

Configuring Mail Clients to Send Plain ASCII Text

What is wrong with sending HTML or MIME messages?

There are a three main reasons for **NOT** doing this:

1. Many Email and Usenet News reader programs, usually the mail and news reader programs that come with browser packages, allow users to include binary attachments or formatted text within their Email messages. They even allow HTML that is normally used in web pages. This makes URLs into clickable links and it means that graphics can also be included in Email messages. While this makes your Email pretty and interesting to look at, it can cause many problems for other people who receive your Email because they may use different Email programs, different computer systems, and different word processing programs, whose files are often not fully compatible with each other. Any of these can cause trouble with attachments. Most of the time all they see is the actual HTML code behind the message. In some cases, the message is nothing but garbled text.

However, when you send an attached word processor file, it will appear on the other end as the exact same type of file. The recipient must have hardware and software that can read that file. For example, if you attach an MS Word file, and the recipient of your message is using a word processor that can't open MS Word files, that person isn't going to be able to open your attachment.

2. HTML or MIME messages are larger and more wasteful than simple text messages. Using HTML or MIME in Email messages makes the messages larger in size by some two thirds. These will take longer to download and they take up more storage space than standard Email messages. Email storage is important because many people retain copies of messages they receive and in the case of mailing list digests, the individual messages are combined in one large message and sent to the user at the end of the day. In addition, the mailings lists archive the messages for periods of up to 6 months to enable users to search for particular postings at a later time.
3. HTML or MIME messages leave or include unwanted files (attachments) on the machines of the recipients of these messages.

Plain text is how your messages should be formatted when sending Email to mailing lists and Usenet newsgroups or to any other recipient. Though this rule is not yet cast in "Netiquette" stone, it is a good policy to follow if you want quick and informative responses to your questions and wish to avoid being "flamed" as a clueless newbie.

HTML is meant for the WWW; not for mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups postings, proper business Email correspondence and preferably not for personal Email unless the recipient is expecting it.

MIME encoded mail is used to send attachments that consist of pictures, sound files, spreadsheets, word-processing documents, zip files, or other binary files to recipients that have use the same operating system, the same word processing program and a common Email program such as Eudora, Pegasus, Netscape, or Outlook.

These types of files are not wanted on mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups postings, business Email correspondence, and preferably not for personal Email unless the recipient is expecting it.

Turning Off HTML or MIME

There are now a variety of HTML/MIME programs, including but not limited to:

- [Agent/Free Agent](#)
- [AOL 5.0 and earlier](#)
- [AOL 6.0](#)
- [Entourage 2001 \(MacIntosh\) NEW](#)
- [Eudora Light v3.0.5 and earlier](#)
- [Eudora Light v3.0.6](#)
- [Eudora Pro v4.0.2 and earlier](#)
- [Eudora Pro v4.2 and later](#)
- [Eudora v5.0](#)
- [Juno v5.0](#)
- [MS Internet Explorer 4.0, 5.0 and 5.50](#)
- [MSN Explorer 6.0](#)
- [MS Exchange and other MS problems](#)
 - [WINMAIL.DAT attachments](#)
 - [Equal signs at end of lines](#)
 - [ISO 8859-1 or other character sets](#)
- [Lotus Notes R5](#)
- [Novell Groupwise](#)
- [Netscape Communicator 6](#)
- [Netscape Communicator 4.5, 4.6, 4.7](#)
- [Netscape Communicator 4.0x - 4.4x](#)
- [Netscape Communicator 3.xx](#)
- [Outlook 2000](#)
- [Outlook Express 4.0](#)
- [Outlook Express 5.0 and 5.50](#)
- [Outlook 97 \(without Service Release 1 SR1\) UPDATED](#)
- [Outlook 97 \(with Service Release 1 SR1\)](#)
- [Outlook 98 \(Work group version\)](#)
- [Outlook 98 \(Internet version\)](#)
- [Pegasus Mail 3.x](#)
- [Pegasus Mail 4.x](#)
- [Pine 4.x \(Unix\) UPDATED](#)
- [Pine 4.x \(Windows\) NEW](#)
- [TheBat! v1.xx](#)

For creators of MIME messages, here are some suggestions

- Know how your attachments are going to be sent. Bear in mind that what's reasonable for another recipient isn't necessarily reasonable for the rest of the world. For example, sending a Microsoft Word document as an attachment might not work out as well as you think it should.

If options are available for turning off attachments, do so, except perhaps for specific correspondents known to have the ability to view the attachments. This is particularly relevant to users of mail systems in *Microsoft operating environments*.

Microsoft TNEF data (WINMAIL.DAT attachments), for example, which was very common during 1996 and 1997, is not something that most Internet correspondents can presently handle. In addition to attachments, TNEF data may include links to OLE objects, fonts, colors, and other information that doesn't have the same form or meaning outside a *Microsoft operating environment*.

- Be somewhat conservative about Content-Types when sending to mailing lists or other public forums, or consider using multipart/alternative.
- Watch character set selections and Content-Transfer encodings. For example, some commonly used character set in PCs use 8 bits, not the standard 7 bits.

Agent/Free Agent

Agent currently does MIME quoted printable. Free Agent does not.

The MIME quoted printable option can be configured separately for each language you have configured in Agent.

- Select Options
 - Select General Preferences
 - Select Languages
 - Under Usenet Text and Email Text, make sure MIME is off.
-

AOL 5.0 and earlier

AOL automatically converts all attachments to MIME when you click on the "Attach" button. So don't use this button.

AOL 6.0

AOL now supports Multipart/Alternative formatted messages which means that a single message sent from a user now contains a plain-text version and a formatted version. Users who use email programs that do NOT support HTML will be able to read the plain-text version of the message without any of the cryptic HTML codes.

Likewise, if the email client supports the HTML format, then the user will read that version.

The headers will show the Content-Type line similar to:

```
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative; boundary=blah...blah...
Content-Disposition: Inline
X-Mailer: 6.0 sub 171
```

AOL recommends this method to send plain text:

- Make sure your font is set to Arial (which should be the default).
- Type your message (in Arial) and then highlight it. Then, right mouse click, select text, then select normal.
- Send your plain text message.

The headers may show the Content-Type line similar to:

```
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="US-ASCII"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
X-Mailer: 6.0 sub 336
```

The "Customer Care" folks at AOL also offer the following solution: Use [AOL Mail on the Web](#) to send mail to Internet addresses that don't allow formatting - AOL Mail on the Web sends mail as plain text only.

NOTE: To use AOL Mail on the Web you will need to signoff AOL.

The [Unofficial AOL Email FAQ](#) recommends that an AOL 6.0 user can turn off the HTML using the following steps:

- Change global email preferences (only needs to be done once):
 - Go to Keyword: Preferences (or choose **Preferences** from the **Settings** menu on the AOL 6.0 toolbar).

- Click on **Font, Text, & Graphics Preferences**.
- Click on the Reset button at the bottom of the resulting window. **Do not make any changes in the Font Preferences area of the window.**
- Click on the **Save** button.
- Change a specific email to plain text (must be done for every email):
 - Compose and address the email as desired.
 - Choose **Select All** from the **Edit** menu to highlight the entire message.
 - With the mouse arrow somewhere over the highlighted text, click the **Right** mouse button, revealing a contextual menu.
 - Choose **Normal** from the **Text** menu.
 - Taking care not to make any further changes to the message, send it.

Note that changing the text to normal will eliminate the "blue bar" quoted text indicator, but **will not** remove some HTML elements of the quoted text. The entire quoted section **must be deleted** (or simply not quoted in the first place), followed by the re-entry of the text quoted manually, prior to changing the text to normal. Changing the text to normal will *also* eliminate any styled text that would have been seen by AOL recipients of the message, which cannot be re-added. Testing also suggests that messages with hyperlinks cannot be converted to normal text, requiring the prior removal of the link.

Entourage 2001 (MacIntosh)

Microsoft Entourage is a new e-mail and personal information manager that makes it easy to communicate with others and organize your personal information.

Entourage comes bundled with Office:Mac 2001. It is only available for Macintosh. Since it was built from the foundation provided by Outlook Express for Mac, the instructions are somewhat similar to that program.

- Select "Preferences" from the Edit menu then "Mail and News"
 - Click on "Compose" tab
 - Under Messages, set the pull-down menus for "Mail Format" and "News Format" to plain text
 - Click the "Reply & Forward" tab, uncheck "Reply to messages using the format in which they sent"
 - Click on OK
-

Eudora Light v3.0.5 and earlier

You can have Eudora warn you before sending messages that contain styled text or HTML.

- Click on Tools: Options
- Select the Extra Warnings category
- Check the box for Warn me when I "Queue a message with Styled Text".

If you want to make sure that you never accidentally send a message with styled or HTML text, you can have Eudora automatically discard the styles before sending any message.

- Click on Tools: Options
- Select the Styled Text tab
- Check the box for "Discard styles before sending messages"
- Click on Tools: Options
- Select the Sending Mail category
- Uncheck the check box for "May use quoted-printable"

This means that even if your message is filled with bold and italics, colors, and font changes, the message will be sent out without any of this formatting; instead it will be stripped down to the basic plain text before Eudora sends

it. Also, the quoted-printable method of character encoding (used by non-US versions for foreign character recognition) can cause some formatting problems for some mail readers. If you do not need to type these foreign characters, you should turn off the quoted- printable option.

Eudora Light v3.0.6

If you want to make sure that you never accidentally send a message with styled or HTML text, you can have Eudora automatically discard the styles before sending any message.

- Click on Tools: Options
- Select the Sending Mail category
- Uncheck the check box for "May use quoted-printable"

This means that even if your message is filled with bold and italics, colors, and font changes, the message will be sent out without any of this formatting; instead it will be stripped down to the basic plain text before Eudora sends it. Also, the quoted-printable method of character encoding (used by non-US versions for foreign character recognition) can cause some formatting problems for some mail readers. If you do not need to type these foreign characters, you should turn off the quoted- printable option.

Eudora Pro v4.0.2 and earlier

Eudora Pro has a "Styled Text" option, which makes messages available in RTF. Currently Eudora Pro doesn't support HTML within the body of a message. When posting a message to a mailing list, you can click on the button on the far right of each individual message's tool bar to "Clear Formatting." You can also set up the options to either warn you of outgoing messages that contain styled text or to discard the styles before sending the messages:

- Click on Tools: Options
- Highlight (Select) Styled Text
- Check either or both of these boxes:
 - Warn me when I queue a message with styled text.
 - Discard styles before sending messages.

You can have Eudora turn off MIME encoding when sending messages that contain special characters.

Eudora automatically uses quoted-printable (MIME) encoding if your mail contains special characters. Eudora also uses quoted-printable encoding for attached plain text files. If your recipients don't have MIME, then just turn off the QP button in the message icon bar when you are sending text files to those recipients.

Eudora Pro v4.2 and later

Eudora Pro has a "Styled Text" option, which makes messages available in HTML format within the body of a message. When posting a message to a mailing list, you can click on the button on the far right of each individual message's tool bar to "Clear Formatting." You can also set up the options to either send plain text or styled text or both.

- Click on Tools: Options
- Check these 3 boxes:
 - Show formatting toolbar - If this is on, the formatting toolbar displays by default in new message windows. If this is off, the formatting toolbar is hidden by default in new message windows. This toolbar lets you easily format text styles in new messages.
 - Send plain text only

- Ask me each time - If this is on, you are warned when you try to send or queue a message with text styles. And you are given the option to send a plain text version, an HTML version, or both in a single message.

You can have Eudora turn off MIME encoding when sending messages that contain special characters.

Eudora automatically uses quoted-printable (MIME) encoding if your mail contains special characters. Eudora also uses quoted-printable encoding for attached plain text files. If your recipients don't have MIME, then just turn off the QP button in the message icon bar when you are sending text files to those recipients.

Eudora v5.0

Eudora has a "Styled Text" option, which makes messages available in HTML format within the body of a message. When posting a message to a mailing list, you can click on the button on the far right of each individual message's tool bar to "Clear Formatting." You can also set up the options to either send plain text or styled text or both.

- Click on Tools: Options
- Check these 3 boxes:
 - Show formatting toolbar - If this is on, the formatting toolbar displays by default in new message windows. If this is off, the formatting toolbar is hidden by default in new message windows. This toolbar lets you easily format text styles in new messages.
 - Send plain text only
 - Ask me each time - If this is on, you are warned when you try to send or queue a message with text styles. And you are given the option to send a plain text version, an HTML version, or both in a single message.

You can have Eudora turn off MIME encoding when sending messages that contain special characters.

Eudora automatically uses quoted-printable (MIME) encoding if your mail contains special characters. Eudora also uses quoted-printable encoding for attached plain text files. If your recipients don't have MIME, then just turn off the QP button in the message icon bar when you are sending text files to those recipients.

Juno v5.0

With Juno you can now send HTML e-mail as well as plain text messages. The default format for new messages you compose in the Write screen is plain text. As you write your message and add any kind of formatting (color, images, font), the format automatically changes to HTML. If you know that the person you are sending the message to uses an e-mail program that is not HTML compatible, make sure to change the message format to plain text (otherwise, the person might not be able to read your message).

To change the e-mail message format to plain text:

- On the Edit menu, point to E-mail Message Format, point to View as and click Plain Text.
 - In the Remove Formatting dialog box, click Yes to change the format.
-

Outlook 2000

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
- Click on "Mail Format" tab
- In the "Message Format" section, the pull-down menu in "Send in this message format" list offers three choices: Plain Text, Microsoft Rich Text, and HTML. Select Plain Text.

NOTE: there is a "Send e-mail using plain text only" checkbox on the properties sheet of an address book entry, but it doesn't do anything if you have the HTML mail format selected here.

- Make sure the check box is unchecked (empty) in front of "Use Microsoft Word to edit e-mail messages".
NOTE: Outlook Help states that you can switch message formats after starting an email message, but this doesn't work if you use Word as your email editor, only if you use the internal Outlook mail editor (and then only switch between plain text and HTML formats).
- Click OK

If you want to override the default for any individual message, click on "Format" within the message and choose the desired format. Outlook 2000 lets you select the email format for a mail message on-the-fly. You can start a new message in a different format than the standard one by selecting New Mail Message Using from the Actions menu (you can select stationery from this menu too).

Outlook doesn't have any way to select the mail format to use when sending mail to a particular recipient when you use the drop-down list on a contact item or an address list entry.

When you open an incoming e-mail message, you may see a blank message or these three characters

<<<

displayed instead of the message text.

In some cases, depending on the Internet e-mail software used, the message may contain other random, unrelated characters or the message body may be blank.

Microsoft describes this behavior in the Knowledge Base article ([OL2000: Message Received from Outlook Express 5 May Contain Unrelated Characters](https://web.archive.org/web/20010406203930/https://expita.com/nomime.html)).

MS Internet Explorer 4.0, 5.0 and 5.50

Unfortunately Microsoft Internet Explorer 4 and 5 come packaged with mail programs whose default configuration is to send HTML formatted mail.

MSIE comes with the program Outlook Express as its mail client. To configure Outlook Express to send text only messages:

Outlook Express 4.0

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
- Click on "Send" tab
- In the "Mail Sending Format" and "News Sending Format" sections, click on "Plain Text" bullet in both places
- In the "Mail Sending Format" section, click on "Plain Text Settings..." button.
- In the "Plain Text Settings" window and the Message format section
 - Click MIME bullet
 - Set "Encode text using:" to None.
 - Uncheck the "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
 - Set Automatically wrap text at 72
 - Check the box in front of "Indent original text with > when replying or forwarding"
 - Click OK
- In the "News Sending Format" section, click on "Plain Text Settings..." button.
- In the "Plain Text Settings" window and the Message format section
 - Click MIME bullet
 - Set "Encode text using:" to None.

- Uncheck the "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
- Set Automatically wrap text at 72
- Check the box in front of "Indent original text with > when replying or forwarding"
- Click OK
- While still in the "Send" tab, Uncheck "Reply to messages using the format in which they were sent"
- Click on "OK" and on "OK" again.

All of your messages will now be sent as plain text. Outlook Express 4.x can also be configured to send Business Cards (also referred to as vCards) with your email. These are attachments, which show up as strings of unreadable code on most mailing lists. To turn these off:

- Select "Tools" then click on "Stationery..."
- In the "Signature" area, click on the "Signature" button.
- In the "Personal Business Card" area, uncheck the check box in front of "Attach card to all outgoing messages"
- Click on "OK" and on "OK" again.

Outlook Express 5.0 and 5.50

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
- Click on "Send" tab
- In the "Mail Sending Format" and "News Sending Format" sections, click on "Plain Text" bullet in both places
- In the "Mail Sending Format" section, click on "Plain Text Settings..." button.
- In the "Plain Text Settings" window and the Message format section
 - Click MIME bullet
 - Set "Encode text using:" to None.
 - Uncheck the "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
 - Set Automatically wrap text at 72
 - Check the box in front of "Indent the original text with > when replying or forwarding"
 - Click OK
- In the "News Sending Format" section, click on "Plain Text Settings..." button.
- In the "Plain Text Settings" window and the Message format section
 - Click MIME bullet
 - Set "Encode text using:" to None.
 - Uncheck the "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
 - Set Automatically wrap text at 72
 - Check the box in front of "Indent the original text with > when replying or forwarding"
 - Click OK
- While still in the "Send" tab, Uncheck "Reply to messages using the format in which they were sent"
- Click on "Apply" and then on "OK".

All of your messages will now be sent as plain text. Outlook Express 5.x can also be configured to send Business Cards (also referred to as vCards) with your email. These are attachments, which show up as strings of unreadable code on most mailing lists. To turn these off:

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
- Click on "Compose" tab
- In the "Business Card" area, uncheck the check boxes in front of Mail and News for "Include my business card when creating new messages."
- Click on "Apply" and then on "OK".

Netscape Communicator 6.0

MORE TO BE ADDED

When in a new message screen

- Select "Options" in the taskbar
 - Select "Format"
 - Click on "Plain text only". The default is probably shown as "auto detect"
 - Send the message
-

Netscape Communicator 4.5, 4.6, 4.7

Unfortunately, Netscape Communicator 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 also come packaged with mail programs whose default configuration is to send HTML formatted mail.

- Select "Edit" then click on "Preferences..."
- Click on the plus sign "+" before "Mail & Newsgroups"
- Click on "Messages" in left pane
- In the "Forward and Replying to Messages", change the "By default, forward messages:" to Inline.
- In the "Send messages that use 8-bit characters", click on "As is".
- Click on "Formatting" in left pane
- In the section "Message formatting", click on "Use the plain text editor to compose messages"
- In the section "When sending HTML mail messages...", click on "Ask me what to do..."
- Click on "OK".

Netscape Messenger can also be configured to send Address Book Cards (also referred to as vCards) with your email. These are attachments, which show up as strings of unreadable code on most mailing lists. To turn these off:

- Select "Edit" then click on "Preferences..."
 - Click on the plus sign "+" before "Mail & Newsgroups"
 - Click on "Identity" in the left pane
 - Uncheck the check box that says "Attach my personal card..."
 - Click on "OK"
-

Netscape Communicator 4.0x - 4.4x

Unfortunately, Netscape Communicator 4 also comes packaged with mail programs whose default configuration is to send HTML formatted mail.

- Select "Edit" then click on "Preferences..."
- Click on the plus sign "+" before "Mail and Groups & Messages"
- Click on "Messages"
- Uncheck the check box that says "By default, send HTML messages".
- Click on "More Options..."
- In the section "When sending HTML messages to recipients who are not listed as being able to receive HTML", click "Always convert the message into plain text (may lose some formatting)"
- Click on "OK" and on "OK" again.

Netscape Messenger can also be configured to send Address Book Cards (also referred to as vCards) with your email. These are attachments, which show up as strings of unreadable code on most mailing lists. To turn these off:

- Select "Edit" then click on "Preferences..."
- Click on the plus sign "+" before "Mail and Groups & Messages"
- Click on "Identity"

- Uncheck the check box that says "Always send Address Book Cards"
 - Click on "OK"
-

Netscape Communicator 3.xx

Unfortunately, Netscape Communicator 3 also comes packaged with mail programs whose default configuration is to send HTML formatted mail.

- Click "Tools" then click on "Mail Options"
 - Click on the "Send" tab.
 - In the "Mail Sending Format" area, click the check box next to "Plain Text"
 - Click on "Settings..."
 - In the section "Message Format", click "MIME". In the check box next to "Encode text using", select "None".
 - Uncheck the check box next to "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
 - Click on "OK"
-

Outlook 97 (without Service Release 1 SR1)

The original version of Outlook 97 (the one without the Office 97 Service Release 1 (SR1) installed) automatically formats all messages you send when you hit the "Reply" button in *Rich Text Format*, which then shows as an attachment on a mailing list (or in any email program other than Microsoft Exchange or Outlook). This "Reply bug" can be fixed in any of the following four ways:

1. Download and install the [Office 97 Service Release 1 \(SR1\)](#)
2. Download and install [inetmail.exe](#) which updates Outlook 97.
3. In the E-mail box, double-click the email address. Clear the "Always send to this recipient in Windows Messaging Rich Text Format" check box. (Note: This must be done **each** time a message is sent via the Reply button.)
4. Download and install ["RTFGuard"](#) written by Ben Goetter This will alert you when a message is about to be sent with RTF formatting, giving you the option to discard the formatting before sending.

If you are using your Outlook 97 address book to send messages to the mail list, make certain you do not have Rich Text Format selected for that address book entry:

- Open the "Personal Address Book"
 - Double Click on the recipients name
 - Uncheck the check box "Always send to this recipient in Windows Messaging Rich Text Format"
 - Close Options window
-

Outlook 97 (with Service Release 1 SR1)

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
- Click on "Internet Email" tab
- Click the circle next to "MIME" and not "UUENCODE"
- Uncheck the check box "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
- Check the "Line wrap" box and set to 80 or less. Preferably 72
- Make sure to use "US ASCII" character set
- Click "OK"

If you are using your Outlook 97 address book to send messages to the mail list, make certain you do not have Rich Text Format selected for that address book entry:

- Open the "Personal Address Book"
 - Double Click on the recipients name
 - Uncheck the check box " Always send to this recipient in Windows Messaging Rich Text Format"
 - Close Options window
-

Outlook 98 (Work group version)

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
 - Click on "Mail Format" tab
 - In "Send in this message format" area, select "Plain Text" from the drop- down box.
 - Click on "Internet E-mail" tab
 - In "Internet E-mail Sending Format" area, click the circle next to "MIME".
 - Uncheck the check box "Allow 8-bit characters in headers"
 - In the drop down box "Encode text using:", select "none"
 - Click "OK"
-

Outlook 98 (Internet version)

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
 - Click on "Mail Format" tab
 - In "Mail Formatting" area, select "Plain Text" from the drop- down box.
 - Click on "Settings..." button
 - Select "MIME"
 - In the drop down box "Encode text using:", select "none"
 - Click "OK"
-

MSN Explorer 6.0

MSN Explorer Tech support states "that MSN Explorer and MSN.com send web-based HTML email only and cannot be configured to send plain text."

However, if you use MSN as your mail service (i.e., username@msn.com) you can simply go to [Hotmail.com](https://www.hotmail.com) and send email from there in plain text (via their so-called PASSPORT system). Same inbox, address book, etc.

You just have to remember to send or reply to POP3 and plain text email from Hotmail and not from MSN. A real nuisance but at least an option.

Unfortunately the transfer to Hotmail from Msn.com email takes you through 3 screens and requires you to reenter your password even if you checked the "remember my password" box.

MS Exchange and other

- From the Microsoft Exchange toolbar select "Tools"
- Select the "Services" tab.
- Highlight "Internet Mail"
- Click on "Properties..." An "Internet Mail, General" window will appear.
- Select "Message Format..." then make sure "Use MIME when sending messages" is unchecked. If you turn off MIME here, it will send attachments UUEncoded.
- Next, select "Character Set..." in the "Message Format" window
 - In the "UUENCODE Character Set" window

- Click the down arrow that shows next to the rectangular "window" below where it says "specify a character set for message" text. A set of options will appear, including both "ISO 8859-1" and "US ASCII".
- Check "US ASCII", then click "OK". This will remove equal signs and "=3D" codes in messages.
- Then click "OK" on the "Options" menu.

Note: As you close the various windows on the way back a message will appear, advising that "configuration changes will not take effect until the next time you log onto Internet Mail".

WINMAIL.DAT

When I send mail to an Internet mailing list, its members complain that my messages contain big binary attachments called WINMAIL.DAT. What's happening? How can I get rid of these?

Either intentionally or accidentally, you have been sending messages in Microsoft rich text format to recipients using mail programs that cannot decipher this format.

When Exchange thinks that it is sending mail to another Exchange user on the Internet, Exchange (more properly, the Internet Mail message service provider) encodes the message, along with attached files, embedded OLE objects, and their associated icons, into a special data block called the TNEF (pronounced tee-neff) block. This block can be seen in the mail header and looks similar to:

```
----- =_NextPart_000_01BB9403.FCDBDA20
Content-Type: application/ms-tnef
Content-Transfer-Encoding: base64
```

This block encapsulates the complete original content of the Exchange message, so that the message arrives at its destination with all proper formatting intact, including boldface, underlining, fonts, and colors. Otherwise, Exchange formats the message in an Internet standard fashion, discarding all rich text attributes and ensuring that all attached files appear as standard attachments.

The problem arises when people not using Exchange or Outlook receive a message in the TNEF format: instead of seeing a formatted message, they see a big chunk of UUENCODE data if the sender used UUENCODE format, or a MIME body part application/ms-tnef if the sender used MIME. Depending on which mail program they use, they may either see a long sequence of hexadecimal digits, or they may see an attached binary file named WINMAIL.DAT.

Exchange specifies whether it emits TNEF or not as a property of the recipient, appearing as a field on the property page of the underlined recipient object within an Exchange To or Cc field. (The underline in the To field means that Exchange has recognized the name, and associated an address and other information with it.) To see this recipient property page, double click the underlined recipient: when using either the Internet Mail provider or Microsoft Exchange Server, the popup that appears should include a check box labeled Send to this recipient in Microsoft rich text format. If this check box is set, Exchange/Internet Mail will use a TNEF block when sending messages to that user; otherwise, it will strip the rich information and send plain text. The sender can also set and clear this flag on entries in the Personal Address Book. Should the sender address a message using an entry from the Address Book, Exchange will use the setting of this flag from that entry.

Never set this check box if you suspect that your recipient isn't using Exchange or Outlook, or if you are sending mail to an Internet mailing list. Otherwise, your mail will include binary garbage.

Here's how to turn it off:

Step #1:

- Double click on the Mail and Fax icon in Control Panel.

- Click on the Services tab, and select Internet Mail from the list. If Internet Mail is not listed, click Add - add this service.
- Click Properties, and then Message Format.
- Turn off the option that reads Use MIME when sending messages.
- Click OK and then OK again.

Step #2:

- Double click on the name of each recipient in your Address Book.
- Turn off the option that reads Always send to this recipient in Microsoft rich text format.
- This option needs to be set for each recipient of a message - if even one has this turned on, all recipients will still get the attachment.

Note: Either of these methods should work for most users, but sometimes nothing seems to work - yet another brilliant design strategy by Microsoft. If you plan to be sending lots of internet email, you should seriously consider using a mail program more suited to the task, such as Pegasus or Eudora.

Note: A bug ("feature"?) in Exchange may cause line feeds to be replaced with equal signs when rich text mail is disabled.

Unfortunately, there are several ways to send Internet mail messages in TNEF format by accident.

- If you address the message by typing a literal name@domain.xxx SMTP address, or by entering the address in Exchange's explicit one off format - i.e., by typing [SMTP:name@domain.xxx] - and you use the version of Microsoft Exchange released with retail Windows 95 (as opposed to Windows Messaging, or the version released as the client of Microsoft Exchange Server), the entry will have its Send to this recipient in Microsoft rich text format check box set by default.
- If you address the message by typing a name and letting the system pick an entry from your Personal Address Book, and that address book entry specifies Send to this recipient in Microsoft rich text format, then the recipient in the message will, too.
- If you address the message by giving the reply command in Exchange, and the message to which you were replying had an explicit RFC822 Reply-To header (such as is the case on many messages arriving via Internet mailing lists), and you use a version of the Internet Mail provider prior to the Internet Mail Enhancement Patch (IMEP), the resulting entry in the To field will have its Send to this recipient in Microsoft rich text format check box set by default. Note that a reply will never reference an entry in your Personal Address Book unless you replace the contents of the reply note's To field yourself.

Some workarounds:

- If you are using the original version of retail Windows 95 Microsoft Exchange, update to a more recent version, such as the Windows Messaging update.
- Know the contents of your Personal Address Book, and ensure that you have not erroneously set the rich text flag on any entries therein.
- Use the most recent version of the Internet Mail message service provider. (Note: Microsoft Exchange Server users do not use this component, since they send mail to the Internet through a component of Exchange Server.)
- On replies to Internet mailing lists, manually clear the rich text flag, or else replace the reply address with a known entry from your Personal Address Book.
- Use ["RTFGuard"](#) or Rich Text Sentry widget, which watches for outgoing Internet messages in rich text format, or install a recent version of Internet Idioms and configure it to do likewise.

Microsoft has their own explanation of this phenomenon in the Knowledge Base article [Q136204 \(XCLN: Sending Messages In Rich-Text Format\)](#).

Microsoft also has an article on how to prevent WINMAIL.DAT from being sent in the Knowledge Base article [Q138053 \(XFOR: How to Prevent the Winmail.dat File from Being Sent to Internet Users\)](#).

The entire preceding discussion assumes that you are using either the Internet Mail (SMTP/POP3) or Microsoft Exchange Server messaging service. If instead you are using the Microsoft Mail messaging service, and depending on a Microsoft Mail gateway to carry your message onto the Internet, you are out of luck, unless you have a gateway clever enough to strip WINMAIL.DAT.

Equal signs at end of lines

When I send mail to Internet users, they complain that my text has equals signs at the end of each line. What is this? How can I make it stop?

You are sending your messages in the MIME message format. The Microsoft Windows95 Plus! Internet Mail transport bundles message plain text into a MIME format called Content-Transfer-Encoding: Quoted-Printable. The mail header usually shows something similar to:

```
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable
```

If you find this bothersome, you have several options. You can keep all of your lines less than 76 characters long, in which case the Internet Mail service provider will not have to insert these soft line break sequences. You can send your mail in a format other than MIME, via the Message Format setting. If your correspondent is using Exchange, you can specify that Exchange send rich text along with the message. Or your correspondent can use a MIME mail reader, which presumably will know how to handle this encoding correctly.

If your message contains extended characters, the Internet Mail service may intersperse equals sign MIME escape sequences into the plain text body of your message, and may append the following preamble to your message:

*Sender composed mail containing characters not in the US-ASCII set
These characters have been transformed into a printable form.*

This is identified in the mail header under the Content-Type line similar to:

```
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable
```

To correct this, change your default character set from ISO 8859-1 to US ASCII, or else take any of the precautions listed above. For more information, see the Knowledge Base article [Q146629 \(Microsoft Exchange Internet Mail Lines End with a "="\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20010406203930/https://expita.com/nomime.html). The mail headers should then show:

```
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
```

Note that the Exchange Server Internet Mail Connector (IMC) only encodes content this way on multipart MIME messages. When the IMC processes a message lacking extended characters or attachments, it instead hard wraps the plain text.

ISO 8859-1 or other character set

This is identified in the mail header under the Content-Type line similar to:

```
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1
```

To correct this, change your default character set from ISO 8859-1 to US ASCII.

For Windows 95 do the following:

- In Control Panel, double-click Mail And Fax.
 - Click Internet Mail, and then click Properties
 - On the General tab, click Message Format, and then click Character Set.
 - Change the option from ISO 8859-1 to US ASCII, or click the "Use MIME when sending messages" check box to clear it.
-

Lotus Notes R5

By default all mail in Lotus Notes is in the Notes Rich Text Format but may be set to MIME.

- Choose File/Mobile/Edit Current Location
- Select the mail tab
- In the field, "Format for messages addressed to Internet addresses", select MIME Format instead of Rich Text Format.

To send mail or news postings in plain text or HTML or both:

- Choose File/Preferences/User Preferences
 - Click the Mail and News Icon
 - Under "Internet message format" (or Internet News Format), choose an option:
 - Plain text
 - HTML format
 - HTML and Plain Text.
-

Novell Groupwise

Generally it is assumed that the email server does not alter the message at all, and that the sender and their client software is entirely in control of the message which is sent. In some systems, such as Lotus ccMail, Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange or Novell Groupwise, the client and server do not follow this model, do not use Internet standards and do not necessarily follow the conventions and standards of Internet email. In those cases compatibility with Internet standards may be handled by a third item of software - a gateway. Thus there can be problems of a significant difference between what the sender sees when they write the email (which is probably similar to how it appears to recipients in their office), and what is actually sent to Internet recipients.

Users of Internet compliant software sometimes disparage the continued use of proprietary systems such as Novell Groupwise or Lotus Notes, based on the awkward or hard-to-read emails they sometimes receive from these systems. However their continued use is inevitable since within their own system they provide additional powerful "groupware" functionality which is valuable to larger organizations and which cannot currently be provided with standard Internet protocols. All these systems can be configured to respect Internet technical standards and conventions (although perhaps not in a way which the sender can see or control) - the problem is that they are sometimes mis-configured by default, creating difficulties for all their users.

Some email client programs can be configured (or are configured by default) to send each paragraph as one long line. Some email systems such as Groupwise (and apparently Lotus Notes), have a single setting in the server (the Message Transfer Agent, which may include a SMTP gateway) which either wraps all outgoing emails of all users to a particular line length, or sends all emails of all users with each paragraph as an arbitrarily long line (unless the user manually sets the line length by pressing "enter"). In neither case does the user control this single, system-wide, setting. Nor may the server's wrapping correspond to what they see on screen when writing.

Arbitrarily long lines can be sent within SMTP standards using the "quoted-printable" MIME type.

If such arbitrarily long lines are sent as plain text, then the 1,000 character limit of SMTP may be reached and the sending client or system may wrap the line arbitrarily there, or may send it out longer than 1,000 characters. If this

happens, a recipient SMTP server may reject it, or break the line. In one instance a plain text email from Groupwise 4.2 exceeded the 1,000 character per line limit. That paragraph, of 1,253 characters was broken in mid word by a SMTP server just before the 1,000th character. This and later versions of Groupwise are used in a significant number of VET institutes, where the system is valued for many functions apart from its Internet email capabilities.

Quoting styles. The established approach to quoting a line of text: "> " or ">" is no longer the only approach. Other methods, which are the default in Groupwise and perhaps other clients or email systems, are much harder to understand, at least in some circumstances, since they mark only the start of the paragraph as a comment, rather than the start of each line. A plethora of incompatible quoting styles is a source of error and frustration for novices and experienced users alike - so an operational guideline standardise on "> " or ">" was decided upon, with the matter to be reviewed within 12 months or so.

Pegasus Mail 3.x

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
 - Click on "Sending Mail" tab
 - In "When sending messages containing rich (formatted) text" section
 - Check the radio button "Always remove formatting."
 - In "Advanced settings" section, uncheck all four options Make sure "Allow 8-bit MIME message is unchecked"
 - Click on "OK"
-

Pegasus Mail 4.x

- Select "Tools" then click on "Options..."
 - Click on "Sending Mail" tab
 - In "When sending messages containing rich (formatted) text" section
 - Check the radio button "Always remove formatting."
 - In "Advanced settings" section, uncheck all four options Make sure "Allow 8-bit MIME message is unchecked"
 - Advanced check, make sure you DON'T add "information" section to multi-part message.
 - Click on "OK"
-

Pine 4.x (Unix)

- Start Pine from UNIX prompt, i.e., pine
- From Main Menu, select "S" (SETUP- Configure Pine Options)
- Select or type "C" (Config)
- Type "w" (Word to find:) and enter "character-" to find Character-Set. Leave as <No Value Set>. It defaults to US-ASCII or set it explicitly to "US-ASCII"
- Type "w" (Word to find:) again and enter "include-" to find Include-attachments-in-reply. Leave or set the box to unchecked

This feature controls an aspect of Pine's Reply command. If set, any MIME attachments that were part of the original message will automatically be included in the Reply.

- Select or type "E" (Exit) and type "Y" to commit changes
- Select or type "Q" (Quit), type "Y"

Pine 4.x (Windows)

- Start Pine and Login
- From Main Menu, select "S" (SETUP- Configure Pine Options)
- Select or type "C" (Config)
- Type "w" (Word to find:) and enter "character-" to find Character-Set. Leave as <No Value Set>. It defaults to US-ASCII or set it explicitly to "US-ASCII"
- Type "w" (Word to find:) again and enter "include-" to find Include-attachments-in-reply. Leave or set the box to unchecked

This feature controls an aspect of Pine's Reply command. If set, any MIME attachments that were part of the original message will automatically be included in the Reply.

- Select or type "E" (Exit) and type "Y" to commit changes
- Select or type "Q" (Quit), type "Y"

TheBat! v1.xx

- Select "Account" from the main menu
- Click on the "Transport" icon
- In the section "8-bit characters are treated", click on "Without changes"

NOTE: 8-bit characters are treated - this radio group allows you to set the method used to handle 8-bit (non-ASCII) characters. If you are using only the English alphabet, this feature is not very significant to you because all English characters are ASCII characters and will go through the net without any problems. However, if you are using accented characters or character sets other than English, you should choose the method carefully because there still are some mail servers which do not allow appearance of 8-bit characters in email messages. If you are not sure that such servers are functioning in the way you write your messages, it is better to choose either Base64 or Quoted-printable encoding. The difference between these two encoding methods is that Base64 produces totally unreadable text. Quoted-printable encoding still can be read if your alphabet is almost Latin, only accented characters are encoded. If your recipient's are using The Bat! or another program which can recognise Base64 and quoted-printable encoding automatically, you may choose either of these two methods.

- Click on the "Options" icon
- Uncheck the check box in front of "Allow 8-bit characters in message header"
- Click OK
- Select "View" from the main menu
- Click on "Encoding" then select "None"
- Select "Options" from the main menu
- Select on "Language" then click on "English"

References:

- [How to turn off HTML being sent out \(Windows\)](#) Eudora
- [How to turn off HTML in Various Email Programs](#) Rootswab
- [alt.usenet.offline-reader.forte-agent FAQ v1.5 \(modified 9/14/97\)](#)
- [Win95 FAQ Part 10: MS Exchange](#)
- (<http://www.transport.com/asciimail.html>) Turning off HTML Mail (defunct as of 24Oct00)
- [Pine International Character Sets](#)
- [Juno search](#) http://www.expressresponse.com/cgi-bin/progsnp/juno/srchjnnp?search_type=vdocument&search_input=5074.htm&session_id=981056986.1809.2&submit.x=69&submit.y=7
- [Unofficial AOL Email FAQ](#)
- [Microsoft Entourage 2001 for Mac](#)

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Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning these web pages.



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