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Outlook Express

By Richard Lowe

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Outlook Express is a reasonably nice email, newsgroup and contacts client. One of the best things about this program is the fact that it is free – if, of course, you install Internet Explorer on your system.

Let's start with the positive things about this program. The email client is on a par with most other email clients. You can do just about anything that you would ever desire, including creating maintaining email accounts, receiving messages, replying, forwarding, and so on.

One of the real benefits to Outlook Express is the ability to create identities. I don't know about you, but I have several email accounts. Using the standard Outlook 2000 client all of the messages from all of the accounts get thrown together in one list (my understanding is that Outlook XP fixes this, but who wants to install such a piece of garbage as Office XP on their system?) Outlook express allows you to create more-or-less separate, well, everything for each and every email account (if you so desire). This way, all of the contacts, inbox, sendbox and so on are totally unique to the account.

The newsgroup reader is the standard, online type. This was the first newsgroup reader that I ever used, and it meets most of the requirements of anyone doing light to medium reading and posting. Other, far better newsgroup clients now exist, however, so Outlook Express cannot be recommended based upon the newsgroup client alone.

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Contacts are handled in a more or less standard way. You've got a list of contacts, and you can add their mailing information as needed. The contact can be defined directly from an email message, which is a nice touch.

The rule engine in Outlook Express probably was considered advanced many years ago, but by today's standards it is mundane. However, it can be used to block spam, file away messages and perform autoreplies.

A feature which is really cool is called Email Stationary. One of the best features about Outlook Express is the built-in stationary

editor. It's not super-sophisticated, but it does the job of creating simple and intermediate stationary files very well.

Okay, now for the negatives about this product. I can sum up the biggest negative in just one sentence:

The reason why viruses such as Melissa, Iloveyou and the like exist and thrive is the proliferation of Outlook and Outlook Express.

You see, Outlook Express (and it's big brother Outlook) support email scripting. Other email clients do allow you to execute programs and scripts, but very few of them allow the email client itself to be invoked from the script or executable. Why is this a problem?

Here's an example. Read and execute a virus in a different email client and you could wipe out your own system. Read the same virus in Outlook Express (or Outlook) and you can additionally automatically (and often without your knowledge) send that virus to everyone you've ever communicated with on email.

Before the days of email scripting, creating a self-replicating virus was a large task requiring a very knowledgeable person. He would have to design and create a means whereby the virus sent itself to other systems. Once email scripting was invented and became popular, virtually anyone with a few days or weeks of script training (or reading of manuals) could do the same.

So if you use Outlook Express, you **MUST** install a very good virus checking program (such as Norton Antivirus) and you **MUST** keep the definitions up-to-date. Unfortunately, the email

security patch for Outlook which disables email scripting does not apply to Outlook Express, so is of no help. (I am not sure if the scripting problem applies to the Outlook Express which ships with Internet Explorer 6 and above as I have not installed that program yet).

To sum it up quickly, Outlook Express is a reasonable email and newsgroup client. The best that can be said about it is the product works and it's free. You are, however, exposing yourself to some risk if you use the program, especially if you do not have a good antivirus program installed.

Additional Reading

Changing Location Of Outlook Stationery

http://www.internet-tips.net/System/registry_outlookstationary.htm

The location of Outlook and Outlook Express stationery files is

contained in the registry. You can modify this value.

Creating Stationery Using Outlook Express 5 Lesson #1 – Basics

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Email/outlookstationarycreate01.htm>

Creating Stationery Using Outlook Express 5 Lesson #2 – Stationery Wizard

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Email/outlookstationarycreate02.htm>

Email – The most critical application on the web

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Email/Email.htm>

Email is the most used and most important component on the web. There are lots of options available to make your email experience better and more more fulfilling.

Outlook Stationery

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Email/outlookstationary.htm>

Both Outlook and Outlook Express support stationery files, which allow you to send very cool-looking email messages.

The Ultimate In Virus Protection

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Security/Virusprotection.htm>

Learn how to protect your computer and your hard work. Start with a backup plan, install antivirus software and subscribe to newsletters.

Viruses

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Security/Viruses.htm>

The most important thing you can do to protect your system is install a virus checker (also known as an anti-virus program). These programs will scan your system for viruses and Trojan horses and delete or repair them. There are several products including those by McAfee and Norton (Symantec).

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> – Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

Why Stick With Email Clients Like Outlook?

By Iulia Pascanu

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Trying to figure out a stream in banning one email client or another is no easy job. As soon as somebody rises up saying

Outlook is bad, somebody else comes saying it's good and the other one is bad. And the story goes on and on.

On one hand, email clients like Outlook Express and (even more) MS Outlook do a really good job when it comes to user

friendliness. What email client allows you to use more options on the agenda, bell ringers, flag wavers and contact managing

tips than MS Outlook?

The ease of use perfectly molds on human indolence. That means I would never question about Microsoft Outlook being or not a

good email client if it comes together with my Office pack that comes together with Windows that comes together with my

computer.

Here is another red flag: MS Outlook is not free as long as I'm paying for my Windows license. This should count when

choosing an email client.

Moreover, everything is so easy to install with those cute wizards, and installing sessions are ready

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within minutes.

Until... well, until I spend enough time online, using email, starting to receive viruses, worms and other creatures that do

bad things to computers. If you ever had to do one of the following when using Outlook or Outlook Express:

- * try very hard not to click on a message subject that looked suspicious; anyway, not without using a small trick (that

used to work for me): pressing Shift, selecting the suspicious messages and then hitting Del,

- * try hard not to select some very good and very important messages together with the suspicious ones,

- * accept phone calls from extremely upset clients accusing you of infecting their computers with God knows what worm

(personally got in trouble with BugBear),

- * working on an extremely low system because an efficient AV is doing its job scanning, updating, warning, locking etc.

- * delete all your Outlook contacts in order not to become infectious for friends and clients in case your computer

somehow got infected,

...then you know what it's like. Both Outlook and Outlook Express, while different applications, with no related history,

have security as their weakest link. And that's why some people switch to other email clients that are said to be more

secure.

It is true that most worms are today Outlook dedicated because Outlook has both more users and more security holes. It is

also true that Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates set security as a top priority back on 17th January 2002 (it's been almost two

years by now). While I don't mean to ban Outlook or Outlook Express, I'd like to choose the best for me, and the best doesn't

seem one of the fore mentioned, at the moment.

Iulia Pascanu writes for <http://www.emailmarketingsoftware.org/> where you can find more information about

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