A SIMPLE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR COMPUTER BEGINNERS

EXPLORING THE INTERNET THROUGH HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.

LEARN HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY USING THE INTERNET
Email

Electronic mail or email is a quick way of sending messages to people using the internet. It’s just like sending a letter to someone, but instead of posting it, you send it via the internet.

There are many benefits to sending an email:

**Speed** - Emails typically arrive within seconds or minutes of being sent to anywhere in the world.

**Convenience** - You can type your email message, save it for later and send it at any time without having to worry about envelopes and stamps.

**Sending files** - You can share photos and files by attaching them to an email.

**Cost** - With the exception of your internet bill, sending and receiving emails is free.

“This guide will help you learn to:

- Create an email account and address
- Use internet calling
- Sign up for a social networking website

These skills can also be used across the internet.

“...It’s easy to lose touch with people. Family and friends can live and work all over the country or even the world.

You don’t need to miss out on their news though. The internet is a brilliant tool for staying in touch.

When I’m away working I like to keep in contact with my family online. I use email to share my news or photos and talk to people face-to-face using internet calling. There are lots of other ways to stay in touch online too. It’s great fun, and easy when you know how.”

Julia Bradbury
To send an email you first need an email account. Getting started is easier than you think. There are many free email accounts available on the internet. The most popular are:

- Gmail (run by Google)
- Microsoft’s Hotmail (now part of Windows Live)
- Yahoo! Mail

There are lots more to choose from. If you’re not sure about which service to use, ask a friend or family member to recommend one to you.

**The sign-up process**

The sign-up process for most email accounts is quite similar. On the homepage there will usually be a link asking if you would like to signup or create an account - you may have to look carefully.

1. Click on **sign-up** or **create an account**. This will open a new page.

You will now be required to complete a **registration form**. The form contains boxes you need to fill in to create a **username** and **password**. It will also tell you if the username you’ve chosen is already being used by someone else and whether your password is secure enough – rating it weak, medium or strong.

2. Click on the box and type the required information using the letter and number keys on your keyboard.

Do this until you have filled in all the required boxes. If you make a typing mistake, press the delete key enough times to remove the error, and try again.

Examples from Hotmail

Continued...
3. Some of the boxes have small arrows next to them. Click on the arrow to reveal a drop-down menu of questions. For example, what is your country of residence? What year were you born? This is an extra security measure. Select a question from the menu that only you know the answer to.

4. To select a question, move your cursor over it and click once. It will automatically appear in the box. Click in the box below to type your answer.

5. At the bottom of the form you may also see a box containing a strange sequence of letters and numbers. This is called a verification code. It is a security measure to ensure that a real person is filling in the form and not someone trying to open lots of accounts using a computer programme.

6. Before you can complete and submit the registration form, you will need to agree to the website’s Terms and Conditions and Privacy Statement. This often appears as a link.

7. Click on the link. This will open a new page. It contains conditions you will need to read and accept. To close the page, click on the cross in the top right corner.

8. Check that all the information in the boxes is correct. To submit your registration form, click on the link or button at the bottom of the page. It might say Create your account or I agree (to the terms and conditions).
Creating an email address

When you sign up for an email account you will be asked to **create an email address**. As with a postal address, an email address is made up of different parts, for example:

tom@bbc.co.uk

- tom is your name, or **username**.
- the `@` symbol stands for the word **at**.
- The company who provides your email address comes after the `@` symbol.
- `.co.uk` shows that the email address is for someone in the United Kingdom.

Email addresses can also have other endings such as `.com`

An email address is written in lowercase with no spaces.

Choosing a password

Your password should be something you will remember but that other people won't guess easily. The best type of password is one that combines **letters and numbers**.

**Bad examples of a password:**
- password
- tomsmith

**Good examples of a password:**
- he770mum
- Tom35th

Some websites will show you how weak or strong your choice of password is.

Logging in

Now you have set up your email account and created an **email address** and **password**, you can **login** or sign into your new account and start sending and receiving emails.

Making free phone and video calls online

There are other ways to stay in touch online

Like something from a science fiction film, you can actually have a free face to face conversation with someone on the other side of the world!

There are many ways to speak and see people via your computer, it may be possible by using pre-installed software on your computer. If you have a PC, you can use Windows Live Messenger. Find out more here at http://explore.live.com/windows-live-messenger

For Apple Mac users the system is called Apple iChat. It comes as standard and allows audio, text messaging, video chat and screen sharing.

Another common way for people to do this is via a system called Skype. It is free to use, you simply need to download the software programme for it onto your computer. You will find lots of useful guides and tools and how to download Skype software on the website www.skype.com.

If you want to download software, there are other companies offering similar features to Skype.

- Gmail has an audio/video chat system: http://www.google.com/support/chat/bin/answer.py?answer=159499
- Yahoo Messenger: http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com/features/

Before you can start you need to:

- Have a broadband connection. Broadband is just a word to describe a kind of fast internet connection.

- Make sure that your computer has a microphone and speakers. Many laptops and computers will already have them.

- Know how to use a Search engine.

- Check whether your computer or laptop has a webcam. Webcams are small cameras that usually sit on top of your computer screen. Many laptops will already have a webcam installed and don’t need a separate camera. If your computer hasn’t, visit the WebWise website for more information www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/guides/setting-up-webcams

- Check that the person you are calling also has internet calling software on their computer as they need it to be able to respond to your call. Perhaps you could email them to ask.
Online social networking

You will probably have heard the term **social networking**. Despite what you may have heard or think, online social networking is not complicated, scary or exclusively for young people. It is simply a way of using your computer to communicate with people you know, (or would like to get to know).

There are many social network websites on the internet. One of the most popular social networking websites is **Facebook**.

Facebook allows you to find friends and family, share photos, plan events, send emails and see what your friends are doing.

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**Creating a Facebook account**

1. Type **www.facebook.com** into your web browser and press enter.
2. As when creating an email account, you will be required to create a Facebook account.
3. You will need to complete an online registration form. Follow the instructions and prompts on the screen to complete boxes.
4. You will need an **email address** to register successfully.
5. Make sure you have read the terms and conditions and filled in the **verification code** before clicking on ‘sign up’.

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**Privacy on Facebook**

Lots of people are concerned about how private the information they put on Facebook is. Facebook has developed a guide to help users increase their privacy settings and find out exactly who can see their information. Visit **www.facebook.com/about/privacy/** to read more. Click on the **Interactive Tools** web link on the right hand side of this page to find tools for checking your own privacy settings.
Other social media websites

Twitter

Twitter is great for asking quick questions, following news and telling people where you are and what you’re doing. You can also follow your favourite celebrities or people of interest. It works by exchanging brief text-only messages, limited to 140 words and based on the question – ‘What’s happening?’

www.twitter.com

You might also like to try...

My Space

www.myspace.com

googleplus

www.plus.google.com

and photo sharing websites such as...

Flickr

www.flickr.com

Photobucket

www.photobucket.com

Kodak Gallery

www.kodakgallery.co.uk

Use a search engine to find even more websites
**Address Book**
Part of your email software where you store details of your ‘friends and contacts’ email addresses so you don’t have to remember them!

**Cursor**
The flashing vertical line on the screen that shows you where you are and where the next character you type will appear.

**Homepage**
The ‘front page’ of a website, where you’re told what’s on the site, how to get around it and how to search for things that’ll interest you.

**Inbox**
The folder in your email program / webmail where you get your incoming emails.

**ISP Internet Service Provider**
An ISP is the company that provides internet connections.

**Junk email**
Direct marketing sent by email rather than by the post.

**Laptop**
A small, portable computer which can be battery operated as well as run from the mains.

**Link**
Words or pictures you can click on which take you from somewhere, (an internet page, an email message etc.) to somewhere else. (another page, a picture etc.).

**Logging in**
Using a username and password to prove your identity so that you can enter your computer or internet account.

**Online**
Describes when your computer is connected to the internet.

**Password**
A series of letters, numbers and characters that you enter to get into your computer, internet connection, email or websites that you are registered with.

**Register**
Some websites ask you to give your name, email address and other personal information in order to view pages. This is called registering.

**Software**
Any programs such as word processors, email applications or internet browsers.

**SPAM**
Junk email sent to many people at once, usually involving advertising or offering services. SPAM is very deeply frowned upon by most internet users, and where it involves advertising or a false return address it is particularly disliked.

**URL**
Stands for Uniform Resource Locator, the technical term for the address of a website or document on the web (e.g. www.bbc.co.uk).

**Username**
A series of letters and numbers you type into your computer, email account or other computer network service to tell it who you are.

**Web browser**
Software which allows you to surf the internet.
Feeling inspired to get online?

There are lots of places you can go to get started with using computers and the internet. Call the freephone BBC advice line to find a beginner’s computer course near you.

08000 150 950
8am to 10pm, 7 days a week

Internet safety

And finally, a word of warning. You’ll notice that there are privacy options available on the websites and software you will be using. It is well worth reading this information carefully.

Visit www.getsafeonline.org for a beginner’s guide to safety online.

Useful Links

- www.bbc.co.uk/firstclick
- www.bbc.co.uk/webwise
- http://learn.go-on.co.uk
- www.facebook.com/help

If a course isn’t for you why not ask a friend or family member to help you use this handy guide.

People with hearing impairments can call:
Text Relay 18001 0800 100 900
Minicom 08000 568 865

All websites correct at time of publication.

“Don’t miss out on what’s happening with family and friends. Being online is brilliant for keeping in touch. Go on - get online and stay in touch.”

Julia Bradbury

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