

## **How does Webmail differ from a POP3 mail client?**

There are two general types of mail systems.

1. Web Mail or other types of web based mail programs such as hotmail, yahoo, etc.
2. Outlook Express or other POP3 mail programs such as Outlook, Netscape Mail, and Eudora.

Web Mail stores the messages on the mail server. When you ask for the mail via your browser (Internet Explorer or Netscape), then you are shown a list of headers including who sent the mail, the subject, the date, and the size. If you ask to see a particular message, then the contents of the message are retrieved from the server and shown to you. If you delete the message, it is deleted from the server. If you simply view the message but leave it alone, then it stays on the server and can be viewed again from any computer connected to the internet. This message stays on the server until you tell it to be deleted.

POP3 mail systems use the same mail server, but when you ask for the mail, the message is transferred from the server to the computer making the request. When the transfer is completed, the messages are deleted from the server and the only location that the messages exist is on the machine you moved them to by checking your mail with the POP3 mail program.

The advantage of the Web Mail method of viewing your mail is that the messages are stored on a server and can be viewed from any computer with a connection to the internet. This is helpful if you want to check mail from more than one location. Another advantage is that if there are multiple people using the same computer, it is easy to keep each person's mail separate. The disadvantage of the Web Mail system is there is a limit to the number of messages that can be stored on the server. This includes messages in the trash. Once that limit has been reached, new mail will no longer be delivered to your mailbox. There is also a time limit to how long you can be connected to the server without activity; this is currently set to 15 minutes. If you take longer than 15 minutes to compose your message, then you may lose your web mail connection to the server. Therefore, if you have not copied the unfinished message to a clipboard, you will have to retype the message.

The advantage of using the POP3 system, then, is that there are no limits to the number of messages or to the time it takes to compose the messages. You have functions and features that may not be available via web mail, such as message management. The disadvantage is that once you have downloaded the mail to your computer, you must have access to that same computer to view the messages since this is the only place they exist. They have been erased from the server at the time of the transfer. If you only have one computer in your life, this is not really an issue.