

# POP or IMAP email — which is best for me?

## You need to know this if . . .

. . . you use more than one device to access your emails, such as a desktop computer in the office, and a laptop, or a smartphone.

## Executive summary . . .

. . . For most people, IMAP is the best choice, especially if you are using more than one device to read your emails.

## What's the difference between POP and IMAP?

You can connect to your standard or premium mailboxes using either POP (Post Office Protocol) or IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol). These methods of retrieving your emails work in slightly different ways.

### POP

If your email software is set up to use POP, each time you connect to your mailbox your computer will download all the emails within the mailbox on our servers and create a copy on your computer or other device (e.g. smartphone). By default, **it will then delete the mails from the mailbox on our servers** to free up space for new emails to arrive.

- **Advantages:** The fact that the emails are stored on your local computer is useful if you like to keep all your emails, as you can store as many as you like (providing that you have room on your hard drive). In addition, if you then want to view your emails at a later date, when you have no internet connection, they are on your computer ready for you. Once you have downloaded your emails, this is the quickest way of reading them at a later date.
- **Disadvantages:** If you have a number of computers and/or other devices all accessing the same mailbox, this can become confusing. If one device downloads your emails and removes them from the server, then you attempt to retrieve your emails from another device, the emails will have already been downloaded and deleted, so there will be no emails for the second device to see. See our article for tips on accessing one mailbox from multiple devices.

### IMAP

If your email software is set up to use IMAP, each time your computer (or other device) connects to the mailbox it will show you which emails are in the mailbox on our server. It does not download the emails to your computer, and they will remain in the mailbox on the server. If you then decide to read an email, it will download that particular email to your computer, **leaving a copy within the mailbox on the server**. Also with IMAP, your sent mails and draft emails are sent from your computer to the mailbox, essentially synchronising your local computer with your mailbox.

- **Advantages:** This means that if you have more than one device connecting to the same mailbox on our servers, each device will see the same messages in your inbox, sent and draft folders.
- **Disadvantages:** You are now storing all your emails within the mailbox on our servers, rather than downloading them to your local computer, so you will need to keep an eye on the mailbox space you are using. However, your mailboxes on the server each now have a very generous amount of space. So it's likely to take a long time before your mailbox runs out of space. In addition, you will only be able to read new emails when you are connected to the internet.



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## Frequently asked questions

### *Which protocol is best for me?*

- As a rule of thumb:
- POP is best if you only use one device to check your mailbox
- IMAP is best if multiple devices check the same mailbox

### *How can I connect my mail software to my mailbox?*

The process will depend on the mail software you are using, and the type of mailbox you want to connect to. You can find step by step instructions in our support database article. Alternatively, please contact Support direct.

### *My email software currently connects using POP, but I would like to connect using IMAP*

It is not possible to change your email software (your email 'client') to connect via a different protocol 'on the fly', but it is usually possible to change your current mailbox settings from POP to IMAP. You should be able to find instructions about this in the Help provided with your email program (such as Microsoft Outlook, Apple Mail, Windows Mail, Thunderbird). Alternatively please contact Support direct.



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