

Using Message Rules

Message rules allow an Outlook Express, Windows Mail or Windows Live Mail user to set up a sorting process, so that e-mail, as it comes in is directed to established and desired folders, bypassing the main Inbox.

To use Message Rules, you must do two things. You must first create the additional folder desired (unless you are going to use only one of the already displayed folders. And secondly, you must establish the "Rules".

Creating folders on Outlook Express, Windows Mail and Windows Live Mail

1. First, have the folder list visible (that is the list of folders, including Inbox, Outbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items). If it is not visible (Outlook Express, Windows Mail and early versions of Windows Live Mail):
 - a. Go to View menu, click on Layout. A window appears.
 - b. Put a check in "Folder List". Click Apply
2. Next, right-click on the folder in which you would like to create a new folder. If you wish for the folder to be at the same level as Inbox, etc., click on "Local Folders" (or the Account name for Windows Live Mail).
3. Now you can choose "New Folder"; or click on the folder in to which you want a new folder and use the File menu (at the top) and click on New, then New Folder (or for Windows Live Mail, use the drop-down arrow to the right of "New", and click on New Folder).
4. Give the folder an appropriate name (such as "Newsletters", if you wanted to save a particular newsletter). Repeat Steps 2-4 for each new folder you wish to create.

Establishing Message Rules

1. On the main Outlook Express, Windows Mail or early versions of Windows Live Mail window, go to Tools menu (if not showing, hit the ALT key), and hover over "Message Rules", then click on "Mail". A Message Rule window appears.
 - a. On Windows Live Mail 2012, go to the Folders ribbon, and the Message Rules button at the far right.
2. Click the "New" button, and a New Message Rule opens. It has four steps.
3. Step 1 asks you to decide what condition will trigger the message being manipulated (I say manipulated, as you have several things the message can be instructed to do).
 - a. Tell it when it goes into effect, such as when the From line contains a certain name or e-mail address, or when the To line contains a certain name or e-mail address. There are other options as well, subject, text, etc.
 - b. You can use any or all those options by placing a check in the corresponding box (or boxes).

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4. Step 2 has you Select the Action which will occur if the above criterion is met (correct name, or e-mail address, etc.).
 - a. Again, you can “move it to”, “delete it”, copy it to”, or “forward it to”.
 - b. You may again want more than one action to occur at the same time (less likely, but you might want it moved to a folder, but copied to yet another folder). Instructions continue on the next page.
5. Step 3 gets down to specifics. Here is where some thought may be necessary, or even some modification (tweaking-change) after the rule has been in effect for awhile, and you see how it is working.
 - a. In box 3, click on the blue text and start adding particular names, or words (depending on the criteria).
 - b. Each time you type an entry, click “Add”, then click in the add box and type a second entry...and “Add”.
 - c. Similarly click on each successive blue text item, and add the appropriate data. In other words, as example you might have chosen to have e-mail containing certain people in the To: line to be moved into their appropriately named folder. When you click the blue “contains people”, the box opens, and you must add any possible variation of the name or e-mail address which the appropriate e-mail might be addressed to. Some will send that e-mail to the address, while others will have it by name (sometimes nickname, other times formal, with or without certain initials). You must consider all possibilities. This is where I said you may need to later modify it, when you realize you left a possibility out.
6. The final step, Step 4, is simply to give the rule a name.
 - a. Make it descriptive. Not too long, but something which makes sense. Such as Linda’s “Mail”. No click OK.

Now just sit back, and assess how it is working. If not, Modify as below.

Modifying an established Message Rule

1. Again go to Tools menu, Message Rules, Mail; or Folders ribbon.
2. Click on the rule you wish to improve or change.
3. Click the “Modify” button.
4. When the Edit Message Rule opens (and it looks just like the original New Message window, except already contains the criteria).
5. Click on the blue item text you need to add to or modify, and change it.
6. Click OK. And the new changes will take effect.

Just repeat this for as many “rules” as you wish to have, or as many folders as you have desired. For instance, if you have several friends who send you material you wish to save, but not cluttering the main Inbox, create a folder each with their name, and create a message rule for each.