

## Gmail Tips – The Complete Collection

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This is the complete collection of all of my Gmail Tips posted between May, 2004 and December, 2007 to the GmailTips.com site. Unfortunately, some of the images have gone missing, and many of the tips are outdated as features and functions have evolved.

Please note that while this is not be an up-to-date reference, it does provide a wonderful glimpse into the history of how we used, interacted with, and adapted to Gmail.

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### Welcome to GmailTips.com!

May 12, 2004

Wow! Something's new! Yep, after a few years, I decided to migrate from [Joomla](#) to [WordPress](#) as my back-end site software. I find it to be better for my needs, so I hope that it will let me provide more timely and more frequent content. Second, I have included an RSS feed from the Official Gmail Blog. As news of new and exciting Gmail features come out, they will be posted here. Finally, GmailTips.com has always been part of JimsTips.com, so I decided to forgo the Gmail-looking theme and just use the same template as JimsTips.com throughout all of my Tips sites. Thanks for visiting!!  
-Jim

### What is Gmail?

May 12, 2004

Gmail is a free POP3 and IMAP webmail service provided by Google. In the United Kingdom and Germany it is officially called Google Mail. Gmail launched on 1 April 2004 as an invitation-only beta release and became available to the public on 7 February 2007. To this day the service remains in beta status and has tens of millions of users. With an initial storage capacity of 1 GB, Gmail drastically increased the standard for free storage from the 2-4MB its competitors offered at that time. The service currently offers over 7200 MB of continuously increasing (at a rate of 353.9 KB a day) free storage with additional storage ranging from 10 GB to 400 GB available for \$20 to \$500 (US) per year. Gmail has a search-oriented interface and a "conversation view" similar to an Internet forum. Software developers know Gmail for its use of the Ajax programming technique. (Source: [Wikipedia](#))

### Gmail Beta: First Impressions

**May 13, 2004**

The other day, I received an "invitation" to beta test [Google's](#) new "[Gmail](#)" email service. After having tried and used literally dozens of web-based email services over the years, I decided to see what the buzz was all about, so I followed the Invitation instructions, and within a couple minutes, I had a new Google Gmail account. After working with this account for several days, I have discovered some things that I like about it as well as some things that I don't. Read on for the lowdown...

First off, please note that this article is based on the pre-release beta of Gmail, so presumably, the public release will have additions, changes, and improvements. Also, I am using Internet Explorer to test this. Gmail supports most of the popular browsers, and even a few obscure ones, so if you use an alternate browser, be aware that your mileage may vary.

## **Webmail**

While Web-based email is nothing new, Gmail introduces some new and unique concepts. Managing email has become very easy while at the same time having powerful tools to find and review information. I have used quite a number of email clients and web-based email accounts over the years. I have tried email accounts at Yahoo Mail, Hotmail, Onebox, ZipLip, FastMail, AOL, WebBox, and literally dozens more. Some are good, some are better, and some are plain junk. All the while, I have kept a "vanity" email account with [NetIdentity](#) (who uses "SecurePath" technology), and though I do pay for their account, their web-based email interface is very simplistic and the space is limited. So I continually look for "better" solutions.

But why use Webmail when I have a good client in Outlook? To me, a personal web-based email account is essential because I do not always have access to my home PC. Sure clients like Outlook are great, but if you can't access your PC, you simply can't easily access your email. Gmail on one hand is just another free email service, it really has the potential to become the next "killer app", because it has some innovations not found elsewhere. Gmail does, however, need some polishing in a number of areas before it's really "ready for primetime".

I'm going to first walk you through some of the "features" that make up Gmail. Some are typical, and some are unique. Then I'll detail some suggestions that, in my opinion, would make the service significantly better.

## **Advertising**

Let's start off with the "tough" issue first: Advertising. This is probably the single most controversial aspect of Gmail. Opponents have said that Google's approach to inserting ads based on message content is a huge privacy breach. So much so that some legislators have proposed legislation to prevent Gmail from implementing this at all. OK, people, sit back and listen very closely as I step up onto my soapbox and

explain “the truth”...

Gmail does not “read” your email. Gmail does not breach your privacy. Gmail does not care about your message content. All Gmail is doing is running your message through a “processor” that looks for ad-related keywords so that it can display unobtrusive targeted ads. Gmail’s process of scanning your messages is technically no more intrusive than EVERY service like Yahoo Mail, Hotmail, and EVERY email service that offers virus scanning and spam protection. ALL of these services “scan” every word, every character, every phrase in your emails to determine if there is a virus present or if the message might be spam. Gmail’s processing simply differs in that instead of matching message text against virus or spam patterns, it is matching against ad-related keyword lists. This is done at the session-level, so no data is retained.

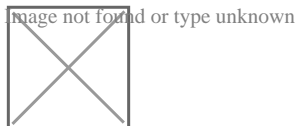
Google has been extremely open and forthcoming about its privacy policy and process. The real issue is that for the first time, the general public is finally beginning to understand a concept that has been used and upon which they have been depending for years. Could this process be abused? Yes, it could, but so could ANY message scanning process. It really comes down to if you have faith in the integrity of the company. Google has a proven track record, and they would be committing corporate suicide if they were to breach that record. Yes, it could happen, but if you are really that paranoid about Gmail’s processes, I suggest you not open a Gmail account and look elsewhere.

Another important point about Gmail’s ads is that they are VERY unobtrusive. They are much like the “Sponsored ads” you see on the right of a Google Search results screen. In fact, they don’t even show up on every email message that you read, and so far, that’s the only place you see the ads: when reading messages. They don’t appear in any other screen. Gmail’s ads are FAR less annoying than the flashy lights and huge billboards that services like Yahoo Mail and Hotmail use. And, given that the ads are intended to be targeted based on message content, you shouldn’t see inappropriate or unrelated ads.

OK, I’ll step down off of my soapbox now. Let’s move on to the details of Gmail...

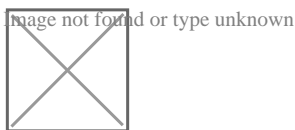
## Logging In

Logging in is typical of webmail services. The login screen is clean and simply requires you to enter your username and password. Here is what the Login screen looks like:



## Inbox

Once you successfully login, you are presented with your Inbox. Once again, it is pretty typical looking:



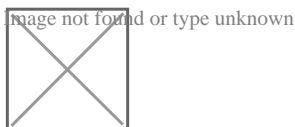
Messages are listed in a typical way, displaying the sender, subject, the first few words of the message body, and the date. Personally, I would like to see the message size included, but I can live without it. The checkbox lets you select individual messages on which to perform specific actions. The “star” lets you “flag” particular messages (more on this later.)

On the left are links that let you compose a message, and select different standard message groups (like Inbox, Sent mail, etc.) Again, it's one of the quick ways to find a specific message. Under the message groups is the “Labels” selector which I'll explain later.

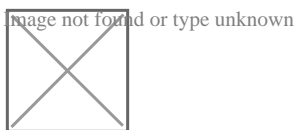
Finally, there are links to all the other functions which I'll describe below.

## Reading Messages

When you click on a message in the Inbox, the message opens for you to read or take action. Here is what the message screen looks like:



Note a couple things: First, no external graphics are displayed. By default, Gmail disables displaying externally referenced graphics. The reason is that many spam messages contain externally referenced graphics. When they are displayed, the email sender can use this to track that you opened the message thus validating your email address for future spam. Clicking on the “Display External Images” link will display the images if you want. Here's an example of the above message with external images turned on:



You can reply to or forward a message by simply clicking on the appropriate link. This is standard functionality with one glaring problem: If the original email is HTML or Rich Text formatted, Gmail will strip out ALL formatting including links, fonts, and images. ie: you can only reply in plain text. To me, this is a HUGE problem because it means that a nice, formatted message gets “altered”. My complaint is that if this is supposed to be marketed to the masses, they have grown to expect to be able to simply forward on what they received and expect it to arrive at its destination intact. I don't think this is an unreasonable request. In Gmail's defense, their support emails do say that they are planning on adding an HTML editor,

so presumably, this may be resolved, but as of this beta, it isn't. Note that this is NOT exclusive to Gmail. Some other Webmail services do the same thing, but it's rare.

## Starring a message

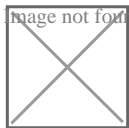
When you "star" a message, you can later click on the "Starred" link on the left of the Inbox screen and Gmail will display all messages that have been "starred". Your specific reason for "starring" a message is purely personal. It simply gives you yet another way to "group" messages.

## Composing a Message

Composing a new email in Gmail is simple. At beta, it is a simple, plain text editor. Gmail support says they are planning on adding an HTML editor.

Here is what the Compose Messagescreen looks like:

Image not found or type unknown

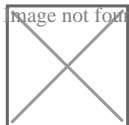


You enter the email address, the subject, and the message body and click "Send". Pretty normal stuff. One nice feature is that if you have contacts set up, as you type the contact's name, a quick menu of contacts containing the letters you typed comes up. You can select one of the addresses quickly and simply. Very nice. There's also an integrated spelling checker. You can also attach files.

## Contacts

Here is what the Contacts screen looks like:

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Underwhelming, isn't it? Simply put, it's a contact list and nothing more. You maintain names, addresses, and a short note for the name. No phone entries, no addresses, no birthdays, just names and email addresses. Streamlined to say the least. At present, there is no facility to import or export the contacts list, but Gmail support says that they are planning on adding it.

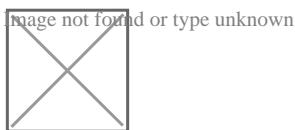
Some may view this as a weakness, but don't forget that this isn't a corporate groupware product, this is a

free webmail service.

## Archiving

One of the first concepts that you have to get used to with Gmail is that of “Archiving”. The overall power of Gmail is in its message management, searching and archival capabilities. In order to really leverage this, you need to get past the “I have to delete everything because I don’t have enough storage space” mindset. With 1GB of storage, the average email user will have enough storage space to hold several years worth of emails. Yes, there will always be emails that you simply don’t want to keep. Don’t fret, despite some speculation, you can always delete any message you want. You aren’t required to retain every email you ever received or sent.

OK, so what’s Archiving? Archiving a message simply tells Gmail to remove the message from your Inbox screen and keep it in your “All Mail” screen. Simple enough, but what does this mean? When you receive an email, it first goes into your inbox. You can read it, reply to it, forward it, etc. You can apply a label to it (more on labels later), you can trash it, or you can report it as Spam. Pretty typical functions. All emails will remain in your inbox until you specifically “Archive” them. Archiving simply removes the message from your inbox screen.



jimstips.com

But what happens to it? Don’t worry, all messages are always accessible through the “All Mail” screen. Archiving simply cleans up your inbox. Once a message has been archived, should you ever want to, you can easily move it back to the inbox, but there really isn’t a need for that.

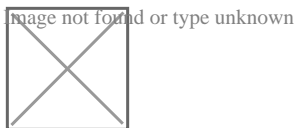
## Labels

The next concept that you have to wrap your mind around is that of the “Label”. A Label is a way of classifying an email. It’s similar to “folders” but it goes much farther: You can optionally assign a user-definable Label to any email. Then, when you click on a specific label in the label list on the left of the screen, Gmail displays only those emails under that label. Sounds a lot like folders, right?

The power of Labels shows in being able to assign multiple labels to an email. When you organize emails in folders, an email can reside in only one folder at a time. Say you have one folder called “Family” and another called “Jokes”. Your brother sends you a joke email, so where do you put it—the Family folder or the Jokes folder? Gmail’s Labels let you assign multiple labels to each email, so you could label your brother’s joke email with both “Family” AND “Jokes” labels. Now, when you click the “Family” label in the label list, you see your brother’s email along with all the other emails from family members. Likewise, when you click on the “Jokes” label, you also see your brother’s joke email along with all of your other joke emails. At first, this may not seem too exciting, but after a while, you will see how this could be very

powerful, especially with large numbers of accumulated emails.

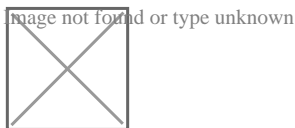
Here is an example of the Labels screen:



I actually like labels, and I know I'll miss it in my other email account screens.

## Searching

Searching is one of Gmail's unique features and strengths. Every email you have sent or received (that you have not sent to Trash) is searchable from the Search screen. Here is what the Search screen looks like:

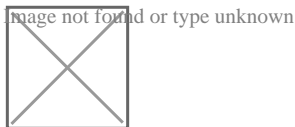


As you can see, you can search on text in various fields. The fields aren't exclusive either—you can enter search text into multiple fields to narrow down the searches. In its current iteration, it seems pretty solid and useful. In fact, now that I've had a taste of Gmail's searching capabilities, I sorely miss it on my other email accounts. This should become standard fare on every webmail service.

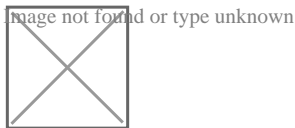
The only thing I don't like about Gmail's implementation is that it doesn't provide for partial word searches. For example, if I want to find the email that had the City "Spokane" in it, but I don't know how to spell Spokane, I'm out of luck. I cannot enter "Spo" or "Spo\*" or "\*kane". Not a big issue, but some will complain.

## Filters

Filtering is another useful feature. Filters are similar to Outlook's Rules. First you set up certain criteria similar to the Search function:



Then, you assign an action:



It's not fancy, but it is very useful to auto-label and archive certain emails. I read somewhere that you are limited to 20 filters. This may prove problematic for some.

## Suggestions

Now that I have shown you what Gmail can do, here is a list of some suggestions that I feel will significantly improve the service. I forwarded this list to Gmail's "Feedback" page, so hopefully, they will consider some of them.

1. Fix the "Forward" function to forward the message UNALTERED. This may seem like an odd suggestion, but currently, if a message is in HTML or Rich Text format, Gmail strips all formatting, links, and images resulting in a simple, plain text message. Messages need to be retained as-is for a number of reasons. Maybe, this could be an option, but by default, ALL messages should be handled unaltered.
2. Add "Report as Spam" button to same line as the "Archive", "More Actions", "Refresh" line. Yes, I could click on the "More Actions" dropdown and select it from the list, but I would rather have an easy-to-find button.
3. Replace the "Compose Email" and "Refresh" links with buttons for consistency. Just a cosmetic thing. If you are going to utilize buttons for some functions, be consistent across the interface.
4. Add an "Import" function to bring emails into Gmail. Say that I have a lot of emails residing on another email account that I would like to have "transferred" to Gmail. Yes, I could "Forward" them all, but then they would appear to be "From" me. Instead, I would like to be able to "export" the emails from my current account in .eml format, and then "import" them into Gmail seamlessly. Gmail should recognize them as "new" emails and apply all defined Filters.
5. Add an "Export" function to be able to copy emails out of Gmail providing users the ability to have "offline" storage and access. Yes, I could "Forward" them to another account, but it would be nice to have an online function that saved them all to .eml files and Zipped them all up for easy download.
6. Integrate the Search function into the above suggested Export function to allow selective exporting.
7. Add an "External Email" function to be able to pull in emails from other POP and IMAP accounts instead of having to forward those accounts to Gmail.
8. Allow for partial word searches.
9. Add "Import" and "Export" functions to Contacts. Managing hundreds of Contacts, requires this.
10. Add capability to "Label" Contacts (defined separately from the Message "labels".) Currently, contacts are simply a list. Being able to apply labels to Contacts would let us better view and manage them. Then, we could select just a Contact label for emailing and it should sent to all contacts with that label—kind of like a mailing list.
11. Have "Filters" optionally apply to ALL emails instead of just those selected or just new emails. Once we have hundreds or thousands of emails, being able to globally process emails may become essential.
12. Add an "Advanced Settings" option to allow "power users" to "tweak" more options such as edit box dimensions, screen colors, etc.



13. On the Settings screen, the entry "Maximum page size: Show XX conversations per page" has values of 25, 50, and 100. Add "20" to the list. This is large enough to show a good number of conversations, but small enough to prevent the user from having to grab the mouse to scroll down the page on a typical 1024x768 Windows XP screen.
14. Integrate Gmail notification into the Google Toolbar that would display the number of new messages in my Gmail Inbox. Clicking the button would then either launch the Gmail login screen, or if I could set my username and/or password in Toolbar "Settings", take me directly to my Gmail Inbox.
15. Provide an HTML editor to compose messages.
16. Allow Labels to be "nested" or "grouped" to allow for more granular labeling.
17. Optionally show a Size column in the Inbox listing and while reading a message. This should be toggleable through Settings.

## Final Thoughts

Gmail is at the same time unique and simple. It has some excellent features that are truly innovative, but at the same time, there isn't a lot of "depth" to many of the features. Unlike many popular webmail services, there is no calendaring, no email list management, no extended contact information, and there are some pending functionality issues, but as a beta, it certainly has some teeth to it. Gmail's interface is very fast, primarily because it is NOT cluttered with the marketing glitz and images that clutter so many other webmail services.

If Gmail was generally available in its current state, I wouldn't recommend it for primetime, particularly for the "forwarding problem". But given that this is beta, Google seems to be responsive, and Google has always provided solid tools, I'll venture a guess that the final release will be an excellent service.

## How I Imported archived email into Gmail

**May 20, 2004**

I have a large number (about 1000) of archived emails that I have saved over the years, and I am looking for a way to "import" them into Gmail so that I can leverage Gmail's excellent Search and Label features. Over at the Gmail forum at [Webmaster World](#) is a [posting](#) on how to "import" emails into your Gmail account using Eudora. Well, I had some problems with Eudora, so I decided to use Outlook Express. Here's the message that I posted...

Well, I spent some time last night "importing" all of my archived emails into Gmail, and it really wasn't too bad. After several failed attempts with Eudora, I decided to go in a slightly different direction. The problems I was having with Eudora were two-fold:

1. Gmail kept giving me that "Relay" error", so messages couldn't be delivered. (I COULD re-direct manually, on message at-a-time, but for some reason, using the Filter gave me the "Relay" error. Go

figure.)

2. I couldn't figure out how to import .eml files into Eudora. If anyone has any suggestions to these, I would be most grateful...

That said, I decided to use Outlook Express instead. It really worked like a charm, with two major idiosyncracies:

1. OE uses whatever "Name" you set up in OE's account properties as the "From" instead of the original email address. This is a HUGE advantage of Eudora—it retains the original address when you re-direct. This means that in Gmail, that name is what you see in the From column. More on this later.

2. OE uses the date you process as the email date, not the original email date, so that bit of data gets lost. I don't know how Eudora handles this, but I think it's the same as OE. To me, this was more of an annoyance than an issue.

End result? I now have almost 1100 emails in my Gmail account occupying 15MB (2%) of my space. The messages are now very easily searchable, labelable, and managable. Before I imported them into Gmail, there was simply no easy way to manage my old messages to find relevant information.

OK, so here's how I did it using Outlook Express (OE):

First, I opened OE and created an email account that pointed to my primary POP3 provider. In the "Name" field, instead of using my full name as normal, I used "Archived". This way, I can easily see that it's an archived email. Gmail will display this in its "From" column. I also set the "Leave messages on server" function checked for safety—didn't want to lose anything.

Next, I logged onto my Primary POP3 provider's webmail account and moved all emails from various folders into my Inbox. This way, OE would simply retrieve all emails. Yes, I just lost the organization I had to all these messages, but I'll take the time to use Gmail to quickly re-label them.

Next, I initiated a "Receive" in OE and retrieved all the emails from my POP3 provider. It retrieved about 650 emails.

I next went back to me Webmail account and moved all the messages into a "hold" folder clearing out my Inbox so that I wouldn't re-retrieve them.

Next, I opened Windows Explorer and opened the folder that contained 310 old ".eml" files that I had previously archived offline. I highlighted them all and then simply drag-and-dropped them into OE's Inbox. OE nicely imported them with all information (dates, original email addresses, etc.) intact. This simple task was something that I couldn't get Eudora to do. If someone knows how, PLEASE let me know!

I now 960 emails in my OE Inbox.

Side note: I found out that my particular POP3 provider won't allow a "send" of more than 100 emails at-a-time, so I had to work with batches of 100 or less emails. So I created three folders in OE: "Hold", "Temp", and "Processed". These would be my work folders. I then moved all the emails from the Inbox into the "Hold" folder.

Next, I created a "Message Rule" in OE that would look for all messages whose subject line DIDN'T contain a unique string forward those messages. I chose the string "{[!ThisWillNeverMatchAnything!]}" and I chose the email address of "jim.barr+import@gmail.com".

I then moved batches of 100 emails from the Hold folder into the Temp folder, opened the message rule, and clicked "Apply Now", browsed to the Temp folder and clicked "Go". OE selected all the emails and began sending them. Once all were sent, I moved the emails in the Temp folder to the Processed folder. I then repeated this process for all emails. With 960 emails, this took some time.

OK, over to my Gmail account.... This resulted in 960 emails now in my Gmail Inbox view. All had a "From" address of "Archived", and the email date was last night's date. I next created a new Label called "Mail Archive" and did a Search on all emails that had a "From" of "Archived". This way, I wouldn't inadvertently select anything that might have come into my Inbox while I was "processing" all the "Archived" emails. I then proceeded to select "All", then applied the label "Mail Archive", and then selected "Archive" from Gmail's "More Actions" dropdown. This really was tedious, because for some reason, despite setting Gmail to display 100 conversations at-a-time, Gmail only displays 20 conversations at-a-time in the Search results view. Yes, I know, I could have set up a Filter prior to doing this to auto-label and archive the messages, but I forgot..

Anyway, I now have a very clean and virtually empty Inbox and a new Label with 960 "archived" messages. Over time, I'll simply apply additional Labels to the archived messages to better organize them. Yes, it'll take time, but Gmail makes it so easy...

Now, if I just can figure out how to get past Eudora's "Relay" issue as well as figuring out how to import ".eml" files, I wouldn't hesitate trashing all the messages I imported last night and re-doing it letting Eudora apply the proper "From" name. But for now, I'm very satisfied with the results.

## **Gmail Tip #1: All About Labels**

**May 21, 2004**

Labels. Gmail lets you assign a Label to a message and then view all messages assigned to that Label. Sounds a lot like the typical "Folder", right? Well, almost. Unlike Folders, you can assign multiple Labels to a message letting the message span multiple categories. To better understand how Labels differ from Folders, consider the the real-world counterparts, and it should become clear.

Say you have a desk full of paper messages, some messages are from family members, and some are

jokes that your friends have sent you. Using the Folder model to categorize the messages, you would create one folder called "Family" and one called "Jokes". You would then look through the paper messages and file them accordingly. Simple and effortless. When you want to look for a message from your Father, you just look in the "Family" folder. But wait. One of the messages is from your Mother, AND it is a joke. Which folder do you file it in? That's the dilemma with Folders.

OK, back to the desk full of paper messages. Now, instead of having folders, say you have sheets of labels, some marked "Family" and some marked "Jokes". You affix "Family" labels to all messages from your family, and you affix "Jokes" labels to all messages that are jokes. Your Mother's message simply now has two labels on it. When you want to see all Family messages, you just grab all the messages that have "Family" labels. Some may also have "Jokes" labels, but you don't care because you are interested in your Family messages. Likewise, when you grab all the messages labeled "Jokes", some may also have "Family" labels, but again, you don't care because you are looking at Jokes. Further, if you only want to look at jokes from your family, you grab only the messages with BOTH "Family" AND "Jokes" labels.

If you followed me this far, you should have absolutely no problem understanding Gmail's Label concept. Because Gmail lets you assign multiple labels to a message, your filing dilemma is solved! Just put one or more Labels on a message, and finding it later becomes much easier.

You can add a Label to a message in one of two ways:

1. If you are viewing a message listing, you can just click the checkbox next to the message, click on the "Apply label..." dropdown, and select the Label you want to apply. Gmail will display the Label just to the left of the message's Subject.
2. If you are viewing a message, just click on the "Apply label..." dropdown, and select the label you want to apply. Gmail will display the new label to the right of the Subject line.

OK, you assigned a Label to a message, but at a later time, you want to remove it. How do you do that? Just select the Label view from the Labels box on the left, "select" the specific message by clicking the checkbox next to the message, and then click on the "Remove label 'xxxx'" button at the top of the listing. Your label has now been removed! Simple and intuitive. But where did the message go? It's no longer in the current view. If the message had one or more other Labels assigned, it will still show up in those Label views. If not, you will find it in the "All Mail" view.

Labels can be very useful and powerful once you break out of the Folder mindset.

## **Gmail Tip #2: Check Your Messages**

**May 21, 2004**

To leverage Gmail's excellent Label and Search functions, I imported close to 1000 archived emails into my Gmail account. (To see how I did it, click [here](#).) After working this large number of messages for a few

days, I have found that managing them, while typically easy and intuitive, it can sometimes be a bit cumbersome. Here is a tip to help you better manage your messages...

One neat feature of Gmail that may not be obvious at first is that Gmail “remembers” what emails you have “checked”. This means, for example, that if you use Gmail’s Search function to search for a message, if you “check” the message in the Search results view, when you then select a Label view or any other view that includes that email in its listing, the message will be “pre-checked” for you! This makes tasks like removing Labels, trashing, etc. very easy. Not only is it “checked” but it is also highlighted in a different color making spotting it in a long list very easy.

## **Gmail Tip #3: How to Maintain Notes**

**May 27, 2004**

Some email providers provide a “Notes” function to let you maintain a list of notes. For example you might keep Web site links, random thoughts, etc. Gmail doesn’t offer this feature, but by using some of Gmail’s other features, you can set up a very nice, easy to maintain group of notes...

Basically, the concept is to email yourself the notes, but Gmail lets you at least better organize and handle these emails. Here’s what you do:

First, create a Contact with a Name of “Notes” and an Email Address of “username+Notes@gmail.com”

Next, create a new Label called “Notes”

Finally, create a Filter to add the “Notes” Label any email addressed to “username+Notes@gmail.com”. Also, check the “Skip the Inbox (Archive it)” checkbox.

The effect is this:

When you email yourself from an email account other than your own Gmail account, address the email to “username+Notes@gmail.com”. When the message arrives in your Gmail account, it will automatically be archived into your “Notes” Label view, bypassing the Inbox. Nice and organized.

When you want to email yourself from your own Gmail account, click “Compose Email”, and just type “Notes” in the “To” field and hit “Tab” or “Enter”. Because you used the name “Notes” in the Contact, Gmail will fill in the email address automatically eliminating the need to enter a long address. Then, when you click send, the email gets sent to yourself, and is auto-archived in the Notes Label, just like above.

You now have a Label containing any notes you want to keep, and they are completely searchable!

## **Gmail Tip #4: Formatting Your Name**

June 2, 2004

Gmail's account names (you know, the "left" side of your email address) are very forgiving. Read more for more details!

If you registered your Gmail account name like I did, you likely used the form "first.last@gmail.com". Did you know that it doesn't matter if you used a period or not! "john.doe@gmail.com" is treated the same as "johndoe@gmail.com". In fact, Gmail is not even case sensitive, so "JohnDoe@gmail.com" is the same as "joHn.doE@gmail.com"! So, not only did you get the email account name you wanted, but you really got more!

Any valid for also works at the login screen too! It surely makes remembering easier!

## **Gmail Tip #5: The Plus Side of Gmail**

June 2, 2004

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@gmail.com" when sending you a response if 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 effective 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!

## **Gmail Tip #6: Define a Signature!**

**June 3, 2004**

When Gmail was first released to Beta, it was missing the ability to create an automatically appended "Signature". Well, after beta tester feedback Gmail has added the feature! Read how to define it...

Go into "Settings" and click the radio button next to the edit box in the Signature section. Next, enter any text you want to have included in all outgoing messages! Makes things simpler and more professional!

## **Gmail Tip #7: Quickly Addressing A Message**

**June 3, 2004**

Want to know a quick way to address another Gmail user? Read more to find out!

Did you know that you can send an email to another Gmail user by just entering their username into either the TO, CC, or BCC fields when you Compose a message? You do not need to type the rest of the "@gmail.com" address! Simple and elegant!

## **Gmail Tip #8: Working With Lots Of Emails**

**June 3, 2004**

There are some idiosyncracies that you should understand when working with large numbers of messages. Read more for a couple pointers...

If you are working with a large number of emails, (more than will fit on one screen "page") be sure to remember that checking "All" doesn't check all messages in the category you are viewing, but only those visible on the current page. So, if you have three pages of messages, only the first page will be affected if you click "All".

## **Gmail Tip #9: New Mail Notification!**

**June 4, 2004**

One often asked for feature has been some sort of automatic notification. Some suggestions have been integrating a button in the Google Toolbar. Another was some sort of System Tray icon. Well, Gmail gave



us a notification method that actually works very well...

Open your Gmail account and look at both the "Title" of your web browser as well as the "Button" in the Task Bar. It now shows something like "Gmail – Inbox (2)" where the "2" is the number of new emails you have. Because Gmail auto-updates periodically, this will update as well. Very cool! This works in IE, FireFox, Safari, and maybe others.

## **Gmail Tip #10: Some Tips about Conversations**

**June 4, 2004**

Conversations are very handy. They group related emails letting you easily track what was sent and to whom it was sent.

One thing that you might overlook is that is that you need to remember that when you perform an action on a conversation such as "Print", "Move to Trash", or "Report as Spam", you are affecting ALL messages in the conversation. If you want to affect only one of the messages, select or expand the message and click on the "More options" link. This will bring up a sub-menu with options specific to that message.

One other thing to note is that Conversations are not perfect. By this, I mean that sometimes (but not always), if you have unrelated emails with the same subject, they sometimes get grouped together in the same conversation. Currently, there is no way to manually "ungroup" unrelated messages. Likewise, there is currently no way to manually "group" seemingly unrelated messages into a conversation.

## **Gmail Tip #11: Connecting Securely**

**June 8, 2004**

Unlike many other Web-based email providers, Gmail offers an SSL-encrypted login by default. This means that your Gmail password is always encrypted when it is sent over the Internet.

Secure HTTPS access is also available by going to <https://gmail.google.com> directly. This is just another way that Gmail ensures your privacy and security!

## **Gmail Tip #12: Archiving Explained**

**June 8, 2004**

One concept that's sometimes a bit unclear to new Gmail users is that of "Archiving" messages. I'm not referring to the hype and false assertions of pundits who claim things like "Gmail keeps everything you



ever send and receive!” and “Gmail archives your messages forever!” No, I’m referring to the “Archive” button in your Inbox view. Just what is it for, and what does it do?

Plain and simple, clicking Gmail’s “Archive” button simply means that the message gets moved out of your Inbox—nothing more, nothing less. It’s a convenient and slick way to manage your Inbox.

But just what happens to the message? If you applied a Label to the message and then click “Archive” button, the message will no longer be visible in the Inbox. It will be visible in the applied Label view as well as the “All Mail” view. If no Label was applied, it is removed from the Inbox and is only viewable in the “All Mail” view. In any case, all messages, regardless of how they are classified, can be viewed in the “All Mail” view. Any Labels that have been applied are shown in the listing. If the message hasn’t been “Archived” yet, it will see “Inbox” Label in the “All Mail” view.

Basically, when you “receive” a message, it automatically gets assigned an “Inbox” Label. It’s a Label just like any other Label. The only difference is that the Label is just typically hidden while viewing the Inbox. The “Inbox” Label is, however, visible in other views. To test this, take any email that’s in your Inbox and apply a Label, but do not Archive it. Go to the view of the Label you applied, and look at the message listing. You should see both the Label you applied as well as an “inbox” Label. It’s also visible in the “All Mail” view. When you Archive a message, it simply strips off the “inbox” Label so that it doesn’t show up in the Inbox view.

A little tip is that if you are in any other view other than the inbox view, you can always select a message, click on the “More Actions” dropdown, and click on “Move to Inbox” to move it back!

## **Gmail Tip #13: Some More About Conversations**

June 9, 2004

I covered this partially in another tip, but I feel it is important to repeat it. One of Gmail’s excellent features is its “Conversations”. Conversations conveniently organize related messages, but this can be potentially dangerous if you don’t understand how to manage both conversations and individual messages. If you aren’t paying attention, you can inadvertently Trash an entire conversation instead of just a single message.

First off, you need to determine if the message is a single message or part of a conversation. While viewing a list of messages (for example, “Inbox”) look in the first column on the left of the message listing. A conversation is indicated by some number in parenthesis ie: “(3)” next to Sender’s name. The number represents the number of messages associated with this conversation. If you click the checkbox in front of the message and select an action, (ie: “Move to Trash”, “Mark as Read”, “Delete Forever”, “Report as Spam”, etc.) the action will affect ALL messages in that conversation. If it is not a conversation, then it will only affect the selected message.

If you want to affect only a single message within a conversation, you must first open the message to view

it and then click on the “More Options” link while viewing the message. This allows you to take specific actions on the open message within the conversation.

Conversations are very convenient and powerful, but actually dealing with them can be confusing at times.

## **Gmail Tip #14: What Happens To Sent Messages?**

**June 9, 2004**

When you “send” a message, two things happen to it: 1. it gets copied into your “All Mail” view, and 2. it is visible in the “Sent Mail” view. Many email clients and Webmail services let you optionally delete all sent messages by default, but Gmail doesn't offer this feature. Here's why...

One of Gmail's intentions is to get you out of the “trash everything” mindset. This is one of the reasons why they offer 1GB of storage. Providing this extra space gives you the ability to leverage features such as “Search”, “Labels”, and “Conversations”. Most email services limit us to a very small storage space, so we have to continually delete old messages to allow room for new ones. The problem is that though there are definitely many messages that should be permanently deleted, many are important enough to us that we may need or want to keep them for future reference. Gmail's added space gives us that capability.

In keeping with this “future-thinking” mindset, by retaining the messages you send, Gmail easily and conveniently matches those messages to any corresponding replies onto “Conversations” making following threads of conversation easier. In any case, contrary to some false information being spread, you still retain full control of your messages. Any message, either sent or received, can be easily and permanently deleted as you desire; the same as any other email service.

## **Gmail Tip #15: New feature – Highlighting on/off!**

**June 11, 2004**

Looks like Gmail added a new feature!

You can now control “highlighting” of searched words in Search results!

When you initiate a Search, Gmail returns a list of any messages and conversations matching the Search criteria. You can select any of these messages or conversations to view, and Gmail automatically highlights the word(s) you searched for. My sometimes, it's distracting, so you now have the ability to click on the “Turn off Highlighting” link on the right column. Clicking it again turns highlighting back on. Very nice! And like just about everything about Gmail's interface, it's lightning-fast. No need to wait for the screen to re-draw like in most other Web-based email services.

## **Gmail Tip #16: New feature – View or Download for attached images**

June 11, 2004

Looks like Gmail added another new feature!

You now have the option of viewing or downloading image attachments! Read on for details...

When you receive an image file as an attachment (like .jpg, .gif, or .bmp) Gmail now displays two links for each attachment: One is the filename, and the other says "Download". Clicking on the name link opens a new browser window and displays the image. Clicking the Download link initiates a standard file download.

Other attachment types simply display the filename letting you download the file. Nice touch!

## **Gmail Tip #17: Advanced Search – View Multiple Labels**

June 17, 2004

Gmail has some advanced searching capabilities that, if you take the time to learn, enables you drill down to very specific information. In future tips, you'll learn many of the advanced searching functions, but in this tip, (sent in by "Juan Valera") you'll learn how to search for specific messages based on their Labels including how to search for multiple Labels...

If you want to search for all messages having a specific label, you can click on the "Show search options" link, click the "Search" dropdown, select the desired Label, and click the "Search Mail" button.

But a shortcut is to type the Label prefixed with the "label:" query word in any simple search field at the top of any Gmail page:

label:Label1

If you want to view all messages that have selected multiple Labels, for example messages having both 'Label1' and 'Label2', enter the following into the simple search field at the top of any Gmail page:

label:Label1 label:Label2

To see all messages with either 'Label1' or 'Label2', you can enter:

label:Label1 OR label:Label2

Note: the specific label names are NOT case sensitive, but the “OR” operator is case sensitive, and must be in uppercase. The pipe operator ‘|’ can also be used in the same manner as ‘OR’.

label:Label1 | label:Label2

(Thanks to “Juan Valera” for submitting this tip!)

## **What if Gmail was a PC-based Email Client?**

**June 18, 2004**

**ATTENTION REGISTERED USERS!!**

It's time to turn the tables a bit here. Here's a chance for Registered Users to give your opinion!

I'm interested to know your opinion if Gmail, instead of being an online service, was a PC-based email client that you downloaded onto your PC that worked either standalone or in conjunction with Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, etc. Read on for more information...

The application would be a personally-downloaded, personally-installed, and personally-run application that would provide you with Search, Labels, Conversations, and a fast interface. The application would scan your email for viruses, scan your messages to manage Spam, and scan your messages and displays related, targeted Ads and related Links alongside your email. It would add these message because it considers itself “Adware”.

How would this client app be any different from the current Gmail service?

How would businesses concerned with competitors' ads appearing with their content react to such an application?

Note that this is NOT something I'm considering writing or even proposing. It's just that I'm still trying to understand just why the Gmail service is being so attacked by pundits, especially with regards to recipient-agreed competitive ad placement.

Registered Users, please feel free to comment!

## **Gmail Tip #18: Some Forwarding Idiosyncracies**

**June 21, 2004**

One very important note to Gmail users: Gmail's "Forward" function only forwards plain text. While this doesn't affect most messages, this behavior can mangle HTML-formatted messages, dropping important formatting, images, and data. Read on for more information...

If you receive a message that has fancy formatting and/or includes inline graphics, when you click on Forward, Gmail strips out all the formatting and forwards only the plain text. This is very apparant with email originating from online services like AOL and with clients like Outlook. For example, I received an email from my parents' AOL account that contained an inline graphic image. I could view it just fine in Gmail, but when I tried to forward it to my wife's email account, it dropped the image and only forwarded the plain text. Yes, I could save the image and then attach it to the forward, but it's a kludgy workaround and not very intuitive to "casual" users. (Note that if you receive an image as an attachment, Gmail DOES handle forwarding properly.)

Theoretically, Gmail could fix this by adding a "Forward as Attachment" option in addition to the standard Forward links. I have emailed Gmail Support about this issue.

Finally, note that while this behavior is not exclusive to Gmail, I feel it's important enough to let people know. In my opinion, this is the one "feature" that prevents me from sending invitations to family and friends who are not computer savvy.

## **Gmail Tip #19: Advanced Search – Query Words**

**June 22, 2004**

One of Gmail's excellent features is its Search function. Searching can be as simple as entering a keyword or two into the Search field at the top of any page to very complex using Gmail's advanced "Query Words" to better constrain searches. Read more to better understand how "Query Words" can help you with your advanced message searching... Clicking the "Show Search Options" link will open up a pane containing several entry fields and dropdowns. This lets you easily specify more detailed search criteria. For example, say you want to search for all email that is unread, regardless of under what Label it is filed. Simply click the "Search:" dropdown, select "Unread Mail" and click the "Search Mail" button. Gmail will display a list of all unread mesasges. Likewise, you can select specific Labels and you can enter specific terms. It's very powerful and useful. But as more savvy users, we often crave, as Tim The Toolman Taylor says, "More power!" Gmail also provides users the ability to prefix their search keywords with "query words" that instruct Gmail how to search. And there is no need to open the Search Options—these can be entered in the simple search window at the top of any page. For example, say you want to search for all messages Labeled with the "Family" Label. You could open the "Show Search Options" pane, select the "Family" Label from the dropdown, and click "Search Mail". Or, you could just enter into the search box at the top of any page "label:family" and hit Enter! Both do the same thing, just in

different ways. But this type of searching goes way beyond this by letting you search using more complex criteria. For example, building on our example above, say you want to search for messages containing attachments from your family sent before May 21, 2004? You would simply enter the following advanced search criteria: **label:family has:attachment before:2004/5/21** Yes, this could actually be done in the Search Options pane, but in addition to the available search criteria fields, query words not only let you search using criteria not included in the Search Options pane, (like "cc:" and "bcc:") but you can do "compound" searches otherwise not available in the Search Options pane. For example: **label:doctors label:statements has:attachment before:2004/5/21 in:anywhere** would return all messages with both Labels of "Doctors" and "Statements" containing attachments, sent before May 21, 2004, existing anywhere in my account including the Trash and Spam views. It's pretty powerful, and fairly intuitive once you get the hang of it. For more information, you should check the direct link to Gmail's "How do I use advanced search?" help page found [\[here\]](#) (You may need to be logged into your Gmail account to access this page.) Here is table of "query words" from that page:

Operator	Definition	Example(s)
<b>from:</b>	Used to specify the sender	Example – <b>from:amy</b> Meaning – Messages from Amy
<b>to:</b>	Used to specify a recipient	Example – <b>to:david</b> Meaning – All messages that were sent to David (by you or someone else)
<b>subject:</b>	Search for words in the subject line	Example – <b>subject:dinner</b> Meaning – Messages that have the word "dinner" in the subject
<b>OR</b>	Search for messages matching term A or term B* *OR must be in all caps	Example – <b>from:amy OR from:david</b> Meaning – Messages from Amy or from David
<b>– (hyphen)</b>	Used to exclude messages from your search	Example – <b>dinner -movie</b> Meaning – Messages that contain the word "dinner" but do not contain the word "movie"
<b>label:</b>	Search for messages by label* *There isn't a search operator for unlabeled messages	Example – <b>from:amy label:friends</b> Meaning – Messages from Amy that have the label "friends"
<b>has:attachment</b>	Search for messages with an attachment	Example – <b>from:david has:attachment</b> Meaning – Messages from David that have an attachment
<b>filename:</b>	Search for an attachment by name or type	Example – <b>filename:physicshomework.txt</b> Meaning – Messages with an attachment named "physicshomework.txt" Example – <b>label:work filename:pdf</b> Meaning – Messages labeled "work" that also have a PDF file as an attachment

<b>" " (quotes)</b>	Used to search for an exact phrase* *Capitalization isn't taken into consideration	Example – <b>"i'm feeling lucky"</b> Meaning – Messages containing the phrase "i'm feeling lucky" or "I'm feeling lucky" Example – <b>subject:"dinner and a movie"</b> Meaning – Messages containing the phrase "dinner and a movie" in the subject
<b>()</b>	Used to group words Used specify terms that shouldn't be excluded	Example – <b>from:amy (dinner OR movie)</b> Meaning – Messages from Amy that contain either the word "dinner" or the word "movie" Example – <b>subject:(dinner movie)</b> Meaning – Messages in which the subject contains both the word "dinner" and the word "movie"
<b>in:anywhere</b>	Search for messages anywhere in your account* *Messages in 'Spam' and 'Trash' are excluded from searches by default	Example – <b>in:anywhere subject:movie</b> Meaning – Messages in 'All Mail', 'Spam', and 'Trash' that contain the word "movie"
<b>in:inbox in:trash in:spam</b>	Search for messages in 'Inbox', 'Trash', or 'Spam'	Example – <b>in:trash from:amy</b> Meaning – Messages from Amy that are in the trash
<b>is:starred is:unread is:read</b>	Search for messages that are starred, unread or read	Example – <b>is:read is:starred from:David</b> Meaning – Message from David that have been read and are marked with a star
<b>cc: bcc:</b>	Used to specify recipients in the 'cc' or 'bcc' fields	Example – <b>cc:david</b> Meaning – Messages that were cc-ed to David
<b>after: before:</b>	Search for messages after or before a certain date* *Date must be in yyyy/mm/dd format.	Example – <b>after:2004/4/17 before:2004/4/18</b> Meaning – Messages sent on April 17, 2004.* *More precisely: Messages sent on or after April 17, 2004, but before April 18, 2004.

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## **Gmail Tip #20: Why some attachments bounce**

**June 23, 2004**

Gmail is trying to help combat the spread of viruses by implementing a "feature" that prevents emails containing attachments of certain file types from being delivered to Gmail accounts. With some simple workarounds, you can get your files delivered to Gmail users while still helping prevent the spread of viruses...

One way that Gmail is helping to prevent the spread of viruses is to prevent the delivery of messages sent from outside of Gmail that .exe and .vbs (and possibly other) extensions. These file attachments are very



easy to inadvertently execute, and are a common source of viruses. Gmail is trying to make it at least a bit more difficult to inadvertently execute these types of files.

If you are sending an email to a Gmail account that contains either extension of .exe or a .vbs (and possibly others) the message WILL bounce as undeliverable. The message will also bounce if these file types are contained within a .ZIP file. If you are sending an email from an outside account to a Gmail user, simply changing the extension to something else appending something like ".txt" lets the message pass through without issue. You could also use another archive format like WinAce or WinRAR as they are not filtered (yet). The point is that the file won't be immediately and inadvertently executable without some recipient intervention.

Again, note that this only affects inbound email originating from another email provider sent to a Gmail account. This does not affect Gmail users sending email to another Gmail user or to an email address outside of Gmail. Obviously, this isn't a perfect solution, but it's a good start.

## **Gmail Tip #21: Official Features and Bugs Status Page!**

June 29, 2004

Want to know what features and bugs the Gmail developers are currently working on? Read on to learn how to access Gmail's new "Features, Fixes, & Feedback" page...

First, log into your Gmail account. You must be logged into your account to access the help screens. Next, click on the "Help" link located at the top of any Gmail page. Next, click on the "Send Feedback" link on the left column. You'll be taken to a page detailing features Gmail is working on and bugs being squashed!

While this may not be a definitive list, at least we can get a better picture of what the busy Gmail developers are working on!

## **Gmail Tip #22: Advanced Search – Multi-Labeled and Un-Labeled Messages**

June 29, 2004

In an earlier tip, I briefly explained how to perform Advanced Searching using Gmail's "query words". Here are two practical examples of how to use the "label:" query word to search for Multi-Labeled messages as well as Un-Labeled messages. Thanks to "rishid" on the GmailForums for submitting this tip...

Say you want to find messages that have multiple Labels. For example, you want to display all messages with label1, label2 and label3 that you had previously defined and assigned. Into the basic search field at



the top of any Gmail page, you would enter label:label1 label:label2 label:label3

Note that this is searching for all messages that have label1 AND label2 AND label3. If you want to include messages that have ANY of those labels, you can use the "OR" command like this: label:label1 OR label:label2 OR label:label3 (Note: "OR" must be in uppercase.)

You can optionally add a "-" to the query words to exclude search criteria. For example, entering -label:label1 label:label2 label:label3 would return all messages that have label 2 AND label 3, but do not have a label1 Label.

Taking this concept a step further, you can use this method to search for all "Un-Labeled" messages. Unfortunately, Gmail does not provide a choice in the search dropdown that lets you search for unlabeled messages. If you manage a large number of messages, it can be very cumbersome to determine which messages are unlabeled. My personal preference is to ensure that all messages have a Label making it easier to manage and organize them.

So, if you want to list all unlabeled messages, just create a long search string containing every label that you have defined. Be sure to include the "-" character in front of every label. This ensures that messages with these labels will be EXCLUDED (remember, you are looking for all messages WITHOUT Labels.) You can also optionally include the hidden "inbox" Label to exclude anything in your Inbox.

For example, if you have defined the Labels "Family", "Friends", "Ebay", and "Support", you would enter the following string into the search field (note that the labels are not case sensitive) to find all Unlabeled messages:

-label:inbox -label:family -label:friends -label:ebay -label:support

If you have a large number of labels, obviously, this becomes harder and harder to manage, so I recommend creating a "note" email to yourself containing the search string for easy future reference.

## **Gmail Tip #23: Cleaning Your Contacts**

**July 8, 2004**

One of Gmail's "features" can leave you with extra entries in your Contacts list. Read on for more information...

Gmail has a (debatably) nice feature that automatically adds to your Contacts list the email addresses of those to whom you send emails. While this can be helpful at times, just remember that EVERY unique email address you send to gets auto-added. So, if someone or some company sends you an email and you reply to it, the email address will get added. For clarification, it only gets added once. We're talking about "unique" email addresses here. But how do you know what gets added? Log into your Gmail account and click on the "Contacts" link at the top of any Gmail page. A window will open displaying any

Contacts you may have. Any you have manually edited will typically have a "Name" and possibly a "Note" associated with it. By default, any Contact Gmail auto-adds and is unedited will not contain any "name" or "note" information, just the email address. Visually scan down the list and look for any that fall into this category. If you find one, determine what to do with it: Delete it, Edit it, or leave it alone. Obviously what you do with it is up to you, but I make it a personal rule to always edit any email addresses I want to keep and add names (and sometimes notes). Any I don't want, I just delete. This keeps things clean. Until I realized that Gmail did this, I was surprised as to how many Contacts were added. So, every once in a while, I take time to be sure to monitor my Contacts list and clean out any unneeded entries.

## **Gmail Tip #24: New feature! Import Contacts**

**July 16, 2004**

Once again, the hard working Gmail Developers have implemented yet another much-requested feature: Import Contacts! Read on for more details...

For the best explanation of just how to Import Contacts, log into your Gmail account, click on Contacts, and click on the new "Import Contacts" link at the top of the Contacts screen.

But what can you import and how do you import? Gmail will let you import address books into Contacts from Yahoo!, Orkut, Outlook, and pretty much any other service by uploading CSV (Comma Separated Value) files to your Gmail account. You can even manually edit and create CVS files for importing using Microsoft Excel.

Just remember that currently, Gmail's Contacts fields are limited to just "Name", "Email Address", and "Notes". According to the Help screen, all other fields will be imported into the Notes field.

Gmail's COnacts aren't sophisticated, but now that you can Import, they certainly are more useful!

One small side note: On the Import Contacts Help page, it reads, "Because Gmail does not offer group or distribution list functionality at this time, this information won't be transferred from other address books into your Gmail Contacts list." The key words to me are "at this time"...not sure if this implies these functions will be incorporated or not, but we can dream...

## **Gmail Tip #25: Find Your Unread Messages**

**July 19, 2004**

Want a quick and easy way to view all of your "Unread" messages? Here's a neat tip submitted by Mark Worsham describing how...

If you have assigned Labels and archived unread messages, finding them later can sometimes be challenging. Simply create a Gmail Label named "Unread", and you will see all of your unread mail in that folder. Though there are other ways to display unread messages, the nice thing about this method is that it displays the number of unread messages right in the Label list. Thanks Mark for the tip!

Important Update: This no longer works. A while back, Gmail made the "Unread" label a reserved label, so you cannot create it rendering this tip inoperative.

But a simple workaround is to do this: In the search box at the top, enter the following Advanced Search string:

is:unread

This will return a list of all unread messages.

## **Gmail Tip #26: Creating a Pseudo Address Group!**

July 20, 2004

Gmail currently does not provide the facility to send emails to a Group or a List or email addresses. But thanks to an excellent tip submitted by "arianj", we now have a very doable workaround! Read on to see how to set up a pseudo Group Contact...

Although Gmail doesn't currently support Groups in your Contacts, you can simulate a Group list by doing the following:

1. Create a new Contact
2. In the "Name" field, enter the name of your Group (eg "My Friends")
3. In the "E-mail" field, enter your list of email addresses in the following format:

friend1@gmail.com>,<friend2@blah.com>,<friend3@foo.com

Note three things:

1. You must enter ">,<" (without the quotes) between all addresses
2. Be sure NOT to include a leading "<" or trailing ">". This is intentional, because during auto-complete, Gmail adds these characters to the beginning and end of the full string that is in the e-mail field.

3. Also, there should be no spaces in the string.

Again, thanks to “arianj” for submitting this tip!

## **Gmail Tip #27: Adding Hotmail Contacts to Gmail**

**July 21, 2004**

Do you have a lot of Hotmail contacts that you would like to add to your Gmail Contacts? “Montevino” submitted this tip on how to do just that. Read on to see how simple it is...

By leveraging Gmail's new “Import Contacts” (see [Gmail Tip #24](#)), you can easily generate an importable file from your Hotmail Contacts.

Just set up Outlook Express to access your Hotmail account (by creating a new account, making it HTML, not POP3, and giving your Hotmail account name and password.) Then, open Windows Address Book, and synchronize. Address Book finds and auto-ads your Hotmail contacts. You can then easily output your addresses to a \*.CSV file, which can then be imported into Gmail.

Thanks, “Montevino” for the tip! His home page can be found at [www.livejournal.com/users/montevino](http://www.livejournal.com/users/montevino).

## **Gmail Tip #28: Gmail Notifier released to beta!**

**August 20, 2004**

Those crazy yet wonderful Gmail Developers have once again brought us a new toy: Gmail Notifier! Read on to see what it is, what it can do, and how you can get it...

The Gmail Notifier is a downloadable Windows application that alerts you when you have new Gmail messages. It displays an icon in your system tray to let you know if you have unread Gmail messages, and shows you their subjects, senders and snippets, all without your having to open a web browser.

You can also have it be the default “mailto:” handler so that when you click on an email address on a Web page, Gmail Notify will open a Compose Window.

You can even define a sound to play when new mail arrives!

To download, go here:

<http://toolbar.google.com/gmail-helper/>

For FAQ's, go here:

<http://toolbar.google.com/gmail-helper/faq.html>

Have fun!!!

## **Gmail Tip #29: A Small Quirk With Gmail Notifys mailto: Handler**

**August 20, 2004**

Read on to better understand a small idiosyncrasy with Gmail's Gmail Notifier application...

One cool feature of Gmail Notifier is that it can be configured to act as the default "mailto:" handler. When set up to do this. Gmail Notifier will open a Compose Window in a new browser window with the email address auto-filled in.

Just be aware that unless you check the "keep me logged in for two weeks" checkbox on the login screen, you will have to log in every time...even if you are already logged into Gmail in another browser window.

While it can be a bit cumbersome, it's certainly worth the new features!

## **Gmail Tip #30: Removing a Label**

**September 9, 2004**

I just stumbled on this one. (Sometimes during a Beta period, you have to "find" new features yourself!) In the past, when you wanted to remove a Label from one or more messages, you would have to click on the desired Label on the left of the screen, select the message, and then click on the "Remove Label" button. Well, The process has been significantly simplified! Read on for details...

While viewing a message, click on the "More Actions" dropdown, scroll to the bottom of the list, and select the desired Label to remove. Voila...the Label is removed!

If you are viewing a list of messages (say, in your inbox or in a Label view, click the checkboxes of the Labeled messages, click on the "More Actions" dropdown, scroll to the bottom of the list, and select the desired Label to remove. Again, the Label is removed!

Don't forget that if the message has been Archived and you remove all Labels, it will be visible only in the "All Mail" view.

## **Gmail Tip #31: Improved and New Contacts Features!**

October 4, 2004

The "Contacts" function has been enhanced to provide some additional functionality, and now adopts the familiar Gmail interface. Read on for the details...

Gmail now displays a "Contacts" link in the left column under the "standard views" (Inbox, Starred, etc.) and just above the Labels. Clicking on the link brings up a nicely formatted display that matches the style of the rest of Gmail. It displays the contact name, email address, Note, and any additional information (see below). At the top are two "tabs" that display "Frequently Mailed" and "All Contacts". I don't know what the criteria for "Frequently Mailed" is, but it does contain the most-used contacts.

Here are some new or expanded features:

### RECENT CONVERSATIONS

Clicking on a contact displays the contact information as well as "Recent Conversations" associated with that contact. Clicking on one of these entries opens it normally with all options available. Very nice.

### ADD MORE CONTACT INFO

Clicking on "Edit" allows you to update the basic contact information (Names, Email Address, Note). But there's a new link: "Add More Contact Info" which lets you add additional "Sections" of information. For example, by default there are "Personal" and "Work" sections defined. Each section contains a Section Name field, Two user-selectable "fields" and an "Address" block. Each User Field has a drop-down label containing the following selectable labels: Phone, Mobile, FAX, Pager, Email, IM, Company, Title, Other. You can also add additional fields as needed.

### SEARCH CONTACTS

Near the top of the Contacts screen is a Search field and a "Search Contacts" button. Entering text into this field and clicking the button returns all contacts that **BEGINS WITH** the text. This is important to know because it will search **ALL** contact fields (even the extended fields) for words beginning with the entered text. For example, entering "Ste" would return "Stephanie", "Steve", and "Stewart" but entering "phani" would not return "Stephanie". Obviously, it would be nice to have extended search capabilities, but this is an excellent start!

### ADD CONTACTS

Clicking on the "Add Contact" link lets you enter the standard "Basic" information, and clicking the "Add More Contact Info" link opens the extended information screen as described above.

### IMPORT CONTACTS

The "Import Contacts" link is still there letting you import contacts from a CSV file. According to the documentation, "other" information gets imported into a Notes field. There is no mention of importing into

the new “extended” fields.

### BETTER INTERFACE

What really makes this shine is the fact that it now uses the same interface as the rest of Gmail giving it some better consistency. That has always been one of Gmail’s strengths: a slick, clean, non-cluttered, fast interface. The added Contacts handling keeps with that philosophy.

So there you have it: some improved Contacts functionality!

## **Gmail Tip #32: Drafts!**

**October 4, 2004**

Gmail now has the capability to save “Drafts” of your messages! This is a long-awaited feature that seems to have slipped in under the radar. Read on for more details...

If you are in the middle of composing a message, but want to finish it later, just click on the “Save Draft” button now located between the “Send” and “Discard” buttons. This droops the message in a new view located on the left side called “Drafts” located under the “Sent Mail” link and above the “All Mail” link. Later, you can just click on the message, complete it, and then click “Send” normally.

Yet another example of Gmail providing what the users need!

## **Gmail Tip #33: Auto-forward received Gmail!**

**October 5, 2004**

Want to use your Gmail account as your main email account but have some or all email auto-forwarded to other email accounts? Well, now you can! Read on for more details...

Gmail has added the ability to forward received emails in two ways: “All” or “Selective”

### “ALL” FORWARDING

This is a “global” setting that lets you optionally forward all received email to another email address. Click on the “Settings” link, and click on the new “Forwarding” tab. In there, you have the option to Disable or Enable email forwarding. Click on Enable, enter the email address to which you want to forward, and then select one of the following self-explanatory actions from the associated dropdown:

- keep Gmail’s copy in the Inbox
- archive Gmail’s copy
- trash Gmail’s copy

This setting will forward all received email to another email address and take the appropriate action on the received email.

### **“SELECTIVE” FORWARDING**

Filters have also been enhanced with a new “Forward it to: emailaddress” action letting you selectively forward emails based on filter criteria. You can use the same or different email addresses for each filter if you choose providing very powerful email management. For example, I may get statement notifications from a bank and want to auto-copy it to my wife. I just set up a filter to select emails with the bank's sending email address and then select the “Forward it to:” action and enter my wife's email address. Now, she'll get notified also!

## **Gmail Tip #34: Gmail on your Palm!**

**November 11, 2004**

If any of you Gmail users own “connected” PalmOS PDA's, you can now use SnapperMail to retrieve your email using Gmail's new POP3 feature! Read on to learn how...

I tried out about 6 different email apps for the PalmOS, and the ONLY one I could get to consistently send and receive email from my Gmail account is Snapper Mail. Here's how to get it working:

Log into your Gmail account, go into Settings, select the “Forwarding and Pop” tab, and enable the type of POP3 you want to do.

Next, launch SnapperMail and create a new POP3 account. In the “Server” tab, fill in the POP3 server with “pop.gmail.com”, enter your full gmail email address as the username, and enter your password in the password field. In the “Outgoing SMTP Server” field, enter “smtp.gmail.com”, enter your full Gmail Email address, and enter your password.

Finally, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT, tap “More” and make the following settings:

For POP3 settings:

Set the “Use SSL” dropdown to “Always Secure (wrapped port)”, set the port to “995” and leave the other checkboxes unchecked.

For SMTP settings:

Set the “Use SSL” dropdown to “Always Secure (STARTTLS)”, set the port to either port “465” or “587” and leave the other checkboxes unchecked.

Set up the rules as you wish, and when you tap “Send/Receive” you should be able to send and receive mail!



Works like a charm on my Tungsten C!

SnapperMail can be found at [www.snappermail.com](http://www.snappermail.com)

## **Gmail Tip #35: Gmail on your Palm! – Part 2**

**November 12, 2004**

I posted an article on how to access your Gmail account using SnapperMail via Gmail's POP3 feature. Read on to see what other PalmOS email application works as well...

I tried several other email applications, and found another PalmOS email application that works very well with Gmail's SSL-secured POP3 connection: Mark/Space Mail from [Mark/Space](http://Mark/Space). Like SnapperMail, it is a very slick, full-featured email client, and it provides SSL connectivity. (For those that don't know, this is a "Secure Sockets Layer" security model that Gmail (and many other Web sites) uses to create a secure connection. This should help boost user confidence in Gmail's security policies.)

To configure Gmail, just enable POP3 in your Gmail Account by clicking on "Settings", click on the "Forwarding and POP3" tab, and then make the appropriate settings based on your situation.

Next, launch Mark/Space Mail, and select "Options > Accounts" and tap "New". Fill in page one with your account information. Tap the Page 2 icon and fill in your username with your FULL Gmail email address. Next, enter "pop.gmail.com" into the "POP3 Host" field and assign your password. Enter "smtp.gmail.com" into the "SMTP Host" field. Next, tap the Page 3 icon and check off BOTH "Use SSL" boxes. For the POP3 port, use "995" and for the SMTP port, use "465" or "587". Check off the "Allow SMTP Authentication" checkbox and then enter your full Gmail email address in the "SMTP Username" field and assign the password.

Tap "OK", tap "Done", and when you tap "Send/Receive", you should connect properly.

This works like a charm on my PalmOne Tungsten C.

Have fun!

## **Gmail Tip #36: Some Email Management Tips**

**December 7, 2004**

This tip is inspired by an inquiry by "Debra" about how to find archived email. Though I cover Archiving in [Gmail Tip #12: "Archiving" Explained](#), I feel that some general email management tips are in order. Managing email within Gmail can be easy or difficult depending on how you handle them. Read on for

some simple tips to better manage your email...

First off, when you “archive” an “unlabeled” email message, it simply “drops out” of the Inbox view and is later ONLY accessible from the “All Mail” view. While this is straight forward, it can be cumbersome if you have more than a handful of email messages. The problem with the “All Mail” view is that it includes just that: all email, labeled or otherwise, and Gmail provides no easy way to find “unlabeled” email. To me, an “unlabeled” email is an uncategorized email that has “fallen through the cracks” and must be Labeled. If I don’t, short of searching later, I’ll never find it again. Why? I currently have over 1600 email message in Gmail, and effective use of Labels and Searching are the only way to manage them effectively.

My general practice is to assign a Label to EVERY email I receive in my Inbox that I’m not going to trash. This way, EVERY email is available through its corresponding Label view.

If you want to “clean up” your unlabeled messages, see my [Gmail Tip #22: Advanced Search – Multi-Labeled and Un-Labeled Messages](#) for details on hoe to find “unlabeled” messages.

## **Gmail Tip #37: New Feature: Image Attachment Thumbnails**

December 7, 2004

Read on for a simple description of a simple new feature...

Gmail’s site describes it as:

*“It’s like seeing the trailer before you see the movie. Now you can get a sneak preview of your attachments.”*

Gmail now adds the ability to preview graphic images attached to email messages you receive by displaying “thumbnails” of the images displayed below the message text. In many cases, you won’t even need to open the image, but you still have the familiar “View” and “Download” options.

Yet another step forward in Gmail’s ever-evolving interface!

## **Gmail Tip #38: Google Gmail Minibrowser**

January 13, 2005

“The [Google Deskbar](#) includes a minibrowser that you can use to quickly open your Gmail account in convenient window that automatically hides and can be accessed with a keyboard shortcut. Read on for more information about this tool...

The Google Deskbar is a little Google search tool for Windows taskbar. It can do most of the Google searches using shortcut keys too. (See the link for a picture.) It also include Google's "Minibrowser" which is fast and cute. If you press Ctrl-Alt-G?by default, you can turn it off?you'll go right to the bar. Typing a search, by default, will open in the mini browser?again you can turn it off if you want or have it use your default browser (Firefox, etc).

So here's the tip: Go to *Options > Customized Searches > Add*. Name it "Gmail" and put in the url: <http://gmail.google.com/gmail>. For the shortcut I used Ctrl M. So if I press Ctrl alt G, then Ctrl M, instant GMail window in the Google Minibrowser! Awesome.

(Google Desktop isn't included in the default searches either. (Yet!) But you can also add it in the customize dialogue to search your desktop just as easily. Since the minibrowser vanishes automatically it's tres convenient to find a file!) Thanks "Sketcher" for the tip!

## **Gmail Tip #39: New Feature! Gmail From Most Any Browser!**

February 28, 2005

From the beginning, Gmail has always required a "supported browser" to gain access and work with Gmail. Well, those crazy Gmail developers have done it again! Read on to see a new addition to Gmail that will please many...

Gmail now offers a "basic HTML view" that lets you access Gmail from almost any computer running almost any Web browser. Mozilla users and Safari users will certainly appreciate this one. According to the Gmail Help site, if you log into Gmail using a non-supported browser, Gmail will automatically revert to the basic HTML view. Just be aware that several features *cannot* be accessed from the basic HTML view, only the "full view". From Gmail's help page:

*"Since your browser isn't fully supported, you might notice that some of your favorite features aren't available in the current view, including the following:*

- Filter creation*
- Settings*
- Spell checker*
- Keyboard shortcuts*
- Address auto-complete"*

Now to see if the basic HTML view works with my PDA...

## **Gmail Tip #40: New Feature! Rich formatting!**

**March 31, 2005**

It's the nail in the coffin...the icing on the cake...the "You had me at hello" feature! Gmail finally has Rich Text formatting! But it's not just for making your messages pretty. Read on to see why the addition of this feature propels Gmail way ahead of the competition...

In this tip, I will briefly explain how to enable Gmail's new Rich formatting features, but first, I need to get right to the heart of the matter.

One thing that has bugged me all along with Gmail is how it handles the forwarding of richly formatted (HTML) messages. Whenever I received an email from an AOL user or an Outlook user, more often than not, it would contain rich formatting like different fonts, inline images, etc. The problem was that while Gmail would display the message perfectly while reading, when I went to reply to or forward the message, Gmail would convert everything to plain text, completely mangling the message. All formatting, inline images, and anything else that was not plain text was efficiently removed and forever lost. Needless to say, the end result was FAR from what was really sent to me. My biggest gripe was that if I receive a message, I should be able to reply to or forward it without its basic structure and formatting being altered.

Well that has all changed! By adding the Rich formatting editor, Gmail can now handle forwarding as it should. Kuddos to the Gmail developers!

OK, that said, here's the tip: If you receive a message and reply to or forward it with the plain text editor, all formatting will be stripped and the message will be sent as plain text. That much is the same. There may be cases where you might want to do this, but not too often. If you have the Rich formatting editor enabled, when you reply to or forward the message, Gmail retains all the formatting for you and you can reply to and forward the message with the assurance that it will be received as it was received by you.

To ensure that the Rich editor is enabled, just click on the "Compose mail" link or press "C" if you have Keyboard Shortcuts enabled. Just below the "Attach a file" link, and above the main text entry space, there will be a "Rich formatting >>" link. Click on it, and the Rich formatting tools will display. Next, just discard the message. Gmail will remember your setting between sessions. If you want to revert back to Plain Text, just click on the "<< Plain text" link to the right of the Rich formatting tools.

For a list of all the tools and their functions, go to [this link](#) where you will see a summary.

So not only do we get a very nice, fast, WYSIWYG editor, with the addition of this feature, Gmail, in my opinion, raises the bar significantly. Before, I simply could not recommend Gmail to anyone other than tech-savvy people, because forwarding some messages was simply too difficult. People like my parents simply would have been confused and intimidated by the original design because handling such messages took significant effort. But that has all changed. It looks like this may be the answer to open the door to the masses!

With features like Labels, comprehensive Search, Rich formatting, unobtrusive, yet targeted ads, and a gig

of storage, I now feel that Gmail could be used by basically anyone, and now stands far above the competition.

## **Gmail Tip #41: How Much Space Do I Have?**

April 1, 2005

Notorious for its April Fools jokes, Google announced on 01-Apr-2005 that it had upped its disk space quota to 2 gigabytes per user, surpassing Yahoo's recent increase to 1 gigabyte. While that's good news for Gmail users, the great news is that it's not an April Fools joke.

Having the extra space is great, but how can you tell how much storage space you have used and how much is remaining? Read on for a very simple tip to keep track of your Gmail account storage space...

OK, this one is very easy. Just scroll down to the bottom of any Gmail screen, and you will see some statistics centered near the bottom of the page. For example, it might display something like:

**"You are currently using 100 MB (10%) of your 1000 MB."**

No, it's certainly not rocket science, and it's quite useful.

Now, if Gmail would only show the sizes on each message...

## **Gmail Tip #42: A More Worldly View**

April 14, 2005

Parlez-vous fran?ais? Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Or if you read any of 11 newly supported languages, you will feel right at home with Gmail. In addition to English, Gmail now supports Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and UK English. (Sorry, no Klingon.) If you want to experience Gmail in one of these languages, read on for simple instructions to make the change...

Simply click on the "Settings" link at the upper right of any Gmail page. Look toward the middle of the page, and you will find a dropdown selector labeled "Gmail display language". Pick your desired language, and click on the "Save Changes" button at the bottom. When the screen refreshes, you will be presented with the familiar Gmail screen, just with the new language integrated throughout the interface.

While many understand multiple languages, I am sorry to say that I am only fluent in one...

## **Gmail Tip #43: Notes in Just Two Clicks!**

June 9, 2005

"Tjeerd" from the Netherlands submitted a neat Gmail Tip that takes a different yet very simple approach to creating and managing "Notes" in your Gmail account. Notes are simply messages typically sent to yourself to store useful information. Read on for a simple method of creating Notes with just two button clicks...

In my [Gmail Tip #3: How to Maintain "Notes"](#), I described a rather elaborate, yet effective way to manage Notes in your Gmail account. It's elegant, but it requires some setup and prior knowledge of Labels and Filters.

Tjeerd suggests an alternative method that leverages the "Draft Message" function:

Just click "Compose Mail" and create a message with no recipient.

If you want, you can include "Note" in the Subject. Use whatever organizational description you want.

Then, write your note, click the "Save Draft" button, and you now have a saved Note...in just two clicks!

Basically, you are just creating Draft messages, but the Draft feature is typically very underutilized, so why not make it more useful?

Gmail already assigns a specific "View" to Drafts so they are easily accessible. Draft messages are treated like any other message, so they are completely searchable letting you can take full advantage of all of Gmail's great searching capabilities. Additionally, you can even apply Labels to make managing even these Notes suitable to your needs!

Thanks to Tjeerd for the Tip!

## **Gmail Tip #44: Using An Email Client**

December 23, 2005

Gmail's POP3 access lets you leverage third-party Email Clients like Outlook or Thunderbird, giving you the flexibility you want. Read on to see some quick tips inspired by "Edwin" and "Zavie" on configuring and accessing Gmail's POP3 access...

POP3 email clients are common, handy tools to enable you to manage your email online or offline. Here are several examples:

### **1. Outlook Express**

Outlook Express is included with just about every Windows installation. Setup is simple, and though its interface is basic, it works well with Gmail.

### **2. Outlook (various versions)**

I used Outlook 2003, and it worked like a charm with Gmail. It's robust, a business standard, and you have all of Outlook's advanced features available to you. The only downside is that for the personal user, it can be expensive, either standalone or as part of Microsoft Office.

### **3. Thunderbird**

Thunderbird is an excellent solution. It's Open Source, free, cross-platform compatible, very stable, and feature-rich. I used the "Portable Thunderbird" version because of its portability, and it worked very well. For personal users, Thunderbird has probably more features than you will ever need.

### **4. Other Email Clients**

Just about any modern POP mail client would work, provided it allows SSL connections. There are numerous examples that can be found with a Google search.

In all cases, the key to setting up your email client to work with Gmail is to ensure that you can connect using a Secure SSL Connection. These settings are typically found in the client's Accounts settings screens where you must define specific ports to access Gmail's POP3 server. Gmail has an excellent Help section that details the setup for most popular POP3 email clients. This is found by clicking the "Configuration instructions" link found in the "Forward and POP" screen of Gmail's settings.

OK. To setup Gmail to allow POP3 access, click on the "Settings" link in the upper right of any Gmail page. Next, click on the "Forwarding and POP" tab. Depending on how much email you want to manage via POP, choose the appropriate selection:

#### **1. "Enable POP for all mail"**

This will let you download all messages you have in your email account as well as any new email that arrives.

#### **2. "Enable POP only for mail that arrives from now on"**

This option lets you download only new email that arrives since the time you activate the POP setting.

The second setting, "When messages are accessed with POP" lets you determine how Gmail will handle the messages you download. How you use your email client and Gmail will determine the setting you

want:

### **1. "keep Gmail's copy in the Inbox"**

This option will leave all new email in Gmail's Inbox with "read settings" intact. This means that regardless of when you use your email client to receive messages, Gmail's Web client settings will always remain independent. Email messages are retained in your Gmail account. If you rely mostly on the Web client and use a POP3 client only occasionally, then this is the setting of choice. Think of this as a "parallel" setup with messages managed on both sides.

### **2. "archive Gmail's copy"**

This option will automatically "Archive" the message (remove it from the Inbox and retain it in Gmail's All Mail view) when you download it using your email client. This is useful when you use your email client more than Gmail's Web client. The advantage of this setting is that it leaves the message on Gmail's server as a backup. You still have full Web access should you ever want to use Gmail's Web client.

### **3. "trash Gmail's copy"**

This option deletes the email from Gmail's server once the message is successfully downloaded to your email client. This is useful if you use an email client exclusively, and don't want any email retained on Gmail's server.

Once you have selected your appropriate settings, click the "Save Changes" button. When you fire up your configured email client and receive messages, they will be downloaded seamlessly!

One point of note: When I initiated a Send/Receive session in both Outlook 2003 and Thunderbird (I didn't try Outlook Express) it only downloaded about 300-400 messages. Initiating another Send/Receive session downloaded another block of 300-400 messages. With over 3500 messages, I had to initiate about a dozen or so Send/Receive sessions, but when they all completed, everything downloaded. Over a broadband connection, it was quite fast.

**Update:** Note that you must set up "secure POP" access for all email clients in order to access Gmail from an email client. Follow Gmail's HELP instructions found at this URL:

<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?topic=1555>

## **Gmail Tip #45: Backing Up Your Gmail Account**

**December 23, 2005**

Gmail is an excellent service, but I sometimes get concerned about the security of keeping all my messages in one place. It's not a "privacy" concern, but a "data integrity" concern: If my Gmail account somehow gets corrupted or blown away, I don't have anything to fall back on...until now. By simply using Gmail's POP3 access, you can download your entire account for offline storage! Read on for some



instructions and Tips inspired by "Edwin" and "Zavie" on backing up your entire Gmail account...

The thought of the possibility of losing over 3500 messages certainly doesn't sit well with me, so I decided to investigate Gmail's POP Mail account options. By better understanding just how it works, you can leverage it to backup your entire Gmail account, and maintain that backup on an ongoing basis. I use the Gmail's Web interface exclusively because I like the flexibility of being able to access Gmail from wherever I am. But setting up an email client to automatically download any new email permits me to retain the Web access I love while maintaining a backup repository locally.

The first things to do are to activate Gmail's POP Download feature, and configure your POP3 email client to work with Gmail. See [Gmail Tip #44: Using An Email Client](#) for details.

This Tip has some repeated elements of that Tip, but it looks at using POP access from a different angle: Backups.

Here's the key to this Tip: In order to download ALL email from your account when you initiate a Send/Receive on your email client, you need to reset Gmail's POP settings. In Gmail's "Forwarding and POP" settings page, select the "Enable POP for all mail (even mail that's already been downloaded)" option and click the Save Changes button. This ensures that when you do your first download, ALL email will be sent.

If you have previously enabled POP Email, select the "Disable POP" and click the Save Changes button, and then re-select the "Enable POP for all mail (even mail that's already been downloaded)" option, and click the Save Changes button. This will reset Gmail's POP settings so that ALL email gets delivered via POP.

Please be aware of a few potential issues:

1. If you already have POP access enabled, resetting the account will re-download EVERYTHING, so you may end up with duplicates. Move any existing messages in your email client to a backup folder prior to resetting Gmail and downloading everything.
2. If you are setting up your email client for the first time and want to retain the email on Gmail's server, be sure that the setting "Delete email from server" in the Account setting is UNCHECKED, otherwise the email will be deleted from Gmail after it is downloaded.
3. When I initiated a Send/Receive session in both Outlook 2003 and Thunderbird (I didn't try Outlook Express) it only downloaded about 300-400 messages. Initiating another Send/Receive session downloaded another block of 300-400 messages. With over 3500 messages, I had to initiate about a dozen Send/Receive sessions, but when they all completed, everything downloaded. Over a broadband connection, it was quite fast.
4. When downloading with Outlook 2003, a number of the emails that were received had Today's date

instead of the date the email was sent. It looks like this only applied to email that I sent, but I'll have to verify that—it was quite a few. The majority of messages, however, appear to have the proper dates. Thunderbird retained all dates properly.

Once all your Gmail messages are downloaded, your email client will be "synced" such that when you initiate additional send/receive sessions, only new email will download. To maintain the backup on an ongoing basis, just periodically initiate a send/receive session to bring in any new email. If you have a PC that is always connected to the Internet, leaving your email client running and setting your email client to auto-download any new messages will keep things always backed up locally nicely. If you use the email client as your primary method of Gmail access, then set the auto-download to something frequent like every 10 minutes. However, if you are using the email client like I do (as a backup tool) set the auto-download to initiate every few hours or just once or twice per day. In that case, you don't need to have it download frequently, just regularly.

Again, Gmail is an excellent service, but it's nice having the peace of mind that you can always have a backup.

Thanks to "Edwin" and "Zavie" for prompting me to look into this!

## **Gmail Tip #46: Creating a Map Repository**

December 23, 2005

Do you find yourself repeatedly looking up the same map info at any of the various online map services like Google Maps, MapQuest, or Yahoo! Maps? Here's a Tip submitted by "Andreas" that lets you maintain a simple Map Repository within Gmail. It's builds on the concept introduced in the [Gmail Tip #3: How to maintain "Notes"](#), but it's application is different. Read on for details...

Create a Contact with a Name of "Map" and an Email Address of username+map@gmail.com (replacing username with your Gmail username.)

Then, create a new Label called "Map".

Finally, create a Filter to add the "Map" Label to any email addressed to username+map@gmail.com. Check the "Skip the Inbox (Archive it)" checkbox to bypass the Inbox.

Whenever you look after a online city map of a friend or location you visit repeatedly. Save the map as gif-Image and send it to username+map@gmail.com. Include the Name and address of the person or location in the subject line.

Using Gmail's Search, you can later find the map much faster then by using an online map-service.

Like [Gmail Tip #3: How to maintain "Notes"](#), this can be adapted for many other applications by simply changing the word "Map" in the Address, Label, and Filter to something more specific to your need.

## **Gmail Tip #47: Gmail Adds Chat!**

February 7, 2006

Google has just announced that they are adding Chat capability within Gmail! Go to <http://mail.google.com/mail/help/chat.html> to learn more about the specifics. Over the next few weeks, it will be deployed to all Gmail accounts.

Gmail Chat! Adding chat to Gmail should be a huge boost for Gmail for several reasons. First, it will be integrated right into Gmail's Web-based application, so there will be no need to launch a separate application like Google Talk. This is important because it will simplify its use, and nicely integrate Gmail with chat. Second, you will not need to rely on cryptic screen names as is typical with most chat applications. You will be able to use the verbose naming that Gmail's Contacts uses.

Image not found or type unknown

Additionally, you will be able to set your availability status, and see when your friends are online allowing you to decide how you will contact them: by Gmail or via IM through chat. You will also be able to optionally maintain a history or log of your chat sessions.

I'll post additional information as it comes out!

## **Gmail Tip #48: Gmail Ads Google Calendar Integration!**

April 18, 2006

Google launched its new Google Calendar service, and added excellent integration to Gmail. (Check out [GoogleCalendarTips.com](http://GoogleCalendarTips.com) for some information about Google Calendar!) Integration includes a small navigation bar to take you right into Google Calendar from Gmail and Event integration in messages. Read on to see how Gmail and Google Calendar work together....

Navigation bar in Gmail:

{mosimage}

Navigation bar in Google Calendar:

{mosimage}

## **Gmail Tip #48: Reply Without Scrolling**

**May 2, 2006**

Here's a simple one. Do you ever find it annoying that in order to Reply to a message, you have to scroll all the way to the bottom of a message to click the "Reply" link? While reading a message, simply press the "r" key, and the Reply editing box will open ready for you to compose your reply! Oh, and pressing the "f" key will also open the "Forward" editing box!

To enable keyboard shortcuts, click on the Settings link at the top right of the screen, and click on the "General" tab. Look for the "Keyboard Shortcuts" entry and click on the "Keyboard shortcuts on" radio button.

## **Gmail Tip #49: Moving the Chat Quick Contacts Box**

**May 2, 2006**

Here's another simple tip. By default, the integrated Chat "Quick Contacts" block displays above the "Labels" block on the left of the Gmail screen. If you seldom use Chat, you may want the location of the two blocks reversed. You can position the "Quick Contacts" block to display either above or below the "Labels" block by clicking on the "Settings" link at the top right of the Gmail screen and clicking the > "Chat" tab. Look for the "Quick Contacts location" setting and select the position from the dropdown menu. Be sure to click the "Save Changes" button!

## **Gmail Tip #50: Changing Subject Text When Replying or Forwarding**

**May 2, 2006**

Sometimes, you want to reply to or forward a message, but the Subject text is either annoyingly mangled, or simply unclear. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to clean up the Subject text to make it a bit cleaner? Read on to learn how to simply edit a message's Subject text....

When composing a message, click on the "Edit Subject" link just above the editor toolbar. This opens an editable Subject text field. Make any changes you want here. When your message is sent and saved, the new Subject text will be used.

One point of note in doing this is that Gmail maintains conversations (grouped messages) by their Subject text, so altering the Subject text while composing a message will "break" that conversation, creating two conversations, one for each Subject. While this may be desirable in some cases, it may be unexpected if you don't remember how Gmail handles conversations.

Also note that you can only edit the Subject text of messages while you are composing it. You cannot edit the Subject text of an existing message.

## **Gmail Tip #51: Keyboard Shortcuts**

**May 2, 2006**

Gmail's User Interface is quite usable, but sometimes a mouse just seems to get in the way of efficiency. The Gmail developers have included lots of nice keyboard shortcuts that can really make using Gmail quicker and easier. Read on for a detailed list of Gmail's keyboard shortcuts....

Gmail offers *many* keyboard shortcuts. To enable keyboard shortcuts, click on the Settings link at the top right of the screen, and click on the "General" tab. Look for the "Keyboard Shortcuts" entry and click on the "Keyboard shortcuts on" radio button.

Below is a table showing the current list as of 25-Jan-2006. Try 'em out!

(For the most recent version, click [here](#).)

Shortcut Key	Definition	Action
<b>c</b>	Compose	Allows you to compose a new message. <b>&lt;Shift&gt; + c</b> allows you to compose a message in a new window.
<b>/</b>	Search	Puts your cursor in the search box.
<b>k</b>	Move to newer conversation	Opens or moves your cursor to a more recent conversation. You can hit <b>&lt;Enter&gt;</b> to expand a conversation.
<b>j</b>	Move to older conversation	Opens or moves your cursor to the next oldest conversation. You can hit <b>&lt;Enter&gt;</b> to expand a conversation.
<b>n</b>	Next message	Moves your cursor to the next message. You can hit <b>&lt;Enter&gt;</b> to expand or collapse a message. (Only applicable in 'Conversation View.')
<b>p</b>	Previous message	Moves your cursor to the previous message. You can hit <b>&lt;Enter&gt;</b> to expand or collapse a message. (Only applicable in 'Conversation View.')
<b>o</b> or <b>&lt;Enter&gt;</b>	Open	Opens your conversation. Also expands or collapses a message if you are in 'Conversation View.'
<b>u</b>	Return to conversation list	Refreshes your page and returns you to the inbox, or list of conversations.
<b>y</b>	Archive* Remove from current view	Automatically removes the message or conversation from your current view. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 'Inbox,' 'y' means <b>Archive</b></li> <li>• From 'Starred,' 'y' means <b>Unstar</b></li> <li>• From any label, 'y' means <b>Remove the label</b></li> </ul> <p>* 'y' has no effect if you're in 'Spam,' 'Sent,' or 'All Mail.'</p>
<b>x</b>	Select conversation	Automatically checks and selects a conversation so that you can archive, apply a label, or choose an action from the drop-down menu to apply to that conversation.
<b>s</b>	Star a message or conversation	Adds or removes a star to a message or conversation. Stars allow you to give a message or conversation a special status.
<b>!</b>	Report spam	Marks a message as spam and removes it from your conversation list.
<b>r</b>	Reply	Reply to the message sender. <b>&lt;Shift&gt; + r</b> allows you to reply to a message in a new window. (Only applicable in 'Conversation View.')
<b>a</b>	Reply all	Reply to all message recipients. <b>&lt;Shift&gt; + a</b> allows you to reply to all message recipients in a new window. (Only applicable in 'Conversation View.')

<b>f</b>	Forward	Forward a message. <Shift> + <b>f</b> allows you to forward a message in a new window. (Only applicable in 'Conversation View'.)
<b>&lt;Esc&gt;</b>	Escape from input field	Removes the cursor from your current input field.

**Combo-keys** – Use the following combinations of keys to navigate through Gmail.

Shortcut Key	Definition	Action
<b>&lt;tab&gt; then &lt;Enter&gt;</b>	Send message	After composing your message, use this combination to send it automatically. (Supported in Internet Explorer and Firefox, on Windows.)
<b>y then o</b>	Archive and next	Archive your conversation and move to the next one.
<b>g then a</b>	Go to 'All Mail'	Takes you to 'All Mail,' the storage site for all mail you've ever sent or received (and have not deleted).
<b>g then s</b>	Go to 'Starred'	Takes you to all conversations you have starred.
<b>g then c</b>	Go to 'Contacts'	Takes you to your Contacts list.
<b>g then d</b>	Go to 'Drafts'	Takes you to all drafts you have saved.
<b>g then i</b>	Go to 'Inbox'	Returns you to the inbox.

updated 1/25/2006

## Gmail Tip #52: Can I "Delete all" Spam?

May 2, 2006

Do you have a lot of Spam messages in your Spam view? I seem to get between 10 and 15 Spam messages per day. Some people like to keep their Spam view empty, so they constantly delete whatever is in there. But is there an easy way to "Delete All" Spam? Read on for the answer....

Simply put, there is currently no way to simply "Delete all Spam" if the number of Spam messages exceeds one screenful of messages. You can, however, delete them one screen at a time. You first need to click on the "All" link under the "Delete Forever" button while in the Spam view. Next, click the "Delete Forever" button. This deletes that screenful of Spam. If you have more than one screenful of Spam messages, repeat this for all screens of Spam. Note that if you have hundreds of Spam messages (which is not unusual) this could take a short while to delete them all.

But here's a tip: Just don't forget that Gmail automatically manages Spam for you by deleting any Spam that is over about 30 or so days old. Even though you may accumulate lots of Spam, letting Gmail auto-manage it for you can have its benefit. For example, if you inadvertently mark a message as Spam, you can always go into the Spam view and move it back to the Inbox—this which "unmarks" the message as Spam.

Though you may have the urge to just delete all Spam as you get it, why not let Gmail manage it?

## **Gmail Tip #53: How Can I View Outlook Stationery In Gmail?**

May 15, 2006

The short answer is: "You can't." Outlook (and several other email clients) enable you to include "stationery" or background images in your email message to "dress up" the look of your email messages. Currently, Gmail does not render these images as expected. Read on for some of my thoughts about stationery...

First off, I need to step up on my soapbox for a moment...

I really never understood the draw of background images or stationery in email messages. Other than allowing you to inject a bit of individuality into a message, what purpose does it really server? I personally find them typically distracting, not so much the images themselves, but the content chosen. Some are elegant and pleasing to look at, but some are just plain distracting.

I would suggest you take a step back and really think about what you are trying to do with email. Many people get so hung up with the style or look of a message that they often overlook the actual content. While it's true that a picture can be worth a thousand words, well-written words should never be overlooked. And a nicely formatted and well-constructed signature can convey a lot of good information.

...OK, off of my soapbox.

Gmail does not currently handle stationery or background images, so if you really have to have it or use it, I suggest that you configure your Gmail account for POP access and then use an email client (like Outlook) that handles stationery. You lose Gmail's excellent Labeling and Search functions, but you can continue to use an email client that you are familiar with, while taking advantage of Gmail's excellent Spam filtering and storage space. You will still always have Web-based access should you need it.

If handling stationery is important to you, then I suggest you contact Google and recommend it as a suggested feature. Click on the Help link in the upper right corner of any Gmail screen, click the "Contact Us" link at the bottom, and click the "Suggest a feature" link. Google may not implement it, but if you don't tell them what you want, they'll never know!

## **Gmail Tip #54: New Feature! Select ALL conversations**

July 12, 2006

New feature! Deleting Spam and emptying Trash in Gmail just got a whole lot easier! Instead of being limited to deleting just a page-at-a-time, Gmail now lets you select all Spam and Trash



conversations for deletion in one simple step. Read on to see some screenshots of the new features...

One of the great annoyances of managing Gmail has been in dealing with Spam and Trash. When you had more than screenful of messages, clicking "select all" would only select all messages on the current screen. Deleting numerous messages could mean navigating multiple screens just to select and delete.

The Trash view now displays the message "Empty Trash now (messages that have been in Trash more than 30 days will be automatically deleted)" Here's a screenshot:

{mosimage}

When you click on the "Empty Trash now" link, Gmail will display a confirmation prompt displaying the number of conversations it will delete. Click "OK" to delete, or "Cancel" to not delete.

For Spam, the Spam view now displays the message "Delete all spam messages now (messages that have been in Spam more than 30 days will be automatically deleted)" Here's a screenshot:

{mosimage}

Clicking on the "Delete all spam messages now" link displays a confirmation prompt displaying the number of conversations in Spam to delete. Click "OK" to delete, or "Cancel" to not delete.

Yet another example of Google refining Gmail's capabilities.

## **Gmail Tip #55: Excluding Chat from Search Results**

**July 25, 2006**

Here's a tip inspired by a question from Ethan Lipman, an active Gmail Chat user. He wants to be able to search his Gmail messages for key words, but the Search Results often return hits from his Chat session logs. Read on to find out how to simply exclude Chat session logs from your Search Results....

The solution turns out to be really simple, but not necessarily obvious. It appears that all Gmail Chat session logs are simply standard messages labeled with a hidden Label of "Chat". So this means that many functions you use on Labels should work.

So, to exclude all Chat session logs from your Search Results, add the following text to your search string:

-label:Chat

Likewise, if you wanted to include words found ONLY in Chat session logs, just add the following to your search string:

+label:Chat

...making sure that it is the only "label:" string (unless you also want to include other Labels.)

Thanks to Ethan Lipman for the question!

## **Gmail Tip #56: Five New Features Launched!**

**November 10, 2006**

Gmail has just rolled out 5 new features to add to Gmail's arsenal including new Mobile Phone access.

**-Gmail On Your Mobile Phone**

**-Forward all**

**-Reply on top**

**-Embarrassment-reducing new message notifications**

**-Chat while your friends are offline**

Read on to see the details of these new features....

### **Gmail On Your Mobile Phone**

Point your phone to [gmail.com/app](http://gmail.com/app), download it the app, and you can access Gmail on your phone with just a click or two.

Some neat features:

- It has the same Gmail interface you know and love
- Your account stays synchronized whether you access it from your computer or the phone
- You can easily view attachments such as photos, documents and .pdf files

To learn more about Gmail for mobile devices, visit this page:

[http://www.google.com/mobile/gmail/#utm\\_source=en-cpp-g4mc-gmnew&utm\\_medium=cpp&utm\\_campaign=en](http://www.google.com/mobile/gmail/#utm_source=en-cpp-g4mc-gmnew&utm_medium=cpp&utm_campaign=en)

Just be sure to check out the phone compatibility at their Supported Mobile Phone link at

<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=50425> Not all phones are supported (mine isn't.)

### **Forward all**

When viewing a conversation, you can now click the "Forward all" link to forward the entire conversation instead of just one message.

### **Reply on top**

Now you don't have to scroll all the way to the bottom of a message to find the "Reply" link. Now there's a Reply button right on top. It also has a nice dropdown menu with many other options. Just click the little dropdown arrow. And don't forget that if you have Keyboard Shortcuts enabled, you can always press the "r" key to reply.

Reply

Image not found or type unknown

### **Embarrassment-reducing new message notifications**

Have you ever replied to a message only to find out that someone sent a reply right before you? Now, if someone sends a reply while you're in the middle of reading or replying to a conversation, you'll get a notification that a new message has arrived. Click "update conversation" to update the view to see what you've missed.

### **Chat while your friends are offline**

If you're chatting with a friend who goes offline, your friend will be able to see whatever you typed the next time he or she goes online.

## **Gmail Tip #57: Mac Keyboard Shortcuts**

January 5, 2007

Here's a quick tip inspired by "garfalk" for you Mac users out there.... Gmail's Mac key combinations are almost the same for the Mac as for the PC with a couple exceptions. "Shift" clicking on the beginning and at the end will "select all". "Command" or "Apple" (same key) clicking will select items one at a time, allowing you to skip some. Also, "Command" + s will Save a draft. Those who tend to be "keyboard-centric" may find this helpful in reducing mouse grabs and clicks.

## **Gmail Tip #58: Gmail Now Opened to Everyone!**

February 8, 2007

Gmail, Google's free Web-based email service, has swept the world, and has become very, very popular. Unfortunately, access to Gmail (and Google Mail in the UK) has always been by invitation only. But no more! Anyone can now get a Gmail account. Just go to [Gmail.com](http://Gmail.com) and click the "Sign up for Gmail" link.

It's that simple!

But having a Gmail account means more than just Web-based email. A Gmail account opens the door to many other excellent Google-related applications and services. By creating a Gmail account, you will gain access to personalize other Google-based applications including Google Maps, Google News, Picasa 2, Google Pages, Google Reader, Google Docs & Spreadsheets, and lots of other goodies.

Admittedly, getting a Gmail invitation has not been a problem for most, but this should open up Gmail to a much larger audience. Oh, and as always, come here for your Gmail tips!

## **Gmail Tip #59: New Feature! Gmail adds POP "Mail Fetcher"**

**February 28, 2007**

Gmail now lets you to fetch mail from up to 5 of your other, POP-enabled non-Gmail accounts! And once the messages are pulled into Gmail, you can leverage all of Gmail's great features. (Note that not all email services support POP access.) As of this writing, Gmail states that this feature is currently only enabled for a limited number of users. They're working on making it more available soon. Read on to see if you have access to Mail Fetcher, and how to set it up...

First off, let's see if you have access to Mail Fetcher. Click on the Settings link and click the Accounts tab. If you see a section titled "Get mail from other accounts:" then you should have access. Click the "Add another mail account" link, and a window will open. Enter your email address, and click "Next". Fill in the required information about your POP account, and click the "Add Account" button. You can add up to 5 accounts.

You can specify if Gmail will leave a copy of the messages on the server or not. If you opt not to leave messages on the server, then they will be effectively "moved" to Gmail, clearing off of the server. This means you don't have to manage email in two places. This is pretty standard.

You can also specify if Gmail connects using a secure connection (SSL).

Now comes the real power! You can define how Gmail will handle the messages once they are received. There are two additional settings that you can optionally configure:

### **Label incoming messages**

If you'd like to automatically label all messages that are retrieved from your non-Gmail account, select this option. You can choose to use the predefined label (set to your email address by default), you can select an existing label, or you can create a new one from the drop-down list. If you are pulling from multiple accounts, this lets you nicely "flag" from accounts they are coming from. And if you decide not to use this option, then all messages seamlessly arrive into your Inbox unlabeled. It is unclear at this time if

messages pulled in using Mail Fetcher are processed by Filters.

### **Archive incoming messages**

Mail from this account can be archived directly, without showing up in your Inbox. You may want email from a specific account to be pulled into your Gmail account, but you may want it to bypass your inbox. An example might be a mailing list account. Just have it auto-Labeled and auto-archived, and the messages will nicely show up in that Label view, but they won't clutter the Inbox.

Finally, once your account has been successfully added, you'll have the option of setting up a custom "From" address. This allows you to compose messages in Gmail, but have them appear to be sent from your other email account. This is existing functionality, but can now be tied to specific Mail Fetch accounts.

Once set up, Gmail will check your other accounts on a regular basis (the frequency is unknown at this time.) New mail will appear automatically in your Gmail account (the location depending on the settings you defined.) At any time, you can always disable Mail Fetch for specific accounts from the Accounts tab of your Settings page.

Once again, Gmail provides new capabilities that really enhance and improve upon its already great feature set. This new feature is not revolutionary, but it helps make Gmail a more complete solution.

## **Gmail Tip #60: Deleting A Message And Moving To The Next**

April 18, 2007

This tip comes from a question asked by a site visitor, Daree: *"I was wondering how you can delete an email and advance to the next email in your folder. Currently when I delete an email I am reading, it takes me back to the inbox. Yahoo has this option but it seems that Gmail doesn't offer it from the Settings link at the top."* The function that Daree asks for is not specifically available, but there is a partial solution—more of a workaround, actually. Read on to learn how to at least get close to this functionality....

First, you need to have "Keyboard shortcuts" turned on. To do this, click the "Settings" link in the upper right of your Gmail screen, and look for the "Keyboard shortcuts:" section. Select "Keyboard shortcuts on", and then click the "Save Changes" button.

Now, while viewing a message, simply press the "#" key (that's shift-2 on US keyboards) and the message will be deleted. But wait, it takes you back to the list, right? Not exactly what we want. But notice that the message prior to the one you just deleted is now "indicated" by the black arrow next to it. Now, simply press either the "o" key or the "Enter" key, and that indicated message will open up.

While this isn't exactly the functionality we are looking for, and it does require an extra keypress, the end result is that you are where you want to be, and it is all be done from the keyboard without having to grab the mouse. It also opens up some other (hopefully) powerful functions making things more flexible. For

example, to further expand on the above, once you are back at the message list after deleting a message, pressing the "k" and "j" keys will move you up and down respectively through the list of messages. You should notice the black arrow on the left of the list moving up and down when you press those keys. Pressing "o" or "Enter" will opens the indicated message.

Further, if you see a message in the list that you want to delete without opening, you can just delete it using the "#" key...well, almost. In this case, as with using the mouse, the message is "indicated" by the black arrow, but it is not "selected" (ie: the checkbox is not checked) so just first press the "x" key to select the message and the checkbox toggles. You can open it, delete it, archive it, or a host of other things.

Gmail packs a LOT of power, but unfortunately, not all of its functions are intuitive. That said, check out Gmail's "Keyboard Shortcuts" help screen found here...

<http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=6594>

...where you'll find lots of useful (but not always intuitive) keyboard shortcuts.

Finally, if you feel that this functionality would benefit the Gmail community, consider suggesting it to the Gmail developers by following this link:

[http://mail.google.com/support/bin/request.py?contact\\_type=suggest](http://mail.google.com/support/bin/request.py?contact_type=suggest)

Gmail is very powerful, and comparisons with competing solutions are inevitable. While not all features will ever match up exactly, there are often solutions that can provide similar function.

## **Gmail Tip #61: Enhancement: Attachment Size Doubled to 20MB!**

**May 24, 2007**



Gmail announced today that it has doubled the allowable size for attachments from 10MB to 20MB. Now you can start sharing more of your home videos, large presentations, and files! Note that because of the way email attachments are encoded, the maximum size of the file you send (which can vary from file to file) may be actually less than 20MB.

Congrats to Gmail for continuing to improve its offerings!

## **Gmail Tip #62: Enhancement: "Universal Navigation Bar"**

**May 24, 2007**

Google has recently enhanced some navigational features across most of its offerings by providing a recognizable and (somewhat) consistent "Universal Navigation Bar" at the top left of every page:



This feature lets you quickly move to other Google applications with ease (and without having to remember the URL!) Read on for a brief description of the new interface...

A source at Google explains that the Universal Navigation Bar will show its "nearest neighbors". This means that, depending on what Google page you are on, the choice of links will differ, presenting you with "related" Google offerings. For example, on a Google search results page, you'd see links to "Images" and "News", because those are related search offerings. On the other hand, if you are in Gmail, you'll see links to Google's "Calendar" and "Documents" applications instead.

Here is an example of the Universal Navigator Bar as seen in Gmail:

Image not found or type unknown

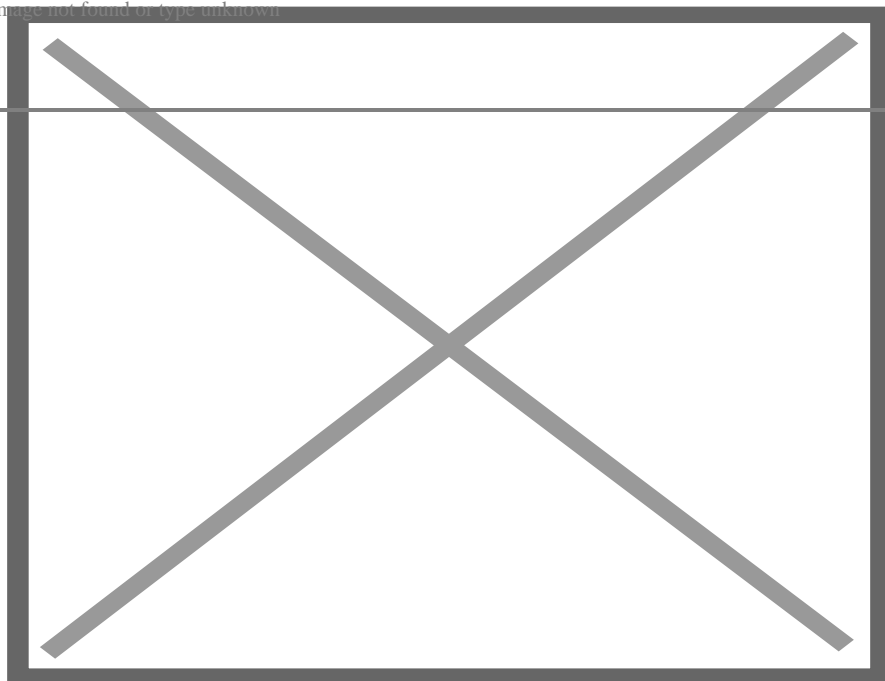
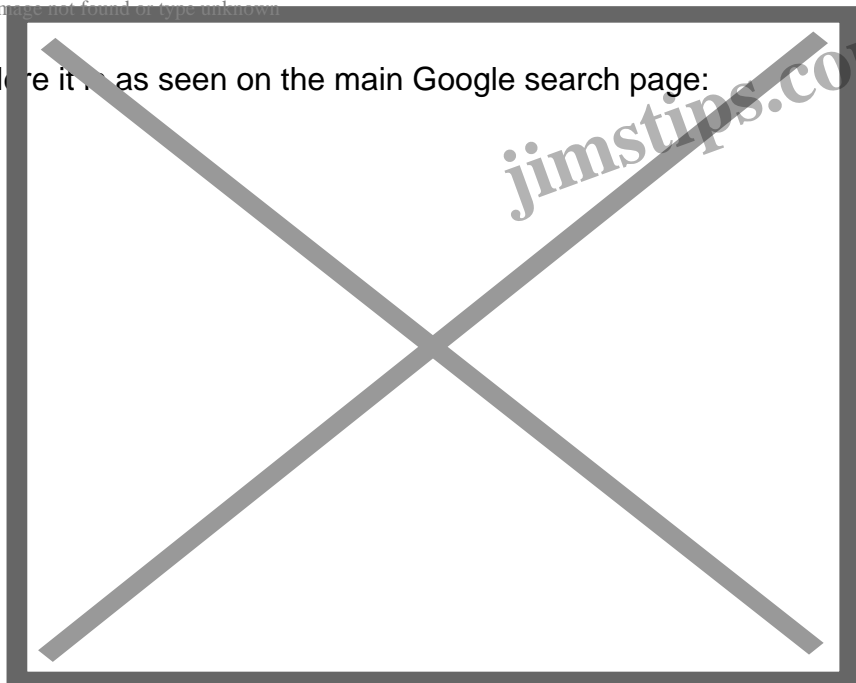


Image not found or type unknown

Here it was seen on the main Google search page:



It's great to see that Google is continuing to enhance, tie together, and better integrate its products.

## [Gmail Tip #63: Gmail And Your Blackberry](#)



June 22, 2007

Stephen Swire, a GmailTips.com visitor, sent me some information on how he uses Gmail with his Blackberry. Though I do not use a Blackberry, I thought I'd pass this along as Blackberries are becoming more and more popular. If you have similar experiences, or other suggestions, let me know, and I'll post 'em!

(Note: Stephen uses his blackberry with a personal email account, not an enterprise server. -Jim)

*"Here are two ways I've just started using Gmail to enhance my Blackberry:*

*(1) in order to have a running record of all sent messages, (a good business practice for me) I set up a BCC of all sent messages to a Gmail address.*

*(2) I find that there are some attachments which can't be opened on the blackberry (for example, some .PDF files download but fail to open.) Also, if I want to forward an attachment, it usually arrives "corrupted" in the recipient's mailbox.*

*My solution to both issues is to direct my domain and personal email addresses to a second Gmail address, place the Gmail quick access icon on my blackberry desktop, and use this on an as-needed basis either to forward an attachment directly from my Gmail account, or as a reader for some attachments."*

Thank you Stephen for your input!

## **Gmail Tip #64: Gmail Rolls Out IMAP!**

October 24, 2007



Gmail has finally rolled out its long-awaited IMAP ([Internet Message Access Protocol](#)) compatibility enabling users of such email clients as Outlook, Lotus Notes, Thunderbird, a host of others, and even Apple's iPhone to now take advantage of IMAP instead of the more limited POP connection.

Google is rolling it out, and it needs to migrate to many accounts, so it may not be available on your account yet. To enable IMAP, click on the Settings link on any Gmail page, and look for the "Forwarding and POP/IMAP" tab. Click that, and follow the instructions in the IMAP Access section. For some general Gmail help information on IMAP, click [here](#). This help section contains configuration information, FAQ's,

and troubleshooting links—very useful. You can also find a list of supported IMAP client applications [here](#). Also, here is a link to [Google's official blog](#) announcing and explaining IMAP.

This really raises the bar for Gmail by opening up more and more of its functionality to client apps. POP has served many well for Gmail, but this opens the door to many more uses, especially for some mobile devices.

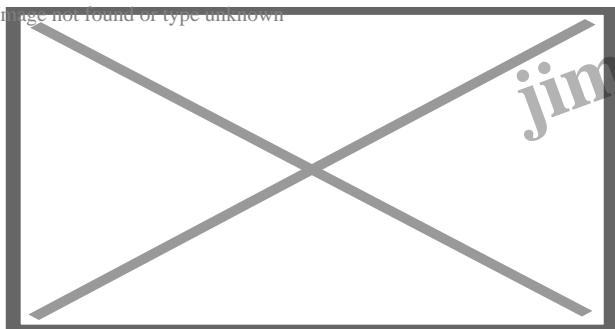
## **Gmail Tip #65: Colored Labels!**

**December 4, 2007**

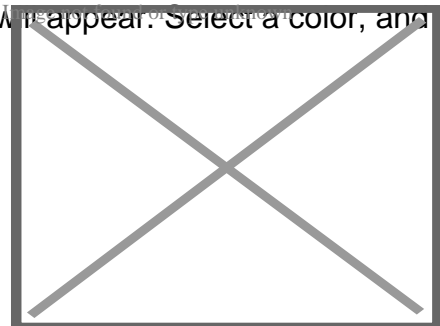
Gmail now lets you define colors for specific labels.

In the message list, any label that has a color assigned will display in that color. Labels with no color assigned will display as they always did. Here is an example:

Image not found or type unknown



To assign colors to a Label, click the Label selector on the left of any Gmail page to display the Labels. Hover your mouse to the right of the Label, and a small triangle will appear. Click it, and a color selector will appear. Select a color, and all messages with that Label will display the Label in that color.



As an added bonus, you can quickly and easily rename the Label using the new "Edit name" menu selection. Just be careful to double-check

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