





Time to Organize – What does that mean?


One of the most challenging things to manage when dealing with a computer is the organization of information or files. E-mail is one of the largest culprits because of the tendency to "Save" stuff. Just like the stuff that we keep in the attic, the "I'll read that again someday" stuff that you really never get back to. Regardless, we hold on to it, especially since it seems so compact inside our computers. However, what seems compact often slows down our E-mail programs.

As many of my clients know, I am a fanatic about maintaining computer systems. I insist on cleaning up and defragmenting. Well, our E-mail programs are a microcosm of the larger system. They also need attention on occasion. Clean up your E-mail program and you can expect your usual tasks to speed up (especially if your system is suffering from the "slow window" symptoms- you ask it and it takes its own sweet time!

What it all really comes down to is DISCIPLINE! Do you really need to forward that joke someday? Unless you are dealing with clients and keeping track of contact E-mails, who needs a pile of FWD: FWD: RE: FWD: E-mail messages anyway? Here are some tips..

 **Use the DELETE key:** Put that **delete** key to work cleaning up the E-mails you haven't bothered with. In fact, why not make it a habit to use it **right away**. One of the biggest issues regarding technology is the slow down due to SPAM (that unnecessary E-mail that clogs your inbox) Unless it has you rolling on the floor laughing, perhaps you really should stop the chain mail and trash it. Throw out anything that isn't of an immediate importance. LOOK at the SUBJECT line and toss anything that looks funny or isn't from someone you know- don't fall for the tricks of spammers with lines like: "About your refund" or "You left your umbrella".

 **FLAG things that need to be reviewed or revisited:** If you come upon something that needs further attention, flag it. Usually you can right click an email in Outlook and flag the message OR in Outlook Express select the email, click Message--> Flag Message. My husband is awesome at keeping emails organized- he flags things immediately when they need attention at a later time, then continues to clean and delete.

 **Important Put it in a FOLDER:** Outlook/Outlook Express/AOL- they all let you organize folders. In AOL you have an option to save emails to your filing cabinet, and that cabinet can be organized any way you like, naming folders as appropriate, and putting messages in them. Outlook is also that way. You should have a folder view, and when viewing your inbox folder you can right click the inbox and select New Folder. Name the folder as appropriate: Evtechie, Mom, Family, Clients, To Do, Important, Subscriptions (you get the picture!) Then drag and drop those messages to those folders. See my cheat sheet on this topic: http://evtechie.com/pdf/Folders_Rules.pdf

Create FILTERS for e-mail: This is a bit more challenging but very useful. A filter is also called a "rule" in outlook. What is a rule? A rule is a set of conditions, actions, and exceptions that are applied to e-mail as it arrives and allows you to organize messages automatically. When is a rule helpful? Lets say you get an e-mail from an important client once a week- a rule would automatically put that e-mail into a folder you have created as soon as it comes in- filtering it away from all the other junk.

What I use rules for? You can automatically:

- Move messages to a particular folder based on who sent them.
- Move certain kinds of messages, such as Out of Office messages, to another folder.
- Delete messages in a conversation.
- Flag messages from a particular person.
- Set up a notification, such as a message or a sound, when important messages arrive.
- Redirect a message to a person or to a distribution list.

Microsoft offers help on this on their web site: <http://office.microsoft.com/>