Gmail Tip #5: The Plus Side of Gmail

Like many Email providers, Gmail supports the standard "plus" addressing scheme. But just what is it, and how can it help me?

The "plus" method of addressing lets you add additional words to your account name (the "left side" of your email address.) For example, if your email address is "john.doe@gmail.com", you could add "+club" when you give your email address to members of a club to which you belong. So, your email address would now be "john.doe+club@gmail.com". But why would you want to do this? Think of the "plus" word as an extra "keyword" or "tag" that you can use to better manage your messages.

Using our example, say you email an invitation to your friends in a club asking them to rsvp to the invitaion. You ask them to reply to "john.doe+nope@gtmail.com" when sending you a responseif they don't want to come, and reply to "john.doe+ofcourse@gmail.com". Assuming they follow your directions, You can then set up a Gmail Filters to automatically route emails to specific Labels based on the addresses. It's a simple example, but the uses can be numerous.

Another use is when you are shopping online. When asked for an email address, use something like "john.doe+amazon@gmail.com". That way, whenever you get future emails addressed to that address, you'll know that it's either from Amazon directly or from someone to whom they sold your email address. This can be a somewhat effctive way to track spam. Just be aware that not all email systems recognize or accept "plus" addresses. In fact, some spammers even strip it out completely, but it's a cool tool, none the less. THe best way is to just try it and see if it works for your application!

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Date
07/08/2025

Date Created
06/02/2004