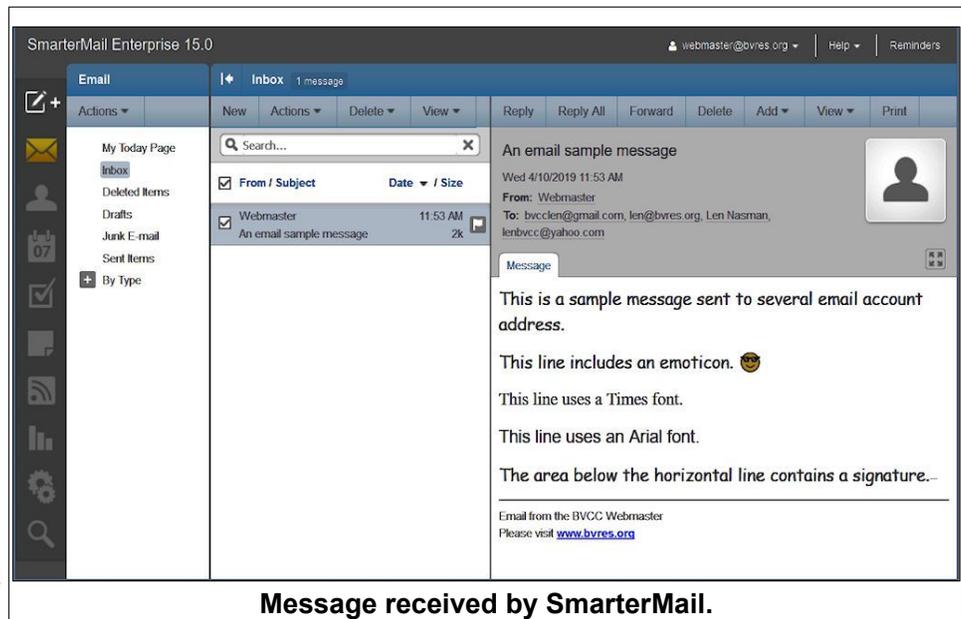
Message received by Yahoo mail.



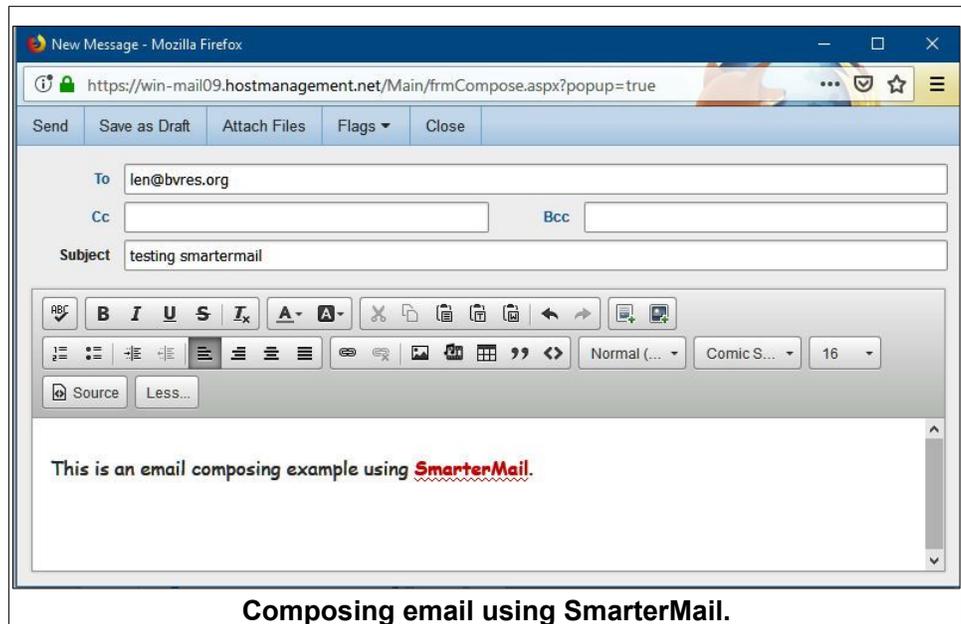


SmarterMail is a program provided by the web host used by the Bristol Village Computer Club. If you have a bvres.org email box, you can access your email from any computer in the world that is connected to the Internet. To access a Smarter Mail account, enter mail.bvres.org in a web browser address box.

The user interface for composing email messages using SmarterMail is basic, clean, and similar to word processing software.



Message received by SmarterMail.



Composing email using SmarterMail.

Multiple email addresses

It is possible to have more than one email address. Some folks establish different email addresses for different purposes such as family, business, or web account registrations. I have created an email address named len.j to use whenever an Internet web site requires an email address before receiving information from that site. The problem is that





many organizations that require email addresses share or sell lists of email addresses to advertisers. Having a special junk email address can do a bit to minimize having my regular email message inbox become filled with junk mail.

Empty your trash

Most email apps provide a delete message option that places the message in the trash, but leaves the message in your email file space. If you never select an empty trash option in your email app, your email host file space will fill up and you will no longer be able to receive new messages.

If you use Thunderbird, there is an option that will move messages from the email host cloud storage to the local computer each time you open a message. Another option automatically empties the trash every time you close Thunderbird. This prevents your email host storage space from becoming filled.

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Please credit copies to the Bristol Village Computer Club <http://www.bvres.org/bvcchome.html>

See the BVCC Schoolhouse
<http://bvres.org/Schoolhouse-web-page/schoolhouse.html>
for other tutorials.

