Chapter 9: Internet Email

Internet email has become one of the most popular applications on the Internet. An Internet experience is not complete without the usage of email. In this chapter we shall be describing two commonly used email software: Evolution and Mozilla Mail.

EMAIL REQUIREMENTS

There are two main types of Internet email systems: webmail and POP3. Webmail, as the name implies, makes use of a web browser to read, compose, send and manage your mail. POP3 email makes use of a POP3 email client to download your email from a server housing your email mailbox. The main difference between a webmail system and a POP3 email system is that for the former, generally, you have to be online to the server housing your mailbox to access and manage your mail. For the POP3 system, you need to be online to the server only to download your mail, after that you can go offline to read, reply and manage your local mail storage. You only need to go online again when you want to send out your email.

In addition to having a webmail account somewhere on the Internet, webmail needs only a web browser and Internet access to work. Examples of popular webmail services are those from Yahoo and Hotmail. Most ISPs also offer webmail services in addition to their traditional POP3 email services.

To use POP3 email you will need to have a POP3 email client software running on your computer. Both Evolution and Mozilla Mail support POP3 email. In addition, you will also need to know the name of the computer on which your POP3 mailbox is located - the POP3 server, as well as the name of the computer which allows you to send out (relay) mail through it - the SMTP server.

Note:
Of course you will need to know your Internet email address irrespective of whether you are using webmail or POP3 email!

Since the usage of webmail involves using your browser mainly, we will not dwell on this form of email anymore here. Instead we will be looking at the POP3 setup and usage of Evolution and Mozilla Mail.

EVOLUTION

Evolution can be launched either from the icon on the panel or from the Main Menu:

Main menu --> Internet --> Evolution Email

The first time you run Evolution, you will be placed in the welcome/setup screen to configure Evolution to send and receive email using your email account. Follow the onscreen instructions to fill in the information required about your email account. Some of the important items to fill in are: described below.

Identity

For the identity screen the following have to be entered:

Email name: (fill in your name)
Email address: (fill in your email address)

Fig: Evolution Email Identity

Receiving Mail

For the receiving mail screen, the following have to be entered:

Server type: POP
Host: (fill in name of your POP3 server)
Username: (fill in username of your POP3 email account)

Fig: Evolution Email POP3 Setup

Sending Mail

For the sending mail screen the following have to be entered:

Server type: SMTP
Host: (fill in name of your SMTP server)

Time Zone

Ensure that you select the correct time zone.

Apply

After successfully filling in the configuration screens, click on the Apply button at the confirmation screen, Evolution will be started and the main Evolution screen is displayed.
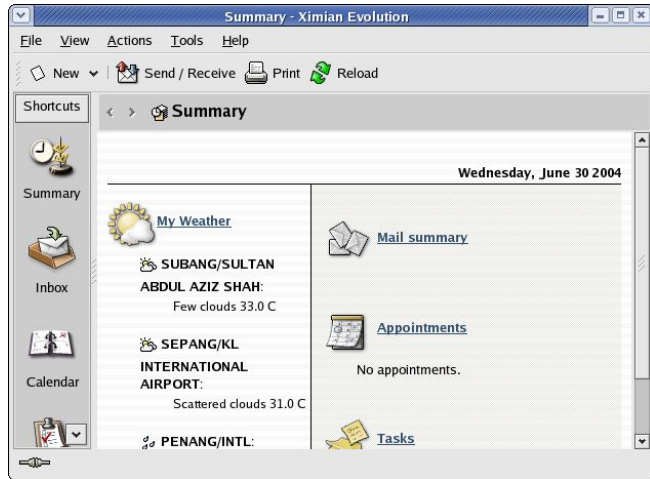

Fig. Evolution Main Screen

Only a very brief description of the functionalities and features of Evolution are given here. The user should refer to the Help button on the menu bar for more details.

Inbox Folder

The Inbox houses the email sent to you which you have downloaded from the POP3 server. To see what is in your Inbox click on the Inbox icon. If you have emails in your Inbox, they will be displayed here. To read an email select it by clicking on it in the Subject Window.
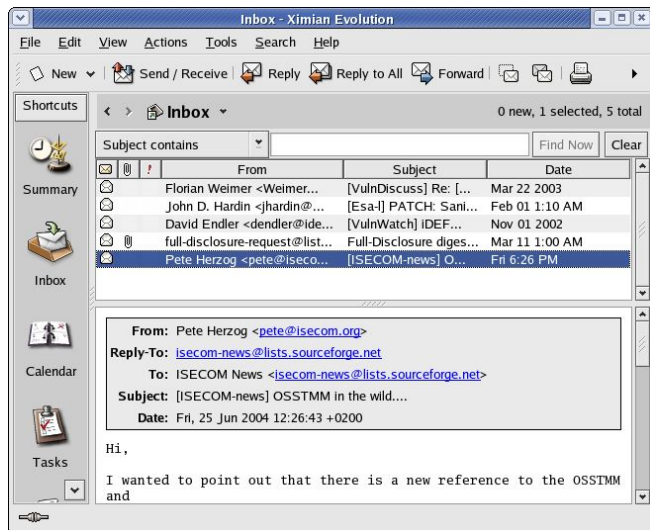

Fig. Evolution Inbox

Composing Emails

To compose an email, from the Inbox screen, click on the New button.

Enter the email address of the recipient as well as the subject. The latter should be a few words describing the contents of the mail but it should also not be too long. If you need to CC the mail to another email address, click on the View button on the top Menu bar and select CC field which will be displayed. After composing the email, you can send it.

Fig. Evolution Composing Email

Offline Mode

If you are on a dial-up connection, it is very likely that you will want to compose all the emails that you want to send offline first before actually going online to send them. To do this click on the File item on the menu bar at the top and select Work Offline

> File --> Work Offline

(if the File menu shows the item Work Online then it means that you are already offline, i.e. It is a toggle between online mode and offline mode.)

In the offline mode, when you compose and send your mail they will not be sent out but rather they are stored temporarily in your Outbox folder. You can send them off later after connecting to the Internet by selecting the Send/Receive button.

Sending and Receiving Emails

To send the emails you have composed, connect to the Internet first and then select Work Online from the File menu. Click on the Send/Receive button or click on the Tools button in the menu bar and select Send/Receive. Unsent mail in your Outbox will be sent out and any incoming new mail will be placed in your Inbox.

Deleting Emails

Any mail deleted from your Inbox will be placed in the Trash folder. You should periodically empty the Trash by clicking on Actions from the menu bar and selecting Empty Trash.

Folders

Mail messages in Evolution are organised in folders similar in concept to the File Manager. To view your Evolution folders, click on the View button in the menu bar and select Folder Bar.
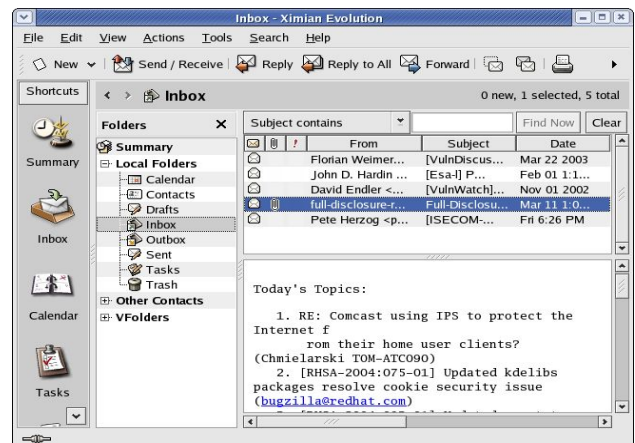
Fig: Evolution Folder View

By default the following email folders are created under the Local Folders: Inbox, Outbox, Sent , Draftsand Trash. You can create a new folder by right-clicking on Local Folders, select ing New Folder and enter the Folder name. You can move and copy mail messages between folders by right-clicking on the message in the Subject Window and selecting "Move to Folder" or "Copy to Folder".

Mozilla Mail

As described in the previous chapter, Mozilla contains an email component in addition to the web browser. This email component is called Mozilla Mail. To invoke Mozilla Mail, you can start Mozilla in the usual way and then from the main menu bar at the top select,

> Window --> Mail & Newsgroups

If this is the first time you are running Mail and the email configuration has not been done, Mail will invoke the Account Wizard to take you through the configuration. This is described briefly below.

New Account Setup

In this screen choose Email account and click on Next

Identity

Fill in the information regarding your name and email address to use. Click on Next to continue.

Fig. Identity

Server Information

Enter the server information in this screen. Select POP for the type of incoming server and enter the names of the incoming (POP3) server and outgoing (SMTP) server. These hostnames will been provided to you by your mail provider or ISP. Click on Next to proceed.

Fig. Server Information

User Name

Enter the name of the id that you will need to login to retrieve your email. This name usually will be alpha or alphanumeric and should not contain blank spaces. This will have been given to you by your mail provider or ISP. Click on Next to continue.

Fig. User Name

Account Name

Enter the name by which you will want this mail account to be known as. This is meant for your own Mozilla Mail internal usage to cater to the fact that more than one email account can be set up. The default account name is the email address you entered earlier. Click on Next to continue.

Fig. Account Name

The next screen allows you to review what you have configured and if something is incorrect you can click on the Back button to go and correct it. If all is fine, click on the Finish button. If you do not want Mail to download your mail immediately after finishing this configuration, uncheck the "Download mail now" box.

Using Mozilla Mail

To start up Mozilla Mail, start Mozilla and from the main menu bar at the top select,

> Window --> Mail & Newsgroups
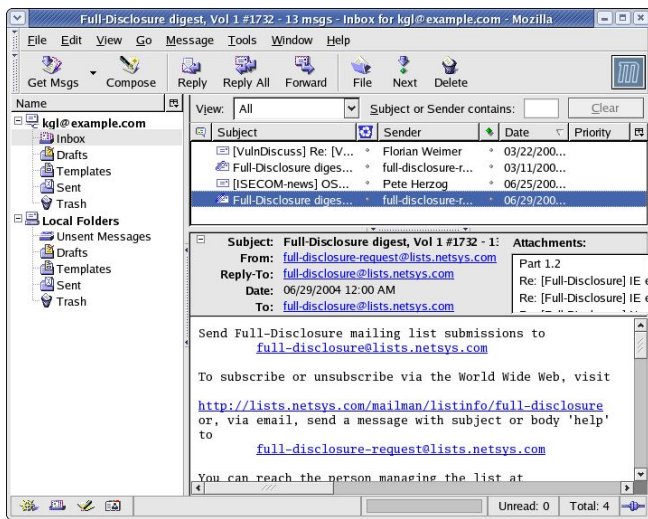
Fig. Mozilla Mail Startup Screen

The default startup screen has three main sections:

- left panel displaying mail boxes and folders
- right main mail display panel
- top panel containing the main menu bar and buttons

The left panel displays in a tree-directory format the email accounts that have been configured for the system and the mailboxes under it. The Local section contains the folders and messages that are not from any of the accounts created and associated with an Internet email account and thus considered local to the system. Note that this includes any unsent mail messages.

Reading Mail

To read any email in your inbox, select the Inbox folder under the desired mail account in the left panel. A list of the messages in your Inbox will be displayed in the top part of the right panel showing the email sender and subject header. To view the mail content click on the desired message in the top right panel and the message body will be displayed in the bottom right panel. Scroll as required to read the entire message.

Composing Mail

To compose a new email click on the Compose button at the top menu. Alternatively you can also click on the "Compose a new message" link in the right display panel. (Ensure that you have selected the appropriate email account on the system by clicking on the appropriate account name in the left display panel.)
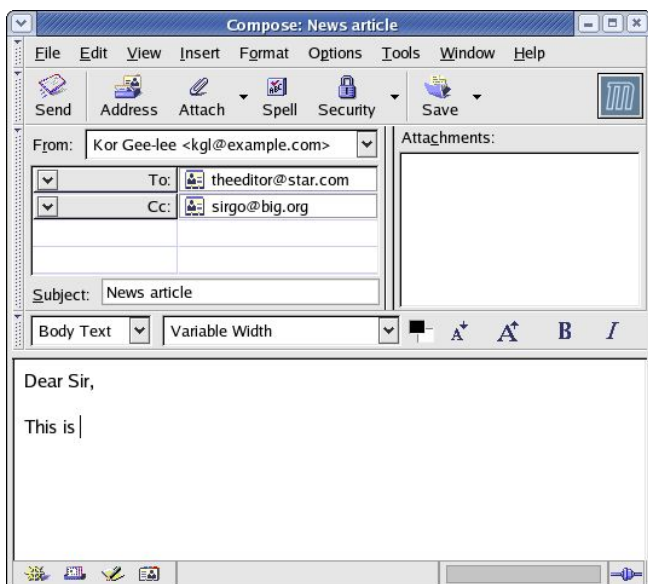
Fig. Composing Mail in Mozilla Mail

The *From* field is automatically filled in for you from the email address you provided in the setup for the account currently being used.

The *To* field has to be filled in with the email address (es) of the recipient(s). If there is more than one recipient, separate the addresses by commas or you can fill them in one line at a time by entering the RETURN key after each address.

The other email header fields like *Cc* and *Bcc* can be selected by clicking on the *To* field button.

The *Subject* field should also be filled in with an appropriate subject header. You should avoid being too verbose for the subject header.

The mail message body can be entered in the right bottom panel provided and any file attachments can be added by clicking on the Attach button at the top and then selecting the file.

Sending Mail

After composing the email, you can either send it off immediately if you are already online, send it later or keep it as a draft to be edited later.

To send it off immediately select the Send button. If the message was sent successfully it will be stored in the Sent folder.

To send it later, select from the main menu at the top,

File --> Send Later

The message will be stored under the Unsent Messages in the Local Folders section. In this way you can compose all the emails first and store them before sending them all in one go. Later on you can send all the unsent messages by selecting from the main menu at the top,

File --> Send Unsent Messages

This method of sending is especially useful if you are on a dial-up Internet connection where you can compose the messages offline and then dial-up later to send the messages.

To save it as a draft select from the main menu at the top,

File --> Save As --> Draft

The email message will be saved in the Drafts folder under the current account section. Later to edit the saved draft, select the Drafts folder under the account, click on the draft message to edit that is being displayed in the top right panel and select from the top menu,

Message --> Edit Message As New

After editing the message you can send it off as discussed above.

Receiving Mail

To receive mail, click on the Get Msgs button at the top, enter your email password (POP3 password) when asked and the email will be downloaded from your Internet mailbox and stored into the Inbox folder. Of course you will have to be online to perform this.

Deleting Mail

To delete mail messages, select the folder in which the messages are stored in, and in the top right display panel where the list of messages are displayed, select one or more messages by clicking on them and then click on the Delete button at the top.

The deleted mail is moved to the Trash folder in the account currently being used. To permanently delete them

you can either delete them from the Trash folder or click on the Trash folder and from the main menu at the top, select,

>   File --> Empty Trash

Folders

The various folders allow you to organise your email so that you can group and file them under appropriate folders. By default when you create a new mail account, the Inbox, Trash, Drafts and Sent folders are created automatically for you. To create a new folder perform,

>   File --> New --> Folder

You can file or move your messages from one folder to another by clicking on the list of messages displayed in the top right panel when the source folder is selected and dragging and dropping them into the destination folder in the usual manner.

Account Configuration

You can customise your account email settings by selecting,

>   Edit --> Mail & Newsgroups Account Settings

There are several important settings which you should be aware of.

Account Settings

In this main configuration screen, you can configure your name, Internet email address and organisation name to use as well as the account name which refer to these settings under Mozilla Mail.

In particular, the "Compose messages in HTML format" box should not be checked if you want to compose and send your email messages using just plain text.

Server Settings

Here you can configure the name of your POP3 mail server. You can also configure whether you want the mail to be deleted from the POP3 server after downloading them into your computer. Usually you will want them to be deleted and so you should ensure that the "Leave messages on server" box is **not** checked.

Outgoing Server (SMTP)

This is where you can configure the outgoing mail server which will process your outgoing mail.

Global Configuration

The account configuration affects only the account in question to enable you to configure multiple email accounts each with possibly its own servers.. The global configuration affects the entire mail subsystem. To access the global configuration, select,

>   Edit --> Preferences --> Mail & Newsgroups

Under this configuration, you can set global preferences which will affect all the accounts configured by you in Mozilla Mail. These will include the look and feel of Mail itself, the way messages are displayed, format for sending etc.

EXERCISES

Start up either Evolution or Mozilla Mail and perform the following:
- download your email
- read them
- reply to two of them and BCC yourself in the reply
- compose a new email

- delete spam email
- empty your trash mailbox