



ARTICLE 5

Using Windows Mail for Public and Private Newsgroups

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Like its predecessors, Microsoft® Office Outlook® 2007 doesn't include a newsgroup reader. Instead, Outlook relies on Windows® Mail (formerly Outlook Express) as its default newsgroup reader. Windows Mail is included with Windows Vista™. Although other newsgroup applications are available—most notably Forte's Agent, which offers some additional benefits—Windows Mail is a good choice for occasional forays into newsgroups and situations where you're not dealing with a large number of encoded attachments.

This chapter explores the newsgroup features in Windows Mail and shows you how to use Windows Mail to read newsgroup messages, post new messages, handle attachments, and process items automatically.

You'll find additional discussion of Windows Mail in Article 4, "Integrating Windows Mail and Outlook," which explains how to move messages, address books, and accounts between Outlook and Windows Mail.

Overview of Newsgroups and News Servers

Newsgroups are the Internet's equivalent of a huge bulletin board. Each newsgroup focuses on a specific area of interest, and you can post messages to a newsgroup and view other people's postings. Newsgroups are *threaded*, which means that you can easily follow a specific discussion within the group. Windows Mail organizes all messages related to a specific topic in an expandable and collapsible hierarchy. Each newsgroup has a unique name not only to help you identify its topic, but also to help you locate the group among the other newsgroups hosted by the server.

Public Internet newsgroups number in the tens of thousands, and many businesses provide their own news servers that allow customers to obtain support or provide

feedback. Microsoft, for example, maintains public news servers where you can get support for various products and interact with other users. It also maintains private news servers for participation by beta testers.

In addition, many organizations implement private news servers where employees can share information and collaborate on projects. You can use Windows Mail as a newsreader for both public and private newsgroups. The only real difference between the two types of groups is access—private news servers restrict access and public news servers do not.

Configuring Windows Mail for Newsgroups

This chapter assumes that you have some degree of familiarity with newsgroups but don't necessarily have a lot of experience working with them. This section, which focuses on setting up Windows Mail to access your news server, should help you get started.

Note

Before you can begin using Windows Mail to view Internet newsgroups or other public or private newsgroups outside your local area network (LAN), you need to establish an Internet connection.

Starting Windows Mail to Read Newsgroups

You can start Windows Mail to read news in two ways: either from Outlook or from the Windows desktop. Microsoft Outlook 2002 included a News command on the Go menu, but neither Outlook 2003 nor Outlook 2007 include the command by default, so you have to add it. Right-click the Go menu and choose Customize. Click Go in the Categories list on the Commands tab, drag the News item from the Commands list to the Go menu, and click Close. Then to start Windows Mail from Outlook, choose Go, News. Windows Mail opens (if it isn't already running) but doesn't open a specific news account or newsgroup.

The first time you start the Windows Mail newsgroup reader you will be informed that you are not currently subscribed to newsgroups and prompted to display available newsgroups and to turn on Microsoft Communities. Microsoft Communities is supported by Microsoft's newsgroups servers, and it includes features such as ranking and rating of newgroup posts. As shown in Figure A5-1, you are presented with three options:

- Show available newsgroups and turn on Microsoft Communities.
- Show available newsgroups, but don't turn on Microsoft Communities.
- Don't download newsgroups now.



Figure A5-1 The initial newsgroup dialog box in Windows Mail gives you the option to enable Microsoft Communities features.

When you select one of the options to Show Available Newsgroups, Windows Mail connects to the Microsoft Communities news server and lists the newsgroups available there.

You also can open Windows Mail from the Windows Vista Windows button by choosing All Programs, Windows Mail.

Setting Up a News Account

Setting up a news account is the first step in using Windows Mail to access a news server. The process is simple, but it requires some preparation. In particular, you need to have the following information available:

- **News server name or IP address** You need to know the Domain Name System (DNS) name or the Internet Protocol (IP) address of the news server so that Windows Mail can connect to it.
- **Logon information** Most public news servers don't require logon. Many private servers, however, do require that you specify valid account credentials (user name and password).
- **Port, if not standard** The default Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) port for the Network News Transport Protocol (NNTP) is 119. Almost all news servers use the default, so you rarely need to specify a nonstandard port.
- **Whether the server requires Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)** Most public servers do not require SSL, although some private servers do. If you're unable to connect without SSL, try enabling it and then retest the connection.
- **Whether Secure Password Authentication (SPA) is required** Most news servers do not require SPA. If you are unable to connect, however, enable SPA and try again.

Follow these steps when you're ready to set up your news accounts:

1. Create the Internet connection for your computer (if you don't already have one).
2. Open Windows Mail, and choose Tools, Accounts to open the Internet Accounts dialog box.
3. Click Add to select the type of account. (In Outlook Express, after clicking Add you click the News tab and then click News.)
4. In the Select Account Type dialog box, select Newsgroup Account and click Next. (This step doesn't apply to Outlook Express.)
5. Specify your display name, e-mail address, server name, and other information as prompted and then click Finish.
6. In the Internet Accounts dialog box, double-click the account you just created or select it and click Properties.
7. Configure settings for the account, as explained in the following sections.

General Tab

On the General tab (shown in Figure A5-2), you can change the account name, specify your name and e-mail addresses, and determine whether the account is included when checking for new messages.

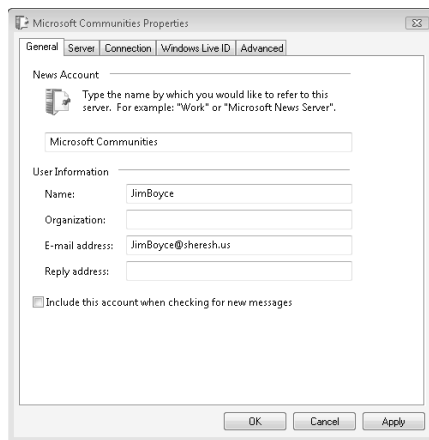


Figure A5-2 Enter user information on the General tab for a news account.

Configure settings on the General tab using the following list as a guide:

- **News Account** Specify the name for the account as you want it to appear in Windows Mail. This account name appears in the Internet Accounts dialog box and in the folder list in Windows Mail.
- **Name** Specify your name as you want it to appear in the header of messages that you post.

- **Organization** Specify an optional organization name (such as a company name).
- **E-Mail Address** Enter your e-mail address as you want it to appear in messages that you post. Leave this box blank if you don't want your e-mail address posted.
- **Reply Address** Specify the address to which replies to your posts will be sent if a reader replies directly to you rather than to the newsgroup.
- **Include This Account When Checking For New Messages** Select this option if you want Windows Mail to check the newsgroups to which you've subscribed and indicate the number of unread messages beside the group name in the folder list.

Server Tab

Use the Server tab (shown in Figure A5-3) to specify the server's DNS name or IP address and authentication settings, as explained in the following list:

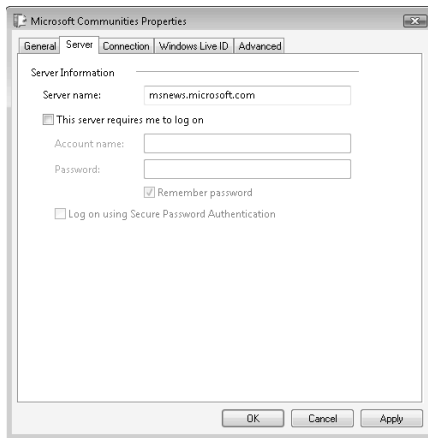


Figure A5-3 You can specify server options on the Server tab.

- **Server Name** Enter the full domain name of the server, or enter its IP address.
- **This Server Requires Me To Log On** Select this check box if the news server requires that you provide an account name and password to access the server.
- **Account Name** Specify the account name to use if the server requires you to log on. If the server is hosted on a server in a Windows domain but uses accounts in a trusted domain for authentication, include the domain name before the user name, such as MYDOMAIN\myusername.
- **Password** Specify the password associated with the account specified by the Account Name setting.
- **Remember Password** Select this check box if you want Outlook Express to store the password for this news server in your password cache.
- **Log On Using Secure Password Authentication** Select this check box if the news server requires SPA for authentication.

TROUBLESHOOTING

You are unable to connect to a server that doesn't require authentication

Many news providers opt to use *subnet exclusion* rather than authentication to control access to the news server. For example, an Internet service provider (ISP) will typically allow access to the news server only by clients within the ISP's own subnets. This method, which allows the ISP to restrict access to the news server to its customers only, is easier to implement than authentication, from an administration perspective.

If you're having problems connecting to a news server that doesn't require authentication, and you know your settings are correct, subnet exclusion could be the problem. The only way around the problem is to dial into the ISP's network using its access numbers, establish a virtual private network (VPN) connection to a VPN server that resides within an allowed subnet, or connect through a broadband connection within an allowed subnet.

Connection Tab

On the Connection tab (shown in Figure A5-4), you specify the dial-up connection to use for the selected server. Clear the Always Connect To This Account Using check box if you connect through a LAN or want to connect using whichever dial-up connection is active when you attempt the connection.

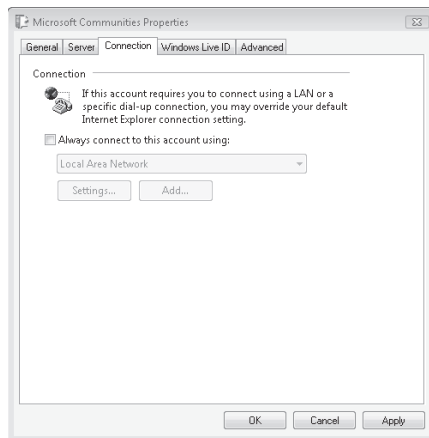


Figure A5-4 You can choose which connection to use, or clear the check box to use the active connection.

Windows Live ID Tab

If you are connecting to newsgroups that use Windows Live IDs for login and authentication, the Windows Live ID tab (shown in Figure A5-5) enables you to control how Windows Mail handles login for these sites. (This tab is not available in Outlook Express.) You can opt to turn off Windows Live ID and never provide these credentials. If

you want to provide your Windows Live ID credentials to newsgroups servers that can use them, you can opt to be prompted for these credentials when needed, or you can provide your Windows Live ID username and password here and Windows Mail will provide them when needed.

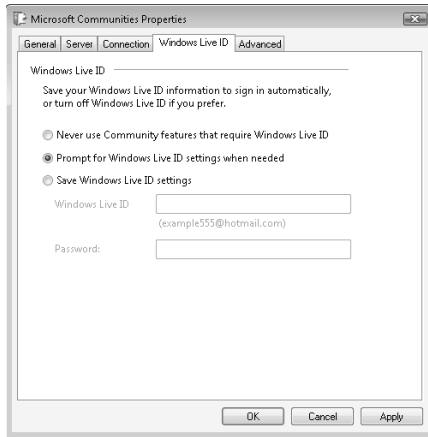


Figure A5-5 You can use the Windows Live ID tab to control how Windows Mail handles login.

Advanced Tab

Use the Advanced tab (shown in Figure A5-6) to specify the port for the NNTP server and other advanced settings, as described in the following list:

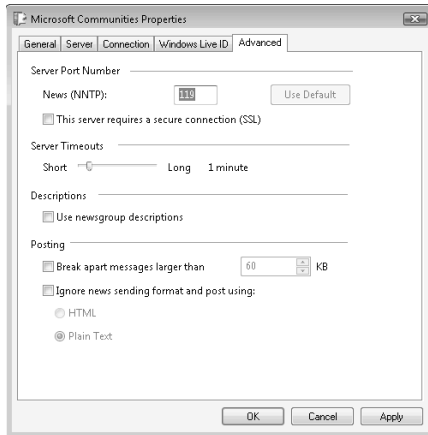


Figure A5-6 The Advanced tab includes the port setting and other newsgroup options.

- **News (NNTP)** Specify the TCP port used for the NNTP protocol on the news server. The default is 119. Most servers use the default settings, so you should not have to change this setting in most situations.

- **This Server Requires A Secure Connection (SSL)** Select this check box if the server requires SSL for the connection. SSL provides higher security, but most servers don't require it.
- **Server Timeouts** Specify the amount of time the server can be unresponsive before Windows Mail cancels the download of messages or groups. Use a shorter timeout if you have a fast Internet connection or the server is not relatively busy. Use a longer timeout for slow Internet connections and heavily used servers.
- **Use Newsgroup Descriptions** In addition to its newsgroup name, each newsgroup also can have a longer description that helps you identify it. Select this check box if you want Windows Mail to download newsgroup descriptions with the newsgroup names when you refresh the newsgroup list or download new newsgroups.
- **Break Apart Messages Larger Than *n* KB** You can use this option to break messages into multiple messages smaller than the specified size. Most servers support large messages, so you'll rarely need to use this option.
- **Ignore News Sending Format And Post Using** Select this check box, and specify the format (HTML or Text) for posting to the selected newsgroup if you want to override the default setting defined in the global properties of Windows Mail. To configure the default setting, choose Tools, Options and click the Send tab.

Managing the Newsgroup List

Each server maintains a certain number of newsgroups. A typical public Internet news server hosts 40,000 or more; other public and private news servers usually host fewer. Microsoft's public news server at *msnews.microsoft.com*, for example, currently hosts approximately 2780 newsgroups. Other business and private news servers generally host a smaller number of groups.

When you first add a news account, Windows Mail asks whether you want to download the list of newsgroups from the server. You must download this list to be able to browse the newsgroups. This generally doesn't take very long, even when you're downloading from a public Internet news server. You can download the 40,000-plus newsgroup list in a matter of a few minutes, even on the slowest connections. Keep in mind that you're downloading only the newsgroup names (and, optionally, the group descriptions), but no message headers or messages.

Downloading and Updating the List

If you didn't let Windows Mail download the newsgroup list when you set up your account, you can download it at a later time. You also might want to reset the list if you think it might contain new newsgroups not included in your original list or if you want to download the newsgroup descriptions as well as the names.

Follow these steps to reset the newsgroup list, which downloads a new copy of the list:

1. Open Windows Mail, right-click the news server in the folders list, and then select Newsgroups (in Outlook Express click Newsgroups in the right pane) to display the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box. (See Figure A5-7.)

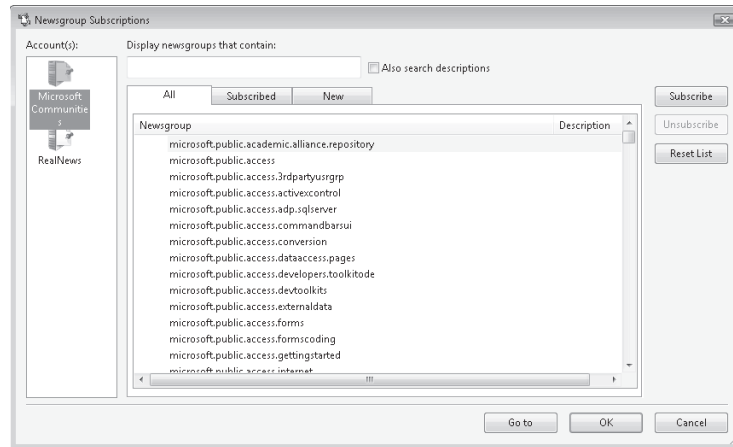


Figure A5-7 Reset the newsgroup list by using the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box.

2. If you want to download descriptions as well as names, select the Also Search Descriptions check box.

Note

If descriptions are not currently downloaded and you select the Also Search Descriptions check box, Windows Mail asks whether you want to reset the list. Click Yes to do so.

3. Click Reset List to download the new copy of the list.

Note

If you don't want to download descriptions, you can reset the list quickly this way: right-click the news server in the folders list and choose Reset List.

Subscribing and Unsubscribing to Groups

You can view any newsgroup without subscribing to the group, but subscribing to a group you frequently visit can simplify access because Windows Mail includes subscribed newsgroups in the folders list. (See Figure A5-8.) You can then quickly open a specific group by clicking it in the folders list.

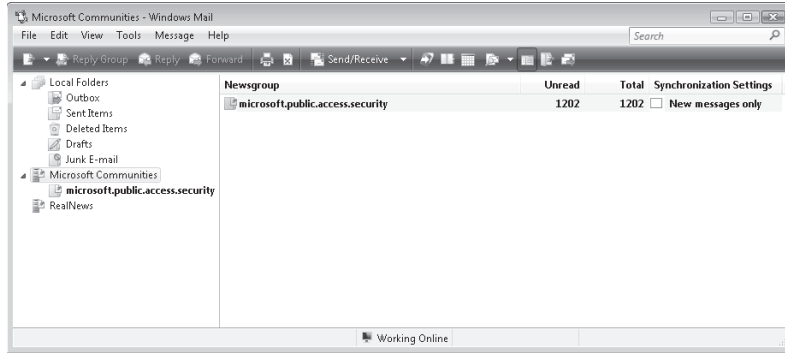


Figure A5-8 Subscribed newsgroups appear in the folders list, making them easily accessible.

Subscribing to a newsgroup has no effect on the server. You're not associating your user account, e-mail address, or any other information with any setting on the server. Nor can others who use a news server determine to which newsgroups you subscribe. Subscription is purely a client-side setting that makes it easier for you to access frequently used groups. Follow these steps to subscribe to a newsgroup and add it to your folders list:

1. Open Windows Mail, right-click the news server in the folders list, and then select Newsgroups (in Outlook Express click Newsgroups in the right pane).
2. In the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box, click the All tab, and then locate and select the newsgroup to which you want to subscribe.
3. Click Subscribe.
4. Repeat the process to subscribe to other newsgroups.

Note

To subscribe to multiple groups, hold down the Ctrl key and select multiple newsgroups.

Windows Mail displays a small icon beside each subscribed group on the All tab. You also can click the Subscribed tab in the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box to view a list that includes only your subscribed newsgroups, as shown in Figure A5-9. The New tab shows new newsgroups.

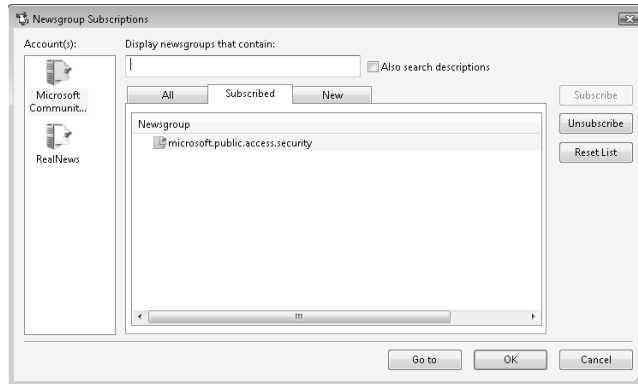


Figure A5-9 Use the Subscribed tab to view the list of newsgroups to which you have already subscribed.

Viewing a Group

You don't have to subscribe to a group to view its contents, but only groups to which you've subscribed appear in the folder list by default.

To open other groups to read and post messages, follow these steps:

1. Click the Newsgroups button on the toolbar to open the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box, shown previously in Figure A5-7.
2. In the Display Newsgroups That Contain box, enter the newsgroup name to view a specific newsgroup. To view all the newsgroups associated with a given topic, enter any portion of the newsgroup name; for example, enter **microsoft.public.access** to view all newsgroups about Microsoft Access. Enter a single word to view a list of all newsgroups that contain that word.
3. After you find the newsgroup you want, select it in the Newsgroup list and then click Go To.

Searching Descriptions

As explained previously, newsgroups can include optional descriptions that explain the content or intent of the newsgroup. When you search for a newsgroup on a particular topic, Windows Mail searches only on the newsgroup name by default. To include the description in the search, select the Also Search Descriptions check box in the Newsgroup Subscriptions dialog box. If you have not yet downloaded the descriptions, Windows Mail prompts you to reset the newsgroup list and download descriptions. Even with a full complement of Internet newsgroups, downloading generally takes only a few minutes over a dial-up connection and is considerably faster over a dedicated connection.

Reading Messages

Because of the way Windows Mail presents the newsgroup and its contents, reading messages in newsgroups is easy. Before you can read messages, however, you need to download message headers. You can then read messages, follow a discussion thread, and mark messages for offline processing.

Downloading Message Headers

After you select a newsgroup, Windows Mail downloads a certain number of message headers from the newsgroup by default. The message headers appear in the right pane, and you can sort the view based on the various columns—subject, size, or date and time posted, for example.

The number of message headers that Windows Mail downloads automatically when you open a newsgroup depends on how you've configured the program. Choose Tools, Options and click the Read tab to display the Read options shown in Figure A5-10. The Get *n* Headers At A Time option specifies the number of headers that Windows Mail will download when you open the newsgroup and when you direct it to download message headers by choosing Tools, Get Next *n* Headers. If you clear the Get *n* Headers At A Time check box, Outlook Express downloads all headers from the newsgroup.

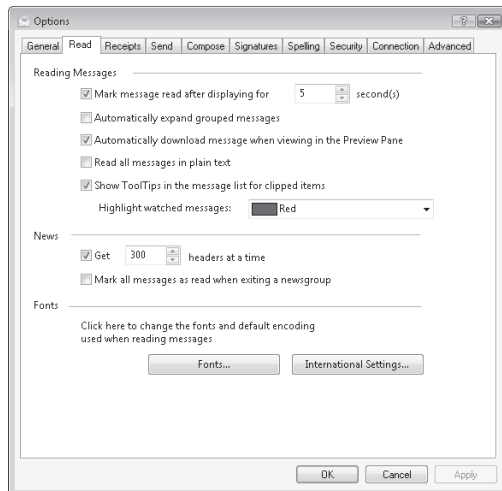


Figure A5-10 Use the Read tab to determine how Windows Mail downloads message headers.

Note

If you clear the Get *n* Headers At A Time option, the command on the Tools menu changes to Get New Headers.

TROUBLESHOOTING

You can't download message headers

On occasion you might not be able to download message headers because your message store is preventing Windows Mail from properly distinguishing between existing and new message headers. If that's the case, you can clear out all headers so that Windows Mail can download them again.

To do so, follow these steps:

1. Save any newsgroup messages or attachments you don't want to lose.
2. Open Windows Mail, and choose Tools, Options. Click Advanced, Maintenance to bring up the Maintenance dialog box. (In Outlook Express, the Maintenance options are available on the Tools, Options, Maintenance tab).
3. Click Clean Up Now, click Select (or Browse in Outlook Express), and select the subscribed newsgroup (or the news server if you haven't subscribed to any groups).
4. Click Reset to delete all message headers and bodies, and then download the message headers again.

Viewing and Reading Messages

Reading a newsgroup message is about as easy as reading an e-mail message in your Inbox. Depending on how you have configured Windows Mail, it can be as simple as opening the newsgroup and clicking the message header to download the message and view it in the preview pane. You also can double-click a message header to open it in a message window.

Choose View, Layout to display the Window Layout Properties dialog box, shown in Figure A5-11. Use the options in the Preview Pane group to turn the preview pane on or off and to specify its location and whether it includes the preview pane header.

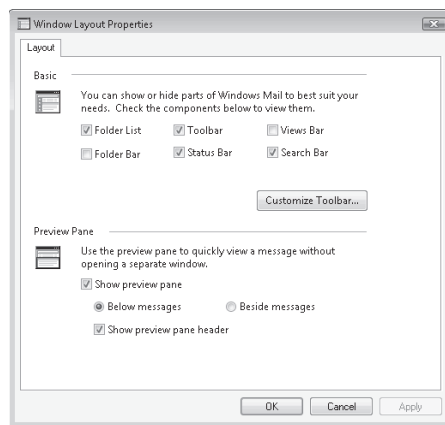


Figure A5-11 Use the Window Layout Properties dialog box to set preview pane options.

You can configure Windows Mail not to download messages when you click their headers. If a selected message hasn't been downloaded, Windows Mail tells you so in the preview pane, and you can then double-click the message to download it. (If the preview pane isn't displayed, Windows Mail takes no action.) You can select multiple message headers, open all of them, and mark them for later download.

Windows Mail displays a half-page icon beside the header of a message that hasn't been downloaded yet and shows a full-page icon beside a message that has been downloaded. The headers of unread messages appear in a bold font, and the headers of read messages appear in a normal font, giving you a quick indication of which messages have been read and which have not. If not all messages in a thread have been read, the first message in the thread retains the bold font when the thread is collapsed but not when you expand the thread. This helps you determine that the thread contains unread messages.

By default, Windows Mail marks as read any message that has been previewed for more than 5 seconds, but you can modify this behavior and set a different preview duration by following these steps:

1. In Windows Mail, choose Tools, Options and click Read.
2. On the Read tab, select the Mark Message Read After Displaying For *n* Seconds check box to have Windows Mail automatically mark as read all messages that are previewed for the specified duration. If you don't want Windows Mail to automatically mark messages as read unless you have actually opened them, clear this check box.
3. Change the preview period in the associated seconds box if you want to increase or decrease the duration of the preview.

Note

Increasing the preview period allows you to read part of a message and skip to another without the first being marked as read.

4. If you want Windows Mail to mark all messages in the newsgroup as read when you exit the newsgroup, select the Mark All Messages As Read When Exiting A Newsgroup check box.
5. Click OK to close the dialog box.

Working with Message Threads

Messages in a newsgroup are organized in Windows Mail by *thread*. A thread is a group of interrelated messages, or posts and replies to those posts. Message threads are also called *conversations*. Windows Mail indicates message threads by displaying a plus sign (+) beside the first message in the thread. You can click the plus sign to expand the

thread, which changes the icon to a minus sign (-). Click the minus sign to collapse the thread. As Figure A5-12 shows, Windows Mail also organizes the messages in a thread by indenting them to indicate the relationship between them in the thread.

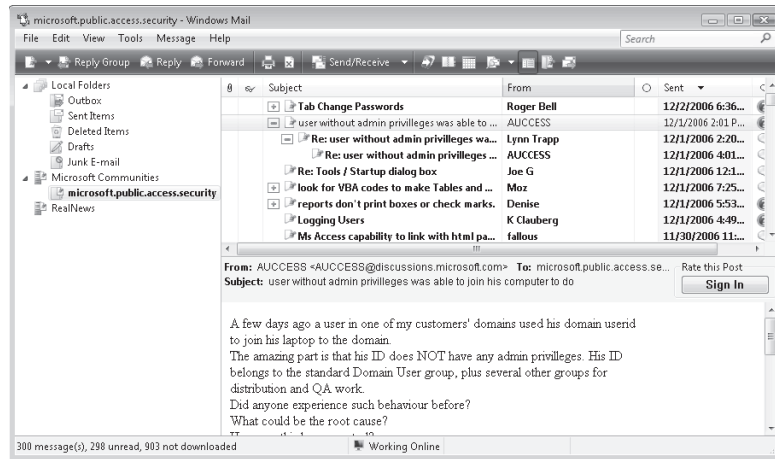


Figure A5-12 Windows Mail indents messages in a thread to make it easier to follow the conversation.

To learn how to “ungroup” messages from conversations and display them individually, see “Controlling Which Messages Are Shown,” later in this chapter.

Unscrambling Messages

Windows Mail supports a standard called ROT13 that allows you to unscramble messages. ROT13 doesn't provide actual security; it simply replaces each character in a message with a character 13 places later in the alphabet, which means that anyone can unscramble the message. However, scrambling messages can hide messages that might be considered offensive or ones the sender wants to make more difficult to read for other reasons. You can't scramble messages in Windows Mail, but you can unscramble messages that others have posted to a newsgroup. Download the message, select its header, and choose Message, Unscramble.

Posting Messages

Posting messages to a newsgroup is a lot like sending an e-mail message. You can post a message to a single newsgroup or post to several at one time.

Posting a Message to a Single Group

To compose a message to post to a newsgroup, click the Write Message icon (in Outlook Express, the New Post button) on the toolbar or choose File, New, News Message.

Windows Mail displays a message form, as shown in Figure A5-13, and automatically includes the name of the current newsgroup in the Newsgroups box.

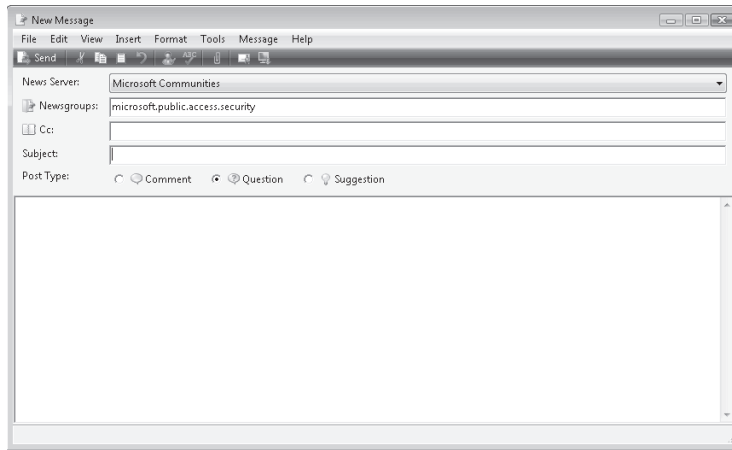


Figure A5-13 Composing a news message is much like composing an e-mail message.

Type the topic of your message in the Subject box, and then type your message in the message box. As you can also do in Outlook, you can post the message using HTML, which means you can create a rich-text message with character and paragraph formatting, bullets, and numbered lists. Click the Attach File To Message icon (or click Insert, Attachment) if you want to attach a file to the message, and then click Send. Depending on how you've configured Windows Mail, the message is either posted immediately or sent to the Outbox until the next time you process messages. Windows Mail places a copy of the post in the Sent Items folder, if you've configured the program to do so (on the Send tab in the Options dialog box).

Note

Use the Cc box on the message form to send a copy of the message post to one or more e-mail addresses.

Posting a Message to Multiple Groups

In some cases, you'll want to post the same message to more than one newsgroup. You might be looking for a particular item to buy, for example, and want to post an inquiry to several newsgroups all related to the same topic. Posting to multiple newsgroups is called *cross-posting*.

Composing the message, saving it, and then posting it separately to each newsgroup requires that you monitor each newsgroup for answers. If you cross-post the message,

however, you can monitor all the replies in any one newsgroup as they appear in all. Only one instance of the message thread exists, but because you've assigned it to multiple newsgroups, it appears in each one. To cross-post a message, address it to multiple newsgroups when you compose the message, separating the newsgroup names with a comma. Click the Newsgroups button on the message form to open the Pick Newsgroups dialog box (shown in Figure A5-14), in which you can select the newsgroups. Use the Show Only Subscribed Newsgroups button to select groups without having to type their names.

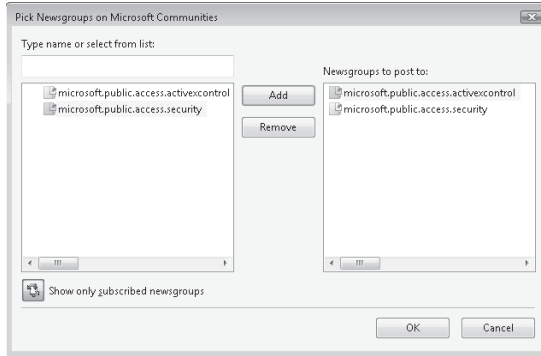


Figure A5-14 Select newsgroups from the Pick Newsgroups dialog box.

Note

Limit your cross-posting and the number of newsgroups to which you post a particular message. Excessive cross-posting is considered poor etiquette.

Processing Newsgroups and Working Offline

Windows Mail provides a good selection of features for automatic processing of messages and working with newsgroups offline. For example, you might want to review message headers offline—if you connect through a metered dial-up connection—and mark selected messages to be downloaded the next time you connect. The following sections explain how to process messages automatically and use Windows Mail offline.

Downloading a Selection of Messages

If you have a dedicated Internet connection, you'll probably do most of your work with Windows Mail online, downloading messages one at a time. If you want to download a large selection of messages or if you connect through a metered dial-up connection, you might prefer to mark messages for downloading and process them automatically. Handling messages this way allows you to process a large group of messages without

manually downloading each one. Furthermore, you can review the message headers offline, decide which ones to download, and process them automatically the next time you go online.

Note

A metered dial-up connection is one for which you are charged a per-hour or per-minute connect fee rather than a flat fee. More online time therefore equates to greater expense.

Note

If you're working online and have configured Windows Mail to download messages when previewed, you can select multiple messages and Windows Mail will download them one after another.

Follow these steps to download a selection of messages:

1. Choose Tools, Options. Click the Read tab, and clear the Automatically Download Message When Viewing In The Preview Pane check box. Click OK to close the Options dialog box.
2. Beside each message you want to download, click the Download column, indicated by a down arrow. By default in Windows Mail, the Mark For Offline column is not displayed—right-click the column title bar, select Columns, select the check box next to Mark For Offline, and then click OK. (In Outlook Express the Download column is the second column from the left by default.)
3. After you select all the messages you want to download, choose Tools, Synchronize Newsgroup. Then select Get Messages Marked For Download, and click OK.
4. If you're currently working offline, Windows Mail prompts you to connect (unless you've configured it to connect automatically) and then displays a download dialog box that shows the status of the download.

Note

Hold down the Shift key and click the first and last messages in a range to select the range. Hold down the Ctrl key and click to select noncontiguous messages.

Selecting the first message in a thread for download automatically selects all other messages in the thread for download. If you don't want all the messages, expand the thread and cancel the selection of messages you don't want Windows Mail to download.

Note

If you are using Outlook Express, you also can choose Tools, Mark For Offline, Download Message Later or Download Conversation Later to mark messages for download.

Creating Messages Offline

You can compose messages offline for later posting, which is particularly useful if you connect through a metered dial-up connection. Composing your posts offline can cut your online time considerably. Outgoing messages wait in your Outbox until you connect and perform a send/receive operation.

You can compose messages offline without any special configuration. However, you'll probably want to set up Windows Mail so that it does not attempt to send messages immediately—that is, you'll want to prevent it from attempting to log on to your ISP and sending messages as soon as you click Post after you compose the message. To do this, choose Tools, Options and click the Send tab. Clear the Send Messages Immediately check box and click OK. Then compose messages as you normally would. If Windows Mail prompts you to go online, select the option to work offline. When you're ready to post the message, choose Tools, Send And Receive, Send All.

Synchronizing Individual Newsgroups

In addition to letting you mark messages for later download, Windows Mail provides other features for synchronizing newsgroups. You can direct Windows Mail to retrieve messages according to the following selection criteria:

- **All Messages** Select this option to have Windows Mail download all messages in the selected newsgroup.
- **New Messages Only** Use this option to retrieve new messages from the server. This option retrieves the message body as well as the message header.
- **Download Headers** Select this option to download all message headers from the newsgroup.

To perform any of these actions, choose Tools, Synchronize Newsgroup. Select Get The Following Messages check box, choose the appropriate option from the Synchronize Newsgroup dialog box, and click OK. This action processes messages or headers only in the current newsgroup. If you have other newsgroups with messages or headers to download, you must synchronize those separately.

Note

Synchronizing newsgroups helps you process them automatically, which means you'll spend less time manually reviewing message headers or marking messages for download. When you synchronize newsgroups, all messages that you have marked for download are processed and message headers for new messages are downloaded.

Synchronizing All Newsgroups and E-Mail Accounts

In addition to synchronizing selected newsgroups, you also can synchronize all newsgroups and e-mail accounts. If you choose Tools, Synchronize All, Windows Mail checks for new messages on your e-mail accounts and processes subscribed newsgroups according to their synchronization settings. For example, if a newsgroup's synchronization settings are configured to download new headers only, Windows Mail downloads marked messages in the newsgroup and any new headers. If the synchronization setting is configured to download all messages, Windows Mail downloads all messages for the newsgroup during the synchronization, regardless of whether the messages are marked for download.

To configure synchronization settings for a subscribed newsgroup, right-click the newsgroup in the folders list, choose Synchronization Settings, and then choose one of the following options:

- **Don't Synchronize** Don't include this newsgroup in the synchronization process.
- **All Messages** Download all messages from the newsgroup, regardless of whether they're marked for download.
- **New Messages Only** Download only new messages for which headers are not currently downloaded.
- **Headers Only** Download only message headers not currently downloaded.

The synchronization settings for subscribed newsgroups are the best way to perform automatic processing on a global scale. You can configure each subscribed newsgroup separately to achieve the type of synchronization you need.

Monitoring and Managing Messages

Outlook provides tools for monitoring and managing e-mail messages; Windows Mail provides similar tools for monitoring and managing newsgroup messages. This section of the chapter examines these features, starting with message flagging.

Flagging Messages

You can flag messages in Windows Mail just as you do in Outlook. Windows Mail places a flag icon beside the message header. Unlike Outlook, however, Windows Mail provides no mechanism for generating reminders for flagged messages or for assigning follow-up actions to flagged messages. However, you can sort the display to view all flagged messages together, which means you can quickly identify messages that you've flagged.

By default, Windows Mail doesn't display the Flag column, but you can turn it on to flag messages by following these steps:

1. Choose View, Columns and select Flag from the list.
2. Use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to change the column order and then click OK.
3. To flag a message, click in the Flag column beside the message header. Click again to clear a flag.

Note

You can also simply drag column headers from one location to another to change the order in which the columns appear.

Watching a Conversation

With smaller newsgroups, you don't need to perform any special processing to monitor the group for messages that interest you. As the number of messages in a newsgroup grows, however, keeping track of specific messages and conversations becomes more difficult. For example, perhaps you've posted a message to a newsgroup and you want to monitor the group to determine when someone posts a reply. You can direct Windows Mail to monitor the particular conversation and notify you when new messages are added to it. This saves you the trouble of updating the message headers, scrolling through the newsgroup to locate your message, and checking it for new replies.

To direct Windows Mail to watch a conversation, click beside the message header in the Watch/Ignore column (indicated in the column bar by a pair of spectacles). Windows Mail places a similar icon beside the message to indicate that it is being watched, as shown in Figure A5-15. When you process message headers, Windows Mail colors the message thread red to indicate that it contains new replies. Windows Mail also colors the newsgroup name in the folders list red to indicate that it contains watched messages with new replies.

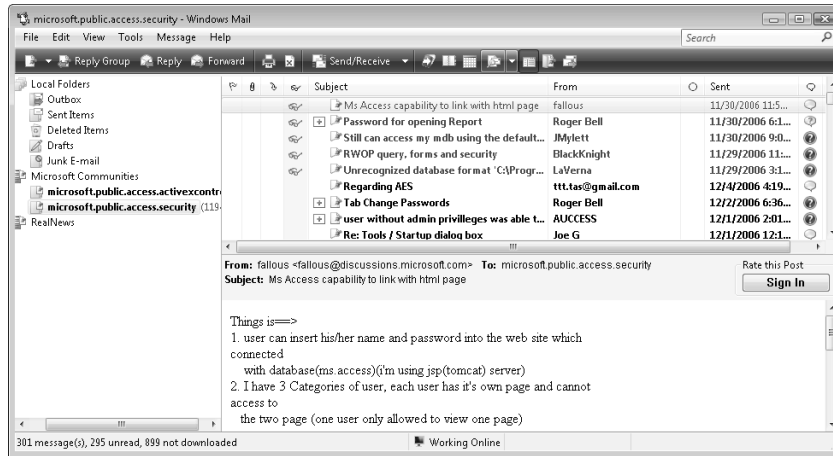


Figure A5-15 Windows Mail is watching several conversations in a newsgroup.

Ignoring a Conversation

In addition to flagging messages to be watched, you can flag messages to be ignored. Flagging a conversation to be ignored doesn't change the way Windows Mail handles it for synchronization, but it does exclude those messages from your current view. For example, you might not be interested in the majority of messages in a newsgroup and want to ignore them to focus on the rest. You can flag the conversation to be ignored and then configure Windows Mail to hide those ignored messages from the current view. This simplifies the view and lets you concentrate on messages that interest you.

Follow these steps to ignore a conversation:

1. Click in the Watch/Ignore box beside the message header to set it to Watch. Click it again to set it to Ignore.
2. Windows Mail places a circle and slash icon beside the message header to indicate that it's being ignored. (See Figure A5-16.)
3. Configure the view to hide read and ignored messages by choosing View, Current View, Hide Read Or Ignored Messages.

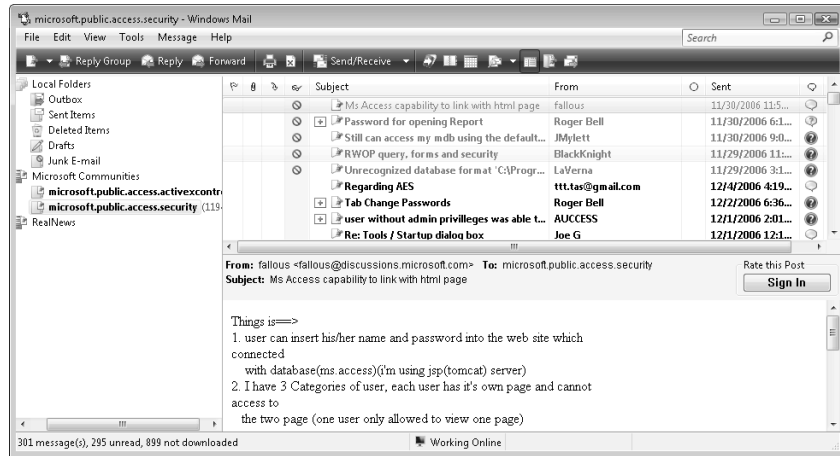


Figure A5-16 Conversations are flagged to be ignored.

Finding Messages

Windows Mail provides a search feature that finds messages based on various search criteria you specify—for example, words in the subject or the body of the message, the sender, or the date. Choose Edit, Find, Message to display the Find Message dialog box, shown in Figure A5-17, which provides several fields you can use to refine the search. You also can click Browse to specify the root of the search location. For example, you might select the news server as the root to search all subscribed newsgroups for messages that fit your search criteria. In the Find Message dialog box, select the Include Subfolders check box to have Windows Mail search all subfolders of subscribed newsgroups within the news server.

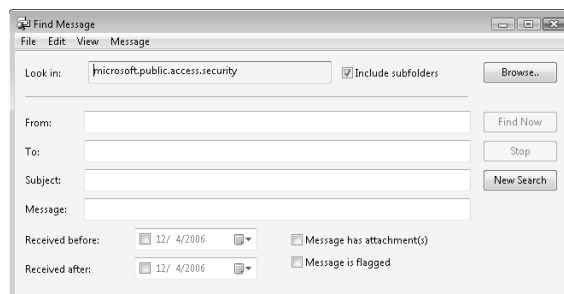


Figure A5-17 Use the Find Message dialog box to perform advanced searches.

Filtering and Controlling the Message View

With newsgroups that contain a lot of messages (typical of many Internet newsgroups and common even with many other private newsgroups), it's often useful to sort or filter the view so that you can focus on specific messages or threads. You can sort the message headers in Windows Mail based on any of the displayed columns. To do so, simply click the appropriate column header. For example, click the From column header if you're trying to locate a message from a specific sender or click the Subject header if you want to locate messages with a specific subject. Click the column header a second time to switch between ascending and descending sort order.

Note

If you don't want to use the mouse, you can choose View, Sort By to sort the message headers.

Adding and Removing Columns

Windows Mail provides columns you can display in addition to the default set. For example, you can include a Flag column (explained earlier) to keep track of specific messages. You can also exclude certain columns if you're not interested in the information they provide. For example, if you aren't interested in the size of messages, you can turn off the Size column to make room for other columns.

To change the columns Windows Mail displays, choose View, Columns or right-click a column header and choose Columns to display the Columns dialog box. Select the columns you want to include, use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to change their display order, and then click OK. You can resize columns or change their order by dragging the column headers.

Controlling Which Messages Are Shown

By default, Windows Mail shows all messages, whether or not they've been downloaded. You can set up the view to show all messages, to show only downloaded messages, or to hide read messages. Choose View, Current View, and then one of the following commands:

- **Show All Messages** Select this option to show all message headers, whether or not the message bodies have been downloaded.
- **Hide Read Messages** Select this option to show only messages that are marked as unread.
- **Show Downloaded Messages** Select this option to show only messages with message bodies that have been downloaded.
- **Hide Read Or Ignored Messages** Select this option to hide messages that are marked as read or marked to be ignored.

- **Hide Answered Messages** Select this option to hide messages that you have responded to. (This option is not available in Outlook Express.)
- **Show Only Useful Conversations** Select this option to display message threads that you have Rated as Useful. (This option is not available in Outlook Express.)
- **Show Replies To My Messages** Select this option to show replies to messages that you have posted.
- **Group Messages By Conversation** Select this option to group messages according to thread; clear the option to display messages individually.

Using Rules

Windows Mail supports the use of rules for processing e-mail and newsgroup messages. In addition, you can use rules to create custom views to show or hide messages based on specific criteria.

Creating Custom Views

Although the views included by default with Windows Mail are useful in many situations, you might occasionally need to filter the view in other ways. For example, you might want to create a view that hides ignored messages but not read messages. You can accomplish this by creating a custom view, which applies a rule that you define to filter the newsgroup folder.

Follow these steps to create a custom view:

1. In Windows Mail, choose View, Current View, Define Views.
2. In the Define Views dialog box (shown in Figure A5-18), click New to display the New View dialog box. (See Figure A5-19.)

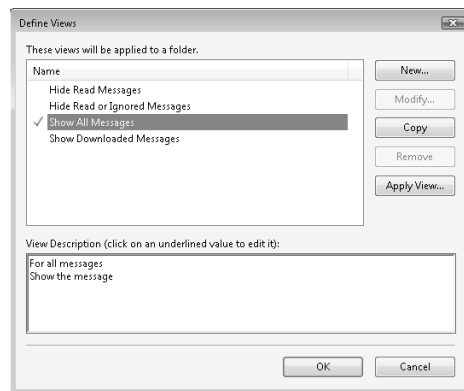


Figure A5-18 The Define Views dialog box shows currently defined views and allows you to create custom views.

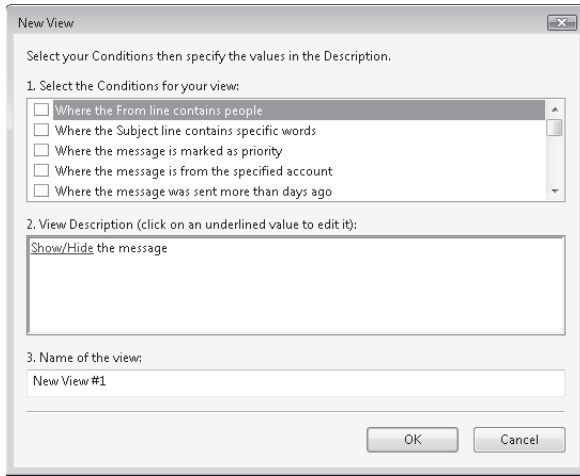


Figure A5-19 Use the New View dialog box to define a rule that filters the newsgroup folder view.

3. Select the rule condition that will apply to the new view. For example, to hide all ignored messages, select Where The Message Is Watched Or Ignored.
4. In the View Description area, click the underlined word that specifies the condition and then specify the criteria. For example, click Watched Or Ignored to specify Ignore Threads if you're creating a rule that hides ignored messages.
5. In the View Description area, click the underlined word that specifies the action to take and then select an action. For example, to hide all ignored messages, click Show/Hide and select Hide Messages.
6. Enter a name for the rule in the Name Of The View box, and click OK.
7. To apply the view, in the Define Views dialog box select the view rule you just created, click Apply View, select either The Currently Selected Folder or All Of My Folders, and click OK. Windows Mail filters the view accordingly, and the applied view appears as a command on the Current View menu.

Note

You can modify the rule that defines the current view by choosing View, Current View, Customize Current View.

Processing Messages with Rules

In addition to controlling the view through message rules, you can use rules to process messages automatically. For example, you might create a message rule that marks for download all messages from specific senders or messages containing certain words in the Subject box. Or perhaps you want to use certain colors to identify messages from specific senders.

You can either apply rules when message headers and messages are downloaded or apply them manually afterward.

In either case, the first task is to create the rule, as follows:

1. In Windows Mail, choose Tools, Message Rules, News. (If you already have established Message Rules for News, you will have to also click New in the Message Rules dialog box.)
2. In the New News Rule dialog box, select the condition or conditions to apply to the message in the Conditions list.
3. In the Actions list, select the action or actions you want Windows Mail to take on messages that fit the conditions.
4. Click the underlined words in the Rule Description area to define the condition and the action.
5. In the Name Of The Rule box, enter a name for the rule as you want it to appear in the rules list and click OK.

News rules that you select on the News Rules tab of the Message Rules dialog box are applied automatically when Windows Mail downloads message headers and messages. You can turn off a rule by canceling the selection (clearing the check box) in the list.

You can apply a message rule manually at any time. For example, you might create a rule that deletes read messages with dates older than a given date. Rather than applying the rule automatically, you can apply it any time you want to clean out old messages.

Follow these steps to apply a rule manually:

1. Choose Tools, Message Rules, News.
2. Click Apply Now to display the Apply News Rules Now dialog box (shown in Figure A5-20).

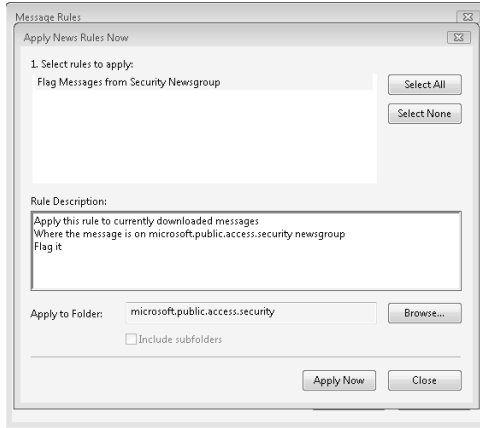


Figure A5-20 Select which rules to apply from the Apply News Rules Now dialog box.

3. Select the rules you want to apply.
4. Check the Apply To Folder box to determine whether the correct folder is displayed. If it isn't, click Browse and select it. Select the news server if you want to apply the rule to all messages that fit the conditions in all subscribed newsgroups.
5. Click Apply Now.

Working with Attachments

Internet newsgroups are a very popular means of sharing all sorts of files—from images to sound files to video clips. With Windows Mail, you can post newsgroup messages that include attachments. The following sections cover viewing, saving, and manipulating attachments to newsgroup messages.

Previewing Attachments

Windows Mail examines the attachment for a message when you preview the message and, if the file type is supported, includes the attachment in the preview pane. Click a message containing a JPEG attachment, for example, and Windows Mail shows the JPEG below the message in the preview pane. Regardless of whether Windows Mail can preview the attachment, it includes a paper clip icon in the preview pane header. Click the paper clip icon, and select the attachment to open it.

Saving Attachments

To save one or more attachments to disk, you can click the paper clip icon and choose Save Attachments. You also can choose File, Save Attachments. In either case, Windows Mail prompts you for the location where the file should be saved.

Posting Messages with Attachments

Posting a message with an attachment is as easy as sending an e-mail message with an attachment. Just follow these steps:

1. Click the Write Message icon (in Outlook Express click New Post), and compose your message.
2. Click the Attach (paper clip) button on the toolbar, or choose Insert, File Attachment.
3. Locate and select the file, and click Open (click Attach in Outlook Express).
4. Post the message as you would any other.

Decoding Attachments

Most news servers impose a maximum size limit on messages, so certain types of messages—particularly those containing larger video clips—are often split into multiple messages. To read the message or view the attachment, you must recombine the multiple messages into one. To do so, select all the messages in the set after downloading them, and then choose Message, Combine And Decode.

Windows Mail displays a dialog box containing the messages and prompts you to arrange them in order. Typically, the messages' titles indicate their order. Use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to arrange them, with the first at the top of the list and the last at the bottom, and then click OK. Windows Mail combines and decodes the message and displays it in a separate window. Choose File, Save As to save the entire message to disk.

Archiving and Restoring Messages

Windows Mail doesn't provide an easy means for archiving and restoring messages, whether from newsgroups or e-mail. However, you can save messages to disk, move messages between Windows Mail installations, and retain your messages during a reinstallation of Windows Mail if it becomes necessary.

Archiving Messages

As it does with e-mail messages, Windows Mail stores newsgroup messages and attachments as individual files, one newsgroup message or attachment per file. Even so, there is no easy way to archive groups of messages from within a newsgroup. However, you can save messages and attachments individually to keep an archive copy, enabling you to save important messages and attachments outside Windows Mail.

To save a message, select the message in Windows Mail and choose File, Save As. Specify the path and file name for the message, and click Save. By default, Windows Mail uses the message header name as the file name, but you can specify any name you like.

To save attachments, select the message and choose File, Save Attachments. Specify a path for the attachments, and click Save.

Archiving a Newsgroup

Although the Windows Mail interface doesn't provide a way to archive a newsgroup, you can archive a newsgroup manually by copying the newsgroup file to a backup location. For example, suppose that you want to archive all messages in a particular newsgroup as of the current date, clearing the newsgroup file to start with messages from that date.

Here's how to accomplish this without saving individual messages and attachments:

1. In Windows Mail, choose Tools, Options, Advanced, and click Maintenance. (In Outlook Express, you select Tools, Option, and click the Maintenance tab.)
2. Click Store Folder, and note the location of your Windows Mail message store (as shown in Figure A5-21).

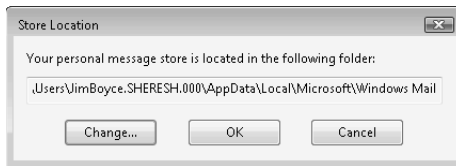


Figure A5-21 Note the location of your Windows Mail message store folder.

3. Cancel the dialog box, and then close Windows Mail.
4. Open the folder identified in step 2, and perform one of the following depending on whether you are using Windows Mail or Outlook Express:

Windows Mail To effectively create an archive of newgroup messages in Windows Mail, you simply change the Store Folder location to an empty folder. Windows will then copy the contents of your current Store Folder to the new location. You can then switch back to the original storage location and modify the contents, such as deleting irrelevant messages, and yet your new archive version remains intact.

To create the archive, perform the following steps:

1. Select Tools, Options, Advanced, and select Maintenance.
2. Click Store Folder, and then select Change.
3. Select an empty folder in which to store your archive, and click OK.
4. Close down Windows Mail, and re-open Windows Mail to use the new (archived) copy of your newsgroups.

To switch back to your original newsgroup store location, repeat the preceding procedure except in step 3 select your original location of your Store Folder. (Windows Vista defaults to storing newsgroups in \Users\<username>\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Mail.) You will be notified that an existing Windows Mail store exists at that location and will be asked whether you want to switch to using that store. Select Yes to switch back to using your original store. At this point you can delete all messages from the selected newsgroup prior to your chosen date, and switch back to your new archive whenever you want to reference those older postings.

INSIDE OUT

Windows Mail uses folder and file newsgroup message store

If you are using Windows Mail, each configured newsgroup server will have its own folder (such as msnews.microsoft.com) within the folder identified in step 2, and each subscribed newsgroup will have a folder (such as microsoft.public.access.security) under the newsgroup server folder. Each downloaded message will be stored in an individual file. You can copy the entire newsgroup folder to a new location, or you can select specific messages to copy and save in another location. Once you delete messages from a newsgroup, however, you cannot reintegrate the messages back into Windows Mail. Even if you copy archived messages into the Windows Mail Store Folder (identified in step 2), they will not be displayed in Windows Mail. You can view them in the folder you have copied them into—by placing your mouse cursor over a message, the subject and author are displayed. To view a message, just double click the message and it is displayed. You can work with these messages like other newsgroup messages—you can, for example, Reply to the message.

Outlook Express If you are working with Outlook Express, you can change the file extension for the newsgroup file you want to archive from DBX to something else, such as BAK. You can move the file to a backup location, but you must move it back to the original folder if you want to use it later. Start Outlook Express and open the archived newsgroup. Outlook Express re-creates the missing folder file by replacing it with an empty one and, depending on how you have configured the program, downloads the headers from the newsgroup but not the messages. How do you use the archived file? Unfortunately, it isn't an easy process. You need to change the file extension of the current newsgroup file, restore the DBX extension to the backup file, and then restart Outlook Express. When you open Outlook Express, you'll find the old message file in place, complete with downloaded messages and attachments. An alternative to this procedure is to copy individual newsgroup files or the entire contents of your Outlook Express store folder to a backup location and then delete messages from the current store. When you need to work with the archive copy, choose Tools, Options. Click the Maintenance tab, click Store Folder, and point Outlook Express to the archive location. Point it back to the original location when you're finished working with the archived messages.

Moving Your Message Store

You can move your Windows Mail message store, which is useful for archival purposes, as just explained; it's also useful when you want to move your newsgroups and messages from one computer to another or to a disk with more space.

Moving the message store is relatively easy, and it is a little different for Windows Mail than for Outlook Express.

Windows Mail To move the location of the newsgroup message store in Windows Mail, perform the following steps:

1. Open Windows Mail; choose Tools, Options, Advanced; and click Maintenance.
2. Click Store Folder to display the current location of the store folder.
3. Click Change, select the new location of your store folder, and then click OK.

Note

The new location must be an empty folder—if the folder is not empty, Windows Mail displays a message telling you that the folder is not empty and does not continue changing the store folder location. If the folder location contains an existing message store (such as an archive message store), Windows Mail asks whether you want to use the message store at the new location.

4. Click Yes to use the message store at the new location the newsgroup messages and folders will be copied into the new location.
5. You are prompted to restart Windows Mail before these changes will take effect.

Outlook Express To move the location of the newsgroup message store in Outlook Express, perform the following steps:

1. Open Outlook Express and choose Tools, Options. Click the Maintenance tab, and then click Store Folder to identify the current location of your store folder.
2. Close Outlook Express, and copy the store folder to its new location.
3. Open Outlook Express and choose Tools, Options. Click the Maintenance tab, click Store Folder, and then click Change. (If you're moving your message store to a different computer, perform this step and step 4 on the computer to which you moved or copied your store file.)
4. Select the new location and click OK. Outlook Express informs you that the specified location already includes a store and asks whether you want to use that store. Click Yes.

Retaining Accounts and Messages During a Reinstallation

Although it doesn't happen often, you might occasionally need to reinstall Windows Mail or Outlook Express. Or perhaps you're moving to a new computer and want to retain your accounts and messages.

Retaining Accounts In Windows Mail

The Windows Mail dialog box for managing accounts provides you with the means to export and import your account settings. By using the export and import options, you can retain both Windows Mail account information as well as your configured news-group information.

To export your Windows Mail user account information, perform the following steps:

1. Select Tools, Accounts.
2. In the Internet Accounts dialog box (shown in Figure A5-22), select your Mail account and click Export.

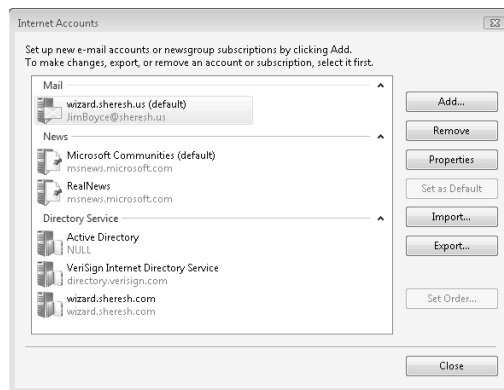


Figure A5-22 You can manage, export, and import your account information via the Internet Accounts dialog box.

3. In the Export Internet Account dialog box (shown in Figure A5-23), select the location to store your Internet Account File (.iaf), set (or accept) the filename, and then click Save. Your account information will be saved to the folder you selected, and you will be returned to the Internet Accounts dialog box.

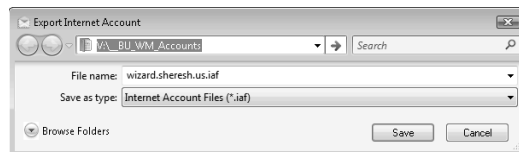


Figure A5-23 Select the location and filename to store your account information.

4. Next select the News account information for each newsgroup server you have configured and click Export.
5. Then, in the Export Internet Account dialog box (shown in Figure A5-24), select the location to store the newsgroup account information to and click Save. Repeat these last two steps for each newsgroup server you have configured an account for.

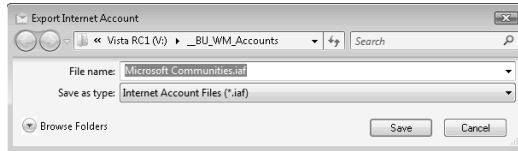


Figure A5-24 Select the location and filename to store information on the newsgroups you have subscribed to.

When you have reinstalled Windows Vista (which includes Windows Mail) or installed to a new system, you can import your Internet Account Settings by selecting Tools, Accounts, Import and then selecting the Mail or News account information from the folder you just exported them to.

Retaining Messages in Windows Mail

You can easily retain your newsgroup messages in Windows Mail by using the procedure described in the Windows Mail section of “Moving Your Message Store” earlier in this chapter. Essentially, you just use the Tools, Options, Advanced, Maintenance option and choose Store Folder and then select Change to change the location of the message store. Doing this will copy your message store to the new location. When you have reinstalled Windows Vista (which includes Windows Mail) or installed it on a new computer, you can copy the contents of this folder to the default location for Windows Mail in the new installation. (By default, this is \Users\<username>\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Mail.)

Retaining Accounts in Outlook Express

The easiest way to retain accounts during a reinstallation or move is to make a backup copy of the appropriate registry key before installation and then restore the key after you reinstall Outlook Express (or move to another computer):

1. Close Outlook Express and click Start, Run. Type **regedit** and click OK.
2. In the Registry Editor, open the branch HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Account Manager.
3. Choose Registry, Export Registry File.
4. Specify a file name and path, verify that the Selected Branch option is selected, and click Save.

5. On the system to which you are moving Outlook Express, or after performing a reinstallation, double-click the REG file created in step 4 to add the registry settings to your registry.
6. Open Outlook Express, and verify that your accounts are working.

Retaining Messages in Outlook Express

You can retain existing newsgroups and messages by copying your entire message store to the other computer or, in the case of reinstalling Outlook Express, backing it up and then restoring the message store:

1. Open Outlook Express and choose Tools, Options. Click the Maintenance tab and then click Store Folder to identify the current location of your store folder.
2. Close Outlook Express and, if you're moving to a different computer, copy the store folder to its new location. If you're preparing to reinstall Outlook Express, copy the store folder to a backup location.
3. Install or reinstall Outlook Express, and then open Outlook Express. Use the Maintenance tab to locate your current store, as you did in step 1.
4. Close Outlook Express, copy your backup store in the location determined in step 2, and then restart Outlook Express.