



DeBug Tech Tips

Taking Email For Granted?

Whether you're playing Pokémon GO or managing a large medical office, most technology users have one thing in common - Email. Whether it's keeping in contact with loved ones, managing your business, or getting the latest deal from your favorite store, email is by far one of the most widely used services on computers. If you're like the majority of people out there, you probably were given your personal email address by your local internet service provider - Charter, AT&T, Frontier, High Desert, or any of the other providers in the area. Most of the time, this works well enough for everyday use, but do you know the differences between email providers? And what if you change providers or move to another location?

To make a long, complicated story short and sweet, there are usually two ways to access your email: "Webmail" where you go to a website like Yahoo.com, gmail.com, Hotmail.com or others. The other way is through an email program like Outlook, Thunderbird, Windows Live Mail, etc. These are called POP/IMAP and SMTP accounts. Generally, it doesn't matter who your provider is, you can access your email by whichever method is best suited for your needs.

Which method is best for you?

First, we'll help clarify those confused about what the "Cloud" is. Cloud is another way of saying Internet. So having your email on the "Cloud" is the same as saying it's web-based, or webmail. When you have an email app on your mobile device or computer, it simply downloads your email from the Internet to your device, generally making it easier to manage your messages, contacts, calendar, etc. This software is generally referred to as your email client or application. This also allows you to manage your emails even when you don't have an Internet connection. However, many people find webmail to be a bit cumbersome and not as user friendly.

There are two technologies used for email programs, and you've probably heard of them before; POP and IMAP. POP was the first technology and hasn't been changed much since its final version, POP3, in 1988. POP email is downloaded and usually deleted from the email server, so it's only available on the computer you read it from. We won't go too much into detail, but the simple way to put it is if you want to keep your email safe and not be afraid of losing your emails when you change computers, avoid POP!

Some email providers don't have IMAP as an option, including some AT&T accounts, Frontier, High Desert, and more. Having an email through one of the big companies like Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, etc. is the equivalent of having a PO Box with the Post Office. If you change Internet providers, your email remains the same. You don't have to worry about contacting everyone you know or emails that you subscribe to, to change your email address. If you're worried about the future of your emails, it's best to stick with a separate email address through Gmail.com, Outlook.com, Yahoo.com, or one of the many others, and use the webmail they provide. One of the things we see often here at DeBug is a computer that has crashed with 10 years of email stored on it that can't be saved. It's heartbreaking news to somebody who has their family pictures in their email, conversations with relatives, important documents, and more. With a webmail account like Gmail, everything is saved on the internet under your account, so you never lose it and can access it from any computer.