

# Email Basics

## ABOUT THIS CLASS

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This class is designed to provide a basic introduction to using email. Throughout the class, we will orient ourselves to the general layout of email service and cover the basics of using email, such as logging-in and out, creating and sending emails, and sending attachments. It is impossible in the short time we have to become wholly proficient in using email, but it is my hope that this class will provide a good foundation for your future email endeavors!

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- ✓ Log-in and out of email
- ✓ Create and send an email
- ✓ Reply and forward emails
- ✓ Send email attachments
- ✓ Print an email

This booklet will serve as a guide as we progress through the class, but it can also be a valuable tool for when you are working on your own. Any class instruction is only as effective as the time and effort you are willing to invest in it. I encourage you to practice soon after we have completed the class. There will be additional computer classes in the near future, and I am always available for questions during Tech Tuesdays (10 am-noon) and Thursdays (3-5 pm.) You are welcome to call to confirm that Tech Time is taking place on the particular day you are planning on coming in.

Remember that the library has many additional books and resources to help you. Never hesitate to ask any of the Sisson Library staff to locate some resources for you.

**Meg Wempe, Adult Services Librarian**



## Getting Started with Email

**What is email?** **Electronic mail**, commonly known as **email** or **e-mail**, is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it's a letter sent over the web!

**How do I get email?** You need to sign up for an email account, which will then give you an email address. There are many free email services (a.k.a. "providers"), such as **Gmail** (Google), **Yahoo**, and **Hotmail** (Microsoft). If you do not have an email account or wish to sign-up for a new account, I recommend **Gmail**. It's easy to use and easy to organize. **\*\*Note** that all free email providers will use some of your personal information to offer you advertisements. This is nothing to be alarmed by, but it is something to be aware of.

When signing up for an email service, you'll choose an email address. This consists of a username and your email service, combined by the @ sign. Here's what a typical email address looks like:

**ruby.sisson@gmail.com**

**Username**      **Email Provider**

You'll also choose a **password**. It's important to choose a password that you can remember and one that is "strong." Here are some tips for creating a strong password:

### **What makes a password strong (or weak)?**

A strong password:

- Is at least eight characters long.
- Does not contain your user name, real name, or company name.
- Does not contain a complete word.
- Is significantly different from previous passwords.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>



- Contains characters from each of the following four categories:

Character category	Examples
Uppercase letters	A, B, C
Lowercase letters	a, b, c
Numbers	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Symbols found on the keyboard (all keyboard characters not defined as letters or numerals) and spaces	` ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & * ( ) _ - + = { } [ ] \   : ; " ' < > , . ? /

A password might meet all the criteria above and still be a weak password. For example, *Hello2U!* meets all the criteria for a strong password listed above, but is still weak because it contains a complete word. *H3ll0 2 U!* is a stronger alternative because it replaces some of the letters in the complete word with numbers and also includes spaces.

Help yourself remember your strong password by following these tips:

- Create an acronym from an easy-to-remember piece of information. For example, pick a phrase that is meaningful to you, such as *My son's birthday is 12 December, 2004*. Using that phrase as your guide, you might use *Msb12/Dec,4* for your password.
- Substitute numbers, symbols, and misspellings for letters or words in an easy-to-remember phrase. For example, *My son's birthday is 12 December, 2004* could become *Mi\$un's Brthd8iz 12124* (it's OK to use spaces in your password).
- Relate your password to a favorite hobby or sport. For example, *I love to play badminton* could become *ILuv2PlayB@dm1nt()n*.

If you feel you must write down your password in order to remember it, make sure you don't label it as your password, and keep it in a safe place.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Tips-for-creating-a-strong-password>

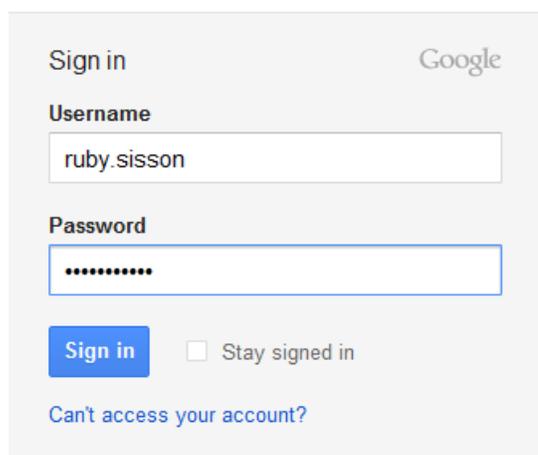


Most email providers will also ask you to select a **security question**, and sometimes two questions. This question(s) is one that you will be asked to answer if you forget your email password, so choose it wisely. I've encountered a number of people who cannot access their email because they have forgotten their password as well as the answer to their security question. Choose a clear question with an answer that you will always remember but that does not include any personal information that is public knowledge (for instance, "What is my last name," or "What is my pet's/child's name" are not safe security questions, since they are fairly easy for even a stranger to figure out.)

Some email providers will also allow you to enter your **cell phone number**. Read the fine print about why they ask for this number. In some cases, email providers will text you your password if you have forgotten it, which is a beneficial service. But you'll want to make certain that this is the only way they intend to use your cell phone number before giving it to them.

## Logging-in & Out

In order to access your email, you will need to go to your email provider's website (such as gmail.com). This is a good example of a site to **Bookmark** or **save to your favorites**, since you will use it frequently. Logging-in requires entering your email address (sometimes called a "username" or "ID") and the password you've chosen, and then pressing "enter" or clicking "sign in." Here's how this looks in **Gmail**:



For our class today, we'll be using a **Gmail** account I created for our practice. Here are the login credentials:

**Username:** ruby.sisson      **Password:** ruby\$1\$\$0n

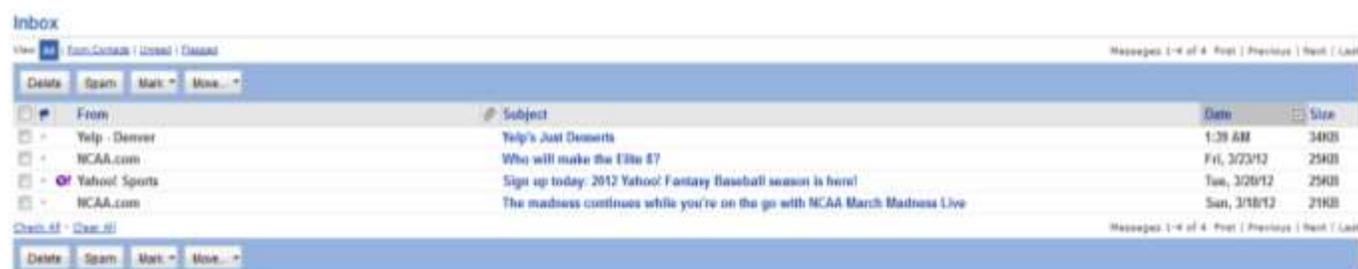


## Inbox

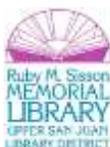
Once you've signed in, you will see your **homepage** or **Inbox**, which displays new messages and any messages that you've chosen not to delete or place in a folder (also called "archiving"). Inboxes look different depending on your email provider, but they all have the same basic layout. Here's what an inbox looks like in **Gmail**:



You can customize and sort your inbox to meet your preference. For most email providers, you can sort your inbox by clicking on the column headings (**Gmail** is unique here, as it instead uses color-coded labels, but most email providers use sortable columns). For instance, in **Yahoo!**, you can see that **Date** is highlighted in dark gray, which means that the emails are sorted by **Date**:



I can easily reorder the inbox by clicking on another column heading. For instance, if I click on **Subject**, my inbox will be sorted alphabetically by the email subject:



Inbox

View: All | Date Received | Unread | Deleted

Messages 1-4 of 4 | First | Previous | Next | Last

Delete | Spam | Mark | Move...

From	Subject	Date	Size
Yahoo! Sports	Sign up today! 2012 Yahoo! Fantasy Baseball season is here!	Tue, 3/26/12	25KB
NCAA.com	The madness continues while you're on the go with NCAA March Madness Live	Sun, 3/18/12	21KB
NCAA.com	Who will make the Elite 8?	Fri, 3/23/12	25KB
Yelp - Denver	Yelp's Just Desserts	1:39 AM	34KB

Check All | Clear All

Delete | Spam | Mark | Move...

Messages 1-4 of 4 | First | Previous | Next | Last

**Tip:** If you click a second time on the same column heading, it will reverse the sorting order. For instance, in the case above, if I click on **Subject** again, it will reorder the emails reverse alphabetically by **Subject**. Or, if the emails are sorted by most recent **Date** received and I click the **Date** heading again, then it will display the earliest email in the inbox as opposed to the most recent.

## Creating & Sending a New Email

To create a new message, click on **Compose** or **New Mail** (again, this differs depending on your email provider). You'll then see window that should look something like this:

Compose window showing fields for To, Subject, and Body.

**To (Address)** → ruby.ross@ymail.com

**Subject** → Hello!

**Body** → Hello, Ruby!  
I just got back from Paris. It was a wonderful trip.  
How are things in Pagosa?  
Regards,  
Ruby

Enter the email address(es) of the person(s) to whom you are sending the email to in the **To** (or “address”) field. You can enter as many addresses as you wish—just separate the email addresses by commas, or click **Add CC**, which stands for **Carbon Copy**. When you click this, a second **To** field will appear, where you can enter additional emails. **Note:**

You can also click on **Blind Carbon Copy**. Use this feature if you wish to send an email to multiple addresses but do not wish for each recipient to see any of the other recipient’s emails.

Give your email a title and enter that into the **Subject** field.

Then type your message into the **Body**. When you are ready to send the message, click **Send**.

If you are not ready to send your email, you can save a **Draft**. This will save your email-in-progress to the **Drafts** folder, which is accessible via your Inbox.

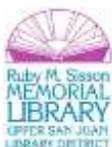
#### **Safety Tip:**

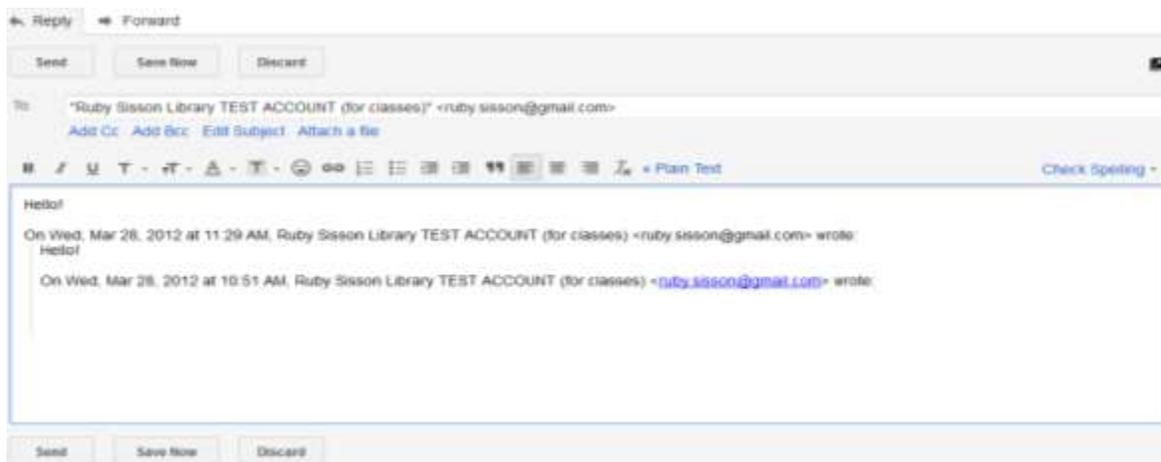
**\*\*Never send sensitive information via email, such as credit card, bank account, PIN, or Social Security Numbers.** Your email site may be **https**, but once you send it, the message will no longer be secure. Additionally, the person to whom you’ve sent your email may not have secure email nor act responsibly with your sensitive information. If someone asks for information such as your credit card information, request a phone number or fax number that you can use to transmit this information.

## Replying to an Email

Replying to an email that has been sent to you is very similar to sending a new email, except that you will click **Reply** instead of **Compose** or **New Message**. If the email you received was sent to others as well as you and you wish to reply so that all recipients can read your reply, click **Reply All**.

Once you have clicked **Reply** or **Reply All**, you will see a screen that’s very similar to a new message window, except that the **To** field is already filled in with the recipient(s) and, in the **Body**, the original message details are included for your reference:

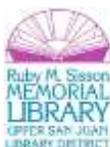
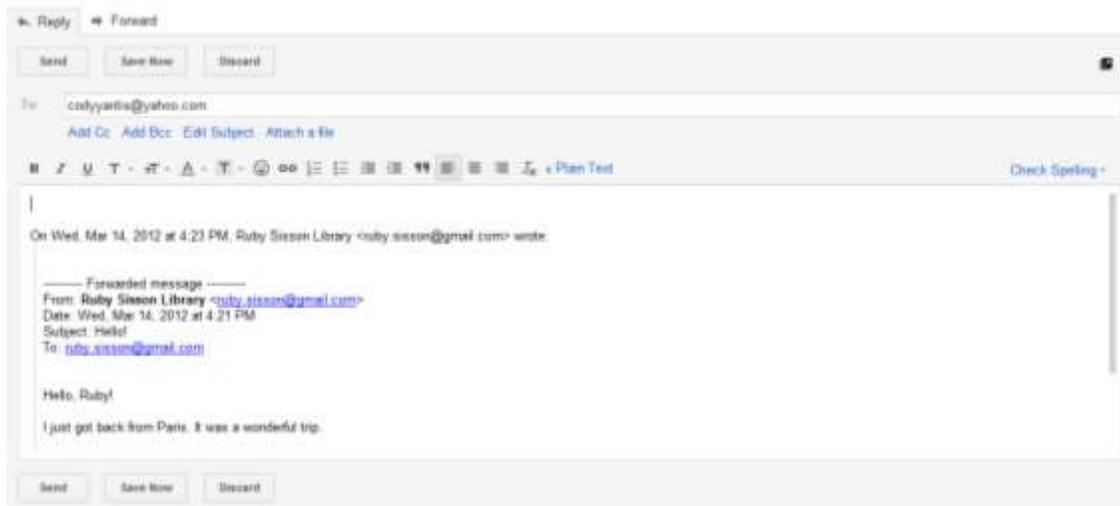




Begin typing your reply at the top of the message (where the cursor is already placed). Once you have completed your reply, click **Send** (or save a draft). When the recipient receives your reply, the subject will start with **RE:** followed by the original subject (e.g. **RE: Hello!**, when the original subject was **Hello!**). This lets the recipient know that this is a reply to the previous message.

## Forwarding an Email

If you want to share an email that was sent to you with others, you can **Forward** the email. This functions just like a **Reply**, except that you will need to enter the email address(es) for those to whom you wish to forward the message. Click on **Forward**, and you will see the original message displayed:



Enter an email address and click **Send**. If you want to preface this forwarded message with an explanation, you can type above the forwarded message, just like in a **Reply**. When the recipient receives your forward, the subject will start with **FWD:** followed by the original subject (e.g. **FWD: Hello!**, when the original subject was **Hello!**). This lets the recipient know that this is a message you are forwarding to them.

## Sending Attachments

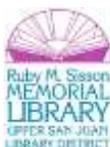
When sending an email, you can **attach** files (such as documents, photos, music files, etc.) that are then sent along with your email. You can add multiple files up to the file size limit that your email provider has in place. To attach a file to the email that you are composing, look for a button that says **attach**. Often there will be a paperclip icon on the attachment button:

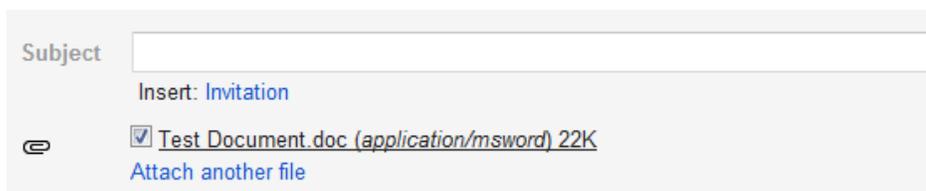


Click the button, and then browse and **double-click** on the document you wish to attach:



You will then see the document attached to your email below the **Subject** line:





When you click **Send**, this document will be sent along with your email.

## Contacts

Most email services will allow you to create an address book, where you can store your email contacts. In addition to **name** and **email**, you can add information such as phone number, physical address, and website. However, it is often not necessary to manually add a contact to your address book, since many email providers automatically remember addresses that you emailed prior.

One nice feature of most email address books is that you can add multiple addresses into a grouping in order to send one email to multiple people. The process for creating a grouping is slightly different depending on your email provider, but within your contacts/address book, there should be an option to create a **group** or **category** or something similar. Click on “create a group” or “create a category,” and then follow the instructions to add email addresses to your group.

## Printing an Email

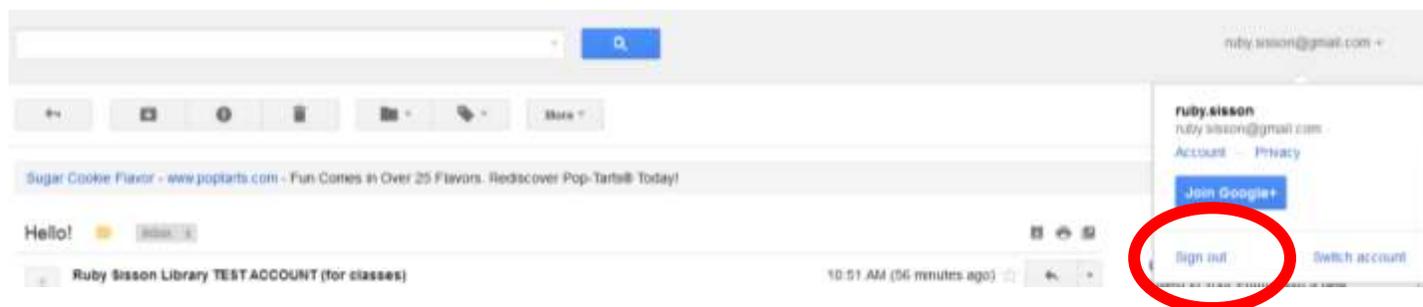
Printing an email can often result in strange formatting and unwanted extra information. The best way to print an email is to use the print button **within your email**, rather than the print option in the browser menu. When reading the email that you wish to print, click on the print button, which should look like this:



A screen will then open that shows you the lay-out of the email, which has been formatted specifically for printing. Click **Print** to print out your email.

## Logging-Out

When you have completed your email session, it is important to **Log-Out**—this may be called **Sign Out, Sign Off, Log Out, or Log Off**, etc. depending on your email provider. Logging-out is particularly important when using a public computer, as others can access your email if you have not ended your session. (**Safety Tip:** it's also a good idea to close your internet browser, as this will more fully end your email and browsing session). For many email providers, this feature is in the upper-right corner of your email, for instance in **Gmail**:



**Congratulations!** You've completed the **Email Basics** class. Please take a moment to fill out the evaluation. Your feedback is *very* important to us!

