

What is E-Mail?

Ray Tomlinson 1941 –

Ray Tomlinson created the first e-mail application in 1971. His use of the @ sign in an e-mail address to connect the user name with the domain name has become standard.

Top Level Domain

The domain name includes the top level domain after the dot. The top level domain indicates the domain type. For example, com indicates a commercial business and edu indicates educational institution.

Mailing List Server

A *mailing list server*, such as LISTSERV, manages Internet mailing lists. Special interest groups often use a mailing list for discussion purposes. When a subscriber posts, or e-mails, a message to the mailing list, every subscriber receives a copy. Mailing lists sometimes have a moderator who filters the messages before posting.

Once complete, a document can be e-mailed to the recipient. *E-mail* means electronic mail and is the sending and receiving of messages and files over a communications network such as a LAN (Local Area Network) or the Internet. E-mailing a document has many advantages, which include allowing a far-away recipient to receive a document very quickly. With Microsoft Office, documents can be e-mailed directly from within the application used to create the document or sent as an attachment.

An e-mail address is required in order to send and receive e-mail messages. E-mail addresses are provided when you sign up with an ISP (Internet Service Provider) or a Webmail service. A typical e-mail address is similar to:

christina@lpdatafiles.com
user name domain name

An *e-mail client* is software that is used to read messages, create and send messages, list and organize messages, and manage e-mail addresses in an address book. Outlook, Eudora, Yahoo! Mail, and GMail are some popular e-mail clients. Yahoo! Mail and GMail run in a Web browser and are called *Web-based e-mail clients* or *Webmail accounts*.

When an e-mail client sends or receives a message, it connects to an *e-mail server*, which is a computer running special software and connected to the Internet. The e-mail client typically connects to an *SMTP server* (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) for outgoing mail. For incoming mail, a connection to a *POP3* (Post Office Protocol3) or *IMAP* (Internet Mail Access Protocol) server is made.

Unfortunately, when using e-mail there is the risk of receiving malicious code, such as viruses, Trojan horses, and worms. An e-mail client usually includes an e-mail filtering system, but antivirus software that runs in addition to the e-mail client is a necessity.