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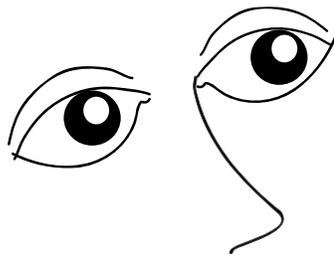
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# Information Technology

## Best Practices

### For U of M e-mail use



E-mail has become an undeniably important part of our daily lives. Whether it is for professional, academic, or personal use, when we do not have access to our e-mail or if access is problematic, it hinders us drastically. Most people have at least one e-mail horror story. What's yours? Have you ever lost an important message? Perhaps you had trouble getting to your messages at all!

There are ways to avoid the missed project deadlines, late papers, slow access, and other frustrations of poor e-mail performance. Follow the four tips outlined in this article to make your e-mail more reliable and run faster: choose the right e-mail client; use IMAP to keep your e-mail accessible and backed up and avoid slow performance; clean up your inbox; and be careful how frequently you check for new e-mail.

#### ■ Tip 1: choose the right e-mail client

An e-mail client is another term for e-mail program. E-mail clients include Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger, Mozilla Thunderbird, Macintosh Mail, and Eudora, to mention a few. Some e-mail clients have better functionality and ease-of-use than others. One such client is Thunderbird.

#### ■ Tip 2: use IMAP; keep your e-mail accessible and backed up

There are two ways to set up an e-mail client: POP and IMAP. University of Minnesota Information Services recommends IMAP for your own benefit.

#### ▼ Is your Internet (x.500) Password secure?

In March, 2002 the University introduced online W-2 and W-4 applications. Beginning with the June 12, 2002, pay date, employees could access their pay statement online through HRSS, also allowing employees to see their pay statements two days before payday. From this rollout date pay statements are available online for two years. For pay statements see the HRSS website <http://hrss.umn.edu>.

To change your Internet Password, log onto your personalized Internet Account Options Page at the /validate website: <http://www.umn.edu/validate>.

**IMAP versus POP: what's the difference?**

- IMAP stands for **I**nternet **M**essage **A**ccess **P**rotocol
- POP stands for **P**ost **O**ffice **P**rotocol

The main difference, as far as you may be concerned, is how IMAP or POP controls your e-mail inbox.

When you use IMAP you are accessing your inbox on the U of M's central mail server. IMAP does not actually move messages onto your computer. You can think of an e-mail program using IMAP as a window to your messages on the server. Although you are accessing the messages and working with them, they remain on the central mail server.

POP does the opposite. Instead of just showing you what is in your inbox on the U's mail server, it checks the server for new messages, then downloads all the new messages in your inbox onto your computer; it also deletes them from the server. This means that every time you use POP to view your new messages, they are no longer on the central mail server. Figure 1 shows an illustration of these concepts.

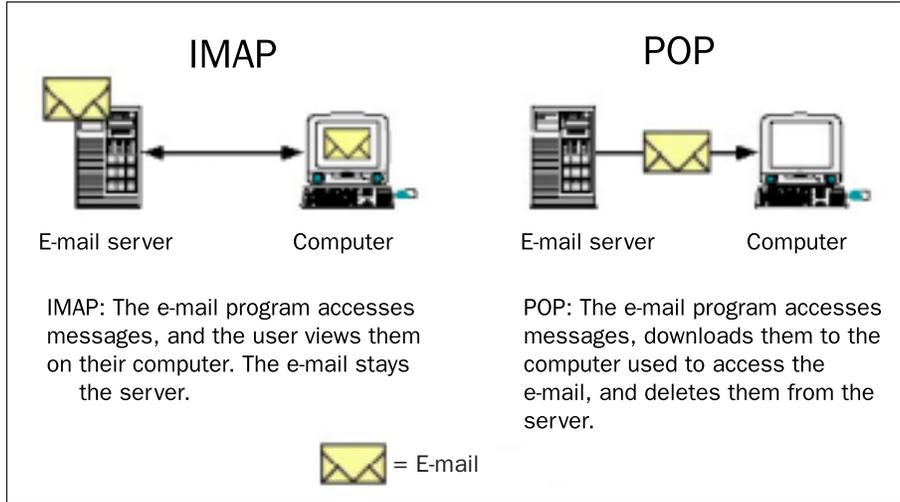
Another reason to use IMAP instead of POP is that it is easier to view e-mail from home or from other locations. Because IMAP leaves all of your messages on the central mail server, you can view these messages from anywhere you have Internet access, regardless of how you access the Internet. This means the U of M e-mail inbox you view from home will be the same one you see at work.

If you use IMAP and create e-mail folders, these folders are stored on the central server and, thus, are accessible from anywhere your read your e-mail. If you use POP and create e-mail folders, you cannot access these folders from anywhere except the computer you created them on.

Also, since POP removes new messages from the mail server, when you view your inbox from other loca-

tions, you will not see any of the messages you looked at using your POP e-mail program. Those messages, as stated above, have been downloaded to the computer that you used the POP e-mail on; and the messages are no longer accessible anywhere else. (This also means people who use POP from home and on campus can have very different inboxes.)

**Figure 1: Accessing your inbox with IMAP versus POP**



**Figure 2: Show Current E-mail Storage Use, an example**

Filesystem	Disk space usage			File usage		
	Usage	Limit	%	Usage	Limit	%
E-mail Inbox	410 KB					
Home directory (including IMAP folders)	2,602 KB	1,000,000 KB	0.3%	37	10000	0.4%
Personal web site	5 KB	100,000 KB	0.0%	5	10000	0.1%

Convert KB (kilobytes) to MB (megabytes): 1 MB = 1,000 KB.

Here's another POP complication: there is an option in many POP e-mail programs to leave copies of messages on the server, but this option has undesirable complications. When you leave copies of the messages on the server, then access your e-mail using WebMail (an IMAP application) or other e-mail programs, it creates duplicates; so you will see each of the messages more than once, and you will have to clean out (delete) these copies.

**With IMAP you get a backup**

The University's e-mail central servers are backed up every night. Thus, when your e-mail is stored on the U's e-mail server (as is the case with IMAP), a backup

of your e-mail is made every night. These backups are used in the event of system failures or if a virus has deleted your mail. If you use POP, you lose your mail. The University cannot help you recover it, since it will not be on the U's central e-mail server.

With the growing number of computer viruses and attacks from hackers, there is a greater possibility that e-mail can be deleted without your knowledge. The best insurance from loss of important e-mail is to have it on the University's e-mail server.

### ■ **Tip 3: avoid slow performance; clean up your inbox**

The No. 1 reason for slow e-mail performance is an oversized inbox. As a rule of thumb, your inbox should be smaller than 10MB. Near 10MB, you will notice slower performance. Why might your inbox be oversized?

- You use your inbox to store many hundreds or thousands of messages.
- You have only a few messages by they have very large attachments, such as images and sounds.
- You are using POP and leaving copies of the messages on the server but never deleting them from the server. (If your software hides these messages from you, you may not even be aware that your inbox is growing.)

#### **Check the size of your inbox**

You can check the size of your inbox on your personalized Internet Accounts Option page, the same page you use to change your Internet and Enterprise passwords. To access your options page, use your University InternetID (x.500) and Internet password, and go to <http://www.umn.edu/validate>.

Once you've logged on, locate the "Show Current E-mail Storage Use" link and click on it. Figure 2 shows an example of an e-mail storage report.

#### **How to clean up your inbox**

Cleaning up your inbox does not mean that you must delete these messages. The best way to keep your inbox under 10MB, and still keep your mail, is to create folders. If you are using an e-mail program with IMAP, or are using WebMail, and you need help creating folders, you can refer to the help menu in

your program or call 1-HELP; if you are off-campus, call 612-301-HELP.

### ■ **Tip 4: be nice to the e-mail servers**

All e-mail programs have an option to automatically check for new messages at a chosen interval of time. By default, this is ten minutes in most programs.

However, if you keep a lot of messages in your inbox, automatically checking for new mail every ten minutes can result in a heavy work load for the server. This is because of the way the software determines which messages are new. Every time an e-mail program checks for new messages, it must effectively check every message in the inbox on the server to see if it has a flag designating it as new, then download it if it is new. If you have a lot of messages in the inbox, the server is forced to perform many operations each time your client checks for new mail.

#### **Change the setting that automatically checks for new messages**

We recommend that you set the e-mail client to check for new mail every 15-20 minutes. This option is not inconvenient. If you are expecting an e-mail and do not want to wait, you can still check for new mail manually; look for a "check for new messages" option in your e-mail client. The manual option will check for new messages on demand, while the automatic option works in the background, grabbing new mail at a regular interval.

### ■ **Online guides**

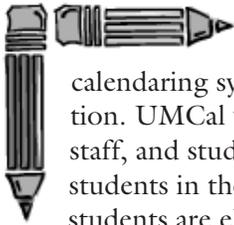
We'll be adding these tips to the **Online Guides** section of the ADCS web pages and will update them as new or improved best practices are dictated by changes in the computing environment: <http://www.umn.edu/adcs/>.

Meanwhile, by following these four easy tips, you can make your e-mail work for you, instead of you working for your e-mail: optimize e-mail accessibility and speed, and protect yourself from data loss with these best practices.

■ Vidya Neni, Academic and Distributed Computing Services, <http://www.umn.edu/adcs/>

# UMCal

## synchronize it with your cell phone or PDA



It has been more than a year since the University's new system-wide calendaring system, UMCAL, went into production. UMCAL was initially available to all faculty, staff, and students in the Class of 2008. Now, students in the Class of 2009 and graduate students are eligible for a UMCAL account.

### Synchronize with PDAs, cell phones

Along with expanding the availability of UMCAL to students, the UMCAL Team has been working on new features to offer. One of these new features is the ability to synchronize your calendar with a PDA or cell phone wirelessly using SyncML.

#### What is SyncML?

SyncML is a standard created by the Open Mobile Alliance (OMA), a consortium of major cell phone manufacturers and providers. This standard was created to allow for a common method of synchronizing data between devices and applications over the Internet.

What does this mean for the average end user? It means they can synchronize their calendar without the need for a cable/cradle connection to a computer. By removing the requirement for a cable connection, a user can synchronize their device anywhere they get an Internet connection.

*More about the standard:* The initial standard was written to enable synchronization of calendar data using common formats like iCal, vCal and vCard that applications like Oracle Collaboration Suite, Microsoft Exchange, Novell GroupWise, and other popular calendaring programs support. Along with calendar support, the OMA is working to enhance the standard to provide more calendar features along with possible e-mail support.

#### SyncML requirements

To use SyncML you must have a PDA or cell phone that has a SyncML compliant client that supports SSL (Secure Socket Layer) connections. Currently, Sony Ericsson and Nokia have phones that come with a

built-in SyncML client that supports SSL. Figure 1 shows devices that are certified for use with UMCAL.

Those with Palm, Pocket PC, and Smartphone devices can purchase the Synthesis SyncML Clients to add SyncML functionality to the devices. Purchasing information about the Synthesis SyncML Clients is on the UMCAL website at <http://www.umn.edu/umcal>.

### Setting up SyncML

The UMCAL Team has created setup guides for all clients and devices that have been certified for use with UMCAL. You may use devices that are not certified for use with UMCAL as long as they are SyncML compliant and support SSL. For these devices, we have a general settings guide that you may reference for setting up those devices. Access the guides at <http://www.umn.edu/umcal/support/SyncML>.

### Support

The SyncML page on the UMCAL website provides support information, FAQs, install guides, and other documentation. Technical problems should be addressed through 1-HELP at (612-301-4357) or [umcal@umn.edu](mailto:umcal@umn.edu). If you have questions or comments, you may contact the UMCAL Team at [umcal@umn.edu](mailto:umcal@umn.edu).

■ Jeremy Casper, Academic and Distributed Computing Services, UMCAL Team

**Figure 1:**  
Devices certified for use with UMCAL

Sony Ericsson	Nokia	Ericsson
P800	6260	T39m
P900	6600	T68
P910	6620	-
T68i	6630	Pocket PC 2002/2003
T610/T616	7610	Smartphone 2003
T630/T637	9200 series	Palm OS 5.x
K700i	9500	-
S700i	-	-

# Good News

**G**reat news even! Our PeopleSoft system was down twice in the past few weeks.

OK, before everyone says: “Hey, this guy’s completely lost his mind,” let me explain. Yes, we had a rough few weeks in support of the PeopleSoft system. No one likes to see our systems down. We all take tremendous pride in keeping our systems going and usable for our customers.

## **Good disaster recovery planning**

While there were significant problems, many things went really, really right the past few weeks. Our disaster recovery planning worked. We had a decision making process that worked and got us to the right decisions. Our recovery processes, which are ahead of most institutions, worked as designed.

Groups of employees, both our technical and our business customers, worked together in wonderful ways to be creative and find resolutions to problems in thoughtful, accurate ways. There were conversations among all areas of our organization to find solutions. When some members of management were away, others stepped up to make sure that things got done and done right.

## **More follow-up**

We had an opportunity to learn from this. We are taking time to review processes and protocols, some of which were several years old.

## **Our disaster recovery planning worked.**

**We had a decision making process that worked and got us to the right decisions.**

**Our recovery processes, which are ahead of most institutions, worked as designed.**

We have implemented some new procedures. We have gotten commitments and already had action taken, in association with our customers, to create decision protocols and communication

plans that are current and allow us to react even better if something should ever happen again.

We apologized to the people around the University who were affected. We were able to work closely with those affected to resolve data and transaction issues. We thanked our functional partners for the hard work and effort spent getting the system back in operation.

## **Better than 99.99% up time**

We still have a better than 99.99% up time on our system. That is great no matter where you are! We need to still feel good about what we are doing and know that we provide tremendous service to our customers.

OK, we really don’t want to have to do this again, but we know that we can do this if we have to. We all need to take some good out of this.

Thank you all for your part in helping get things back to normal!

■ Scott Ruud, Enterprise Application Systems

# Get Ready Now

## To teach with Vista and other technologies this fall

### Faculty, TAs, P&As, students

**T**he majority of Twin Cities campus students and instructors are using digital technology for teaching and learning and have positive attitudes toward educational technology, based on the results of two 2004 technology surveys. (For details see <http://dmc.umn.edu/surveys/>.)

Many faculty respondents expressed an interest in learning more about HTML authoring, the pedagogy of technology-enhanced learning, and course management tools such as WebCT. They also indicated that they hoped using educational technology would increase students' access to course materials, facilitate communication between students and instructors, address varied learning styles and needs, and help them teach their courses more efficiently.

The Digital Media Center (DMC) and Academic and Distributed Computing Services (ADCS) provide several services that can help faculty members learn more about these areas of interest. Below is an overview of some you may have time to take advantage of over the summer. You may find them particularly helpful if you are converting WebCT Campus Edition (CE) sites to WebCT Vista in time for the complete conversion to Vista at the end of August.

### Support from consultants

DMC consultants are available at no charge to provide advice and assistance to University faculty members and their staff and student assistants about a variety of issues related to planning and designing classroom learning activities and materials that make effective use of educational technology, including how to manage the process of converting your WebCT CE course site(s) to WebCT Vista, designing new learning activities for students with Vista tools, and preparing students for this new environment.

To set up an appointment, call 612-625-5055 or send e-mail to [dmc@umn.edu](mailto:dmc@umn.edu).

### Student Web Core Service developers

Student Web Core Service developers are available to produce course Web sites and other educational technology projects for Twin Cities campus instructors at reduced fees.

The students are hired and trained by DMC and ADCS staff members and work under the direction of a full-time DMC consultant who manages the project and provides instructional design assistance. The students produce digital content using a variety of multimedia development software, including Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe Photoshop®, and WebCT CE and Vista. They can convert CE sites to Vista or develop new Vista sites as well, then demonstrate to instructors how to maintain them.

For more information, call 612-625-5055 or send e-mail to [webcore@umn.edu](mailto:webcore@umn.edu).

### TA Web Certification Program

Teaching assistants (TAs) may attend the summer noncredit version of the TA Web Certification Program to learn technology-enhanced learning (TEL) skills. Staff from the DMC, ADCS, and the University Libraries teach participants how to develop a TEL lesson plan and to create a course Web site using Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe Photoshop®, and WebCT Vista. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are awarded a certificate that demonstrates their TEL and Web site production skills to the faculty members they assist.

The next session begins July 12. For schedule and registration information, see <http://dmc.umn.edu/ta-web/schedule.shtml>.

## Other learning opportunities

The DMC also offers a free intensive workshop to University of Minnesota faculty and academic professional and administrative (P&A) instructors called Digital Teaching: How to Design and Teach Within Technology-Rich Learning Environments. Over the three days of the workshop, each participant begins developing a technology-enhanced learning (TEL) environment for one of his or her courses based on his or her own syllabus by participating in classroom sessions and consulting one-on-one with the instructors.

The currently-scheduled summer sessions of the workshop are full; for information about future sessions see <http://dmc.umn.edu/digital-teaching/>.

Members of the University community also may take noncredit University Technology Training Center short courses for reduced fees to learn how to use multimedia software such as Macromedia Flash, Adobe Photoshop®, and WebCT Vista, and how to convert course sites from WebCT CE to Vista. For details see <http://uttc.umn.edu/training/courses.jsp>.

Videos of and handouts from the WebCT conversion and Vista courses are also available online at

- <http://webct.umn.edu/instructors/vista/videos.shtml> and
- <http://webct.umn.edu/instructors/vista/handouts.shtml>

Training tailored to address specific educational technology issues at the college, department, or program level is available as well through the DMC and ADCS. For more information, call (612) 625-2005.

## Other educational technology support options

The Digital Media Center also manages other support services, programs, and projects, and publishes educational technology information, to help campus instructors teach with technology. See the DMC site for details at <http://dmc.umn.edu>.

■ Christina Goodland, Digital Media Center,  
<http://dmc.umn.edu/>

WebCT  
Vista is  
coming in  
August!

Are you ready for the  
complete conversion from  
WebCT Campus Edition (CE)  
to WebCT Vista at the end of  
August?



▼ **Help**

- Computer Misuse or Abuse (also see Procedure 2.8.1.1)
  - Emergency Network Help Line ..... 612-625-0006
  - Non-emergency, e.g., spamming ..... abuse@umn.edu
- 1-HELP ..... 612-301-4357**  
Dial 1-HELP. Listen to the voice menu list of options.  
Press the number of your desired option.
  - Technology Help ..... www.umn.edu/adcs/help

▼ **Modem pool for active UM accounts**

Internet/PPP: up to 53kps if v.90 ..... 612-627-4250

▼ **Quick Guide**

- Internet/Email account options .... www.umn.edu/validate
- Office of Information Technology ..... www.umn.edu/oit
- One Stop Services ..... onestop.umn.edu
- Techmart ..... www.techmart.umn.edu
- Computer Accommodations Program ..... cap.umn.edu
- University Computer Services ..... www.umn.edu/ucs
- U Libraries (MNCAT/LUMINA) ..... www.lib.umn.edu
- UM News Server ..... news.umn.edu

Associate Vice President and  
Chief Information Officer, Steve Cawley ..... 612-625-8855

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*Twin Cities campus address label trivia: 1st # is record #; 2nd # is your Campus Mail delivery code, http://umn.edu/lookup*

June 2005 [pantone 295, featuring Mister Kooky]

Add (subscribe info below at ☆)

Delete/Cancel \*

Change Name \*

Change Address \*

Change Other \*

\* If you cancel or change a campus address, please tell us the **Record No.** Tear off the end page and send the entire mailing label to us. Or send e-mail to: oitns1tr@umn.edu

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