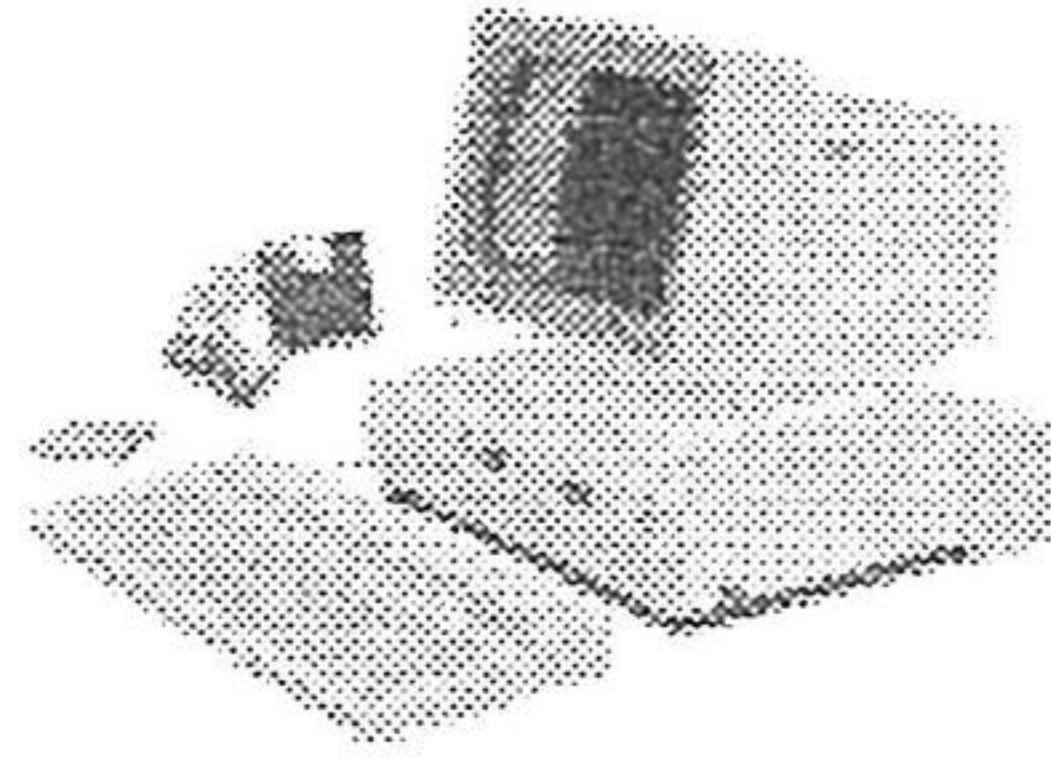


Computer Tips



I know that we are always talking about upgrades and security and things that don't mean much to the end user. So this month I thought I would cover a topic that everyone seems to use, email. In the past few years, email has become one of the main ways of communicating on a daily basis. It is shocking to think that it took almost 8 decades for the telephone to take over the world as the major way of communicating, and email has done almost the same in about 5 decades. That's a lot of use in a short time.

First of all there are the programs. The three major contenders are Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger, and Eudora. These are all stand alone programs which reside on your computer and allow you to handle both incoming and outgoing email. They all operate very similarly; however some have more features than others. Outlook Express is a Microsoft product that ships with Microsoft's popular Internet Explorer program. Netscape Messenger comes with Netscape, of course. Eudora is a product on its own and strictly handles email. A note to the wise, though Outlook Express is the most popular program, it is also the one that most hackers target with worms and viri. If you are a security conscious user, you could switch to Netscape or Eudora and get some added protection, though these programs are not bullet proof.

You also have the ability to sign up with a number of free internet email services. These services used to be excellent, but have been hampered by corporate greed and spam. Still they are excellent if you want to use an anonymous email address as you surf the web. Hotmail and Yahoo remain the two favourites, though Hotmail has taken a hit after it began to demand that its users upgrade to a paid service with greater storage, even if the storage amount they are offering is pathetic for the price.

Now for the fun. Here are some tips to make your email experience a little easier and even fun. If you are the type of person who likes to feel popular and needs a full inbox each day, then you could go to <http://www.emazing.com/> and sign up for any number of tips and information on numer-

ous subjects that will be emailed directly to you each day. Be forewarned though, what is fun for now can be downright annoying later on and the more lists you are on the more generic email you will get. As Monty Python very aptly put it... Spam Spam Spam Spanmity Spam.

Attachments are a subject that I get asked about regularly, so here are some tips on them.

1. Do not send very large files as attachments (>100K). Examples include applications, updaters for applications, or large graphics files. Sending large files like these have caused problems with the mail servers, so do not use the email system as a method for transferring large files. Instead, place them in a public directory on a server and have the other person pick it up from there.

"Attachments" are those pictures and sounds and videos and programs you send along with email messages. The biggest problem with attachments is, well, they're often too big. Many Internet services don't want to choke on huge chunks of attached bits so they set limits. As the pictures, programs or whatever wends their way through the net, this gateway or that can stop them. Often anything over 1 to 3 MB gets cut off, truncated. WhaleMail is a free service that lets you send attachments of up to 50MB. <http://www.whalemail.com>

2 Think about the person or persons to whom you are sending the attachment. If you are sending a Microsoft Word file, and you know that the person who will receive it has the same type of computer as you and the same version of Microsoft Word, you will not need to do anything special with the file. However, if the person has a different version of Word, or is on a different type of computer, you should save the file in Rich Text Format (RTF) to insure that the

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