



the Union Technologist

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E-mail Choices

There are enough people using e-mail, that it is hard to function without your own e-mail account. Your Union uses e-mail to more quickly communicate with stewards and members. During negotiations next year, we will create a mailing list you can subscribe to for up-to-date information.

The school district creates an account for you automatically when you become an employee and will also disable it when you leave. If you did not receive information on your account and requests to our district's tech support (support@staff.chuh.org or 397-5910) do not get a response, leave me a message at 320-2340 and I will send you your account information.

There are a number of web sites that offer free e-mail accounts. You can also purchase an account, even one with an address you choose.

What e-mail account should you use?

The district created account's main advantages are that it is free, has virus protection built in, has a large capacity limit, and provides access to the staff directory. It's disadvantages are that it will be disabled when you leave employment and you should not use it for commercial purposes.

Free e-mail accounts such as hotmail and yahoo are popular but may not always be free. Some services may change or disappear without notice or require additional fees. Your Internet service provider usually maintains an e-mail account for you as long as you use the service. If you change Internet service providers, your account is disabled. As you can see, maintaining a consistent e-mail address over time can be a real problem. Be prepared, get a new account before

Be prepared for the inevitable - your e-mail account will change!

the old one is disabled and then contact all your regular correspondents.

You can also purchase your own e-mail address that can be moved to a new service provider without your correspondents knowing the difference. These cost ten or more dollars a year to maintain, but you can have a meaningful e-mail address like mine (stephen@titchenal.com) or the Union's (chtu@chtu.org).

How can I check my mail?

Most e-mail accounts have a number of options for reading and managing your mail. You need a program to do that, called an e-mail program (client). You can install and configure your own e-mail program or use a client that you access from your web browser.

Web Based E-Mail

For beginning users or those without their own personal computer, the easiest way to check mail is by using the web browser already installed on the computer (Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator.) When you connect to the e-mail web site client (email.chuh.org, mail.yahoo.com, hotmail.com, etc.) you will be asked for your account and password in order to check your mail. When you are done, you need to logout or exit your browser to keep others from using your account. No e-mail is saved on the computer. Web based e-mail, if available, is provided by your e-mail account provider.

The district's web e-mail client is called Outlook Web Access (OWA). To use it easily, you must use Internet Explorer version 5.x or greater and have a monitor resolution of at least 800x600. Older computers often are not set up for that and you will have difficulty using the district's web based e-mail. It also does not support filters which automatically move mail specific senders or mailing lists to their own folders. This makes it easier to organize your mail when you get lots of messages.

Using E-Mail - The Short Answer....

My advice is to start out using the free district account via the web at email.chuh.org As you use e-mail more regularly, and/or run up against CH-UH Outlook Web Access's many limitations consider the following choices:

1. If you have your own computer, use a computer based e-mail program (client) to access your e-mail such as Netscape Messenger, Microsoft Outlook/Express, etc..
2. Use a different e-mail account. Consider the free web based e-mail accounts (such as mail.yahoo.com or hotmail.com) or use the one provided by your home Internet provider (AOL, Ameritech, Adelphia, etc.). If you do this, either check both accounts or have your chuh.org e-mail forwarded to that account. You can request this through support@staff.chuh.org.

Some other web based e-mail clients will work with Netscape Communicator and on older computers. Some also support filters and other features not supported the district web e-mail. I use email.yahoo.com when I my regular computer is not available.

E-mail Programs

For many years the only way to check e-mail was to install an e-mail program (client) on your computer. Common e-mail programs include Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger and Eudora. If you have used e-mail for many years this may be the only way you have ever checked for e-mail. It is still the preferred choice for users that get a lot of mail and/or need advanced management features. You can still use web-based e-mail when you are away from your regular computer.

For a number of years the district provided inservice instruction using Netscape Composer. This is an e-mail program that is part of the Netscape package, but it is separate from Netscape Navigator, the web browsing program. The Netscape Navigator web browser does not work well with the district web-based e-mail client, but Netscape Composer still works fine with your district e-mail account. The only change is that in the past, if you tried to send mail to a staff.chuh.org account, the program would not let you send the message if the e-mail address was not correct. Now the message can still be sent but the district e-mail server will send a message back to you stating that the message is undeliverable.

There are two ways to configure most e-mail clients, POP3 and IMAP. POP3 is the most common method. When you check your mail using POP3, it is copied to your computer so you can read and respond to mail without being continually connected to the Internet. Anyone that uses your computer could read this mail. But it gives you the opportunity to backup (make copies of) your mail if it contains information you want to keep. I archive welcome information from mailing lists and web sites that I join; correspondence with people that contain information that will be useful in the future; and responses to orders I place on-line. One of the unfortunate side-effects of using electronic communication is that the paper trail is gone. If the electronic message has not been saved there is no record for the future. Think of the information historians gotten from written letters.

With IMAP the mail stays on the server and just downloads it as needed to read it. This is similar to the way web based e-mail works, except that you must configure IMAP on the client installed on your local computer. I don't recommend IMAP for most purposes.

Web Based E-mail

- ✓ No setup necessary - but you must have a computer that meets the recommended requirements.
- ✓ Mail resides on the e-mail server only, nothing is saved to your computer. This is important on shared computers. but you cannot view messages when you are not connected to the Internet and cannot back up your e-mail easily.
- ✓ You don't have to wait for messages to download that you don't want to read.
- ✓ Not as easy to view e-mail attachments (files). You cannot just double click to view them, you must save the file to your computer and then open it.
- ✓ Not as easy to use e-mail links on web pages. You must copy the address link, open your web email page and paste the address into a new message.
- ✓ Advanced e-mail management features may not be supported.

E-mail Programs

- ✓ Must be configured on each computer you use (and copied when you change computers).
- ✓ E-mail is saved to each computer you check mail on when configured for POP3. This takes time to download.
- ✓ E-mail can be stored for years, searched quickly and backed up easily.
- ✓ Programs offer advanced features.
- ✓ E-mail from mailing lists you subscribe to can be automatically put into separate mail-boxes using filters.

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For more information contact Steve Titchenal at the Union Office or on the Internet:
S_Titchenal@chtu.org



CLEVELAND HEIGHTS TEACHERS UNION

Local 795 — american federation of teachers

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Fairmount Office Building
3473 Fairmount Boulevard
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

2155 Miramar Boulevard
University Heights, Ohio 44118

Telephone
216-321-0020
Fax
216-321-0786

www.chtu.org