

YOUR GUIDE TO: FREE EMAIL SERVICES

Who offers free email and where do I find them?

Many companies offer free email services. The three biggest are [Microsoft](#), [Yahoo](#), and [Google](#).

Microsoft: [Outlook](#) is the name of the service. You will be asked to provide a cell phone number at sign-up to send a verification text.

Yahoo!: [Yahoo Mail](#) is the name of the service. You may be asked to provide a cell phone number at sign-up to send a verification text.

Google: [Gmail](#) is the name of the service. You can create up to two accounts before being asked to provide a cell phone number.

Which service to choose?

Each service has its own pros and cons as well as unique features. Some important considerations are:

- **Storage size:** the total amount of space available to store your emails
- **Attachment size:** the largest possible size of attachment you can send in an email
- **Security:** some providers offer ‘two-factor authentication.’ This allows for an extra layer of security using a smartphone or tablet to verify your identity

Finding Help In Your Email

Every email provider offers help right in your email. Often its available by clicking a question mark button, similar to the ones below.



Key Terms

- **Email:** electronic mail you send and receive using a computer or mobile device.
- **Username or login:** unique to your account, your username or login will go in front of the @ symbol in your email address.
- **Password:** a collection of letters, numbers and symbols you enter to access your account.
- **Inbox:** the area in your email that shows all mail you’ve received
- **Folders:** electronic containers for storing emails—including inbox, sent mail, and any others you choose to create.
- **Attachments:** Files sent or received with emails. These can include pictures, videos, and documents.
- **Browser:** The program on your computer or mobile device used to access websites

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Creating an Account

All email services will ask you to choose a username and a password. Your username will form the first part of your email address. For example, if your username is johnsmith and you're using Gmail, your address will be johnsmith@gmail.com

All email services will also have standards for passwords. Typically they must be at least eight characters long, and include at least one capital letter, and one special character - such as punctuation.

Two-Factor Authentication

The three email providers mentioned offer a service called **two-factor authentication (2FA)** or **two-step authentication**. This service uses another device—typically a smartphone or tablet—to verify your identity. This ensures that even if your password is stolen or guessed, the attacker still can't access your account, because they'll be asked to verify their identity through a notification sent to your mobile device.

See the links below for information on each provider's two-factor authentication options:

Google: [Two-step authentication](#)

Microsoft: [Two-step verification](#)

Yahoo!: [Two-step verification](#)

Account Security Tips

- Don't share your password with others
- Save your password using your browser. All major browsers offer the ability to save usernames and passwords.
- Don't leave your password written down near your computer—let the browser save it for you!

The library offers many online resources. Visit library.brucecounty.on.ca for more details.

Email Usage Basics

All email accounts share the same basic ideas: and inbox or folders to hold your messages, a window to read messages, and buttons to write new messages and replies, forward emails to others, and delete messages. In this guide we'll look at a broad overview of these functions to get you started with email. The location and icons for each will vary somewhat from one services to the next, but are similar enough to talk about generally.

Writing New Messages

1. Find and click on the button or link to start a new message. **Compose** or **Write** are the most common terms. Some services use an icon instead, which is commonly a + symbol, an **arrow** or a picture of an **envelope**.
2. Fill in the email address or addresses for the recipient(s) you want to send this email to. If you've sent an email to this person before, it may offer you suggestions as you type, as it will have saved the contact information previously.

Email also have an option to **CC** or **carbon copy** your recipients. This sends a copy of the email to anyone in the **CC** line. You can also **BCC** or **blind carbon copy** someone. Anyone entered in the **BCC** line will receive a copy of the email, but people you put in the **To** or **CC** lines won't see the **BCC** recipients. Recipients in the **BCC** line also won't see each other. **BCC** is useful when you want to email several people but not reveal their email addresses to each other for privacy reasons.

3. Click the send button or icon to send your message.

Saving Drafts

If you want to finish writing a message later, you can save what you've written as a draft. Gmail, Outlook and Yahoo all save automatically as you write. If you attempt to close a message that isn't saved, you'll be asked if you want to save the draft or discard it.

Drafts can be found by finding and clicking on the **Drafts** folder in your inbox. Draft emails will be shown in this folder, and clicking on a message will open it up so you can continue working on it.

Replying and Forwarding

Sending Replies

Replying to an email lets you send a response back to the person who sent you the email. When replying, you can also add more recipients, replying to all of them at once, even if they weren't in the original email, by entering their email address in the 'to' field.

Replying is done by pressing the reply button, which is most commonly an arrow pointing left, like the ones below.



If you received an email that was sent to more than one person, you can reply to all of them by pressing the **reply all** button, which is most commonly two arrows pointing left, a doubled version of the arrows above.

Forwarding Messages

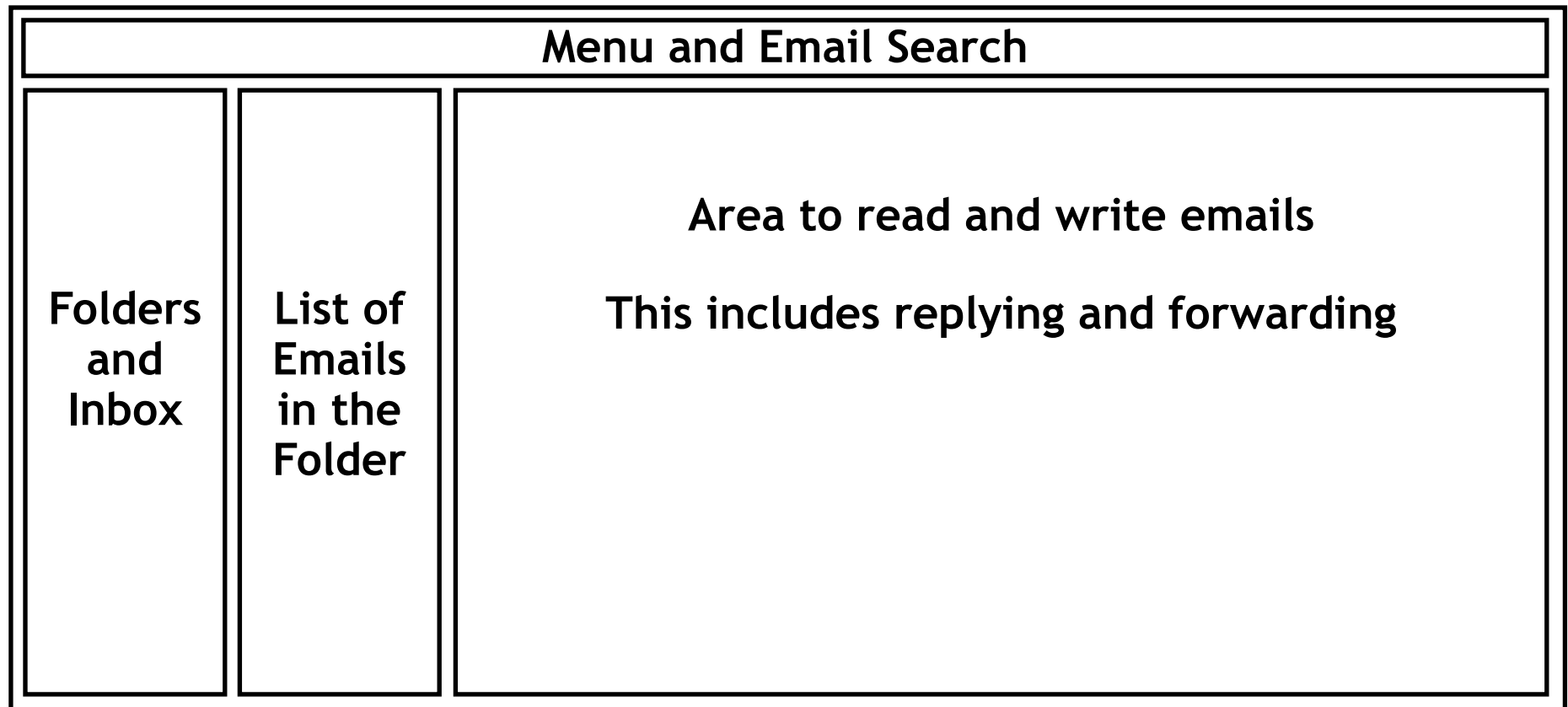
Forwarding a message lets you send an email you received to one or more new recipients. To forward an email to one or more people, press the **forward** button, which is most commonly an arrow pointing right, like the ones below, and enter the addresses of the person or people you want to forward the message to.



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Generic Email Inbox Display

Because email providers all use a similar interface, we can show you a general guide on what to expect. This isn't an exact duplicate of what you'll find, but is a good place to start understanding the different parts of your inbox.



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Taking Precautions

Emails advertising scams, or trying to get you to reveal personal information are a concern, and you should take care not to get into trouble with them. These basic precautions can help.

- **Unknown sender:** If you don't recognize the person or company sending you an email, don't open it.
- **Links in emails:** If an email, particularly one from an unknown sender, has a link to a website in it, be careful. The link may send you to a website which will attempt to get your personal information, or install malicious software on your computer.
- **Requests for information:** If an email asks for personal details such as banking information or your Social Insurance Number, do not send it. Legitimate requests for this information do not come via email.
- **Does it seem too good to be true?** It probably is! Offers of money, or requests for assistance in moving or acquiring cash or goods are among the most common scams

Other Resources

[The Canadian Anti Fraud Centre](#) maintains an excellent resource regarding scams in general, much of which is applicable to email as well.

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Finding More Help

Below are links to resources offering additional help for using email.

Resources from Lynda.com

Lynda.com is a training resource available for free through the [Bruce County Public Library website](#). All you need to access it is a library card and PIN. If you don't have a card, or don't know your card number or PIN, visit or call and Bruce County Public Library branch and staff will help you.

[Gmail Essential Training](#)

[Outlook.com Essential Training](#)

Other Resources

- [Getting to Know Gmail](#)
- [Get Help with Outlook.com](#)

Visit or Call the Library!

There are public computers in all Bruce County Public Library, and knowledgeable staff who can help you get up to speed with using your email.

The library offers many online resources. Visit library.brucecounty.on.ca for more details.