

Using Imap vs POP3 for Email

As more and more customers are using handheld devices, there have been numerous issues arising from problems relating to mixing IMAP vs POP3 clients.

Traditional email accounts have been POP3. When setting up accounts in Outlook, there is a box during one of the first screens (the one where you enter the incoming and outgoing server names) for the Type of server. The default is POP3. When setting up handheld devices, the default is IMAP.

All of our email servers handle both types.

POP3 Explanation

POP3 client means that your client software, for example Outlook, will check our server for new mail. If there is new mail on our server, it will DOWNLOAD it to your computer. By default, it will delete it off of the server once it successfully completes the transfer. (There are options in your software that allows a copy to remain on the server, for a specified time period or until deleted on your computer.)

In most client software, you have your Inbox, Outbox, and Sent folders. There are folders stored on Your Computer where the emails reside.

Webmail works more like IMAP in that your are browsing emails that still reside on the server, and are never actually downloaded to your device, making them more easily accessible from anywhere.

You cannot change an existing POP3 account to IMAP in Outlook. You have to add a new account.

IMAP Explanation

IMAP clients synchronize the local device, whether handheld or desktop, with our server. Like POP3, your client will have some default folders, Inbox, Sent, and Outbox. However, these folders are created on our Server, and the emails **do not actually reside on the device**, whether desktop or handheld.

In Outlook, the two types of accounts are kept separate. The POP3 Local Folders are shown, and then the IMAP Server Folders are shown below.

The advantage of IMAP is that allows a phone and desktop computer to have the same contents. Emails can be deleted from either, and marked are read from either.

Another important issue is that when you 'delete' email on your IMAP client, it does not delete off the server. Each client seems to handle this differently. In Outlook Express, when you delete an email, it puts a line through the email. In order to remove from server, you must click "Purge". (This command only shows on the toolbar once a IMAP account is setup on your computer.) In Windows Mail on Vista, the default setting deletes the email off the list in your inbox when you click delete. However, the email remains on the server until you 'leave' the imap folder, either by clicking on another folder or exiting the program.

You can, however, create LOCAL folders on your desktop computer to keep copies of important emails.

Issues for IMAP users

First, mixing the two types can corrupt your folder on the mail server. We highly recommend adding an IMAP account to your desktop computer, and remove or disable the POP3 account. More on this below.

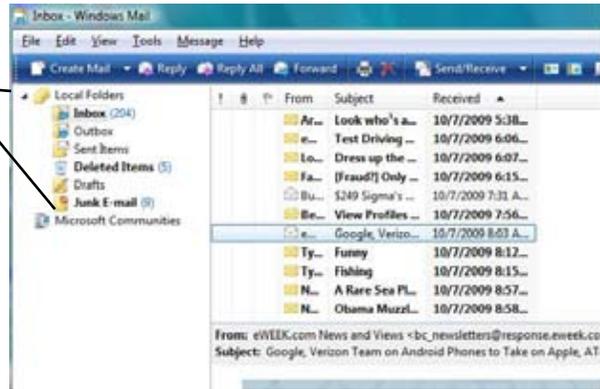
Second, in the past, we've never enforced hard limits on how much mail can be stored on our server. If you have the 'leave a copy of email on the server' option checked on POP3 accounts, or are using IMAP, your email folder on our server can grow very, very large. This can slow down the process of synchronizing, increase the chances of failed synchronizations, and pose a risk of lost email. We currently do not backup email stored on our servers. We highly recommend that you copy any important email to a local folder on your computer!

The following pages show examples of setting up and implementing good IMAP practices into your desktop client.

These Examples Use Windows Mail on Windows Vista. The setup is nearly identical to Outlook Express. These examples are intended to highlight the differences in setting up and using IMAP accounts. Actual setup examples including server names and settings can be found at <http://www.basinbroadband.com/fyi.htm>

The Basic “Default” POP3 Account in Windows Mail

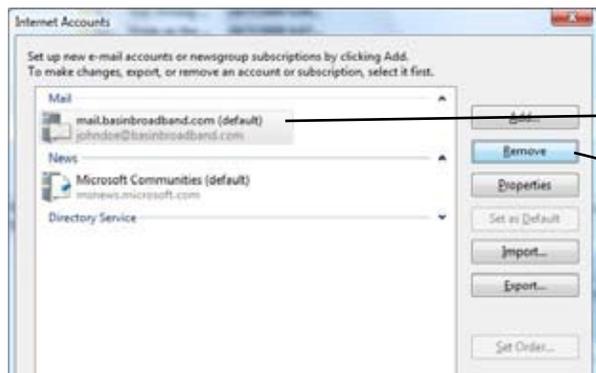
Local Folders on Your Computer



First, it's recommended to remove the POP3 account. (Your local folders will still be there)

If you don't remove it, you must disable “Include this account when receiving mail” from the Account Properties General Tab. Otherwise file corruption can occur.

Go to *Tools*, then click *Accounts*



Click on the existing account to highlight it

Then click *Remove*

Next, click *Add*

Set up e-mail servers

Incoming e-mail server type:

POP3
POP3
IMAP or IMAP server
HTTP

Outgoing e-mail server (SMTP) name:

Click on the Pulldown menu that says POP3

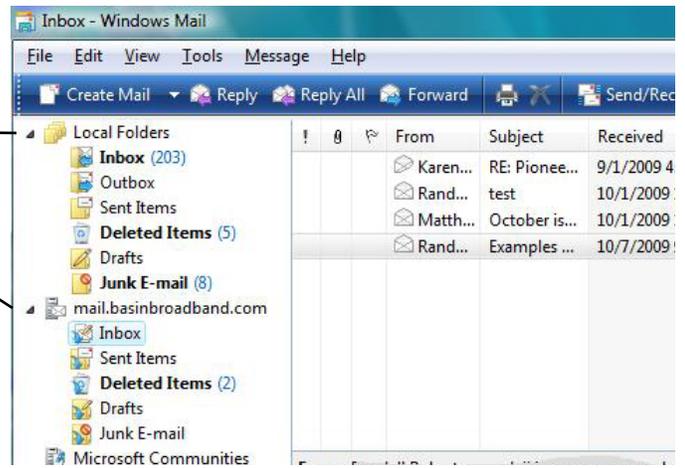
Select IMAP

Fill out the next few screens with your email address, server names, and account name and password



When you finish, you may have the option to not download the IMAP folders. I would leave this unchecked to go ahead and retrieve that information.

Once the account is created on your client software, you will notice that the IMAP account folders, which are NOT on your computer, are listed below the LOCAL folders, including traditional POP3 folders.

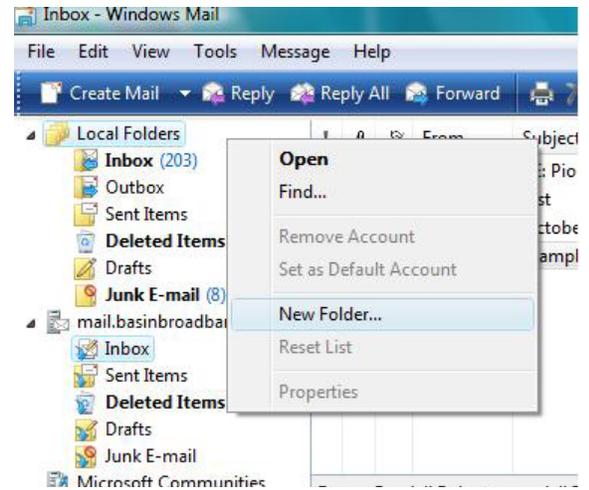


You can add local folders to keep important emails in.

First, right-click over *Local Folders*, then left-click *New Folder*

Type in a name for the New Folder

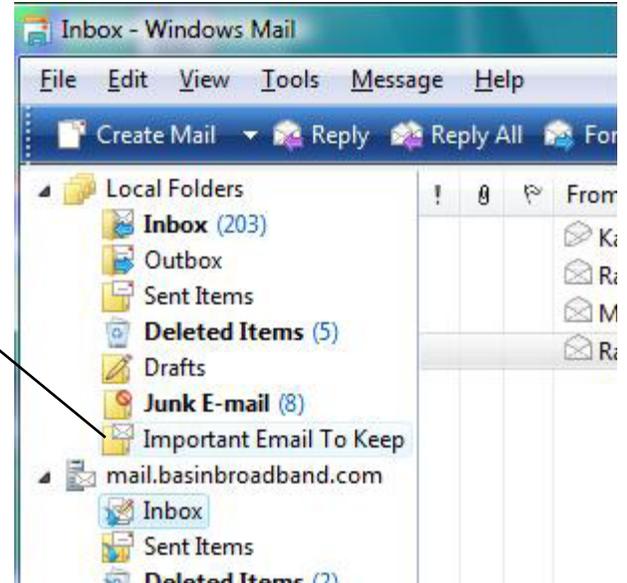
The list of local folders is in alphabetical order. It is very difficult to remove the default local folders.



I created a folder “Important Email to Keep”.

You can now go back to your Imap account Inbox.

As you click on emails, you can drag them to the new “Local” folder. If you hold the CTRL key when you drag it, it will make a copy in the local folder, and keep the email in the Inbox, where it will still appear on your phone.



Deleting eMail

If your client leaves a strike-through line through the email when you hit delete, it means that it is still on the server. (Outlook Express for example) You have to click Purge from the toolbar, or from the edit menu in order to remove them from the server.