What’s New in MS Outlook 2003

When you start using Outlook 2003 for the first time, you will notice that Outlook has a new look that incorporates many features designed to make Outlook easier to use. The most notable changes to Outlook include the following:

- Noticeable New Look
- Enhanced Reading Pane
- Enhanced Navigation Pane
- Enhanced Email Alerts
- AutoComplete Address
- Smart Tags
- Search Bar
- Color-Coded Message Flags
- Follow Up Folder
- Spam Filter
- Enhanced Privacy Options

Noticeably New Look:
The new Navigation Pane replaces the Outlook Shortcut Bar, from earlier versions of Outlook. This new feature allows easy access to mail, calendars, contacts and tasks.

The Inbox, as well as each folder, now categorizes mail by date (Today, Yesterday, Last week, Two Weeks Ago, etc).

If you have subfolders under your Inbox, items are categorized by sender. These categories are expandable/collapsible, simplifying email organization.

A Reading Pane may be added to the right side of the window, allowing you to read the selected message. (See page 2 for more information.)

You can change the contents in the Outlook window by clicking on one of the large buttons at the bottom of the Navigation Pane. The Mail view contents are shown at the right.

Navigation options change for Calendar, Contact and Task categories. Views within each category are fully customizable.
**Enhanced Reading Pane:**
In Outlook 2003, the Preview Pane is gone and has been replaced by the more appropriately named Reading Pane. Now you can read your messages as they would appear on paper in the Reading Pane.

The secret to this change is that the list of mail is now vertical instead of horizontal as in previous versions of Outlook. This provides a large space for the Reading Pane on the right-hand side of your Outlook window. You can customize your Outlook 2003 Reading Pane to suit your needs from the View menu as shown in the image below.

![View Menu](image)

Other Reading Pane options can be accessed from the Tools menu by clicking Tools, Options, Other tab and then clicking the Reading Pane button. Options include moving the Reading Pane back to the bottom (as in previous versions of Outlook) and hiding or showing message headers in the Reading Pane.

![Enhanced Reading Pane](image)

**Enhanced Navigation Pane:**
The Outlook Shortcut Bar, from earlier versions of Outlook, has been replaced by the new Navigation Pane which provides centralized navigation and easy access to sharing features. You can turn the Navigation Pane on and off by pressing ALT+F1. When you first open Outlook the Navigation Pane will show your Favorite Folders and All Mail Folders.

In the Favorite Folders pane, e-mail messages are displayed in folders; however, the messages aren’t actually moved to the folder in the Favorite Folders pane. The messages are still in their original folders but are also accessible in the Favorite Folders pane, where they are more noticeable and more easily organized to suit your purposes.
The **All Mail Folders** includes only e-mail folders from your account. Click on **Mailbox - Your name** within the All Mail Folders to see an Outlook Today view which is very familiar to the Outlook 2000 feature.

If you want to see ALL of your Outlook folders, (similar to the way you may have configured Outlook 2000) you'll want to display the **Folder List**, which includes all Outlook folders, such as Mail, Calendar, and Contacts, and Public Folders.

The large buttons in the Navigation Pane allow you to easily switch to Mail, Calendar, Contacts, Tasks, Notes, Folder List and Shortcuts. Not all of these large buttons show by default.

You can show fewer or more buttons by clicking on the **Configure buttons** button and making a selection of your choice from the menu that appears.

If you find that large buttons take up too much space, point to the horizontal splitter bar between the buttons and the **All Mail Folders** pane, and then when the pointer turns into a double-headed arrow, drag the splitter bar down. Dragging the horizontal splitter bar to the bottom of the Navigation Pane converts the large buttons to small buttons in a single row of icons at the bottom of the Navigation Pane.

**Enhanced E-mail Alerts:** Another new feature is desktop notification of new email. A small alert box appears identifying the sender, the subject line and the first line of the email. You can flag the message,
delete it, or ignore the box. It will fade away after the amount of time you specify. This allows you to decide if you should interrupt your current task to respond to the email.

You can customize the appearance of these Desktop Alerts so that they appear more or less transparent or remain visible for as short as 3 seconds or as long as 30 seconds. Use the Tools menu, select Options then go to the Preferences tab. Click Email Options, then Advanced Email Options to access the Desktop Alert Settings.

This feature can be disabled by using the Tools menu to select Options then going to the Preferences tab. After clicking Email options, then Advanced Email Options the check box for displaying/disabling the alert is just above the Desktop Alert Settings button.

**Arrange by Group:** Outlook 2003 includes an Arrange by Group feature that helps you see your messages in different ways. There are 13 predefined standard arrangements, such as grouping messages by date, conversation, category, flag, and importance.

To quickly change from one predefined standard arrangement to another, click View and Arranged By column heading, and then select the arrangement you want.

**AutoComplete Address:** The AutoComplete feature is on by default, and it will suggest names as you type in the To: Cc: Bcc: boxes. When you type the first letter of a name in one of these boxes, AutoComplete begins to suggest possible matches based on names you have typed before. The more letters you type, the greater the possibility of AutoComplete finding a match.

Names that you use less frequently will move lower in the list over time, and eventually will no longer appear.
**Smart Tags:** These are a set of buttons shared across Office programs that deliver a menu of context-sensitive options when and where they are needed. For example, the Smart Tag button appears when you paste data or make an error in an Excel formula. They provide options for completing a task quickly.

- **Context-sensitive smart tag**
  It automatically recognizes many information types, including names, dates, addresses, telephone numbers, places, and stock symbols. Smart tags can be customized to recognize multiple types of data.

- **Paste options smart tag**
  When pasting data from another source, you can paste data in its original style and format, modify it to match the target document's formatting, or paste it as text only.

**An Example:** This Smart Tags appeared after copying and then pasting data. Clicking the down arrow on the smart tag gives you a menu of options.

- **AutoCorrect options smart tag**
  When auto-corrections are made, you can undo or modify a correction or specify that the correction not be made again in the future.

**Search Bar:**
You can search for Outlook items by using **Find**, which searches for items based on a word or phrase they contain. By default, Outlook searches only the current folder (excluding subfolders).
Use the Search Bar to specify which folders you want to search.

Color-Coded Message Flags allow users to organize email for follow up by assigning a colored flag.

To color-code a flag, right-click on the flag icon on the right side of a piece of mail in the Inbox, then make a selection from the menu that appears.

Follow-Up Folder: When a message is flagged for follow up, it appears in the For Follow Up folder. This folder appears in the upper portion of the navigation pane when the mail category is selected and contains all messages marked for follow up, categorized by flag color.

Spam Filter: Outlook 2003 includes a customizable junk mail filter. Depending on the settings you choose, Outlook can identify some junk mail flowing into your inbox based on time sent, content of the message, and organization of the message. Outlook sends mail identified as spam to a Junk Mail folder where you can periodically review and delete the contents. You can block or allow specific senders as well as control image downloading. (You can prevent
offensive pictures from appearing on your computer screen!)

**Enhanced Privacy Options:** This feature disables **Web Beacons**, which are small files embedded within some emails that send a message back to the web server saying the message has been previewed or read. It tells the sender that your email address is an active account. This is a strategy used by many spammers to find active email addresses they can then turn around and sell. Blocking Web Beacons could reduce the amount of junk email you receive.