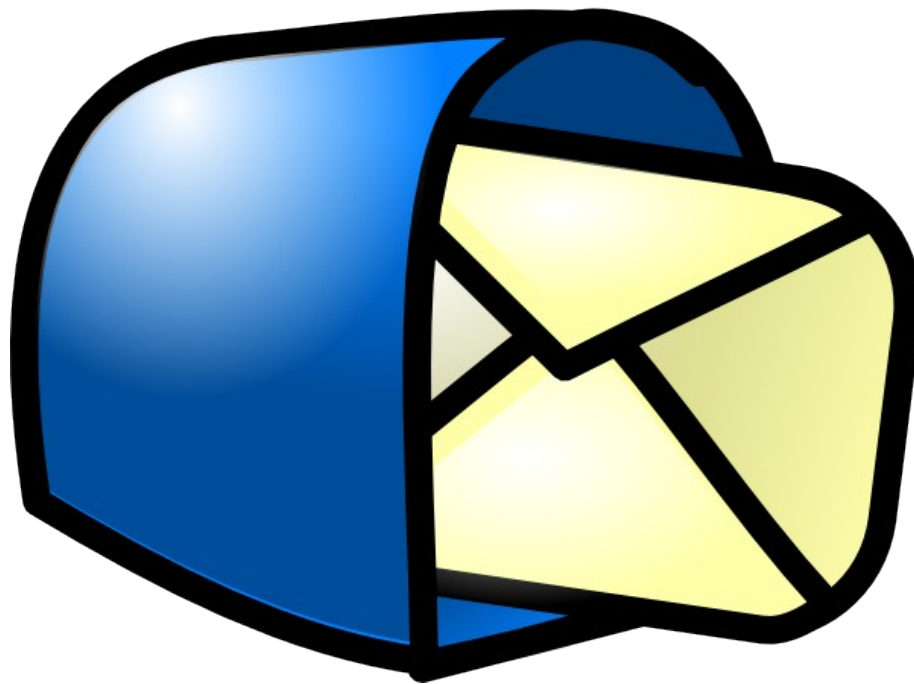


Taming Your Email With Thunderbird 3.1



**A guide to managing a heavy email load in
Ubuntu with Thunderbird 3.1**

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www.jimspapers.ca/tamingyouremail/

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(Except for the word “Blank”... and this)

Introduction to Taming Your Email with Thunderbird 3.1

This document is a guide written for the *Ubuntu Vancouver Local Community*, or [Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo](http://www.meetup.com/ubuntuvancouver/) (UVLC), on how to manage the ever-growing amount of email we get today using *Mozilla Thunderbird 3.1*. It is the companion guide to *Getting Started with Thunderbird 3.1*, a quick-start guide to installing Thunderbird and importing your existing email messages and contacts.

This guide assumes that you have Thunderbird installed and just covers the more advanced topics related to managing a heavy email load. If you would like to get some help with installing Thunderbird and importing your email messages and contacts, please check out the *Getting Started with Thunderbird 3.1* guide on the Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo website. The Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo is an Ubuntu users group for Vancouver, Canada, and is a great place for learning about, and sharing your passion for all things Ubuntu. The *Getting Started with Thunderbird 3.1* guide can be found on the UVLC website under Discussions > Message Board > Technical Support:

<http://www.meetup.com/ubuntuvancouver/messages/boards/forum/1245793>

This guide will follow an Ubuntu user, named Mary, who wants to use Thunderbird to manage the unruly forest of email that has sprung up in her *email accounts*. After explaining what everything is called in Thunderbird, we'll start off accompanying Mary as she learns how to use Thunderbird's advanced tools to view and search for email messages. Next, Mary will learn how to sort, *filter*, *mark* and *tag* her email messages so that she can see at a glance the ones that are important to her. Finally, we will see how Mary maintains Thunderbird by deleting and *archiving* old email messages, *compacting* folders to keep them working smoothly, and backing up her settings and email.

Because nothing stays the same, least of all computer programs, there are sure to be changes to future versions of Thunderbird that are not reflected in this document. That is where you come in. If you find that things “just don't seem right”, it could be because this guide was written for an earlier version of Thunderbird than you have. Please feel free to ask for help, or mention the changes, on the Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo discussion boards. Your assistance will help us keep this guide up to date. After all, helping each other is the spirit that makes Ubuntu great!

<http://www.meetup.com/ubuntuvancouver/>



Taming Your Email with Mozilla Thunderbird 3.1

“I have just too much email!”

“Are you sure you sent it to me? I don't see it.”

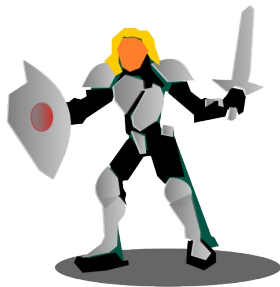
“Arrgh!!”

Ever use any of these statements when dealing with your email? Is your Inbox starting to feel like a dark and forbidding jungle? It is time to tame the wilderness with *Mozilla* Thunderbird 3.1.

By default, *Ubuntu* 10.10 comes with the *Evolution* groupware client, but not all users need, or want it, for their email messaging. Enter Thunderbird. Thunderbird is a free email client produced by Mozilla, the same folks that make *Firefox*. It has been around for years, but with the release of version 3.1 and some great new features, Thunderbird is even better than ever.



1 Introducing Mary, an Email User Under Siege



Mary is an email user with a problem. She has three *email accounts*, each with hundreds of email messages, and every day Mary receives dozens of new messages. She is suffering from 'email overload'! Mary tries to keep up to the barrage of email, but checking multiple email accounts for new mail, and then deciding what is important and what isn't, seems to take all her time. Unlike '*snail mail*', email may save trees, but the forest has sprung up in her Inbox.

Mary needs help!

1.1 Why does Mary want to use Thunderbird

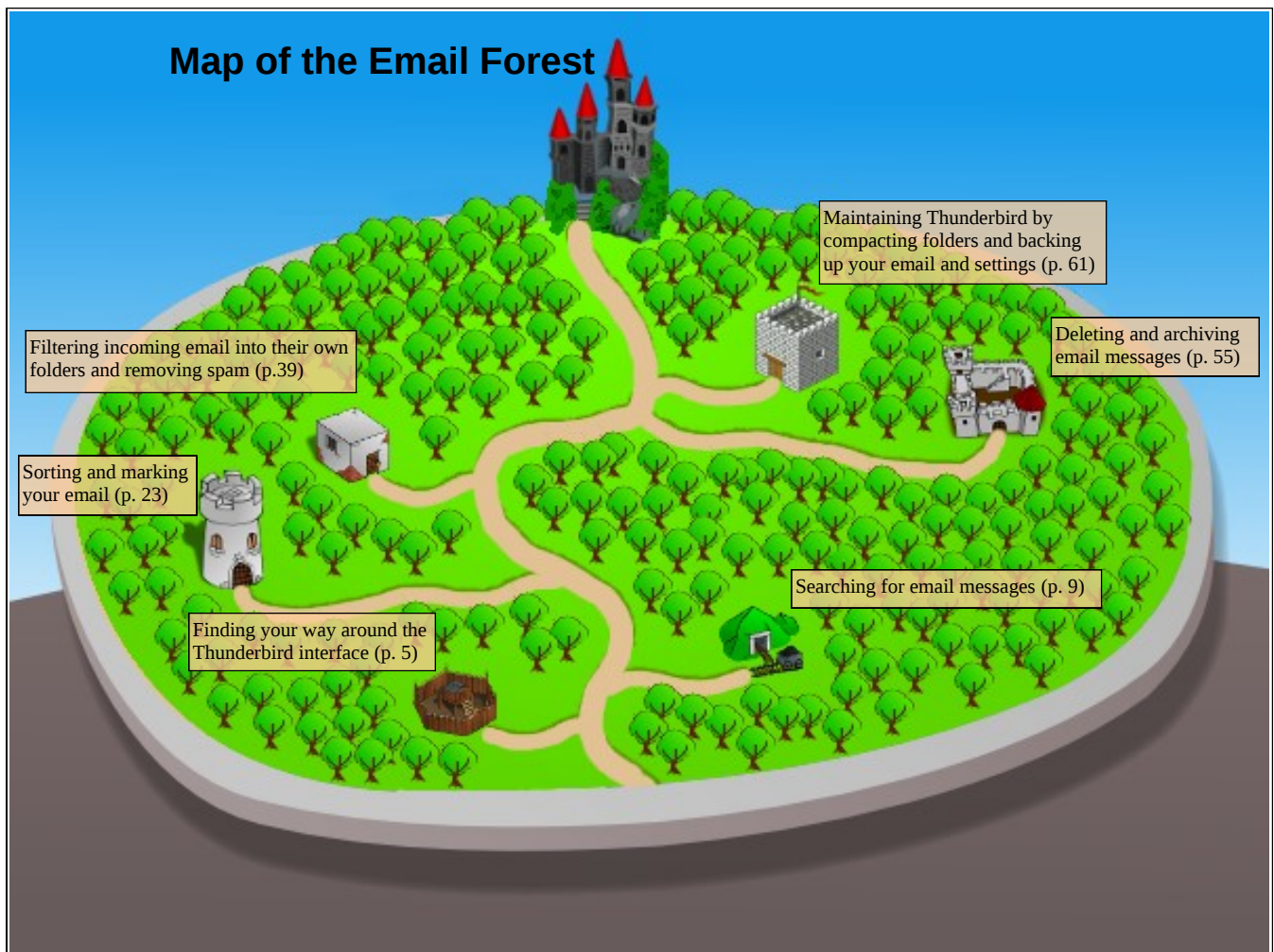
Ubuntu comes with a perfectly good email client installed by default; *Evolution*. If you don't want to use *Evolution*, there are also many free *webmail* services. So why does Mary want to use Thunderbird? Here are a few reasons:

- *Evolution* is a groupware client that deals with not just email, but also calendars, to-do lists and notes. *Evolution* will also connect to the email systems that many business run for internal email. Frankly, that is way more than Mary needs. All she is looking for is a program that manages her Internet email.
- Thunderbird is a commonly used email client on all the major *computer operating systems*, like *Linux*, *Macintosh* and *Windows*. Once Mary is familiar with *Ubuntu* Thunderbird, she can use it on any computer, even the *Windows* computer her boss forces her to use!
- There is a huge community of Thunderbird users and developers. With so many people using Thunderbird, when Mary needs help, there is sure to be someone who can answer her questions. She can also chose from thousands of free additions to Thunderbird that extend its functionality.
- *Webmail* services leave you at the mercy of the service provider. They can make changes to their service at any time, or even discontinue it.

- The features of webmail services are generally quite limited. Mary prefers the vast number of features that she gets with Thunderbird.
- Mozilla Thunderbird is developed right here in Vancouver, so not only is Mary supporting a local product, but the Ubuntu Vancouver Local Community can help shape future versions.

1.2 Using this guide

If you don't want to read through all the introductory material, and want to jump right to the section that interests you, you can use this map of the Email Forest to help find your way. Clicking on a label will take you to the section that covers the topic. Remember, you are never lost if you have a map!



Follow Mary as she cleans up her email clutter

To help you make most of Thunderbird, we will follow Mary as she learns how to use it to manage her email clutter. Mary will take the tangled forest of email messages and accounts, learn how to more efficiently view and search them, organize and prioritize them, and then thin them out by archiving and deleting them. Once she has a handle on all that, Mary will find out how to protect herself from disaster by maintaining her folders and by backing up Thunderbird.

Become a power user with tips and tricks



As Mary learns how to use Thunderbird, she picks up tips and tricks that make her work even more efficient. As she finds these hidden gems, she writes them down on sticky notes that you can see stuck to these pages. Using these can make a power user out of anyone, and help you to avoid potential problems.

Document conventions

While you work your way through this guide, there are a few document conventions that will help you along. By recognizing these conventions, you will be able to see at a glance which items are Thunderbird or Ubuntu components, terms that are defined in the Glossary, links to other parts of the guide, and hyperlinks to Web pages.

| Convention | Description | Example |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Bold | Indicates a Thunderbird/Ubuntu component or menu item. Often, Thunderbird components are also defined in the Glossary. | In the Address Book , click File , point to New and click Address Book Contact . |
| <i>Italic</i> | Indicates the word is defined in the Glossary. The first instance in each chapter of words defined in the Glossary are in italics. | Click the second drop-down list and select how you want to match the <i>search criteria</i> . |
| <i>Italic-bold</i> | Indicates words that should be typed. | Type <i>thunderbird</i> into the search box. |
| <u><i>Italic-underline</i></u> | Indicates a link to another section in the guide. A page number is also included. Clicking on the link will take you to the page. | For more information, see, “ <u><i>Grouping email folders with Unified Folders</i></u> ” on page 8. |
| <u>Blue-underline</u> | Indicates links to Web sites. | http://www.meetup.com/ubuntuvancouver/ |

Getting further help

If you need more help setting up and using Thunderbird, the best source of information is the *Mozilla Messaging* support Web site:

<http://support.mozillamessaging.com>



2 Finding Your Way Around the Thunderbird Interface

Before we start following Mary in her quest to tame her email, we should probably take a look at what the various parts of the Thunderbird *interface* are called. Calling things, “the get mail or filter thingies”, might be fine for Mary, but will get awfully confusing if you don't know what she is referring to.

Here are the common names for the Thunderbird interface components so that we are all on the same page while we accompany Mary on her journey.



2.1 Main Thunderbird window

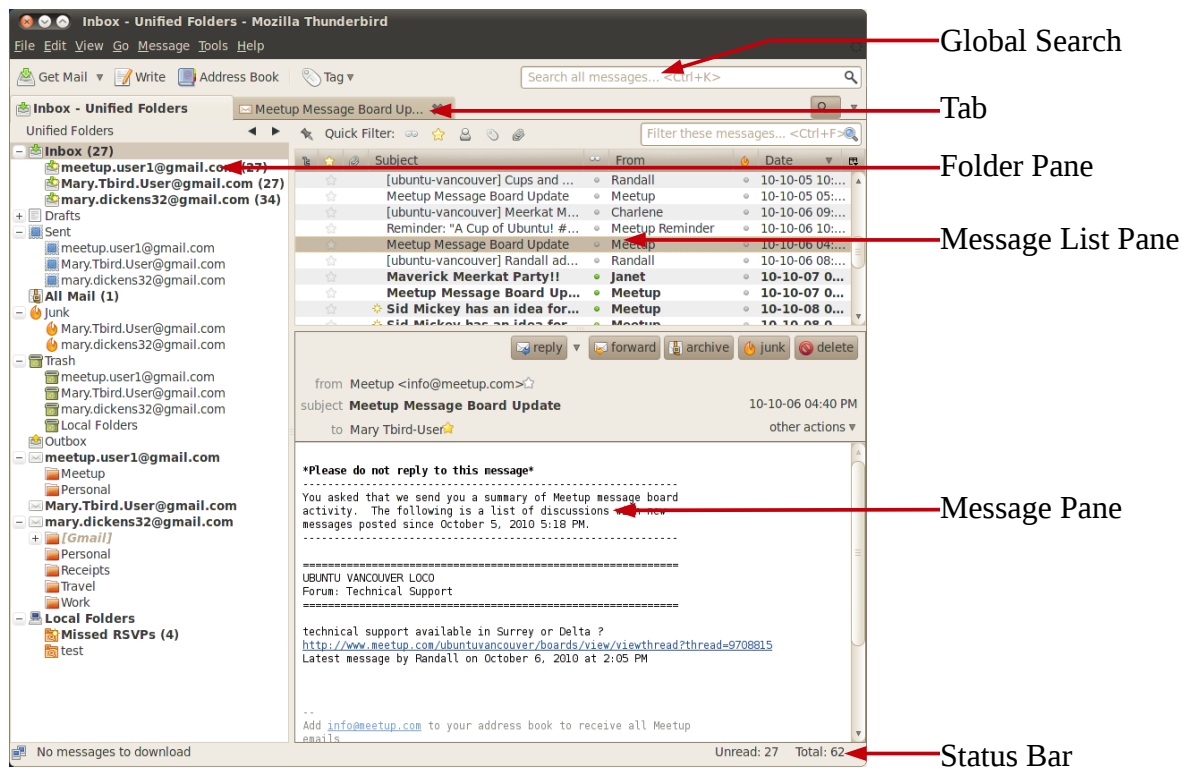


Figure 1: Main Thunderbird window

2.2 Message List Pane

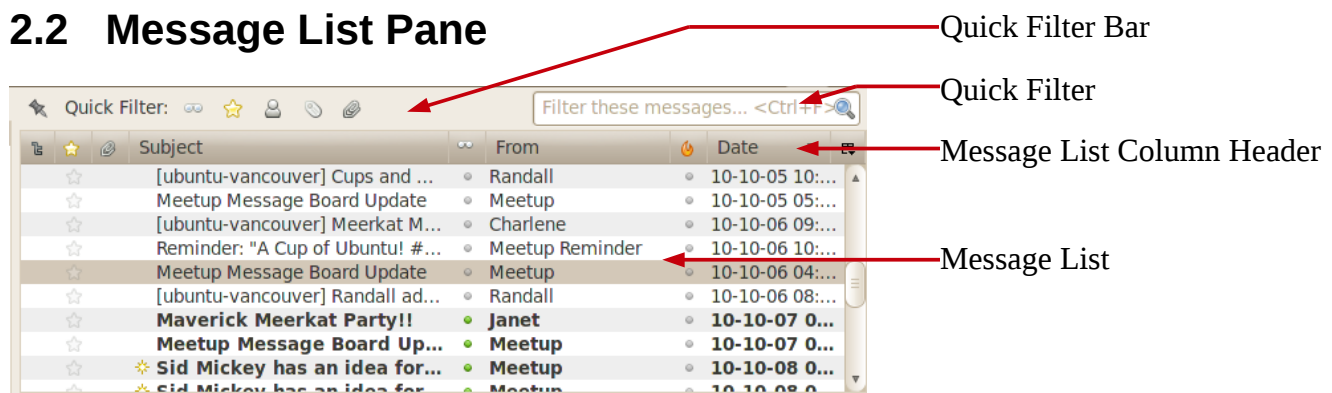


Figure 2: Message List Pane

2.3 Message Pane

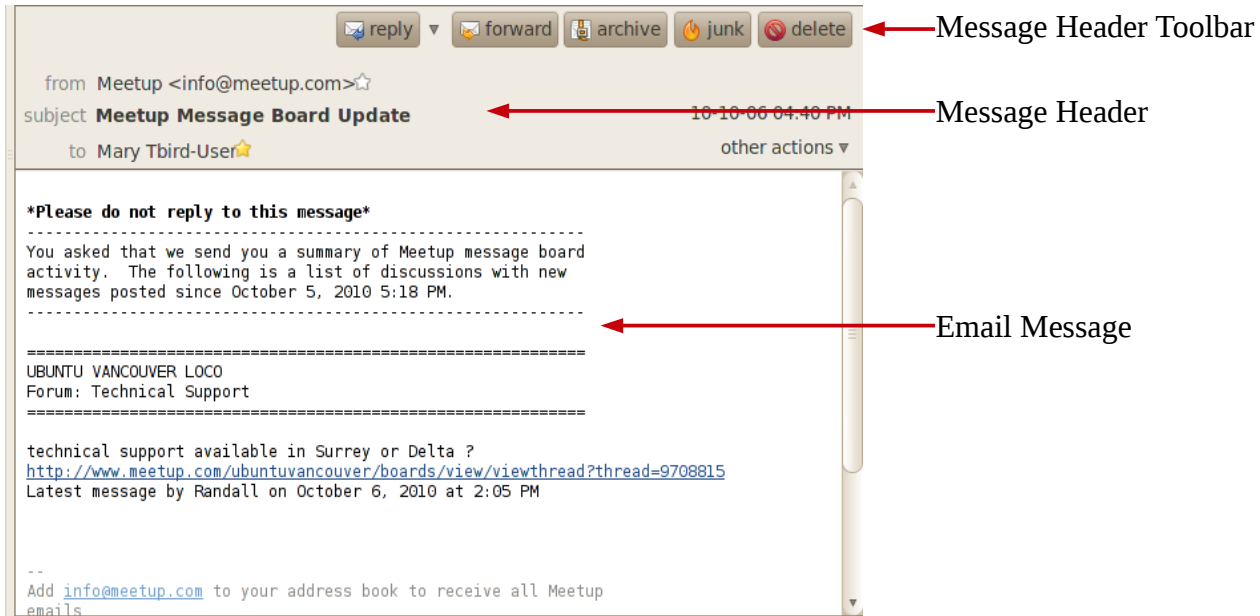


Figure 3: Message Pane

2.4 Address Book

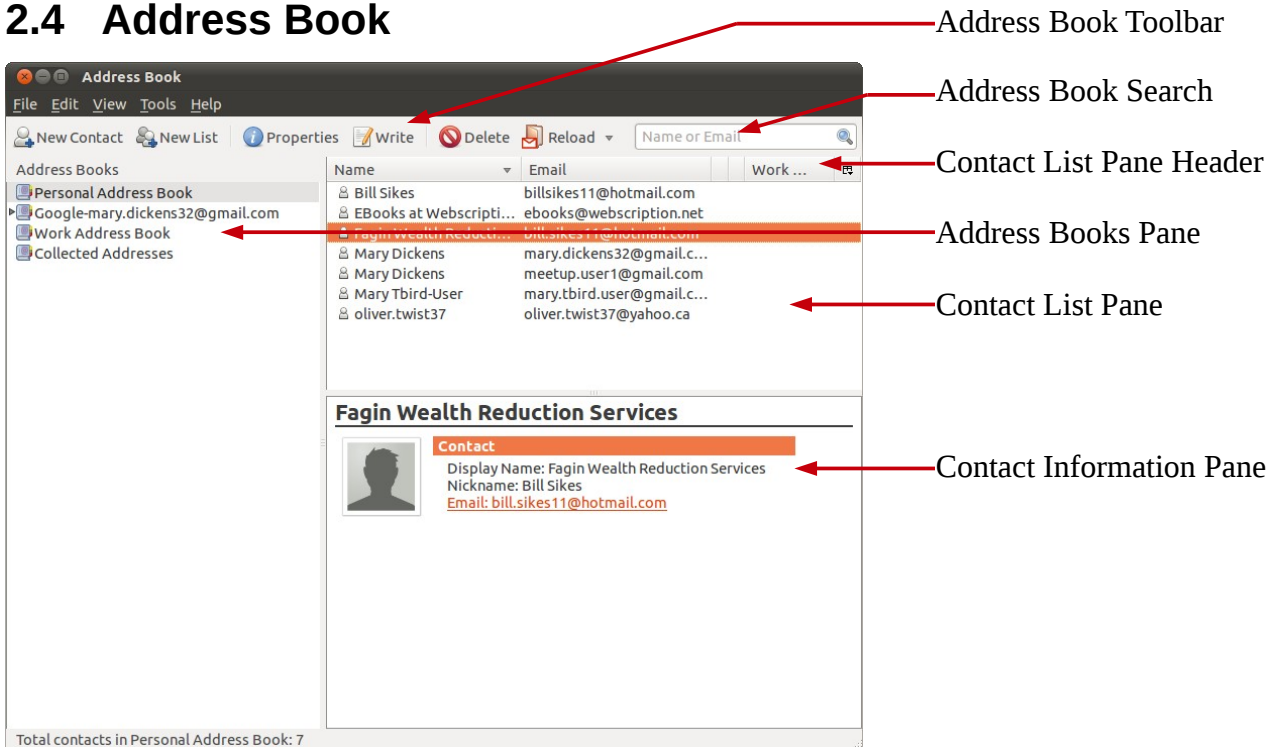


Figure 4: Address Book

3 Viewing and Searching Your Email Messages

The first thing that Mary must do to organize her overgrown email accounts is to learn how to view messages more efficiently and search for the ones she needs. Thunderbird has many features that Mary can use to make viewing and searching her email messages easier than ever... and she doesn't need to be a detective to use them!



3.1 Viewing your email messages

Viewing email messages in a conversation

Mary often has long email exchanges that include dozens of replies going back and forth. Thunderbird calls these exchanges a *conversation* or *thread*. Sometimes, Mary needs to look up things that were said in earlier email messages. Sure, she could scroll through the latest message, but it might not include all the quoted text. She could also do a search to find the message that contained the information, but Mary has found a better way!

If Mary uses the Thunderbird **Open in Conversation** feature, the email is opened in a new tab containing a **Message Pane** and a **Message List Pane**. The **Message List Pane** includes only email messages in that conversation, displayed in a threaded format. Now Mary can view all the email messages in that conversation in one place.

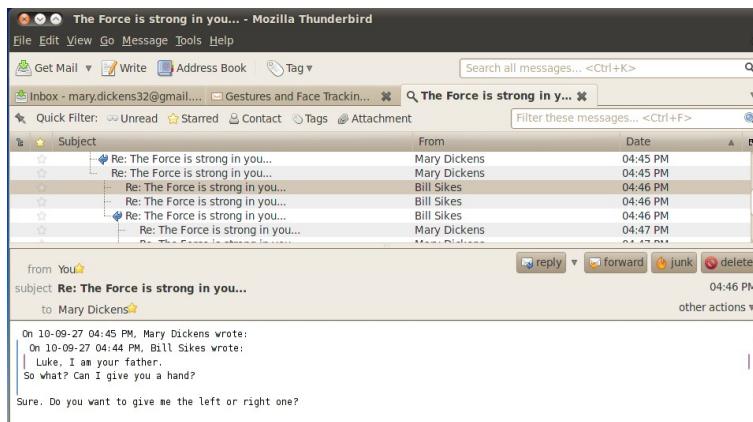
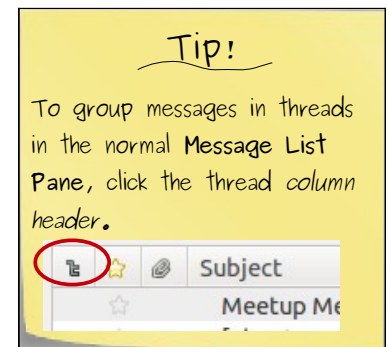


Figure 5: Email message open in a conversation tab



To open an email conversation thread in a tab

- Right-click on the email message in the **Message List Pane** and then click **Open Message in Conversation**.

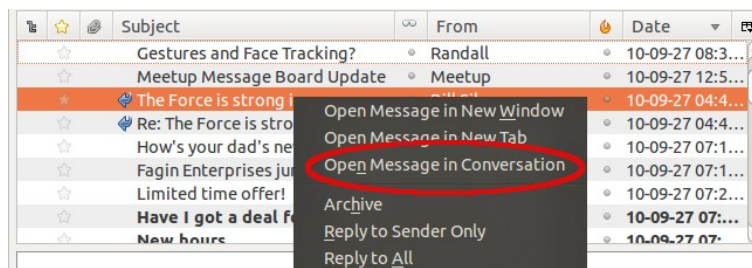


Figure 6: Open Message in Conversation

- Select the email message and then click **Open in Conversation** on the **Message** menu.

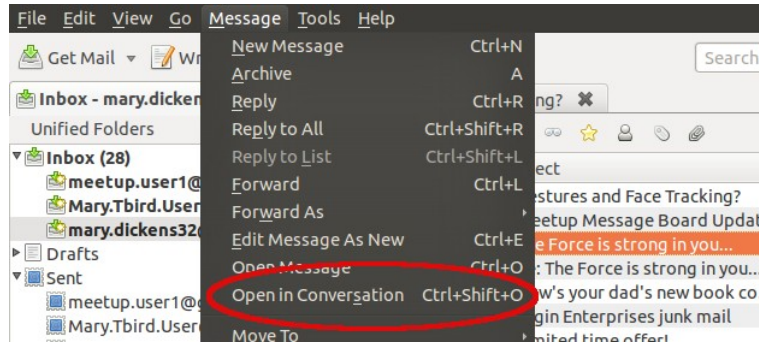


Figure 7: Message menu

- On the **other actions** drop-down list, located on the **Message Header**, click **Open in Conversation**.

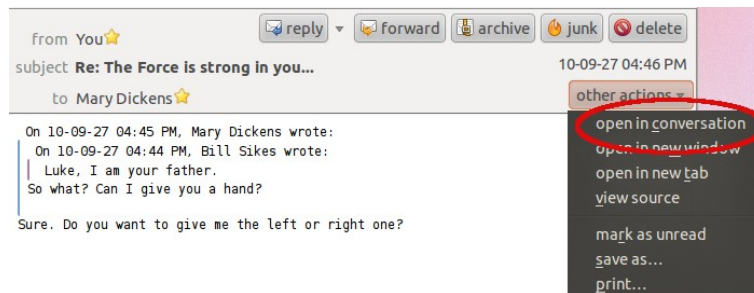


Figure 8: other actions drop-down list

Grouping email folders with Unified Folders

By default, Thunderbird groups email folders in the **Folder Pane** by email account, or the **All Folders** view. Each email account is displayed in the **Folder Pane** with the Inbox, Sent, Trash, *Junk* and any user-created folders listed under it. Mary has found that this folder structure can become quite unwieldy when she has multiple email accounts containing many folders. Her Inboxes are spread all over the place and she has to click in each one to view her email messages. Thunderbird 3.1 has a new feature called the **Unified Folders** view that makes viewing folders much easier.

Unified Folders group similar folders together, instead of grouping them by account. There is a group called Inbox that has the Inboxes for all of Mary's accounts listed under it. The same is true for the Drafts, Sent, Junk and Trash folders. By displaying **Unified Folders**, Mary can see all of her Inboxes in one place, and best of all, she can click on the *parent* Inbox folder to see the messages in all the Inbox subfolders at one time! She can still view the email messages for a single account by clicking on a subfolder under the **Unified Folders** Inbox.

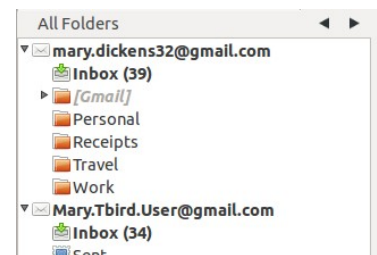


Figure 9: All Folders

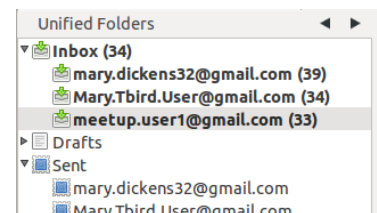


Figure 10: Unified Folders

Mary can use the arrows at the top of the **Folder Pane** to cycle through *folder views*. The views she can display are: **All Folders**, **Unified Folders**, **Recent Folders**, **Favorite Folders** and **Unread Folders**.

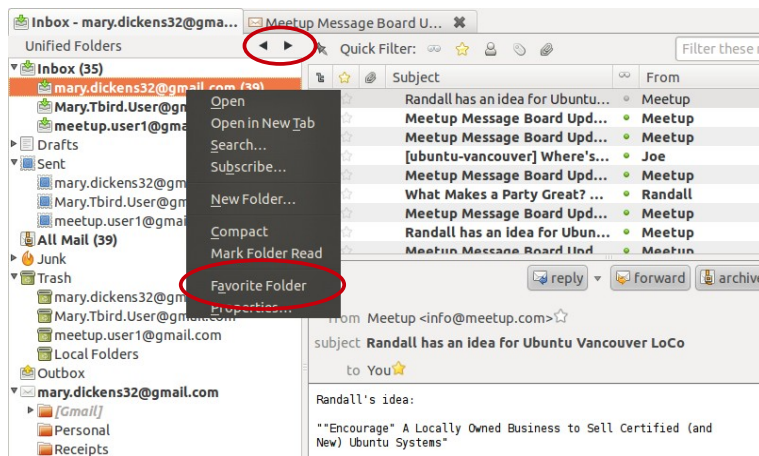
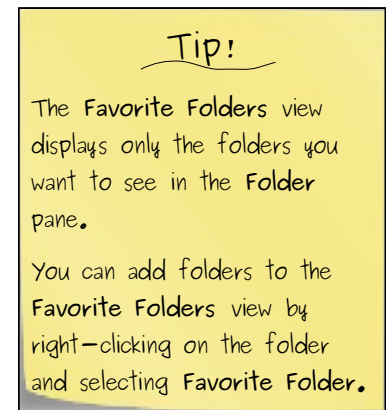


Figure 11: Unified Folders and adding a Favorite Folder



3.2 Finding email messages with Thunderbird's search tools

There are times that Mary wants to find email messages that refer to specific things, or are from certain people. With hundreds of email messages in each of her three email accounts, looking through them and finding what she wants can be a day-long task. Fortunately, Thunderbird has some very useful search tools.

Searching using the Global Search

The easiest method that Mary can use to search her email messages is the **Global Search** box on the right-hand side of toolbar. The **Global Search** will search all of Mary's email messages except for those in the Junk and Trash folders. It will also search all the email message *fields*, such as the sender, the recipient, the subject, and the message body. This search is not case-sensitive so Mary does not have to worry about capitalization.

While Mary is typing in the **Global Search** box, a drop-down list displays possible matches to email addresses, or she can press ENTER to search for both email addresses and words in the body or subject of the messages. Please note that the search will only match complete words, not partial words. It will, however, find the plural or singular versions of words.

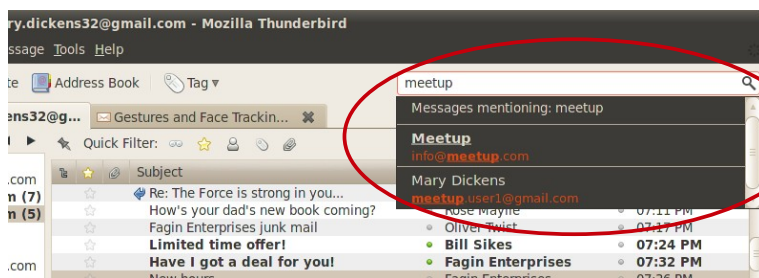


Figure 12: Global Search drop-down list

The search results that match Mary's search term are previewed in a new tab. Clicking on a search result will open the email message in a *conversation tab* that displays the message any other related messages, if it is part of a thread.

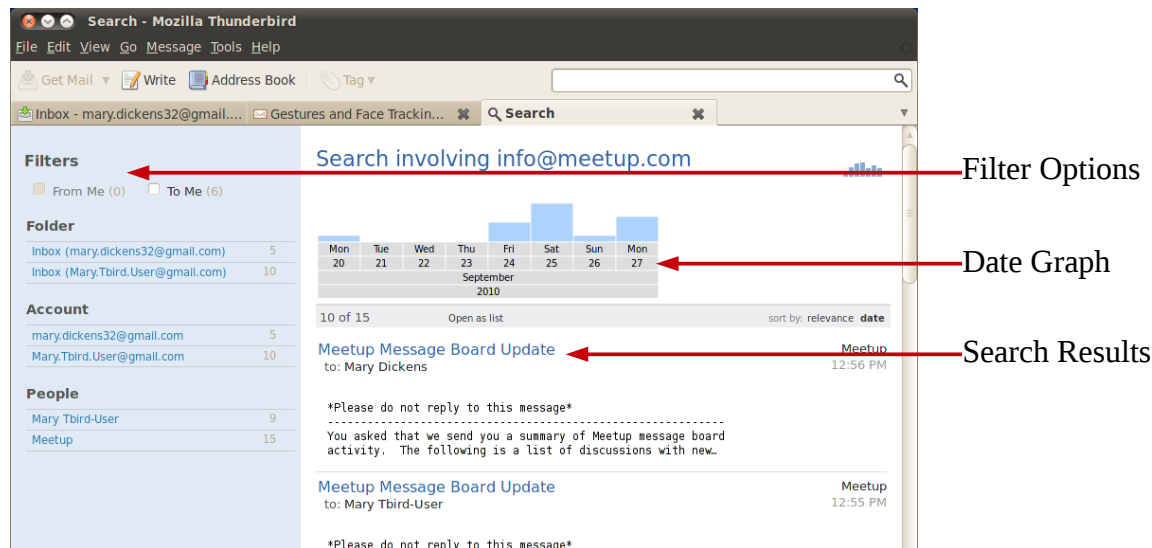


Figure 13: Global Search results tab

Searching for multiple terms using the Global Search

So now Mary can quickly search for email messages or addresses that contain a word, but sometimes she needs to search for multiple words. For instance, she seems to get more “Virus Alert” email messages from well-intentioned *Windows* users than messages from her friends. Mary remembers that her friend, Oliver, sent her an email message about viruses and wants to find it again. OK, she'll type **viruses** into the **Global Search** box and find what he was referring to.

Hmm, that wasn't such a good idea! Wow, are there really that many Windows viruses out there? Mary once again applauds her choice to run *Ubuntu*. Problem is, the search results seem to go on for ages! Time to try to narrow the results down by using multiple search terms.

Searching for email messages containing all the search terms

To search for email messages that contain all the search terms, Mary simply needs to type them all into the **Global Search** box and press ENTER.

Mary types **oliver viruses** into the **Global Search** box and the multitude of email messages containing the word “viruses” is reduced to the single one she was looking for.

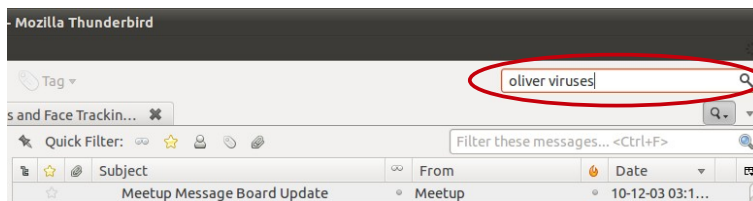


Figure 14: Global Search with multiple terms

Searching for email messages containing a phrase

What if Mary doesn't remember who sent her the email message, but remembers a phrase used in the message? That could narrow the search down. She thinks that the message contained the phrase “contains viruses” so she types “**contains viruses**” (with the quotation marks) into the **Global Search** box, and sure enough, the search finds the email message she was looking for.

Enclosing words within quotations matches the exact phrase instead of individual words. You can also combine individual search terms and phrases in one search. For instance, to find messages containing word “oliver” and the phrase “contains viruses”, type: **oliver “contains viruses”**

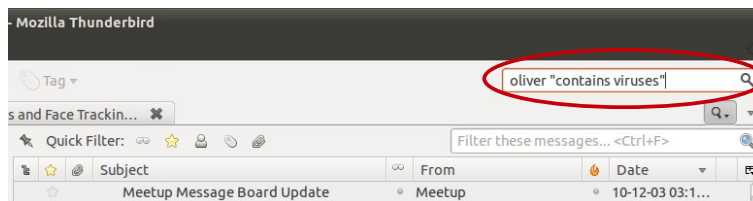


Figure 15: Global Search with a term and a phrase

Filtering and analyzing Global Search results

There are times that Mary has searches that return dozens of matching email messages, even using multiple search terms or phrases. When this happens, Mary needs a way of thinning the forest of results down to something more manageable. Fortunately, the Thunderbird **Global Search** results tab allows her to do this. She can *filter* the results and analyze them by date.

Filtering Global Search results

The **Filters** options are displayed on the left-hand side of the **Global Search** results tab. They allow Mary to filter the results based on whether they are from her or to her, their *status*, if they have attachments, the folder they are in, the email account they are in, or their email addresses. By clicking on an item in the **Filter** options, Mary can select if the messages match the item, or do not match the item. Clicking the filter item again lets Mary remove the filter.

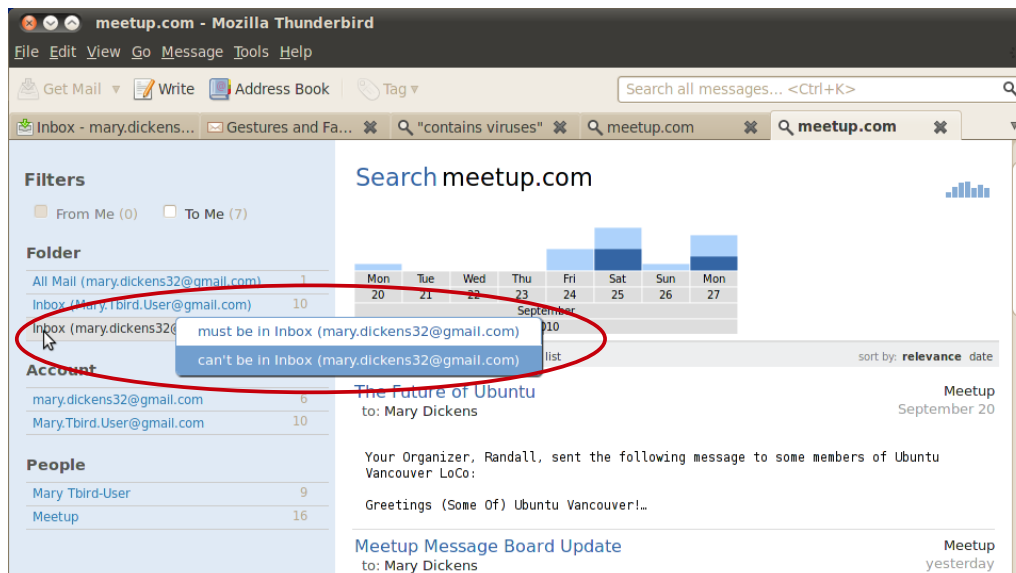


Figure 16: Global Search Filters

Analyzing Global Search results by date

The top of **Global Search** results tab shows a graph of how many email messages are found based on their date. It's all well and fine for Mary to find all email messages from info@meetup.com that ask for an RSVP, but she isn't interested in those for past events. By hovering her mouse over a **Filters** option, the days that have messages matching the option are highlighted on the graph.

Mary can also click a date on the graph to only display email message results for that day.

Tip!

To display more results on the page, you can hide the date graph by clicking the graph icon in the top right of the results tab.



Advanced searches using the Search Messages tool

Thunderbird allows Mary to do advanced searches that find email messages that contain, or do not contain, complex combinations of various terms, addresses, or attributes. Each thing searched for is called a **Search Rule**. For instance, Mary sometime forgets to RSVP to *Ubuntu Vancouver Loco* event announcements, but using the **Search Messages** tool, she can find and reply to upcoming event notices she missed reading. To do this, she creates a set of *rules* that searches for email messages from “info@meetup.com” that contain the word “RSVP” but not the word “reminder” in the body, that have not been replied to, and that are not older than seven days.

Tip!

Unlike the **Global Search**, the **Search Messages** tool can only search a single folder and its subfolders at a time. To search all of your email accounts, it must be run separately on each.

Now Mary never has to miss RSVP'ing to another event notice again!

To search using the Search Messages tool

1. On the **Edit** menu, point to **Find** and then click **Search Messages**.
2. Choose where you want to search in the **Search for messages in** drop-down list.

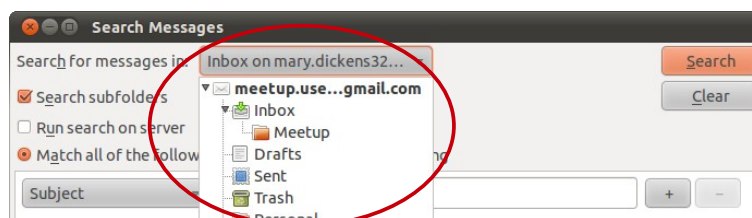


Figure 17: Search for messages drop-down list

3. Select **Search subfolders**, **Run search on server** (IMAP only), and how you want to match the **Search Rules**.

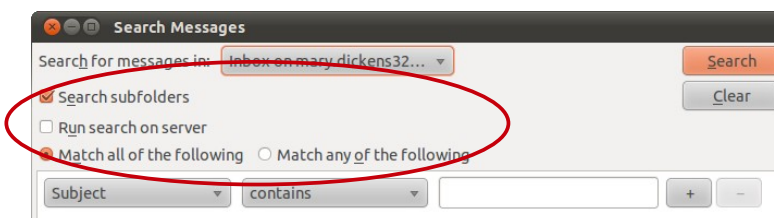


Figure 18: Search Messages options

Tip!

- Match all of the following finds messages that match all the **Search Rules**.
- Match any of the following finds messages that match at least one **Search Rule**.

4. Click the first drop-down list and select which part of the email messages to search in.



Figure 19: Search Rule

5. Click the second drop-down list and select how you want to match the search criteria.

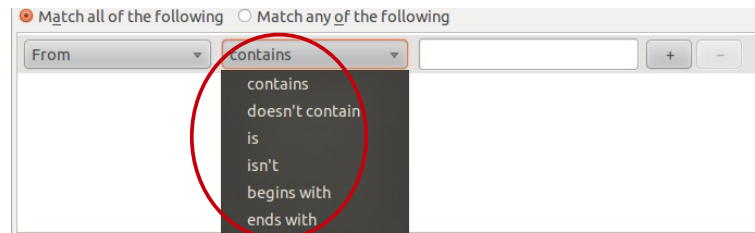


Figure 20: Search Rule

6. Type the search criteria in the text box or select it from the drop-down list, depending on what is being searched for.



Figure 21: Search Rule

7. Click the plus sign to add more Search Rules.



Figure 22: Search Rule

8. Click the **Search** button to begin the search.

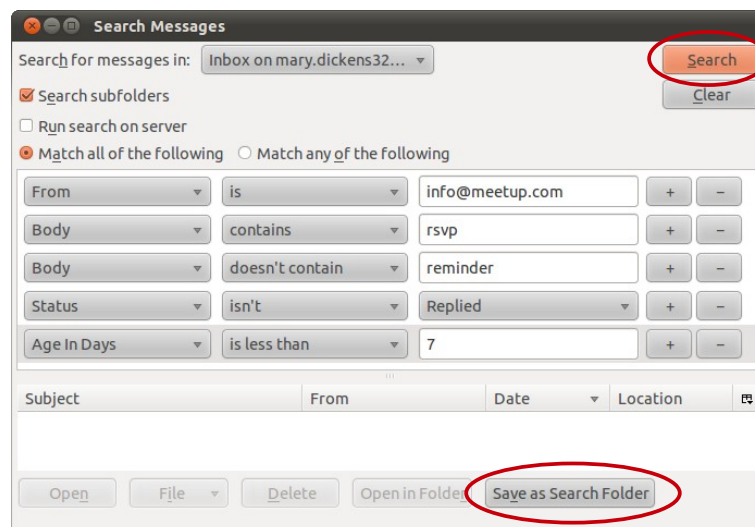


Figure 23: Search Messages

Tip!

You can save the search for later use by clicking on the **Save as Search Folder** button at the bottom. For more information on saving searches, see the next section, **Creating a Saved Search folder**

Creating a Saved Search folder

Mary has now been using the **Global Search** and **Search Messages** tools for a while, but she finds that she often repeats the same searches. There has to be a better way, and indeed there is; **Saved Search** folders! A **Saved Search** is a search that continuously runs in the background, collecting matching email messages and placing them in their own folder.

For instance, in the last section, we saw Mary create a search for meetup.com event notices that she hasn't RSVP'd to yet. However, Mary would like to keep running the search on a regular basis as these messages sometimes get lost in the daily avalanche of new messages she receives. With a **Saved Search**, these messages are automatically collected in a folder called Missed RSVPs.

To create a new Saved Search folder

1. On the **File** menu, point to **New** and then click **Saved Search**.
 - Note: If you are displaying **Unified Folders**, you need to have a subfolder of the parent **Unified Folder** selected. For more information about **Unified Folders**, see *"Grouping email folders with Unified Folders"* on page 8.

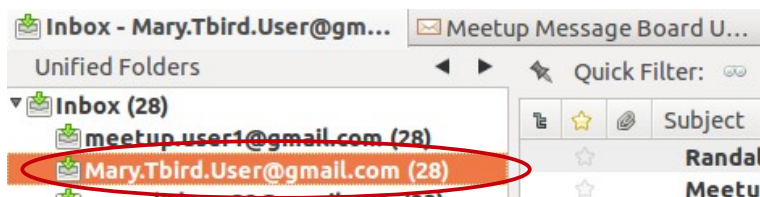


Figure 24: Unified Folders

2. Type a name for the new **Saved Search** folder and choose the parent folder to put it in.

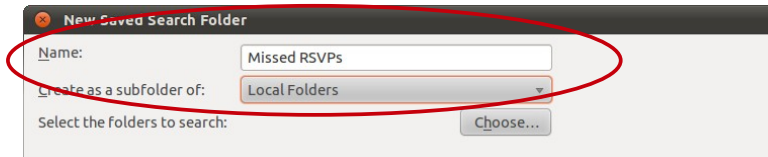


Figure 25: New Saved Search Folder name and location

3. Click **Choose** and select which folders you want to search.

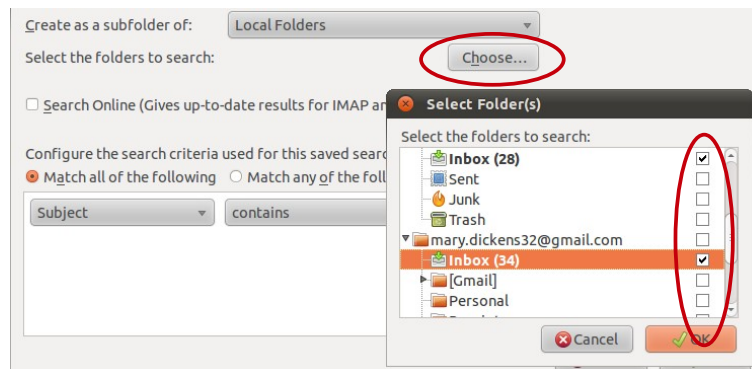


Figure 26: Select Folder(s)

Tip!

A Saved Search is an easy way to search specific folders in multiple email accounts. Just create a Saved Search folder and delete it when you are finished.

4. Select **Search Online** to search on IMAP email servers.

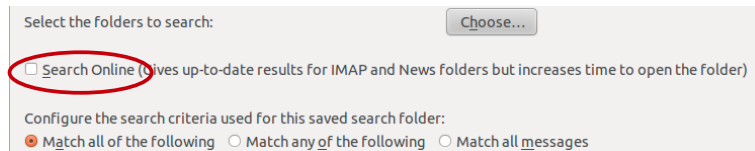


Figure 27: New Saved Search Folder options

5. Choose how to match the rules, or to match all messages.

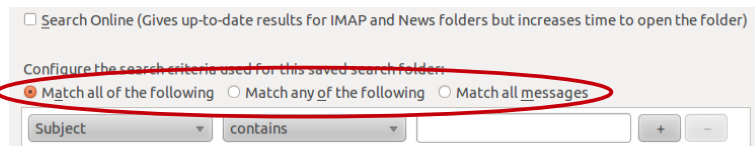


Figure 28: New Saved Search Folder options

Tip!

- Match all of the following finds messages that match all the Search Rules.
- Match any of the following finds messages that match at least one Search Rule.
- Match all messages finds all messages, even if there are no matches to Search Rules.

6. Click the first drop-down list and select which part of the email messages to search in.

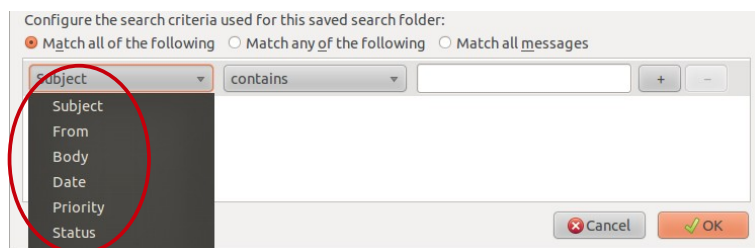


Figure 29: New Saved Search Folder rule

7. Click the second drop-down list and select how you want to match the search criteria.

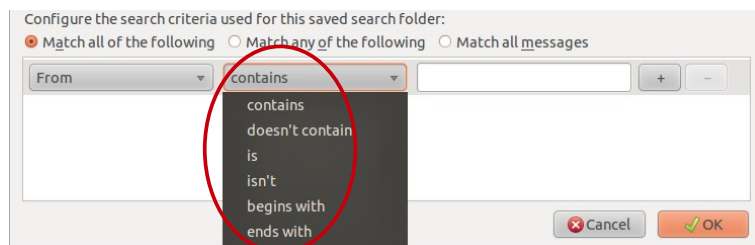


Figure 30: New Saved Search Folder rule

8. Type the search criteria in the text box or select it from the drop-down list, depending on what is being searched for.

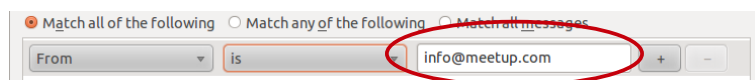


Figure 31: New Saved Search Folder rule

9. Click the plus sign to add more search rules.

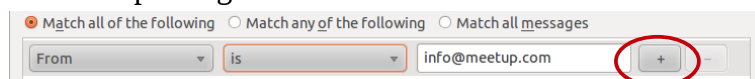


Figure 32: New Saved Search Folder rule

Clicking **OK** creates a folder that is constantly updated with messages matching the search.

Searching the Junk and Trash folders

Mary recently received a phone call from Fagin Enterprises asking her why she hasn't been answering any of their email messages. As far as Mary knew, she hasn't received any messages from Fagin Enterprises. Unfortunately, it turns out that she had created a **Message Filter** that set the status of all messages with “limited time offer” in the body of the message to **Junk**, and Fagin Enterprises uses that phrase in all of their email messages.

Mary could open the Junk folder and sort by sender, but if she wants to see if there are any other messages using the same phrase that were mistakenly flagged as *spam*, a **Global Search** wouldn't work. The **Global Search** does not search the Junk or Trash folders. She could also run a **Search Messages** query, but that will only search a single account at a time. Instead, to search the Junk and Trash folders for all of her accounts, all Mary has to do is create a **Saved Search** folder and select the Junk and Trash folders in the **Select Folders** dialog box. For more information about **Saved Searches** see “[Creating a Saved Search folder](#)” on page 14.

3.3 Finding email messages using the Quick Filter

A quick way that Mary can search for email messages in the current folder is to use the **Quick Filter** to create *view filters*. A **Quick Filter** is a convenient way to show only email messages in a folder that match a set of criteria. It doesn't do anything to the messages, just hides the other email messages in the folder so that you only see the ones you want to. **Quick Filters** shouldn't be confused with email **Message Filters** that actually do things to email messages. **Message Filters** will be discussed in “[Filtering email messages](#)” on page 39. Mary most often uses **Quick Filters** to quickly find only unread or **Starred** messages in a folder.

The **Quick Filter** toolbar is located at the top of the **Message List Pane**. Clicking the magnifying glass icon above the toolbar will hide the tools if you want additional room in the **Message List Pane**, or if you don't regularly use the **Quick Filter**.

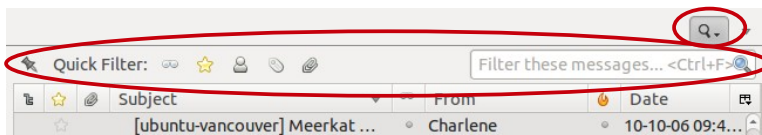


Figure 33: Quick Filter bar

This tool can filter the list of messages displayed in the folder based on:

- If they are **Unread Messages**.
- If they are **Starred Messages**.
 - You can assign **Stars** to email messages as visual reminders or to tell Thunderbird that they are important. For more information about **Stars**, see “[Using Stars to mark important email messages](#)” on page 32.
- If they are from **Contacts** in your **Address Book**.
- If they have **Tags**.
 - You can assign **Tags** to email messages to categorize and display them with different colours in the **Message List Pane**. For more information about **Tags**, see “[Tagging email messages to categorize them](#)” on page 34.

- If they have **Attachments**.
- Who the **Sender** is.
- Who the **Recipients** are.
- What the **Subject** contains.
- Words in the message body.

Using the Quick Filter

To quickly toggle a predefined filter on or off, all Mary has to do is click one or more of the **Quick Filter** icons:

Unread  **messages**, **Starred**  **messages**, **Contact**  **Tags**, or **Attachments**  **icons**.

She can further filter the results, or filter the entire message list, by typing into the **Quick Filter** box and selecting one or more of the filter options; **Sender**, **Recipients**, **Subject**, or **Body**.

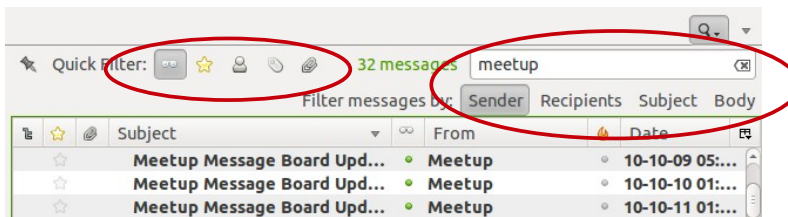


Figure 34: Quick Filter bar search



If your filter doesn't match any email messages in the current folder, you are given the option of converting the filter to a **Global Search** that searches all of your folders. For more information about the **Global Search**, see "[Searching using the Global Search](#)" on page 9.

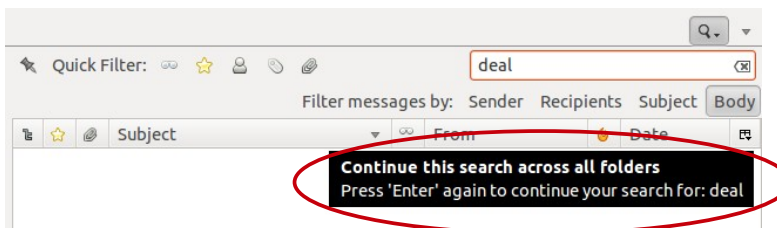


Figure 35: Converting a failed Quick Filter to a Global Search

3.4 Finding email messages with the Mail Views list

Thunderbird has another view filter tool that is not displayed by default. It is the **Mail Views** list that you can add to the toolbar. Mary is thankful that she found this tool, as it not only allows her to filter her message views using the normal view filters discussed earlier, but it gives her more control over the filtering. She can even create **Custom Message Views** based on complex view filters and save them as folders.

To add the Mail Views list to the toolbar

1. Right-click on the Thunderbird toolbar and select **Customize**.

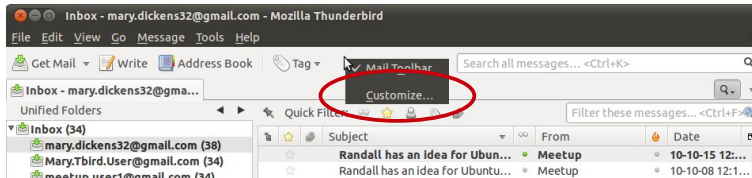


Figure 36: Customize the Thunderbird toolbar

2. Drag the **Mail Views** list to where you want it on the Thunderbird toolbar.

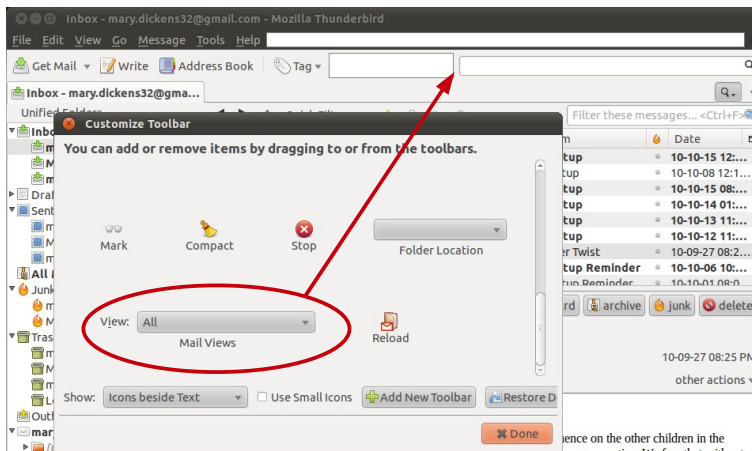


Figure 37: Add Mail Views list

3. Click **Done** to add the **Mail Views** drop-down list to the toolbar.

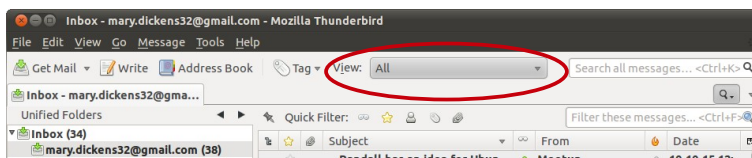


Figure 38: Mail Views list

Using the Mail Views list

By clicking on the **View** button, Mary can quickly change how the email messages are displayed in the **Message List Pane**. She can:

- Display all her email messages.
- Display only unread email messages.
- Display email messages with specific **Tags**.
- Display email messages based on **Custom Message Views** using a set of view filters.
- To see how to create **Custom Message Views**, see [“To add a new Custom Message View”](#) on the next page.

- Save the current view as a folder.
- This creates a **Saved Search** folder based on the view filter. To see how to save the view as a **Saved Search** folder, see *“Save a View as a Folder”* on page 21.
- Add or remove views from the **Custom Views** menu.

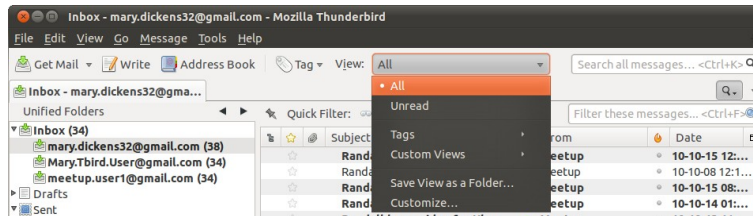


Figure 39: Mail Views menu

The most useful features of the **Mail Views** list are the ability to create **Custom Message Views** and to save the current view as a new folder. If you get as many email messages as Mary does, it is nice to be able to filter the scores of email messages clogging up your Inboxes down to something more manageable. This is where the **Custom Message Views** comes in handy. The **Custom Message Views** uses the same rule-based search criteria as the **Search Messages** tool, making it an extremely powerful method of creating view filters. For more information about the **Search Messages** tool, see *“Advanced searches using the Search Messages tool”* on page 12.

There are five **Custom Message Views** that Thunderbird has already configured for you:

- **People I Know**
 - Email from contacts in your **Address Book**.
- **Recent Mail**
 - Email messages that are less than one day old.
- **Last 5 Days**
 - Email messages that are less than five days old.
- **Not Junk**
 - Email messages that are not marked as **Junk**.
- **Has Attachments**
 - Email messages that have file attachments.

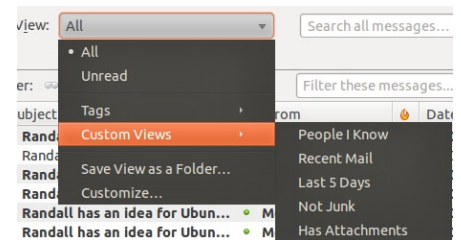


Figure 40: Custom Views

To add a new Custom Message View

1. On the **Mail Views** drop-down list, select **Customize**.

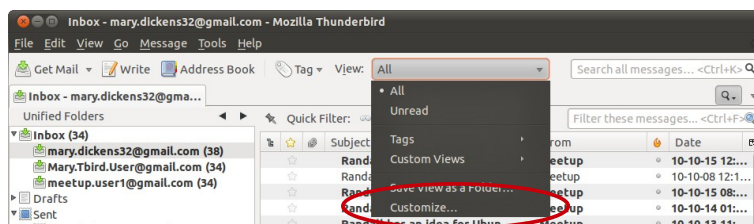


Figure 41: Customize Mail Views

- Click the **New** button on the **Customize Message Views** dialog box.

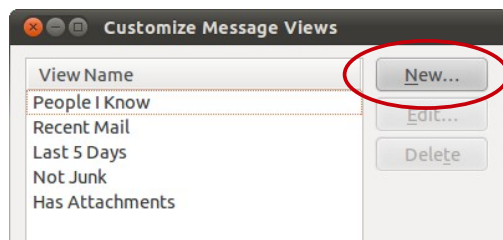


Figure 42: Customize Message Views

- Type a name for the **Custom Message View**.

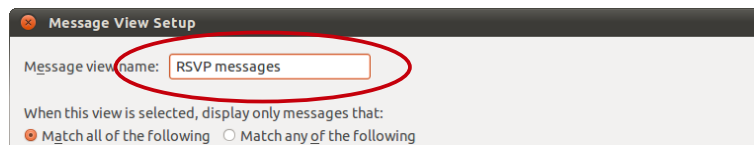
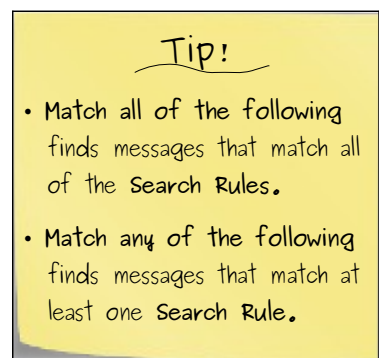


Figure 43: Message View Setup



- Select how you want to match the **Search Rules**.

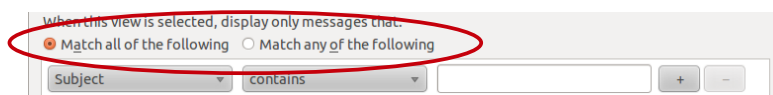


Figure 44: Message View Setup options

- Click the first drop-down list and select which part of the email messages to search in.

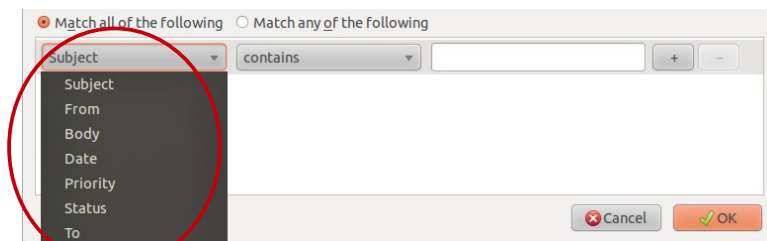


Figure 45: Message View Setup rule

- Click the second drop-down list and select how you want to match the search criteria.

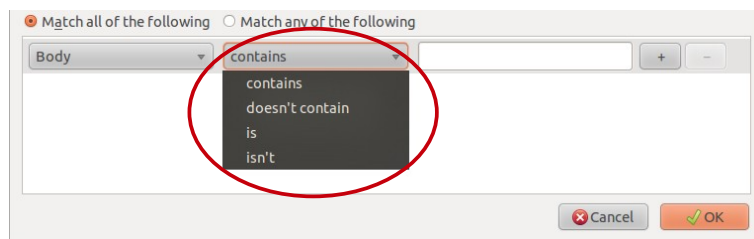


Figure 46: Message View Setup rule

- Type the search criteria in the text box or select it from the drop-down list, depending on what is being searched for.

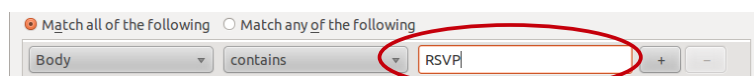


Figure 47: Message View Setup rule

8. Click the plus sign to add more **Search Rules**.

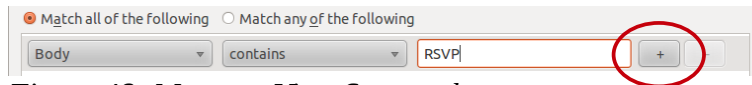


Figure 48: Message View Setup rule

Clicking **OK** will create the new **Custom Message View** and add it to the **Custom Views** submenu of the **Mail Views** drop-down list.

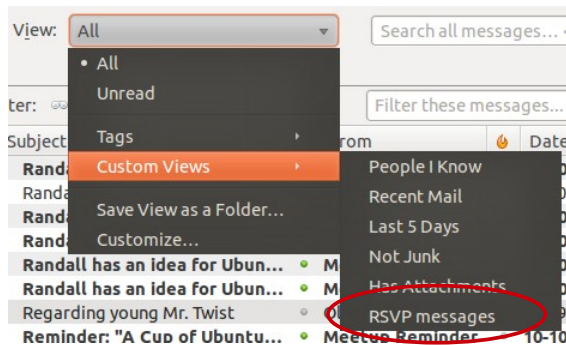


Figure 49: Custom Message Views

You can also modify or delete **Custom Message Views** by selecting them from the list in the **Customize** dialog box of the **Mail View** drop-down list and clicking **Edit** or **Delete**.

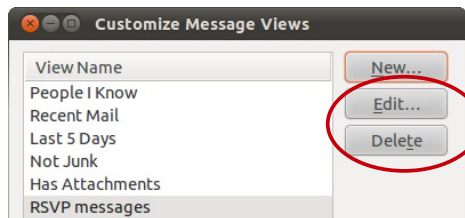


Figure 50: Custom Message Views

Save a View as a Folder

The **Save View as a Folder** item on the **Mail Views** drop-down list lets you save the view as a folder that is continually updated. If you read the section about “*Creating a Saved Search folder*” on page 14, this might sound familiar. That's because all this does is save the current **Mail View** as a **Saved Search** folder. The search rules are filled in and the folder has been given a default name and location, but you can change these. Click **OK** and the **Mail View** is saved as a new **Saved Search** folder.

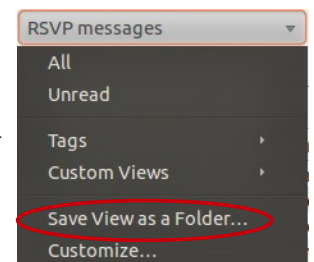


Figure 51: Mail Views

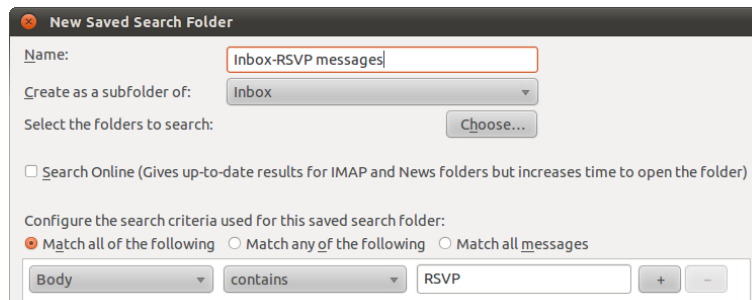


Figure 52: Save View as a Folder

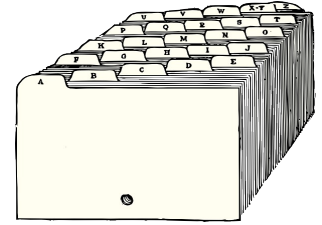


4 Organizing and Prioritizing Your Email Messages

So, Mary can now efficiently search for and view her email messages. Unfortunately, the email jungle is still growing up around her and holding her back from effectively managing her email load. Mary needs to organize and prioritize her email messages so that she can respond in a timely manner to the important ones, and put off or ignore those that aren't.

As Mary tackles the task of organizing and prioritizing her email messages, she learns how to:

- Sort and group email messages.
- **Mark** and **Tag** email messages.
- Filter and run **Junk Mail Controls** on email messages.



4.1 Sorting and grouping email messages

Sorting and grouping her email messages is the first task Mary undertakes in her quest to organize and prioritize her email. With so many new email messages coming in each day, it is important for Mary to sort her messages in a meaningful way, and to group them so that she can quickly find the important ones. More importantly, sorting and grouping her email messages helps Mary decide which ones she needs to deal with sooner, rather than later.

You can sort the list of messages by most of the columns that can be displayed in the **Message List Pane**. By default, the **Thread**, **Star**, **Attachments**, **Subject**, **Read**, **Junk**, **From** and **Date** columns are shown.

Message List Pane columns

| Column Name | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Thread | Indicates email messages that are part of a <i>conversation (thread)</i> when they are grouped by Thread |
| Starred | Messages that have a Star applied to them. You can assign Stars to email messages as visual reminders or to tell Thunderbird that they are important. For more information about Stars , see “ Using Stars to mark important email messages ” on page 32. |
| Attachments | Email message that have attachments. |
| Subject | The subject line of email messages. |
| Read | Unread email messages have a green dot in this column |
| From | The sender of email messages. |
| Junk Status | Email messages marked as <i>junk mail</i> have a flame icon in this column. For more information about marking messages as junk mail, see “ Using the Junk Mail Controls ” on page 50. |

Message List Pane columns (*continued*)

| Column Name | Description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Recipient | The recipient of email messages. This is useful when sorting messages in your Sent folders. |
| Date | The date and time email messages were sent. |
| Received | The date and time email messages were received by your <i>email provider</i> . |
| Status | Indicates if email messages have been read, are new, have been replied to, or have been forwarded. |
| Size | The size of email messages. You can use this to sort messages based on how large an email message and its attachments are. |
| Tags | The Tags assigned to email messages. You can assign Tags to email messages to categorize and display with them different colours in the Message List Pane . For more information about Tags , see “ Tagging email messages to categorize them ” on page 34. |
| Account | What <i>email account</i> the messages are in. |
| Priority | The <i>message priority</i> the senders assign to email messages. |
| Unread (Non-sortable) | Whether there are unread email messages when they are grouped into Threads . For more information about grouping email messages by thread, see “ Grouping your email messages ” on page 27. |
| Total (Non-sortable) | The number of email messages in a conversation when they are grouped by Threads . |
| Location | The email folders that email messages are in. |
| Order Received | This is a number that indicates the order that email messages were received by an Thunderbird. On some versions of Thunderbird this is a weird number that might not be consecutive. They are based on the email message size added to the previous Order Received number. They may not be consecutive, but they are in order. |

Sorting your email messages

The easiest method of sorting email messages is to click the *column header* you want to sort them by. The column that is being sorted is indicated by a triangle on the column header. When the triangle is pointed down, the column is being sorted from oldest to newest or alphabetically from “A” - “Z”. If it is pointing up, the column is being sorting from newest to oldest or from “Z” - “A”. Click the column header again to switch between an ascending or descending sort order.

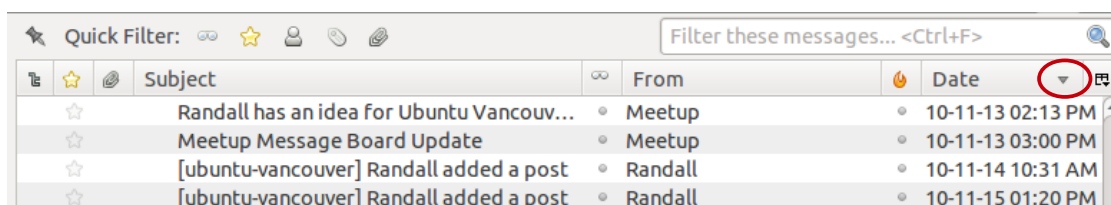


Figure 53: Message List pane column sort order

If what you want to sort by is not displayed as a column, you can either add the column to the **Message List Pane**, or use the **View** menu to sort the email messages.

To add a column to the Message List Pane

- Right-click anywhere on the **Message List Pane** column header and select the column you want to add. Currently displayed columns are indicated with check marks in the list.

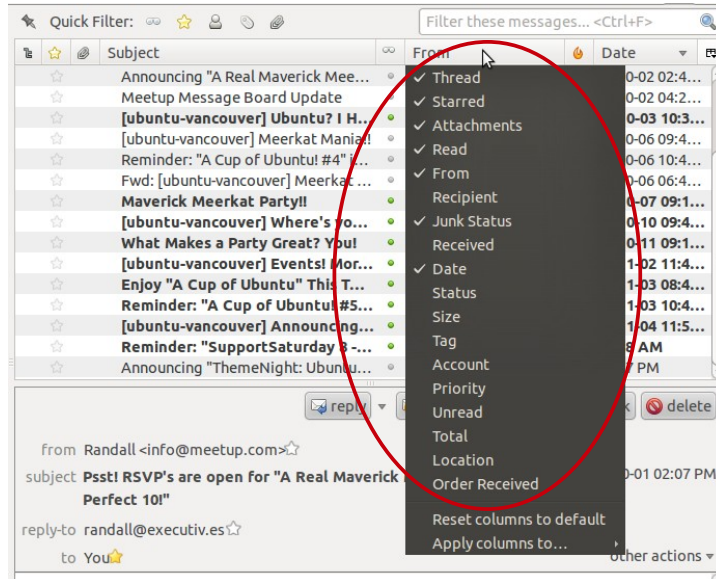


Figure 54: Add Message List pane columns

- To display the same column setup in other folders, right-click anywhere on the **Message List Pane** column header, point to **Apply columns to** and select the folder(s).
 - You can select an individual folder, or a folder and all of its subfolders (*children*).

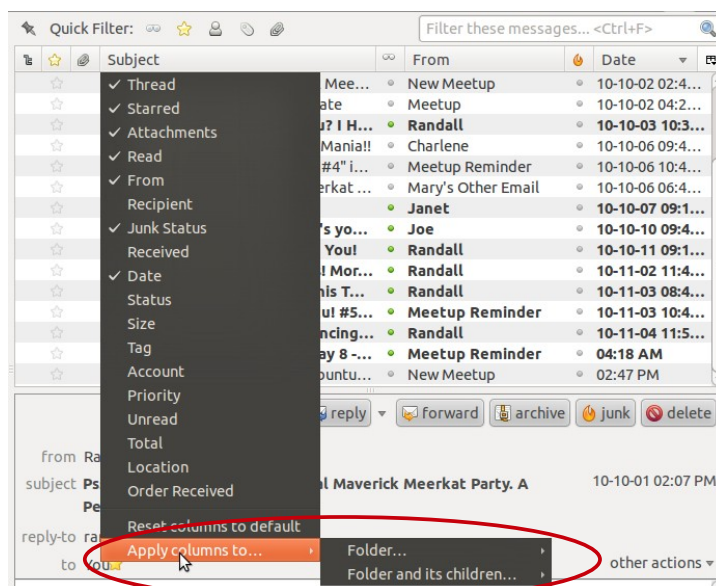


Figure 55: Apply columns to other folders

To reset the displayed columns to the default

- Right-click anywhere on the **Message List Pane** column header and click **Reset columns to default**.

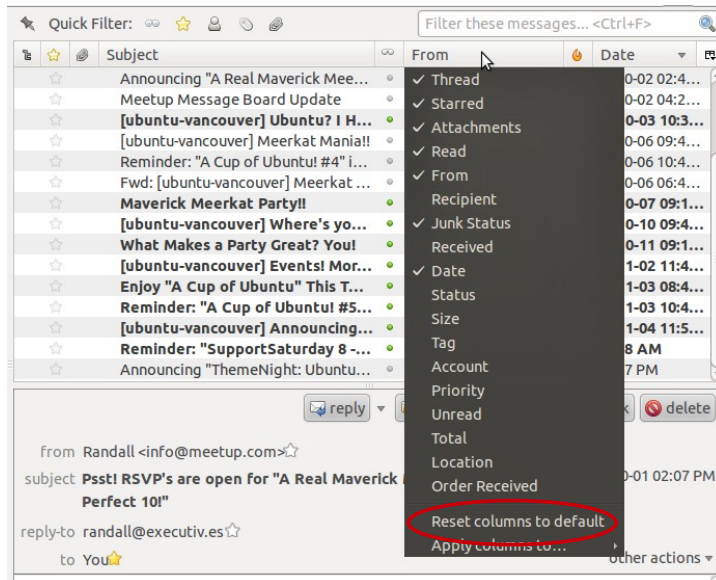


Figure 56: Reset columns to default

To sort your email messages using the View menu

- On the **View** menu, point to **Sort by** and select how you want to sort your email messages. The column currently being sorted is indicated by a dot.
- You can also use this submenu to change the sort order from **Ascending** to **Descending** if the column is not currently displayed.

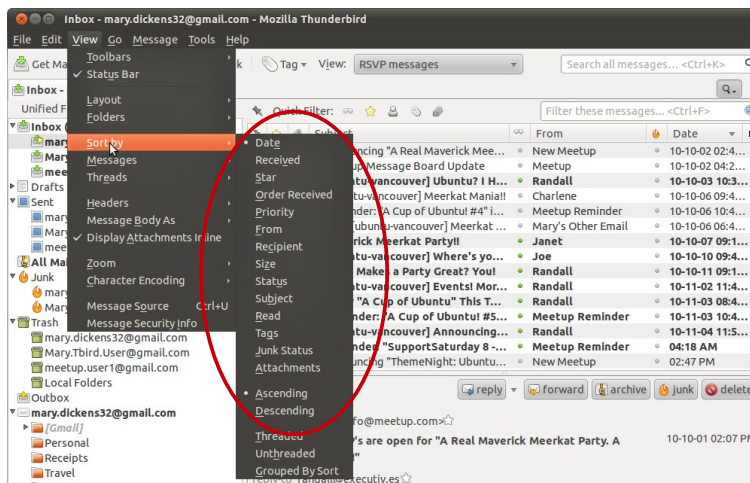


Figure 57: Sort by menu

Tip!

While you can sort by columns that are not being displayed, it can get quite confusing.

Mary prefers to display the columns that she is sorting so she can see at a glance why May 6th insists on coming between June 8th and June 9th.

Grouping your email messages

Earlier, we learned that you can sort your email messages by any of the columns that you can display in the **Message List Pane**. Well, you can also group your email messages by the same columns. When you group your email messages, they are all listed under a common entry in the **Message List Pane** that you can expand to view, or collapse to hide. You can also group your email messages by conversation with the **Thread** column.

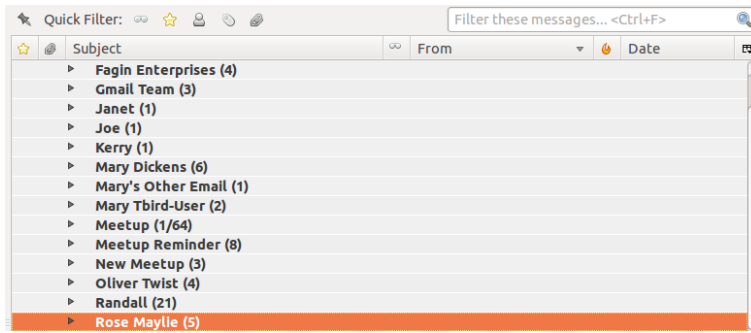


Figure 58: Email messages grouped by sender

When Mary is working in an email folder overflowing with email messages, it helps if she can group them into categories. Mary usually sorts the email messages in her Saved folder by date, but that only puts the most recent messages at the bottom or top of the list. Unfortunately, that list of email messages often gets pretty long. What Mary does to help sort her email messages is to also group them by date. That way, instead of scrolling through hundreds of messages, May can quickly display only email messages that she received today, yesterday, last week, or two weeks ago. Another common grouping that Mary uses is by the sender of the email messages. When Mary groups her email messages by who sent them, she can see at a glance all the email messages from her boss... or she can ignore all the email messages from her boss simply by collapsing the group! However, ignoring email messages from your boss is generally not a good idea.

For an example of grouping your email messages, let's see how to group email message by date. You can use the same process to group your email messages by any of the **Message List Pane** columns. If the column you want to group by is not showing, see [“To add a column to the Message List Pane”](#) on page 25 for details on how to display it.

To group email messages by date

1. Sort the email by date by clicking on the **Date** column header.

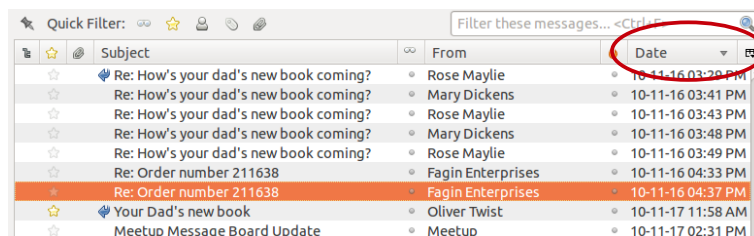


Figure 59: Email messages sorted by date

2. On the **View** menu, point to **Sort by** and then click **Grouped By Sort**.

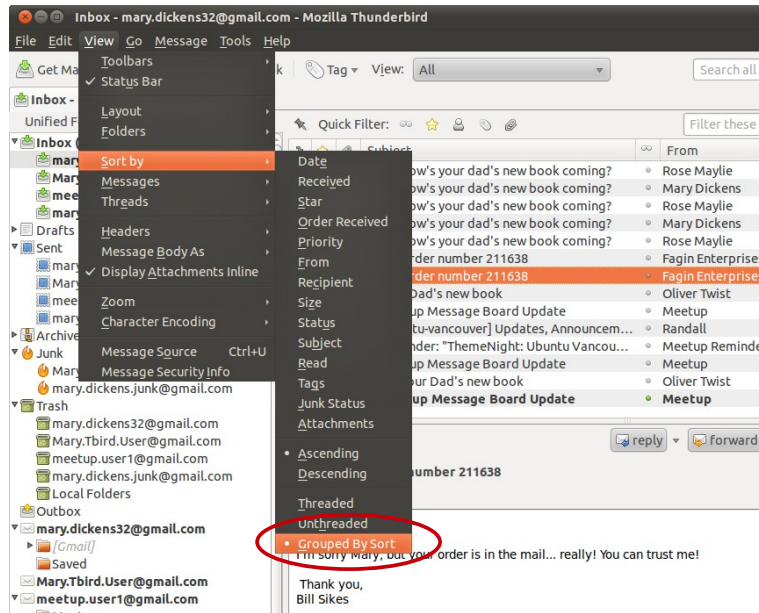


Figure 60: Sort by submenu

3. Click on the triangle beside the grouped email messages to display or hide them.

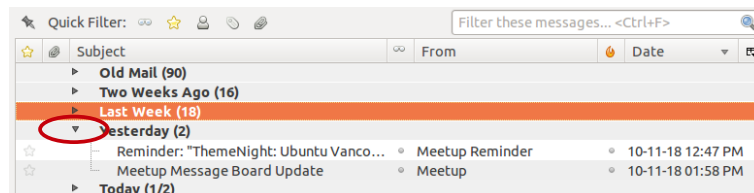


Figure 61: Grouped by date

To remove the grouped display of your email messages, just click on another column header in the **Message List Pane** and the grouping will be removed, leaving the messages sorted by whichever column you just clicked.

Another method of grouping your email messages is by thread. We learned at the beginning of this chapter that Thunderbird can open email message conversations in a new tab that shows only a message and its replies. If you skipped that section, you can take a look at, “[Viewing email messages in a conversation](#)” on page 7 for more information. Well, you can also group email messages by thread in the **Message List Pane**. If you have a lot of back-and-forth email conversations, your email folders can get pretty cluttered and it is often difficult finding specific replies in a conversation. Grouping by thread can help to keep the clutter to a minimum.

To group email messages by thread

- Click the **Thread** column header in the **Message List Pane** to toggle the **Thread View** grouping on or off.

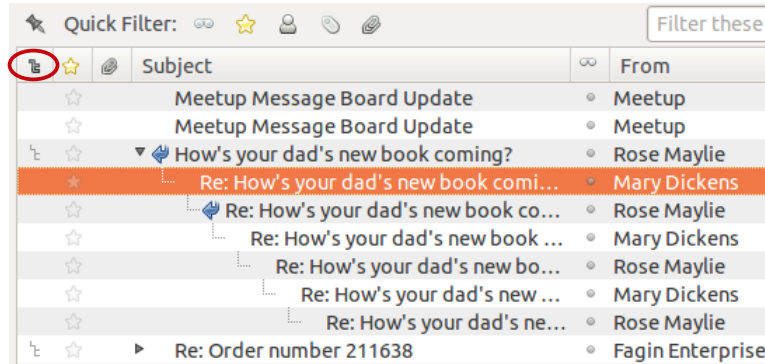


Figure 62: Thread view grouping

4.2 Marking and Tagging email messages

Mary is now down to a mere one-hundred, or so, email messages in her Inboxes. Some of the email messages are important, some are time sensitive and need to be addressed immediately, some are work related, and others are personal. Without looking at the subject, sender, and sometimes the body of her email messages, it can be tough to tell which are which. Mary looks at all the email messages in her Inboxes, but sometimes she is in 'scanning' mode; just seeing what a message is about and then moving on to the next.

As Mary scans through her email messages, she can mark them as read or unread, assign **Stars** to them, and **Tag** them with different colours. That way, Mary can see at a glance which she needs to reread, which are time sensitive, which relate to projects she is working on, and which are from her Mother wondering if she has found a potential husband yet.

Marking email messages as read or unread

Often, as Mary works her way through new email messages, she comes across ones that she doesn't have time to read all the way through. Once she has viewed an email message, however, Thunderbird marks it as read. In these cases, Mary can mark the email message as unread again.

There are other times that Mary wants to mark email messages as read without even viewing them. Mary can usually assume that ninety percent of the email messages from her mother are tips about prospective husbands, and doesn't want them cluttering up in her list of unread messages. Her mother seems to find a new man for her to marry at every function she attends!

To mark email messages as read or unread

1. Select the email message(s) to mark as read or unread in the **Message List Pane**.
2. Right-click on a highlighted email message, point to **Mark** and click **As Read** to toggle the *status*.
 - Read messages will have a check mark beside **As Read**.

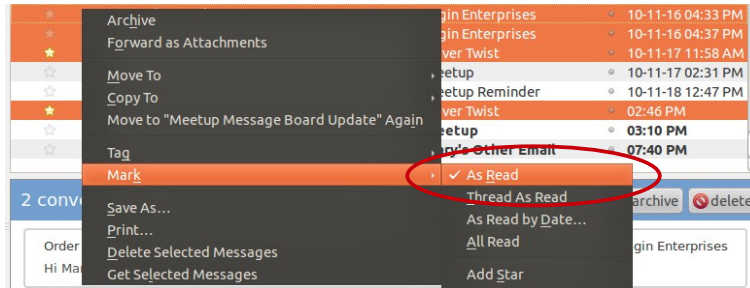


Figure 63: Marking email messages as unread

Marking email message threads as read

You can mark an entire email message thread as read, as well. The process is more or less the same as marking individual email messages as read. Unlike marking individual email messages, however, you can not use this command to mark threads as unread. For that you need to mark each email message in the thread as unread.

To mark email message threads as read

- In the **Message List Pane**, right-click on any email message in the thread, point to **Mark** on the shortcut menu and click **Thread As Read**.

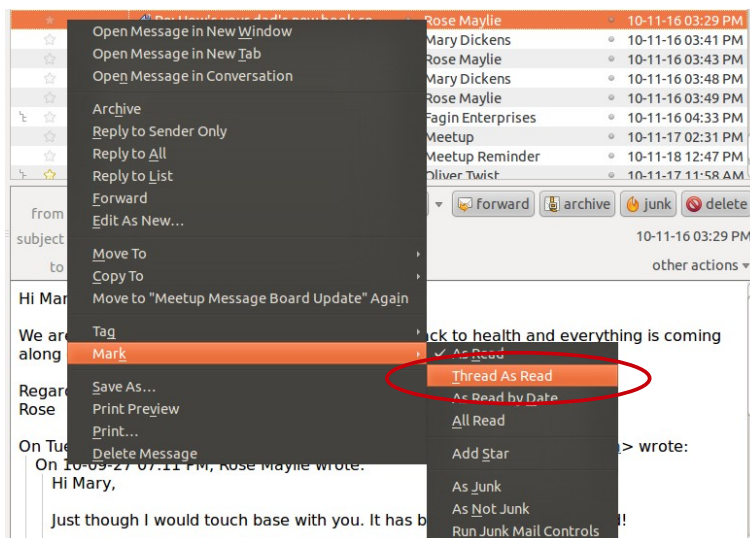


Figure 64: Mark a thread as read

Tip!

You don't have to have the email messages grouped in threads to mark them all as read, but it may help to see which messages you are marking.

For information about how to group messages in threads, see "To group email messages by thread" on page 29.

Marking email messages as read based on their date

Another useful tool that Thunderbird provides is the ability to mark email messages as read based on their date. When Mary started her journey down the path of taming her email, she had hundreds of email messages in each of her Inboxes. She had already read most of these messages in her other *email clients* before importing them to Thunderbird, but as they were new to Thunderbird, they were marked as unread.

Mary can tell Thunderbird to automatically mark the email messages in a folder, or group of **Unified Folders**, that were received between a range of dates as read. For the newly imported email messages in all her Inboxes, if Mary is displaying **Unified Folders**, she can mark them all as read with one command.

To mark email messages in all your Inboxes as read based on their date

1. Make sure you are displaying the **Unified Folders** view in the **Folder Pane**.
 - For more information about displaying **Unified Folders**, see “[Grouping email folders with Unified Folders](#)” on page 8.
 - If you are not displaying **Unified Folders**, you can still run this on individual folders.
2. Click on the *parent* **Inbox** so you are showing the email messages from all the Inboxes.

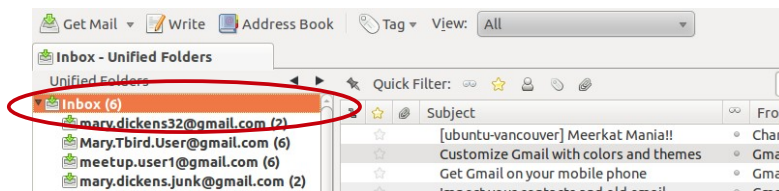


Figure 65: Displaying email messages from all the Inboxes

3. Right-click on any email message in the **Message List Pane**, point to **Mark** and click **As Read by Date**.

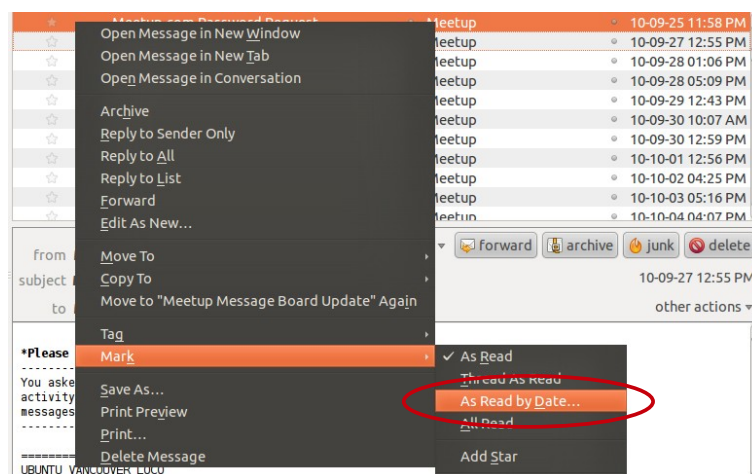


Figure 66: Mark email messages as read by date

4. Enter the range of dates for the email you want to mark as read in the **Mark Messages as Read by Date** dialog box and click **OK**.
 - Enter the dates as YYYY-MM-DD

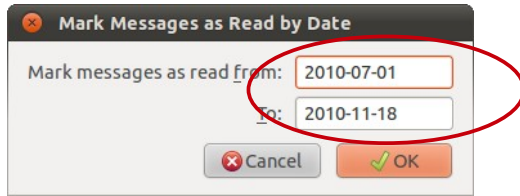


Figure 67: Mark Messages as Read by Date

Automatically marking email messages as read

As Mary views email messages, Thunderbird automatically marks them as read, but Mary would like a few seconds to see what an email message is about before it is marked as read. Mary likes to quickly scan through the new email messages in her Inbox looking for important ones to deal with first before going back and reading the others.

To give her the time to see what an email message is about before marking it as read, Mary can change the default behaviour of Thunderbird so that it waits a few seconds before changing it.

To automatically mark email messages as read

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Advanced** and select the **Reading & Display** tab.

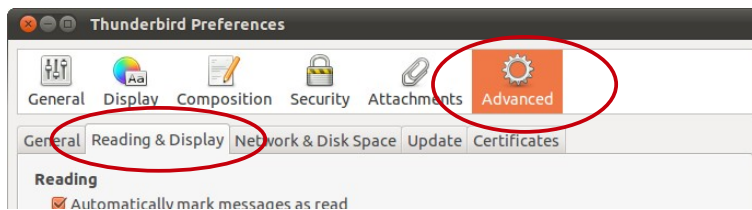


Figure 68: Reading & Display tab

3. Select **After displaying for x seconds** and enter the number of seconds before Thunderbird marks email messages as read when you are viewing them.

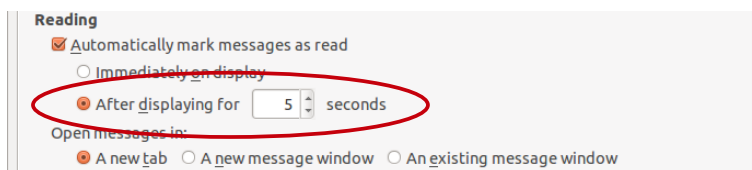


Figure 69: Reading & Display tab

Using Stars to mark important email messages

You can assign **Stars** to email messages as visual reminders, for searching, or to tell Thunderbird that they are important. The **Star** icon is displayed in the **Message List Pane** beside the email message. If the **Star** icon is filled in, it applies to the message. Thunderbird will also display **Stars** for email messages marked as **Starred** in *Gmail* that are downloaded to Thunderbird.

There are a quite a few things you can do with **Starred** email messages:

- You can assign **Stars** to email messages as a quick way to mark messages that you want to be reminded about.
- You can display **Starred** email messages using the **Quick Filter**. For more information about the **Quick Filter**, see *“Finding email messages using the Quick Filter”* on page 16.
- You can filter **Global Search** results to show only **Starred** email messages. For more information about filtering **Global Search** results, see *“Filtering Global Search results”* on page 11.
- You can use the **Search Messages** tool to search for **Starred** email messages. For more information about the **Search Messages** tool, see *“Advanced searches using the Search Messages tool”* on page 12.
- You can create a **Saved Search** folder to display all of your **Starred** email messages. For more information about **Saved Search** folders, see *“Creating a Saved Search folder”* on page 14.
- You can create **Message Filters** that look for Gmail **Starred** email messages and do things like move them to other folders, assign **Tags** to them, etc. For more information about creating **Message Filters**, see *“Filtering email messages”* on page 39.
- You can assign **Stars** to email messages that you don't want Thunderbird to automatically delete. For more information about automatically deleting email messages, see *“Automatically deleting old email messages”* on page 58.

To assign a Star to an email message

- Click the **Star** icon in the **Starred** column of the **Message List Pane** to toggle the **Star** on or off.

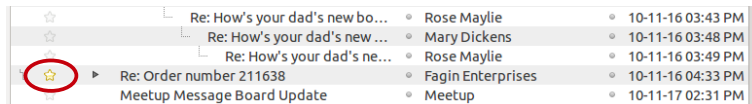


Figure 70: Assigning a Star to an email message

Stars of a different sort

Thunderbird also displays **Stars** beside email addresses in the **Message Header**, but these are not the same as **Stars** assigned to email messages. Instead, the **Stars** in the **Message Header** show whether an email address is in your **Address Book**.

If the **Star** is filled in, the contact is in your **Address Book** and clicking on it allows you to edit the contact's details. If the **Star** is just an outline, the email address is not in your **Address Book** and you can click on it to add a new contact.

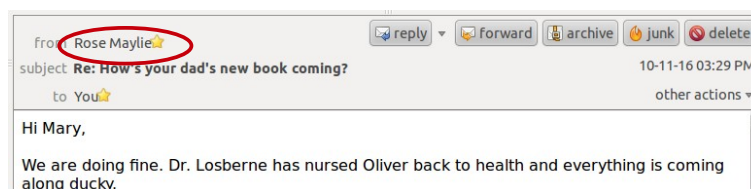


Figure 71: Message Header Stars

Tagging email messages to categorize them

Which email messages are important, which are from friends, which should be dealt with immediately, and which are from your Mother? By simply looking at the list of email messages in a folder you might not be able to tell which is which. When Mary reads the email messages in her Inboxes, she likes to assign colours to the listing in the **Message List Pane**, depending on which category they fall under. That way, after she has finished her quick scan of the new messages, she can see at a glance which she needs to deal with first because they are time sensitive, which are work related, which are from friends, etc. To do this, Mary attaches **Tags** to the email messages.

Tags are a list of categories that have colours associated with them. The email messages that have **Tags** are displayed with the matching colour in the **Message List Pane**, and when Mary reads a message, the **Tag** is shown in the **Message Header**. If an email message has more than one **Tag** assigned to it, the colour shown in the **Message List Pane** is of the highest priority **Tag**, but the **Message Header** shows all the **Tags** assigned. For more information about **Tag** priority, see the next section, “*Tag priority*”.

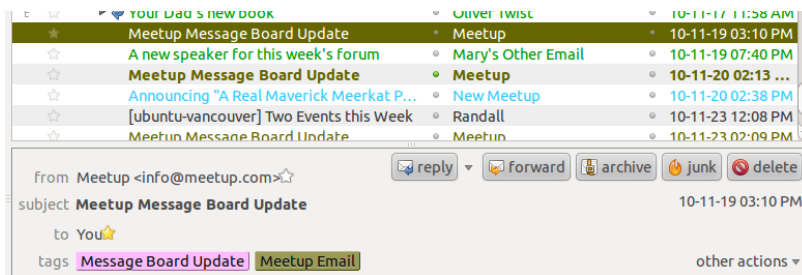


Figure 72: Message List pane and Message Header with Tags

By default, Thunderbird already has some **Tags** created for you. In order of priority, they are:

- Important
- Work
- Personal
- To Do
- Later

You create as many **Tags** as you want, or even modify or delete the default **Tags**. Mary creates **Tags** to identify any common email messages that she receives regularly. For instance, so that she doesn't lose messages from meetup.com that request an RSVP, Mary has decided to create a **Tag** that colours them light blue in the **Message List Pane**.

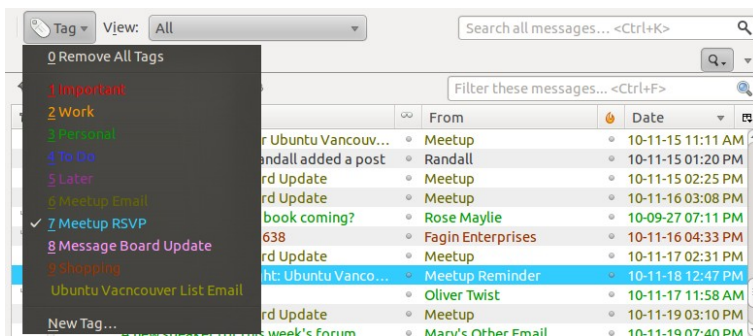


Figure 73: Meetup.com RSVP Tag

Tag priority

The higher a **Tag** is in the list of **Tags**, the higher its priority. If an email message has more than one **Tag** assigned to it, the colour of the message in the **Message List Pane** will be of the **Tag** with the highest priority. The default Thunderbird **Tags** have predefined priorities assigned to them so they will always be at the top of the list, with any **Tags** you create prioritized alphabetically below them. In the following example, the **Important** **Tag** has the highest priority and **Ubuntu Vancouver List Email** has the lowest.

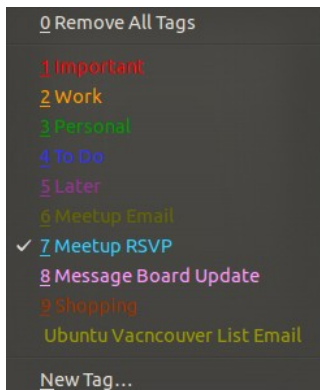


Figure 74: Tag list

Tip!

To sort new **Tags** non-alphabetically, make the first character a number. e.g., *1 Shopping* will place it just after the last default **Tag**.

Once a **Tag** is created, however, changing its name does not change its priority.

To add or remove email message Tags

1. Select the email message(s) in the **Message List Pane**.
2. Click the **Tag** button on the Thunderbird toolbar and select the **Tag** you want to add to or remove from the email message(s).
 - The **Tags** assigned to the email message(s) have check marks beside them.

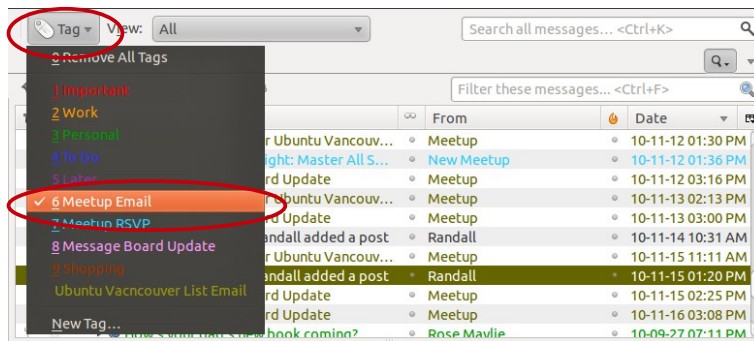


Figure 75: Selecting a Tag to remove from an email message

To remove all Tags from email messages

1. Select the email message(s) you want to remove all the **Tags** from in the **Message List Pane**.
2. Click the **Tag** button on the Thunderbird toolbar and select **Remove All Tags**.

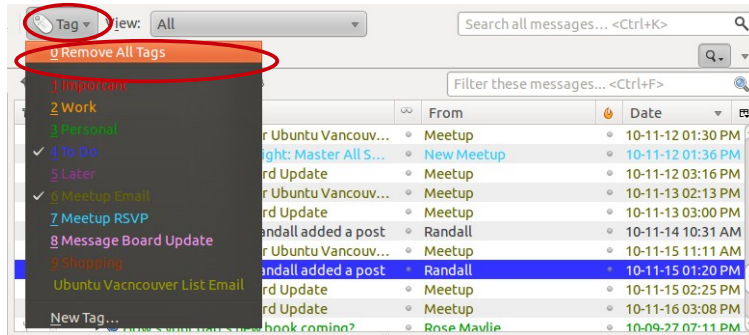


Figure 76: Removing all Tags from selected email messages

To create new Tags

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Display** and select the **Tags** tab.

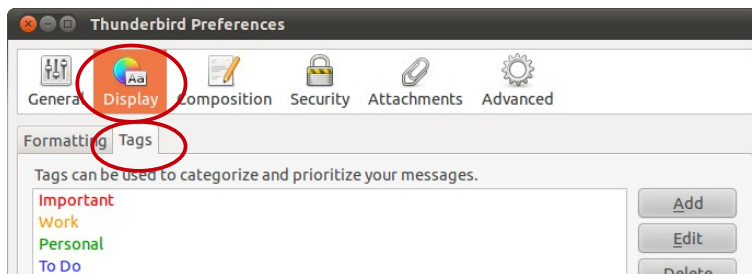


Figure 77: Display Preferences Tags tab

3. Click **Add**.

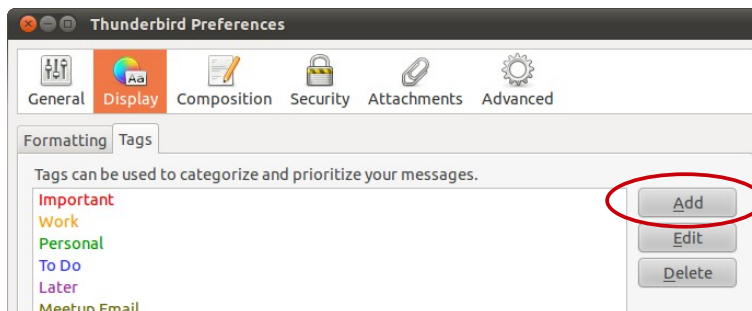


Figure 78: Display Preferences Tags tab

4. Type the name of the new **Tag**, click the grey box to the right of the name and select a colour for the **Tag**.

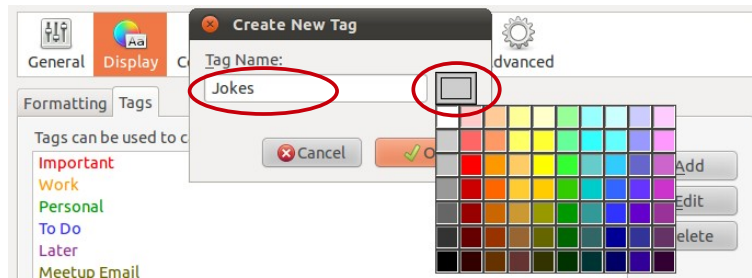


Figure 79: New Tag name and colour

To create a new Tag while reading an email message

1. While reading an email message, click the **Tag** button on the Thunderbird toolbar and select **New Tag**.

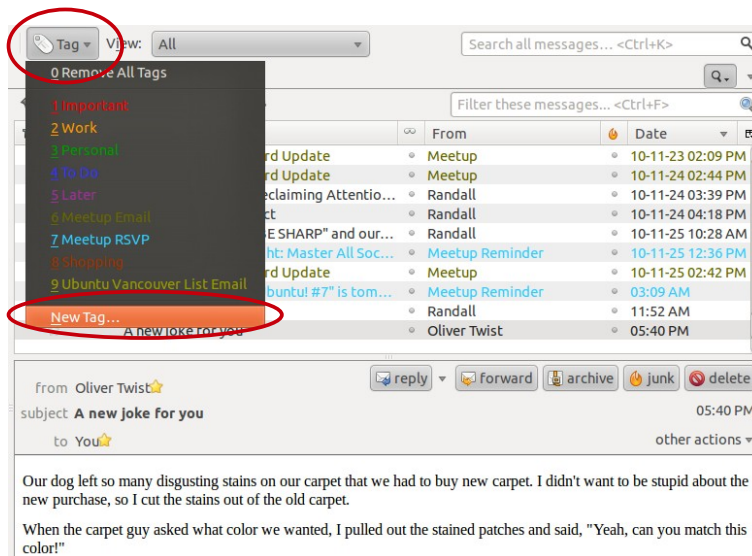


Figure 80: Add a new Tag to the current email message

2. Type the name of the new **Tag**, click the grey box to the right of the name and select a colour for the **Tag**.

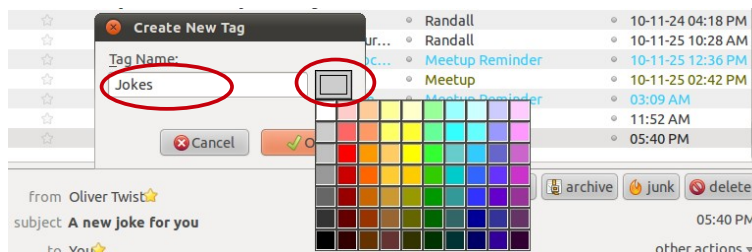


Figure 81: New Tag name and colour

To edit email Tags

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Display** and select the **Tags** tab.

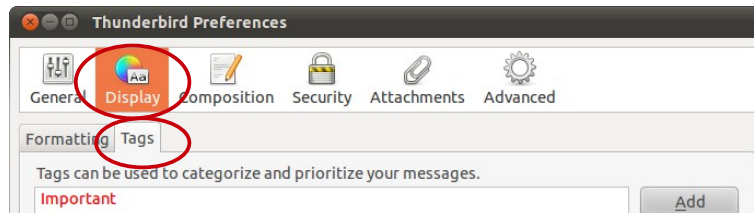


Figure 82: Display Preferences Tags tab

3. Select the **Tag** you want to change and click **Edit**.

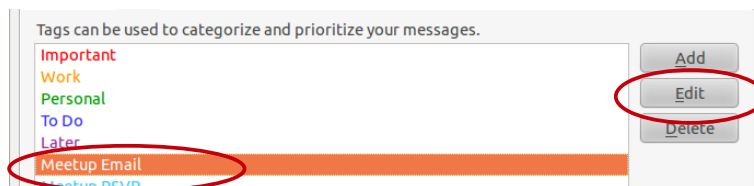


Figure 83: Edit Tag

4. Change the name or colour of the **Tag**.

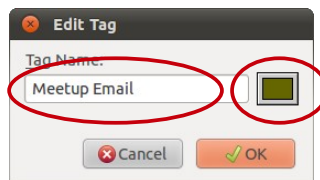


Figure 84: Edit Tag

To delete email Tags

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Display** and select the **Tags** tab.

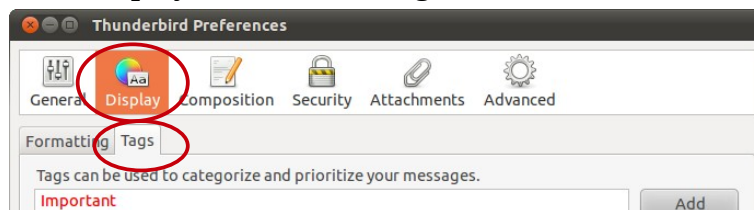


Figure 85: Display Preferences Tags tab

3. Select the **Tag** to remove from the list and click **Delete**.

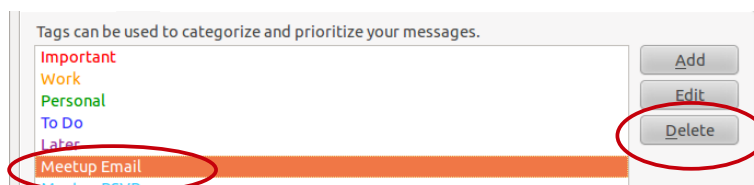


Figure 86: Delete Tag

Tip!

If you delete one of the default Tags, making a new one with the same name will not recreate its priority!

The new Tag will be sorted alphabetically, just like any other non-default Tag.

4.3 Filtering email messages

Even after everything Mary has done to tame her email, each of her Inboxes can still receive dozens of new email messages every day. It takes a lot of valuable time to work her way through them all. To make matters worse, Mary keeps getting junk mail from unsavoury types trying to sell her things that she really doesn't need, or even wants to read about! To help her automatically organize her email messages, and to get rid of some of the junk mail, Mary needs to create some **Message Filters**.

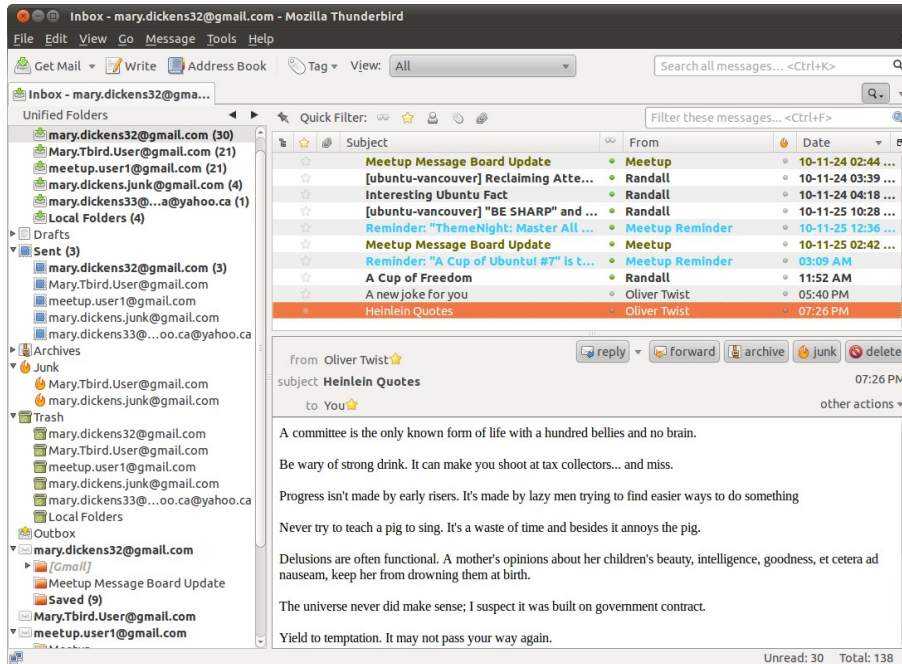


Figure 87: Mary's Inboxes full of email messages

A **Message Filter** reads your email messages, checking them for keywords, who sent them, who they are to, their status, and just about anything else you can check for in an email message. When it finds an email message that matches the **Message Filter**, it will do something to it. For instance, you can create a **Message Filter** that moves email messages from meetup.com to a folder called Meetup Email Messages. Or you can have a **Message Filter** that reads the body of email messages looking for the words “someone you should meet” and automatically deletes them if they are from your mother!

Deciding how to filter your email messages

The first thing you need to do when creating **Message Filters**, is to plan! Just like the old adage, “measure twice, cut once”, you need to carefully think through when you want the **Message Filters** to run, what you want to filter your email messages for, and then what you want to do with them.

When to run Message Filters

The first thing you need to do, is to decide when you want the **Message Filters** to run. For each **Message Filter** you create, you tell it when you want it to act.



There are five ways to run **Message Filters**:

- When Thunderbird checks for new email messages.
 - This allows a **Message Filter** to do its thing automatically before the email messages make it to your Inbox. For instance, you can have email messages from friends automatically put in their own folder.
- When you manually run **Message Filters**.
 - When you tell a **Message Filter** to run manually, new email messages arrive in your Inbox so you can look at them before you run **Message Filters**. This way, you can do things like add **Tags** that the **Message Filter** looks for, or mark them as **Junk**.
- When Thunderbird checks for new email messages or when you manually run **Messages Filters**.
 - This allows a **Message Filter** to run automatically when Thunderbird checks for new email messages, and it will also run when you manually run **Message Filters**.
- When Thunderbird checks for new email messages, but after **Junk Mail Controls** have checked the messages. (Thunderbird calls this, “*after classification*”)
 - You may want to run **Message Filters** on email messages that Thunderbird marks as **Junk**, automatically deleting particularly distasteful ones. For more information about email messages marked as **Junk**, see “*Using the Junk Mail Controls*” on page 50.
- When Thunderbird checks for new email messages or when you manually run **Message Filters**, but after the **Junk Mail Controls** have checked the messages. (Thunderbird calls this, “*after classification*”)
 - You can use this to automatically delete email messages that Thunderbird marks as **Junk**, and to delete distasteful email that sneak past the **Junk Mail Controls** into your Inbox.

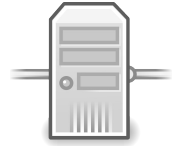
What email messages to filter

There are many different strategies you can use to filter your email messages. For instance, you can filter a message based on:

- Who the email message is from.
- Who the email message is to.
- Where the email message is from.
- Words or phrases in the email message subject.
- Words or phrases in the body of the email message.
- The date of the email message.
- How old the email message is.
- The **Priority** of the email message.

- **Tags** assigned to the email message.
- If the email message has a Gmail **Star**.
- The size of the email message.

You can also create custom **Message Filters** to look for certain things hidden away in the data that normally only *email servers* look at, but that is way beyond the scope of this guide. Suffice it to say, that if it pertains to an email message, you can create a **Message Filter** to search for it and then do something to it.



What to do with email messages that match your Message Filter

Doing something to an email message; that's the next thing you need to plan. Some of the things you can tell Thunderbird to do with an email message that matches a **Message Filter** are:

- Move the email message to another folder.
- Copy the email message to another folder.
- Forward the email messages to another email address.
- Automatically send a response to the email sender. (e.g. *Vacation response*)
- Mark the email message as read.
- Add a **Star** to the email message.
- Set the **Priority** of the email message.
- Set the **Junk** status of the email message.
- Delete the email message.
- Delete the email message from the email server.
- Retrieve the entire email message from the email server.

Some common Message Filtering strategies

The most common strategy for using **Message Filters** is move matching email messages from your Inbox to other folders. This is a great way to keep the clutter in your Inbox to a minimum. If you receive a lot of email messages from meetup.com, why not have Thunderbird automatically move them into a folder called Meetup Email Messages? That is what Mary has decided to do. Mary also uses **Message Filters** to move work-related email messages to a folder called Work, messages from friends to a folder called Friends, and messages from her family to one called Family.



If you don't want to scatter the email messages from your Inbox all over the place before you read them, another common method of filtering messages is to assign **Tags**, **Priorities** or **Stars** to them. You can still see all your messages in one place, but you don't have to manually categorize each one.

After reading them, however, you should still move them out of your Inbox or delete them. It is not a good practice to keep everything in the Inbox as it increases the load on Thunderbird and may lead to corrupted email messages.

Mary actually uses a combination of these two strategies. In addition to moving work-related email messages to her Work folder, she also assigns them **Tags** indicating the project they are related to. If it is an important project, she might also set the **Priority** of the email messages to **High** or **Highest**. For really important email messages, Mary will add a **Star** to them. That way she can quickly find them in her Work folder.



There are many ways to filter email messages:

- Often, business email messages are assigned a **Priority** when they are sent. You can use this to group them with **Tags**, **Stars** or in their own folders.
- Look for frequently used words or phrases in the subject lines to group or **Tag** email messages.
- Filter email messages from friends telling you the latest jokes into their own folders.
- Don't use the Inbox as a to-do list to yourself, instead use the word "To-Do" in the email message subject and filter them into another folder.
- As you read email messages, assign **Tags** like, "Review Daily", "Review Weekends", "Review Someday", and "Review Optional" so you can then use a **Message Filter** to move them out of the Inbox to deal with later.
- Automatically forward personal email messages sent to a work account to your home email address and then delete them from the work Inbox.

Creating Message Filters

When you create a **Message Filter** you are only creating it for a single email account. If you have more than one email account set up in Thunderbird and want to filter them all for the same thing, you need to create a **Message Filter** for each.

There are two ways you can create a **Message Filter**. You can create one from scratch, or you can create one from the sender of the email message you are currently reading. However, creating a **Message Filter** from the current email message isn't much different than creating one from scratch. You get the same window, but the sender's email address is already listed in the search criteria, what Thunderbird calls **Filter Rules**. If you have read the section about "[*Advanced searches using the Search Messages tool*](#)" on page 12, you will recognize the layout of the **Filter Rules** window as it does the same thing; it searches email messages for matches to the search criteria. Unlike using the **Search Messages** tool that just displays matching email messages, **Message Filters** also have section where you define what to do with email messages they find.

To create a new Message Filter

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Message Filters**.
2. Select the email account you want to create the **Message Filter** for in the drop-down list.

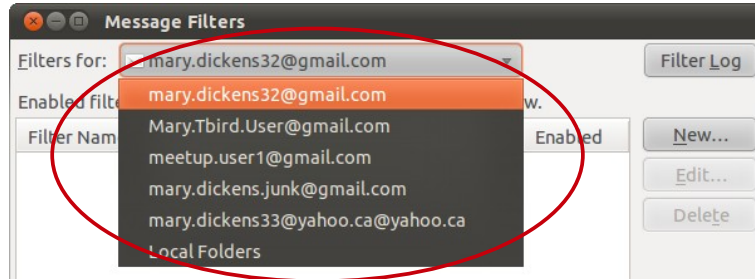


Figure 88: Message Filters

3. Click the **New** button.

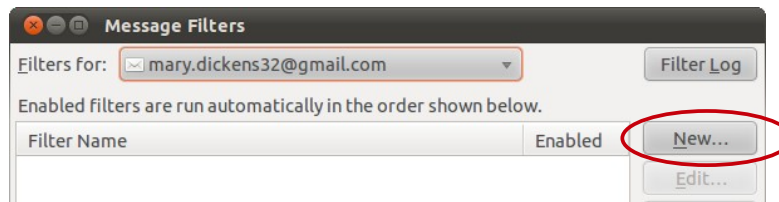


Figure 89: Message Filters

4. Give the **Message Filter** a name that you will recognize.

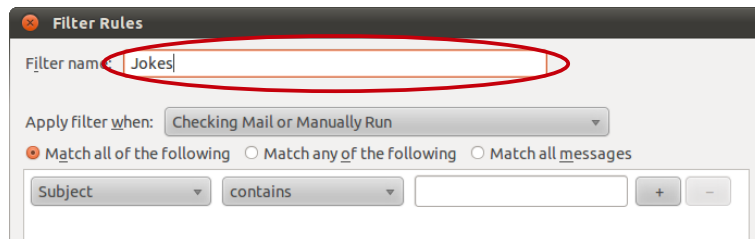


Figure 90: Filter Rules

5. Select when to run the **Message Filter**.

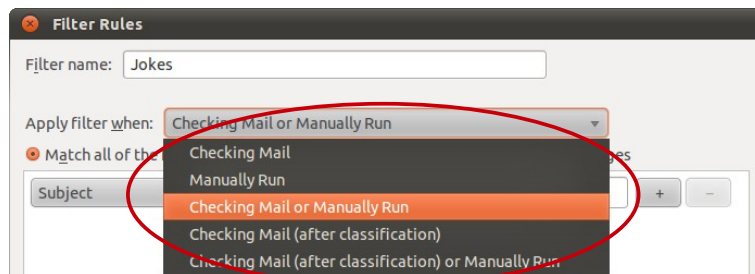


Figure 91: Filter Rules

6. Select how the **Message Filter** will match the **Filter Rules**.

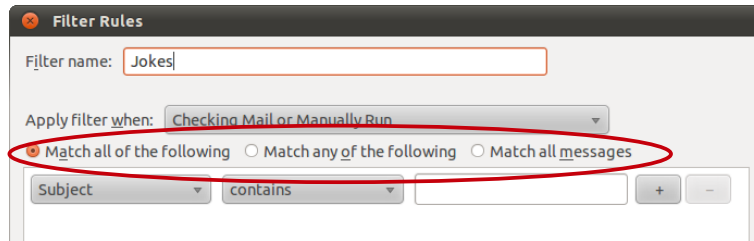


Figure 92: Filter Rules

7. Click the first drop-down list and select what part of the email message to search in.

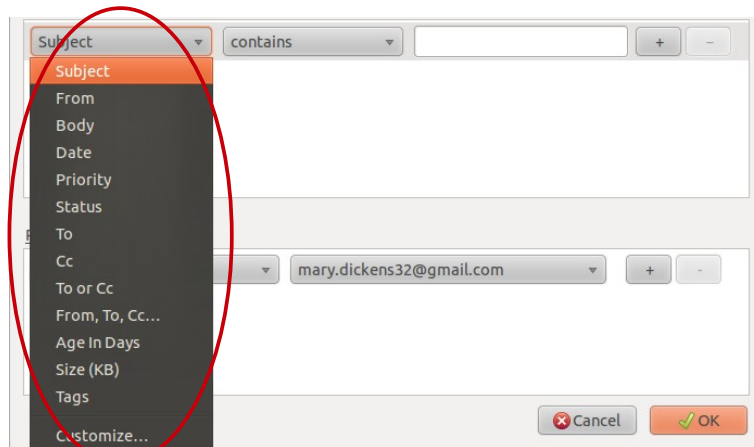


Figure 93: Filter Rules

8. Click the second drop-down list and select how you want to match the **Filter Rule**.

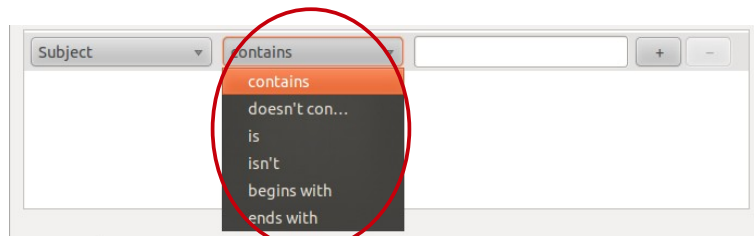


Figure 94: Filter Rules

9. Type the search criteria in the text box or select it from the drop-down list, depending on what is being searched for.

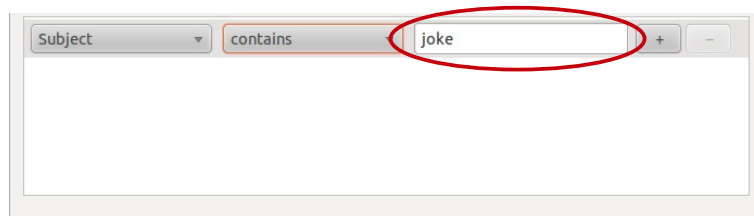


Figure 95: Filter Rules

Tip!

- Match all of the following finds messages that match all the Filter Rules.
- Match any of the following finds messages that match at least one Filter Rule.
- Match all messages finds all messages, even if there are no matches to Filter Rules.

10. Click the plus sign to add more **Filter Rules**.

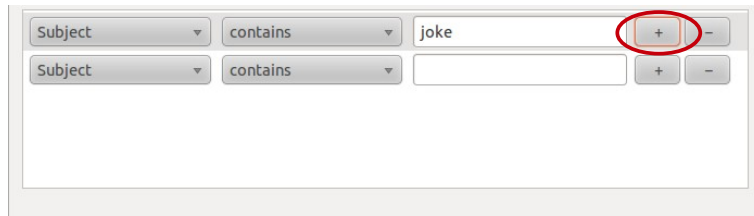


Figure 96: Filter Rules

11. Click the first drop-down list in the **Perform these actions** section and select what you want the **Message Filter** to do with matching email messages.

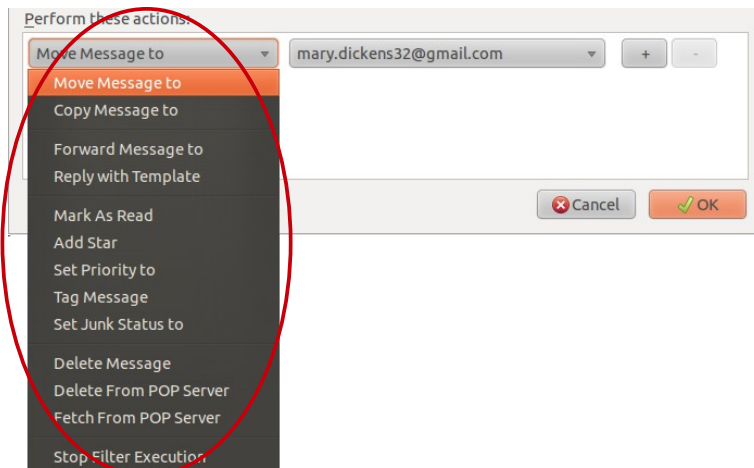


Figure 97: Filter actions

12. Click the second drop-down list and further define the what you want done with the email messages, if applicable.

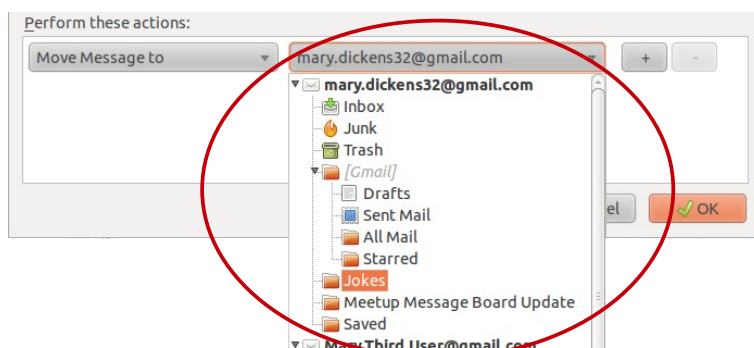


Figure 98: Filter actions

Tip!

Depending on what you select in the first drop-down box, there might not be a second drop-down box. For instance, if you tell the **Message Filter** to delete matching email messages, you don't have to tell it anything else.

- Click the plus sign to add more actions you want the **Message Filter** to perform on matching email messages.

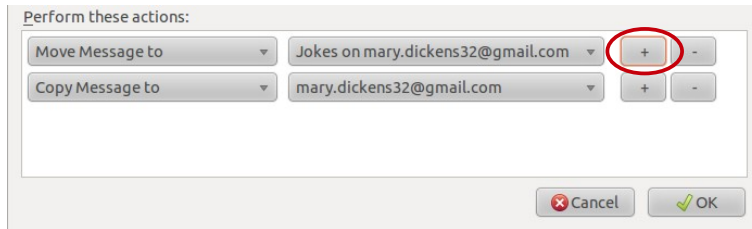


Figure 99: Filter actions

To create a Message Filter from the sender of the current email message

- Right-click on the sender's name or email address in the **Message Header** and click **Create Filter From**. The **Filter Rules** window will open with the sender's email address already filled in for you. The rest of the steps are the same as those in, “To create a new Message Filter” on page 43.

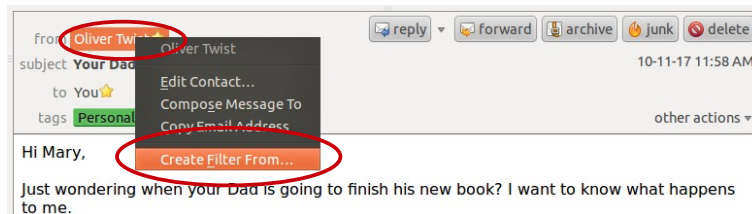


Figure 100: Create a filter from an email message

Message Filter order

When Thunderbird checks an email message, it runs each **Message Filter** in the order it appears in the **Message Filters** window, from top to bottom. If one **Message Filter** marks an email message **High** priority, it may get changed if the next **Message Filter** says it should be marked **Low** priority. The second **Message Filter** overwrites the change the first made. This is why Thunderbird allows you to change the order of the **Message Filters**.

To change the order Message Filters are run

- On the **Tools** menu, click **Message Filters**.
- Select the account you want to change the order of the **Message Filters** for.

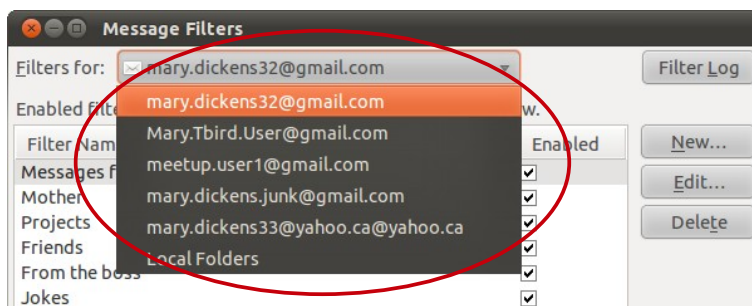


Figure 101: Message Filters

3. Select a **Message Filter** and move it up or down in the list using the **Move Up** and **Move Down** buttons.

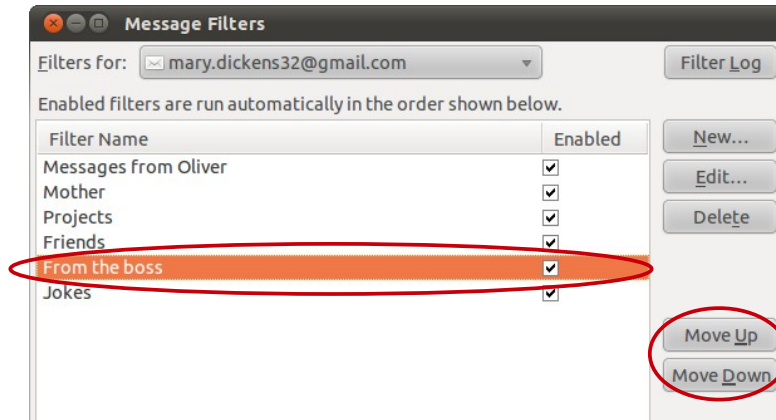


Figure 102: Message Filters

Stopping further Message Filter checks on a match

Sometimes, you might want Thunderbird to stop checking for matches when an email message matches a **Message Filter**. Say, for instance, you have a **Messages Filter** that sets the **Priority** of email messages from your boss as **Highest**, and you have another one that sets messages with the word *joke* in the subject line to the **Lowest** priority. It wouldn't be a good career move if a message from the boss telling you the latest joke gets marked as **Lowest** priority, and you don't read it and applaud him for a his outstanding wit! The way to save your career, and to continue to put food on the table for your family, would be to make sure the **Message Filter** that marks email messages from your boss with the **Highest** priority stops checking the other **Message Filters**. To do this, make the **Message Filter's** last action, **Stop Filter Execution**.

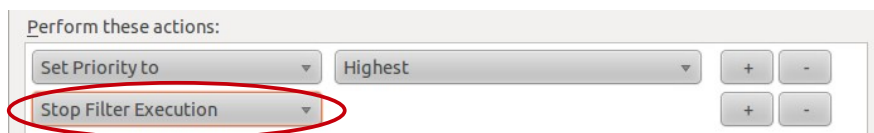


Figure 103: Filter actions

Running Message Filters

If you set a **Message Filter** to run only when checking for mail, it does its thing on new email messages without any prompting from you. If, however, you told a **Message Filter** to only run manually, you need to tell Thunderbird to run it if you want it to work its magic. A **Message Filter** set to run both when Thunderbird checks for mail and manually, will run automatically, but it will also run when you tell the **Message Filters** to run. When you manually run **Message Filters** you can check certain folders, run specific **Message Filters**, or only check selected email messages.

To manually run Message Filters on a folder

1. In the **Folder Pane**, click on a folder you want to run the **Message Filters** in.
 - Note: If you are displaying **Unified Folders**, you need to have a subfolder of the **parent Unified Folder** selected. For more information about **Unified Folders**, see [“Grouping email folders with Unified Folders”](#) on page 8.

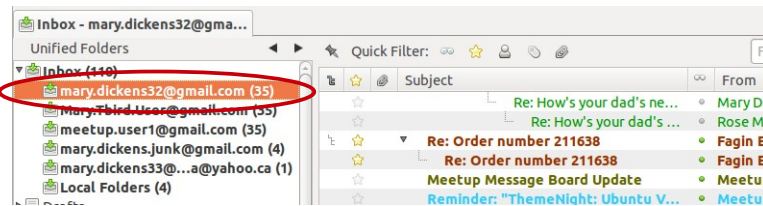


Figure 104: Selected folder to run Message Filters in

2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Run Filters on Folder**.

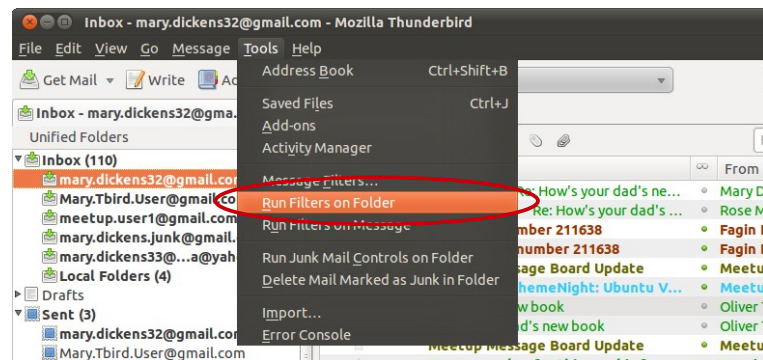


Figure 105: Tools menu

To manually run Message Filters on selected email messages

1. Select one or more email messages in the **Message List Pane**.
2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Run Filters on Message**, or **Run Filters on Selected Messages**.

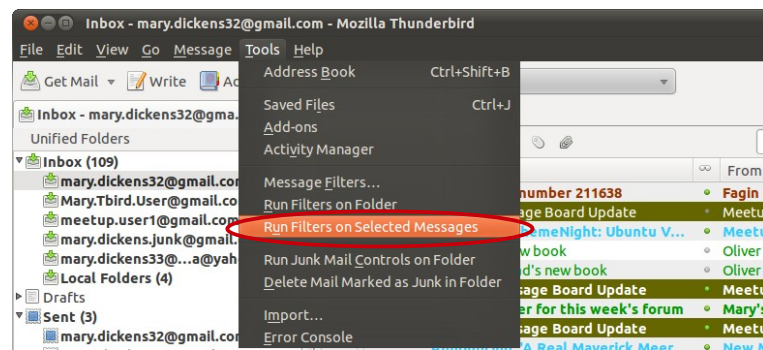


Figure 106: Tools menu

To manually run specific Message Filters on a folder

1. Click on the folder you want to run the **Message Filter(s)** on.
 - Note: If you are displaying **Unified Folders**, you need to have a subfolder of the parent **Unified Folder** selected. For more information about **Unified Folders**, see [“Grouping email folders with Unified Folders”](#) on page 8.

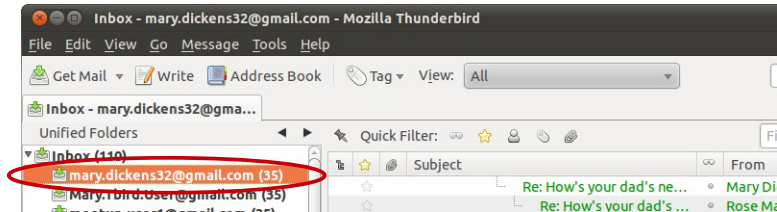


Figure 107: Selected folder to run Message Filters on

2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Message Filters**.

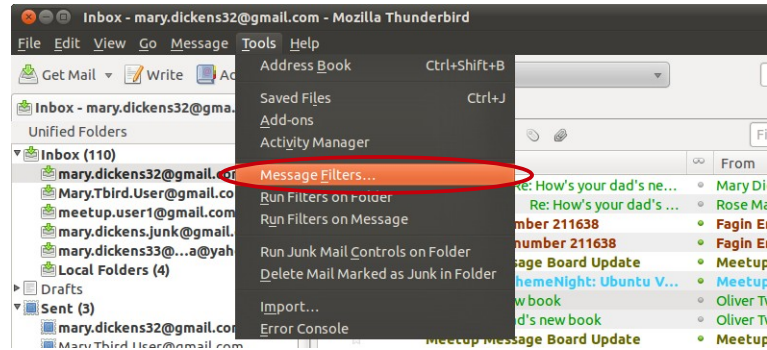


Figure 108: Tools menu

3. In the drop-down list, select the email account that contains the **Message Filter(s)**.

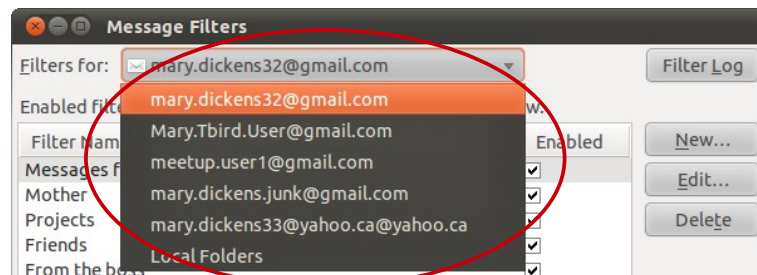


Figure 109: Message Filters

4. Highlight one or more of the **Message Filters**.
 - Holding the CTRL key down when clicking allows you to select multiple filters.

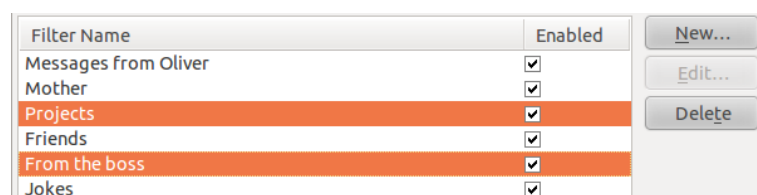


Figure 110: Message Filters

5. Select the folder to run the highlighted **Message Filter(s)** on in the drop-down list and click **Run Now**.

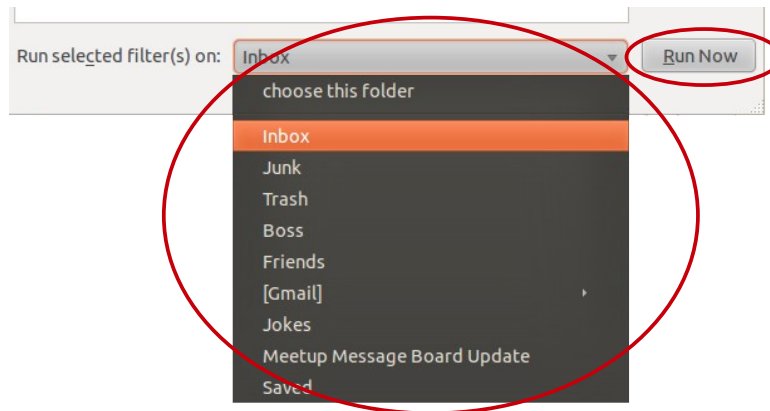
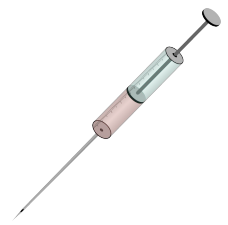


Figure 111: Message Filters

Using the Junk Mail Controls

Mary doesn't really think she needs to consider taking Viagra, so why do so many of her email messages feel she should? Junk mail, or *spam*, is the bane of modern email users. It is so much of a problem, that a whole industry has sprung up to combat it. Not only is spam annoying millions of email users, but in some cases it can be downright dangerous to you or your computer. Spam can contain links to dangerous Web sites or computer viruses, and it can even try to sell you 'prescription drugs' that are not only fake, but they may even harm you. Most email providers try to warn you in the subject line about junk mail, or filter it out before it gets to you, but they aren't perfect.

Once again, Thunderbird comes to the rescue. Using **Junk Mail Controls**, Thunderbird can detect and filter unwanted email messages to save you the aggravation. It's like giving Thunderbird an inoculation to protect it from spam. Instead of letting your email provider delete junk mail, it might even be a good idea to let them mark the junk mail and send it to you anyway. That way, Thunderbird can filter them into a folder so you can review them before deletion. Even the best junk mail filters have been known to make mistakes! It wouldn't be good if email messages from a client get mistakenly deleted because they looked like spam.



Junk Mail Controls are configured separately for each account in Thunderbird. By default, they are turned on but not doing anything. Before Thunderbird can use them to filter spam, you must first train them to figure out what is junk and what isn't. When you train **Junk Mail Controls**, you are teaching them to look for certain words, email addresses or other parts of messages that indicate they might be junk mail. You need to train them by marking both junk mail and email messages that are not junk mail. The more email messages you mark, the more accurate the **Junk Mail Controls** will be. Before the **Junk Mail Controls** can really work effectively, though, you need to mark at least one-hundred messages as **Junk** and one-hundred as **Not Junk**. Once you mark an email message as **Junk** you can delete it as Thunderbird makes a record of the information it needs.

Like any learning in life, it's an ongoing process. You need keep marking new junk email messages that slip through and occasionally mark good messages, just to keep Thunderbird trained. A good habit is to mark a few messages as good every time you mark any as bad.

Once **Junk Mail Controls** are configured, they run automatically when email messages are received and after the **Message Filter** are run. Email messages marked as spam will have a flame icon in the **Junk Status** column of the **Message List Pane** and a bar at the top of the **Message Pane** telling you it is **Junk Mail**.

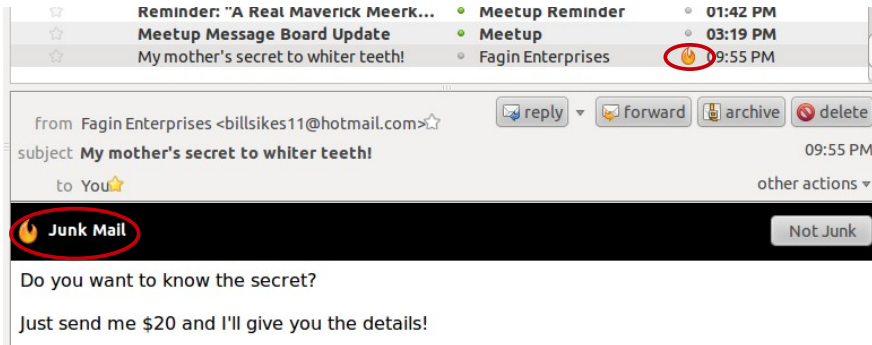


Figure 112: Junk Mail

To configure Junk Mail Controls

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Account Settings**.
2. Click **Junk Settings** for the account you want to configure.

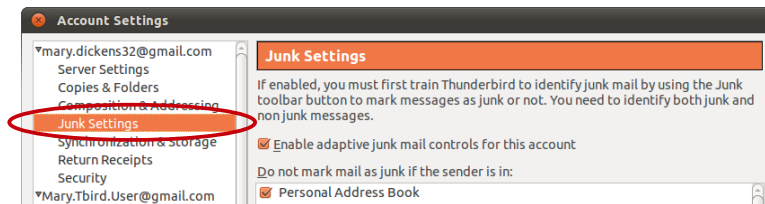


Figure 113: Junk Settings

3. Ensure the **Enable adaptive junk mail controls for this account** check box is selected.

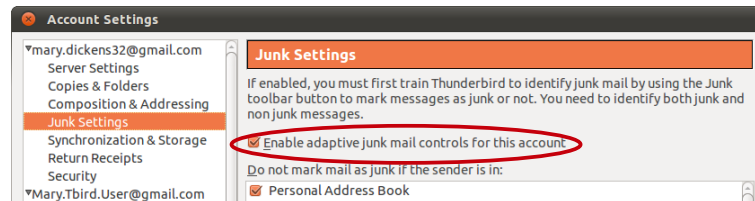


Figure 114: Junk Settings

4. Select the check boxes for **Address Books** that contain email address you don't want marked as **Junk**.

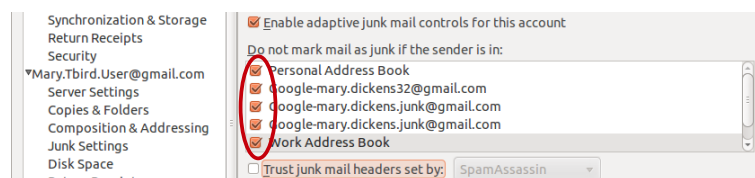


Figure 115: Junk Settings

- If you or your email provider use *SpamAssassin* or *SpamPal* to filter junk mail, select the **Trust junk mail headers set by** check box and choose the product in the drop-down list.

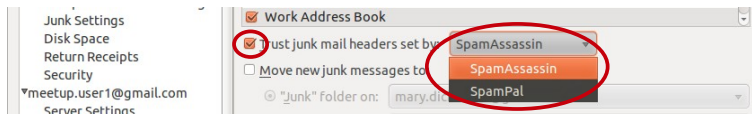


Figure 116: Junk Settings

- Select the **Move new junk messages to** check box and choose where you want the junk mail moved to.

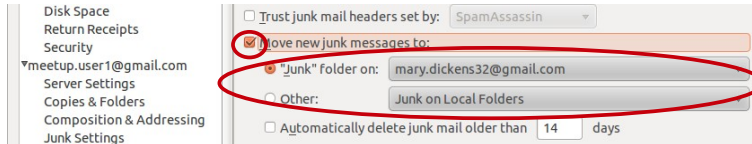


Figure 117: Junk Settings

- Select the **Automatically delete junk mail older than** check box and enter the number of days you want to keep email messages marked as **Junk**.

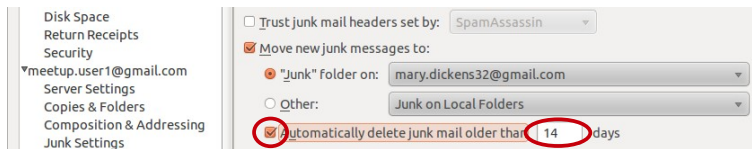


Figure 118: Junk Settings

Tip!

SpamAssassin and SpamPal are two major spam filtering software products that Thunderbird can use information from to filter spam. If you are not sure if your server or email provider uses them, you can leave this unchecked.

Tip!

Be Careful! Even when Thunderbird is well-trained, it can still make mistakes!

To classify email messages as Junk or Not Junk

- Select the email message(s) in the **Message List Pane**.
- Right-click on a selected email message in the **Message List Pane**, point to **Mark** and click **As Junk** or **As Not Junk**.

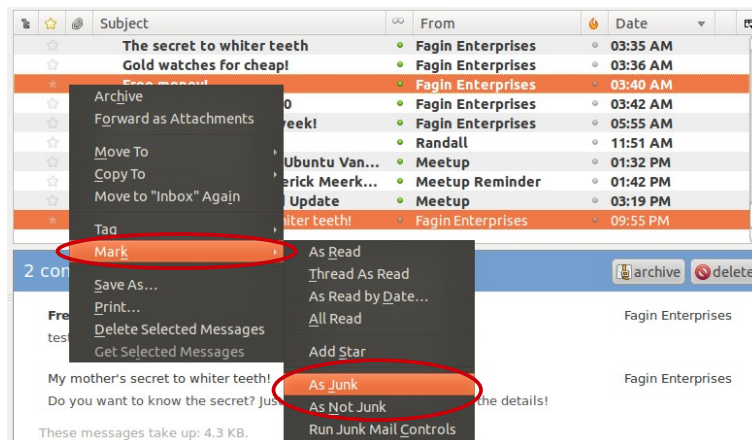
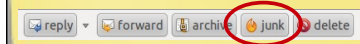


Figure 119: Marking messages as Junk

Tip!

You can also mark the email message you are reading as Junk by clicking the Junk button on the Message Header.



To remove the Junk classification from email messages

1. Select the email message in the **Message List Pane**.
2. Click the **Not Junk** button on **Junk Mail** bar at the top of the **Message Pane**.

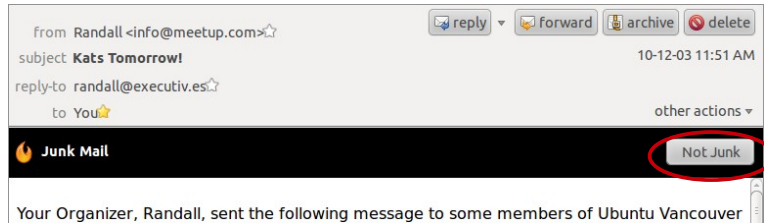


Figure 120: Not Junk button in the Message Pane

To delete all email messages marked as Junk from a folder

1. Select a folder in the **Folder Pane**.
 - Note: If you are displaying **Unified Folders**, you need to have a subfolder of the parent **Unified Folder** selected. For more information about **Unified Folders**, see [“Grouping email folders with Unified Folders”](#) on page 8.

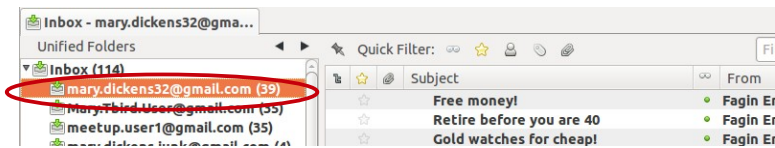


Figure 121: Selected folder to delete junk mail from

2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Delete Mail Marked as Junk in Folder**.

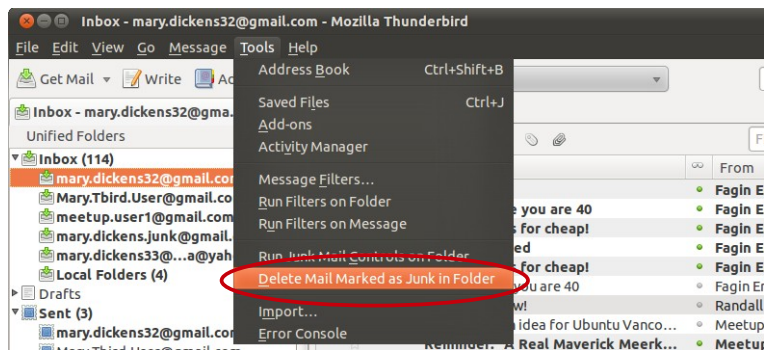


Figure 122: Tools menu

To set default junk mail preferences for all folders

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Security** and select the **Junk** tab.

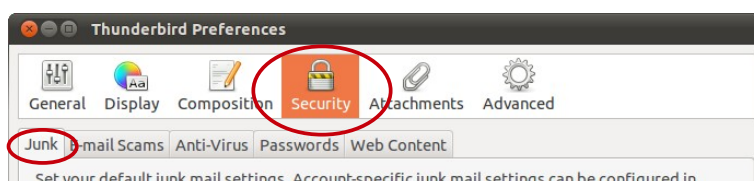


Figure 123: Preferences Junk tab

3. Select the **When I mark messages as junk** check box and choose if you want to **Move them to the accounts "Junk" folder** or **Delete them**.

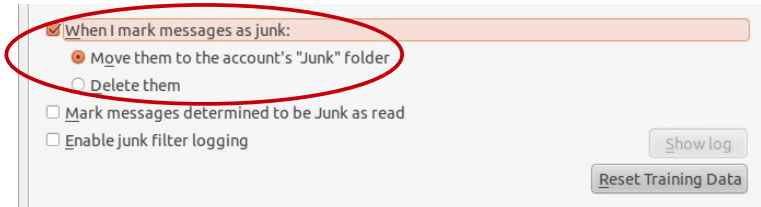


Figure 124: Preferences Junk tab

Tip!
Junk Mail Controls only run on new mail. This setting moves or deletes downloaded messages you mark manually.

4. Select **Mark messages determined to be Junk as read** if you don't want them showing up as unread.

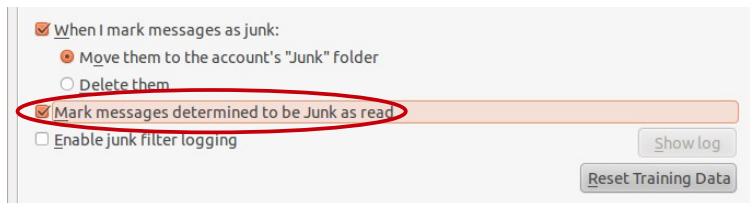


Figure 125: Preferences Junk tab

5. Select **Enable junk filter logging** to keep a record of what the **Junk Mail Controls** do.

- You can click the **Show log** button in this window to display the *log*.
- Thunderbird doesn't always write to the log immediately. If you are finding that the log is not being updated, restarting Thunderbird will force it to write to the log.

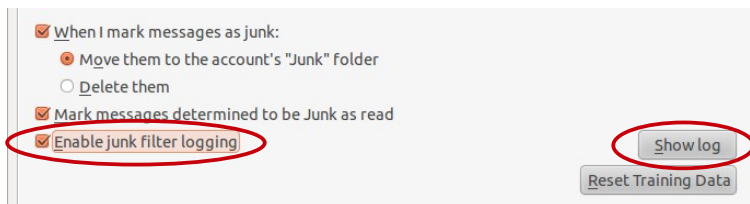


Figure 126: Preferences Junk tab

6. Click **Reset Training Data** to reset everything the **Junk Mail Controls** have learned and start the training from scratch.

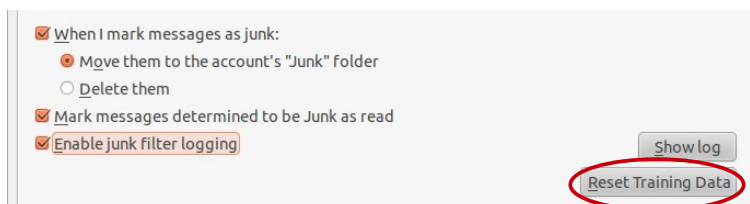
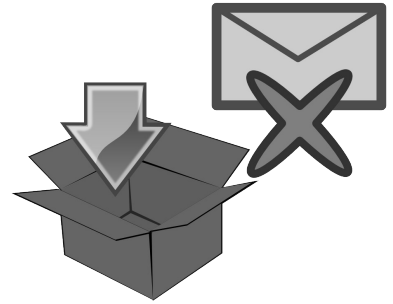


Figure 127: Preferences Junk tab

Tip!
Warning, this resets the Junk Mail Controls for all of your accounts and you must retrain them before they can become effective.

5 Archiving and Deleting Your Email Messages

Once Mary has read and dealt with email messages, she either saves or deletes them. The main thing is that she gets them out of her Inbox. It is important that Mary not store all her email messages in the Inbox as it can cause all sorts of problems and headaches. Storing everything in the Inbox can really slow Thunderbird down when it has to read through 5,000 email messages every time it opens a folder or does a search. That's the headache part, but the biggest reason for not storing everything in the Inbox is that it increases the chances that email folders can become corrupted. The larger the folder, the more chance that something can go wrong. Mary is generally a very polite person, but she is liable to use some very inappropriate language if she suddenly loses 5,000 email messages! Her boss has an even more colourful vocabulary when it comes to problems that affect the business.



Not only should Mary not store all 5,000 email messages in her Inbox, but they shouldn't all be stored in any single folder. This is where **Archiving** and deleting email messages come in. **Archiving** moves email messages that Mary wants to keep into a new *Archive folder*. Deleting messages removes them, sort of. There is a bit more to deleting email messages than just pressing the **Delete** button, as you will see later in this chapter in “*Compacting folders*” on page 61.

5.1 Archiving old email messages

After Mary reads a new email message that she wants to keep, she save it into another folder. That way she can quickly find work email messages, replies from online vendors, all the jokes her friends have sent her, and other groupings of common messages. However, Mary gets a great deal of work-related email messages and her Work folder is getting quite large. A good method of keeping the size of the folder down, and keeping Thunderbird running smoothly, is to **Archive** old messages. **Archiving** email messages moves the messages out of the folder they are in and into special Archive folders.

Setting up and using Archiving

Generally, when Thunderbird **Archives** email messages, it moves them into an Archive folder that has subfolders based on year the messages are from. For instance, when displaying the **All Folders** view, Mary has a folder named 2010 inside an Archives folder under mary.dickens33@yahoo.ca. For more information about the **All Folders** view, see “*Grouping email folders with Unified Folders*” on page 8.

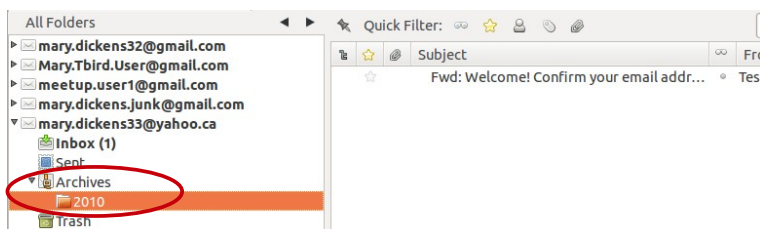


Figure 128: Archive folders in the All Folders view

Tip!

When messages are **Archived**, they are simply put in a folder named after the year, but what folder did they come from?

Tagging the messages with the folder name before **Archiving** them is a good way to see what the original folder was.

If Mary is displaying the **Unified Folders** view, and has more than one email account, her Archives folders will look like this:

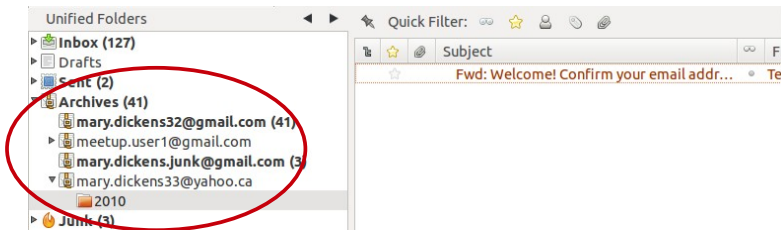


Figure 129: Archives folder in the Unified Folders view

Gmail, does things a little differently than other email providers when it comes to **Archiving** email messages. Gmail POP3 accounts work the same as other accounts, but Gmail IMAP accounts are set to move **Archived** email messages into the *All Mail folder*. The All Mail folder is a special folder that Gmail puts all your email messages into and it doesn't group them by year. When you view your email in Google's *webmail*, you aren't actually seeing folders like Thunderbird uses. What Gmail does is put all the messages into the All Mail folder and give them labels like Inbox, Saved, etc. The folders you see in webmail are basically like Thunderbird's **Saved Search** folders; just groups of email messages with the same label. Take a look at "[Creating a Saved Search folder](#)" on page 14 if you aren't sure what **Saved Search** folders are.

This is what one of Mary's Gmail Archives folders look like when displaying the **Unified Folders** view. It is the same as other Archives folders, but doesn't have the subdirectory named after the year. The folder also contains all her Gmail messages, not just the **Archived** ones.

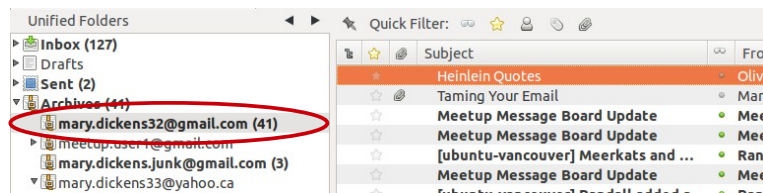


Figure 130: Gmail's Archives folder in the Unified Folders view

If Mary is displaying the **All Folders** view, Gmail's All Mail folder is a little harder to find. It can found it buried under the [Gmail] folder.

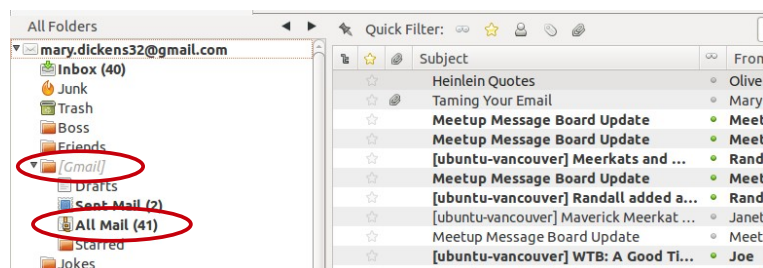


Figure 131: Gmail's Archive folder in the All Folders view

Archiving your Gmail IMAP messages is almost redundant because the All Mail folder stores everything anyway. The advantage of **Archiving** Gmail IMAP messages is that you can do things like add **Tags** to them before archiving them.

As with many other preferences in Thunderbird, you can change the default folders that email messages are **Archived** to.

To set the default Archive folder

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Account Settings**.
2. Click on **Copies & Folders** under the account you want to change.

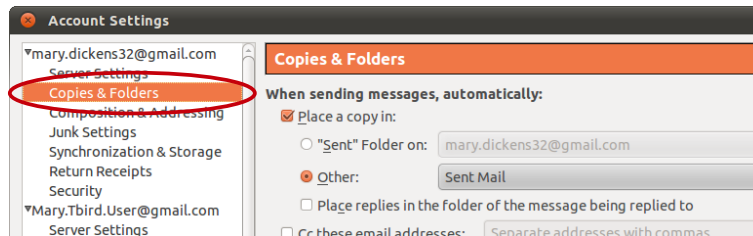


Figure 132: Copies & Folders in the Account Settings

3. In the **Drafts, Archives, and Templates** section, click “**Archives**” **Folder on** or **Other** and select the folder you want to save **Archived** email messages to.
 - If you select “**Archives**” **Folder on**, Thunderbird will create a folder called Archives under the account you choose.

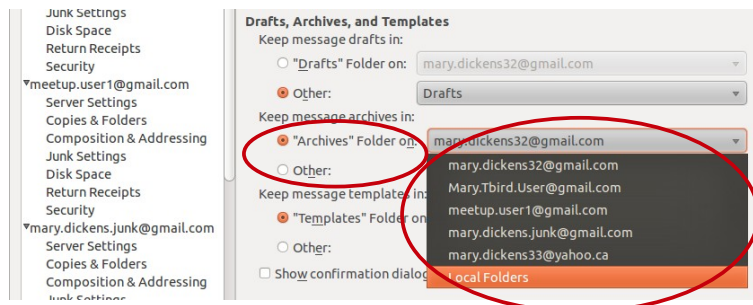


Figure 133: Archives folder location

Tip!

If you want to remove archived messages from an IMAP server, select **Local Folders**.

Local Folders are stored on the computer, not on the IMAP server.

To Archive email messages

You can **Archive** email messages by either:

- Selecting one or more email messages in the **Message List Pane** and pressing the letter **A** on your keyboard.
- While reading an email message, click the **Archive** button on the **Message Header**.

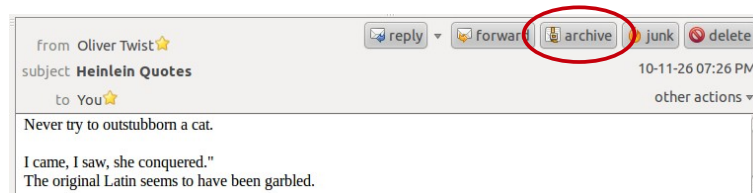


Figure 134: archive button

Tip!

To quickly **Archive** messages based on their age, for instance older than one month, create a **Saved Search** folder. That way you can select everything in the folder and **Archive** it.

See “*Creating a Saved Search folder*” on page 14 for more information.

5.2 Deleting email messages

After reading many of her new email messages, Mary simply deletes them. By deleting them, she is moving them from her Inbox to her Trash folder. This is great, but Mary also needs to periodically empty deleted email messages from her Trash folders, too. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is not a good practice to store too many email messages in any one folder. This is true for the Trash folder, as well. Too many email messages just slows Thunderbird down and is a recipe for a corrupted folder. For Mary's IMAP accounts, deleting email messages can also keep the size of the messages stored on the email server from exceeding the space she is given.

Mary can manually empty the Trash folder every so often, but she can also have Thunderbird automatically do it for her.

Automatically deleting old email messages

Manually emptying the Trash folder is fine, so long as you keep on top of it. If you don't, your Trash folders can start to balloon in size, especially if you receive a lot of email message with attachments. Mary has decided to have Thunderbird automatically empty her Trash folders for her so she doesn't have to remember to do it regularly.

There are two ways that Thunderbird can automatically remove email messages from the Trash folders; using folder **Retention Policies** or emptying the Trash when Thunderbird exits. Folder **Retention Policies** are rules that automatically delete email messages that are a certain number of days old, or based on the number of messages in a folder. You can set **Retention Policies** globally for all folders in an account, or on each individual folder. Most often, they are used to automatically delete email messages from the Trash as it is uncommon for people to want their saved email messages to be automatically deleted. Generally, people remove saved email messages manually.

Having Thunderbird automatically empty the Trash when it exits is another common way to keep the size of the Trash folders down. When this is set, every time you exit Thunderbird, all the email messages in the Trash folder are removed. This works well if you exit Thunderbird every so often, but unlike in *Windows*, some *Ubuntu* users keep their computer running for months at a time, seldom needing to exit Thunderbird because they need to do a reboot.

To set the Retention Policy for all folders in an account

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Account Settings**.
2. Click **Synchronization & Storage** (IMAP accounts) or **Disk Space** (POP3 accounts) under the account you want to configure.

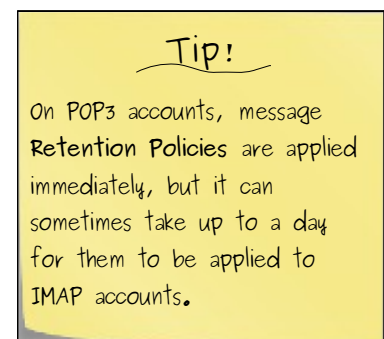
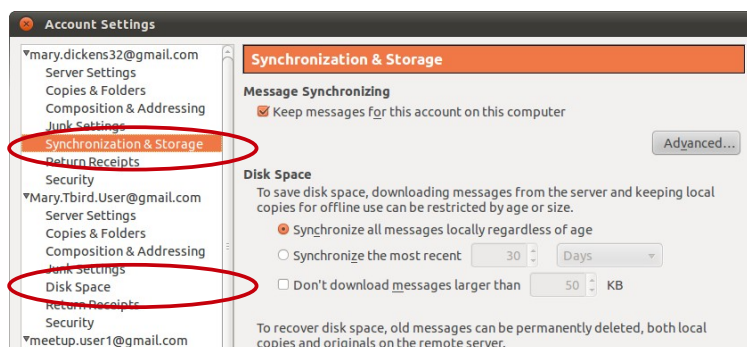


Figure 135: Synchronization & Storage in Account Settings

3. Select **Delete all but the most recent xxxx messages** or **Delete messages more than xx days old** and set the number of email message or the age of messages to keep.

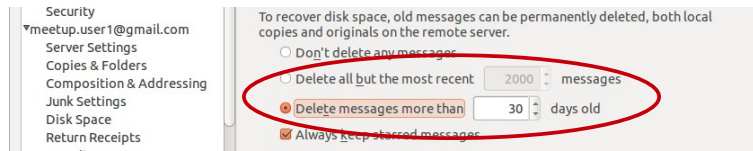


Figure 136: Account Settings automatic delete settings

4. Leave the **Always keep starred messages** check box selected if you don't want Thunderbird to automatically delete email messages that have **Stars**.

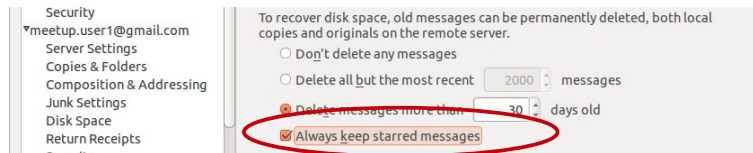


Figure 137: Account Settings automatic delete settings

To set the Retention Policy for a single folder

1. Right-click on a folder in the **Folder Pane** that you want to configure the **Retention Policy** for, and click **Properties**.
 - Note: If you are displaying **Unified Folders**, you need to have a subfolder of the **parent Unified Folder** selected. For more information about **Unified Folders**, see [“Grouping email folders with Unified Folders”](#) on page 8.

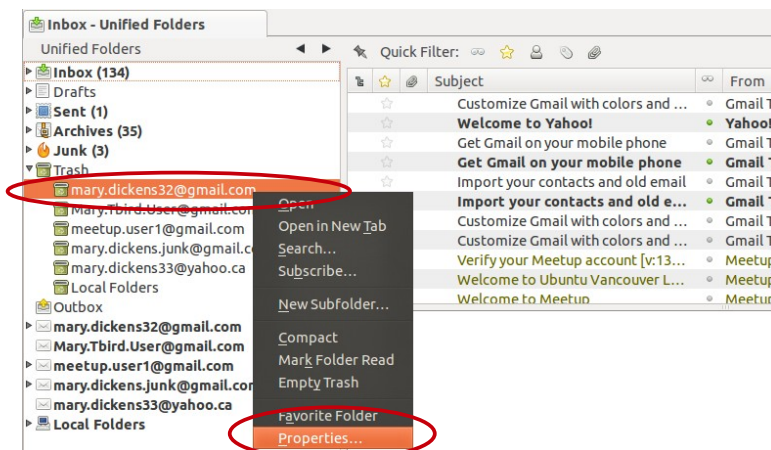
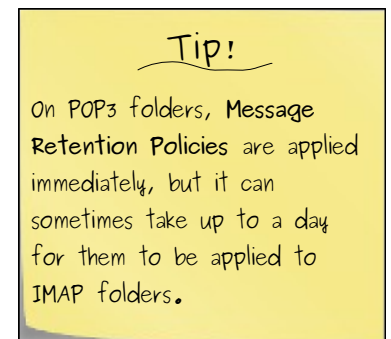


Figure 138: Selecting Properties for a Trash folder



2. Select the **Retention Policy** tab.

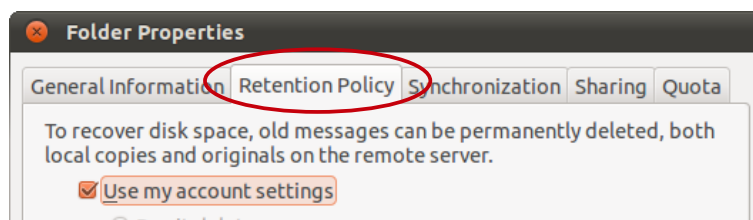


Figure 139: Retention Policy tab in Folder Properties

3. Clear the **Use my account settings** check box.
 - This overrides any **Retention Policies** you set for the email account in the **Account Settings**.

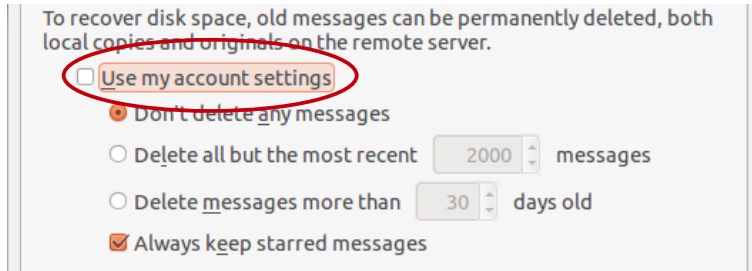


Figure 140: Retention Policy tab in Folder Properties

4. Select **Delete all but the most recent xxxx messages** or **Delete messages more than xx days old** and set the number of email message or the age of messages to keep.

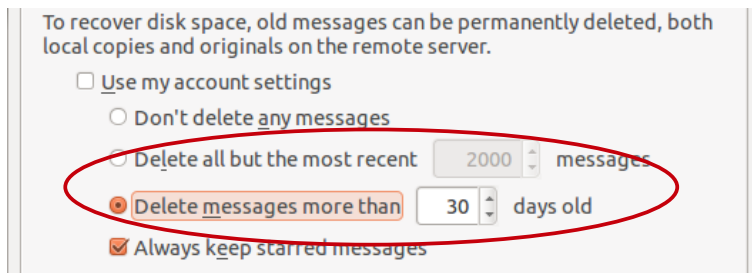


Figure 141: Retention Policy tab in Folder Properties

5. Leave the **Always keep starred messages** check box selected if you don't want Thunderbird to automatically delete email messages that have **Stars**.

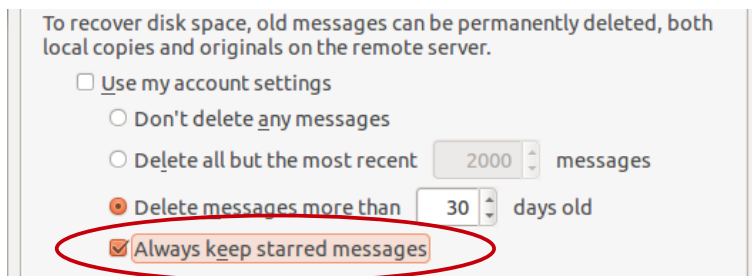


Figure 142: Retention Policy tab in Folder Properties

To empty the Trash folder on exit

1. On the **Edit** menu, select **Account Settings**.
2. Under the account that you want to empty the Trash on exit for, click **Server Settings**.

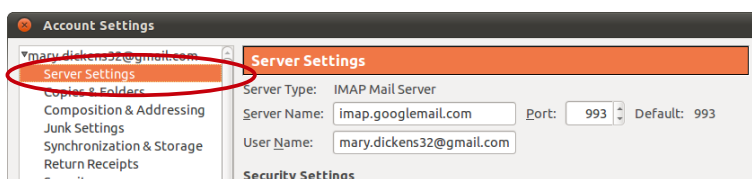


Figure 143: Server Settings in Account Settings

3. Select the **Empty Trash on Exit** check box in the **Server Settings** section.

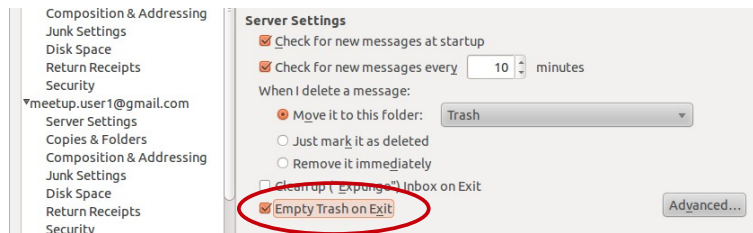


Figure 144: Server Settings in Account Settings

5.3 Compacting folders

If Mary doesn't need to keep old email messages, she deletes them, but deleting an email message doesn't really delete it! Each folder in the **Folder Pane** is actually two files on your computer's hard disk; a text file containing all the email messages in the folder, and an *index file* that points to where in the text file each message is. For instance, there is an Inbox file that holds all the email messages for Thunderbird's Inbox folder, and an index for it called Inbox.msf. When an email message is added to a folder, it is added the end of the folder's text file and entry is added to the index file telling Thunderbird where it is.

When you tell Thunderbird to delete an email message from your Inbox, it just copies it to the Trash folder and removes the index entry for it in the Inbox.msf. It removes the message's entry in the index, hiding it in Thunderbird's Inbox folder, but it does not remove the message from the Inbox text file! This is good and bad. It is good in that you can recover email messages that were accidentally deleted, but it is bad because the real size of the folder file keeps growing and growing, even if it looks empty.

Thunderbird does the same thing when you move an email message; it sends a copy to the new folder and hides it in the original folder. Imagine if you move a 20 MB email message from your Inbox to your Saved folder and then to your Work folder. All of a sudden, that one 20 MB email message is now using 60 MB of space on your computer! What you need to do is remove the old messages that Thunderbird hides from you.

To really remove deleted email messages, Mary needs to **Compact** her folders. When Mary **Compacts** Thunderbird's folders, it permanently removes the deleted email messages from the folder's text file, reducing the possibility that the folder will get too large and possibly become corrupted.

Setting up and using folder Compacting

There are three methods of **Compacting** folders; manually **Compacting** folders, **Compacting** folders at exit, or having Thunderbird automatically **Compact** folders. There are pros and cons with each method.

Automatically **Compacting** your folders makes sure that they are always **Compacted**, but if you do anything in Thunderbird that writes to a folder while it is being **Compacted**, you may cause some corruption and data loss. It's best to only read messages while **Compacting** is going on. Thunderbird will tell you it is **Compacting** in the **Status Bar** at the bottom of the window. If you set automatic **Compacting** to be done frequently, it will only take a moment to **Compact** your folders.

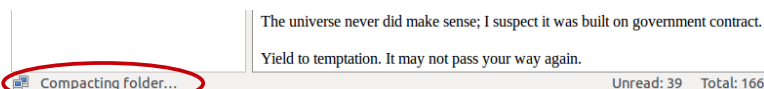


Figure 145: Thunderbird Status Bar

The safest methods of **Compacting** folders are to do it manually or when Thunderbird exits. However, if you choose either of these methods, you must be diligent about doing it. Don't let your folders get too big or you might be asking for trouble! When you choose to **Compact** folders on exit, Thunderbird will automatically **Compact** your IMAP Inbox or Trash folders when you close the program. Unfortunately you can't set POP3 Inboxes to **Compact** on exit, you need to do them automatically or manually. Emptying a Trash folder also compacts it, so you don't need to worry about **Compacting** it if you have told Thunderbird to empty the Trash when exiting.

To manually Compact all folders in an account

1. In the **Folder Pane**, select any folder in the account you want to **Compact**.

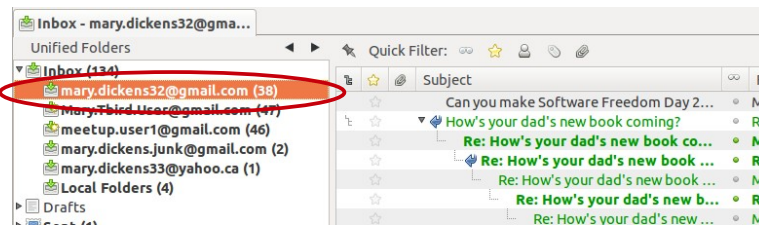


Figure 146: Folder selected in the account to compact

2. On the **File** menu, click **Compact Folders** to **Compact** all the folders in the account.

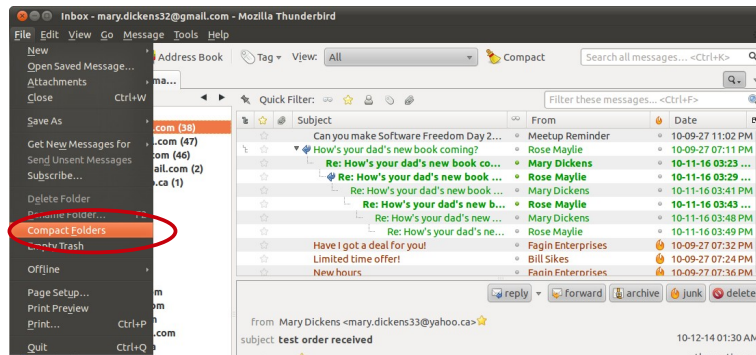


Figure 147: Compacting an account's folders

To manually Compact a single folder

- Right-click on the folder in the **Folder Pane** and click **Compact**.

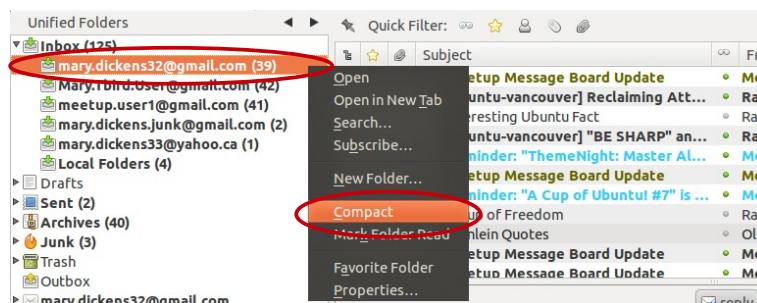
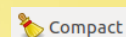


Figure 148: Compacting a folder

Tip!

You can make it easier to Compact a folder by adding a Compact button to the toolbar.



Just right-click on the toolbar, select **Customize** and drag the Compact button to where you want it.

To Compact the Inbox or Trash folders at exit

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Account Settings**.
2. Click on **Server Settings** under the account you want to set up **Compacting** for.

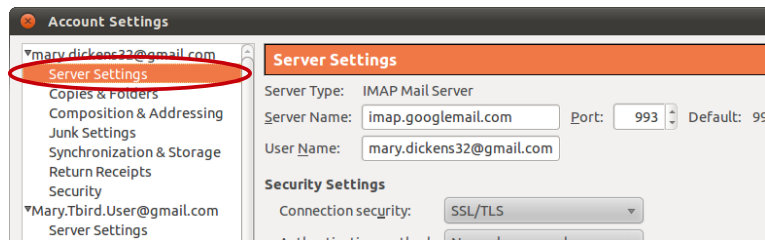


Figure 149: Server Settings in Account Settings

3. In the **Server Settings** section, select the **Clean up ("Expunge") Inbox on Exit** and/or **Empty Trash on Exit** check boxes.

- Note: The **Expunge** option is only available for IMAP accounts.

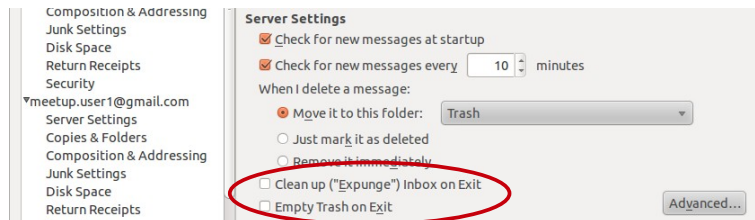


Figure 150: Clean up ("Expunge") Inbox on Exit

To configure automatic Compacting

1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Preferences**.
2. Click **Advanced** and select the **Network & Disk Space** tab.

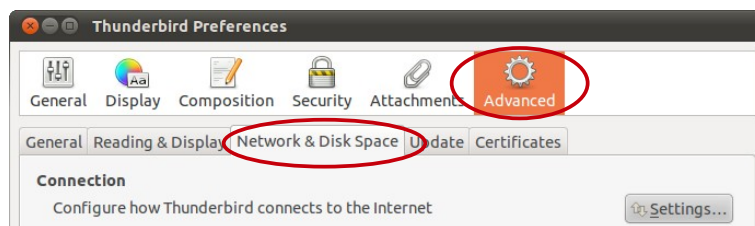


Figure 151: Network & Disk Space tab in Preferences

3. In the **Disk Space** section, select the **Compact folders when it will save over xxx KB** check box.
- Note: Leaving the number of *KB* (kilobytes) at the default value makes sure that the **Compacting** process doesn't take too long and folders are kept clean of deleted email messages.

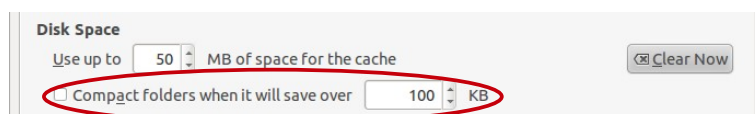
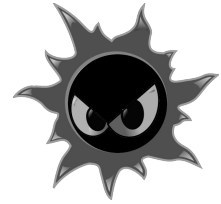


Figure 152: Disk Space section of Network & Disk Space

5.4 Backing up Thunderbird

The most important *'Best Practice'* that Mary can follow is to back up Thunderbird regularly. No matter how good Thunderbird or her computer are, there are times when the planets align and catastrophic things happen! If Mary's computer starts puffing out clouds of smoke or gets sucked into a black hole, it's probably too late to save her data.

There are two ways that Mary can safeguard her email information; she can back up the Thunderbird *profile* or she can save her emails messages.



Backing up the Thunderbird profile

This is the best method of protecting your Thunderbird information. Thunderbird stores all of its configuration settings and email messages in a folder on your computer's hard drive. If you copy this folder to a new computer, you can fire up Thunderbird to exactly the same state it was when you saved the profile. The profile folder is named `.thunderbird` and is in the *root* of your Home folder. You can open your Home folder by selecting it on the Ubuntu **Places** menu, however, by default you won't see the `.thunderbird` folder. That's because it has a period in front of its name making it hidden. It's not a problem, though, because it is a simple task to show hidden files and folders.

It is important that when you back up your Thunderbird profile, you don't just copy it to somewhere else on the same computer. Remember, when the planets align and you computer gets sucked into a black hole, having two copies of the profile on the computer won't help you much! To show you how to back up your profile, we'll use a *USB flash drive*. Just don't forget to remove the flash drive before your computer gets sucked into that black hole!

To copy the Thunderbird profile to a USB flash drive

1. Exit Thunderbird.
2. Insert your USB flash drive and make sure it is recognized.
3. On the Ubuntu **Places** menu, click **Home Folder**.

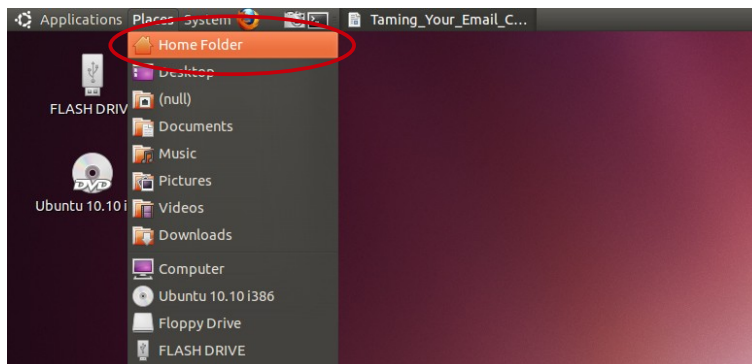


Figure 153: Ubuntu Places menu

4. On the **View** menu, click **Show Hidden Files** to show the .thunderbird folder.

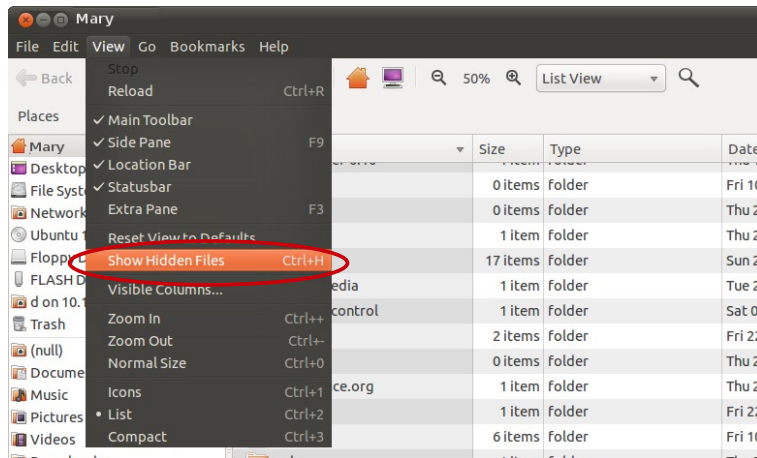


Figure 154: Show Hidden Files

5. Right-click on the .thunderbird folder and click **Copy**.

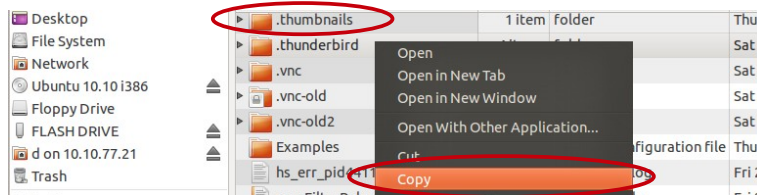


Figure 155: Copy the .thunderbird folder

6. Click on your USB flash drive in the list of **Places** on the left side of the window.
- The contents of the USB flash drive will be displayed in the right side of the window.

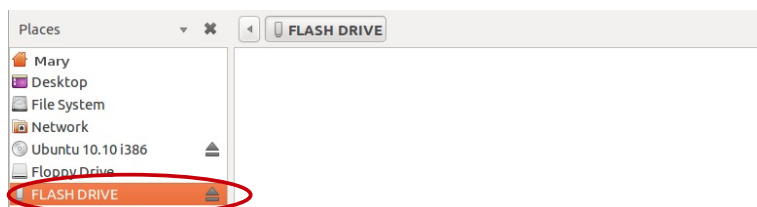


Figure 156: Opening the USB flash drive

7. Right-click in the USB flash drive where you want to save the profile and click **Paste**.

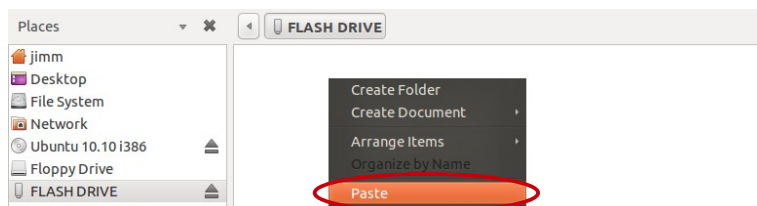


Figure 157: Paste the .thunderbird folder

There you have it, you now have a backup copy of your Thunderbird profile. To restore the profile on your new 'black hole proof' computer, just install Thunderbird and copy the .thunderbird folder to your Home folder. You can overwrite any existing .thunderbird folder, **so long as you haven't used it yet!** If the .thunderbird folder you overwrite has been used, you will lose any data in it.

But what if you don't want to back up the whole profile? Maybe you just backed it up and you only want to save a copy of one or more email messages. You can do that, too. We'll use the same USB flash drive to save the email messages to.

To save one or more email messages to a USB flash drive

1. Insert your USB flash drive and make sure it is recognized.
2. In the **Message List Pane**, select the email message(s) you want to save.

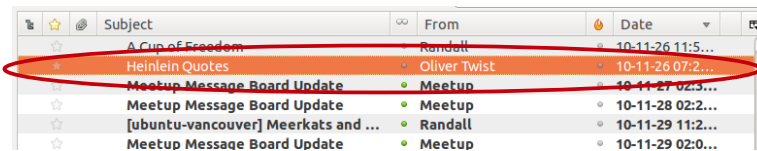


Figure 158: Selected message to save

3. On Thunderbird's **File** menu, point to **Save As** and click **File**.

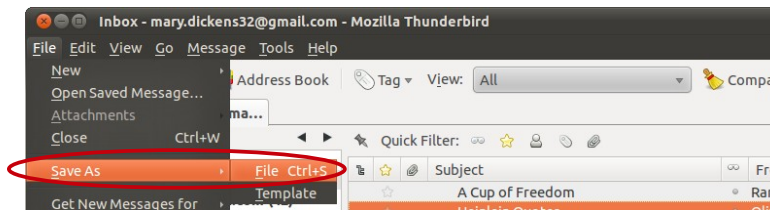


Figure 159: File menu Save As

4. Click on the USB flash drive under **Places** on the left side of the **Save Message As** window and click **Save**.

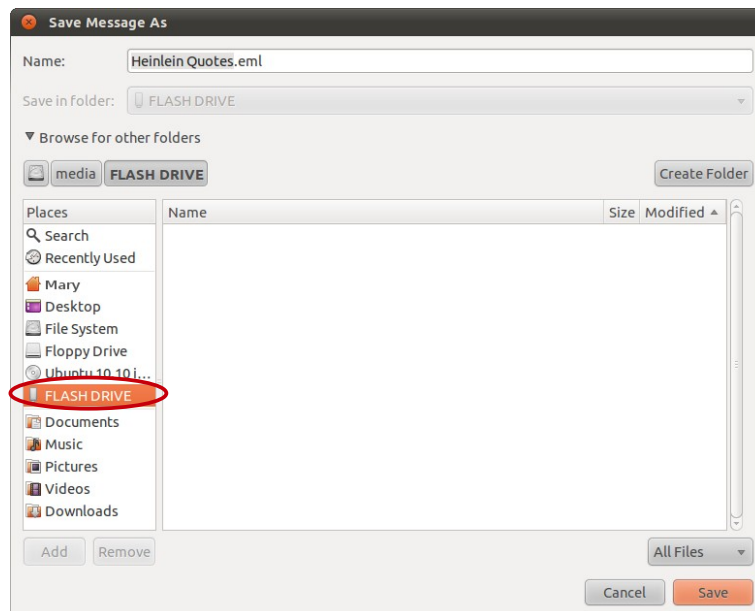


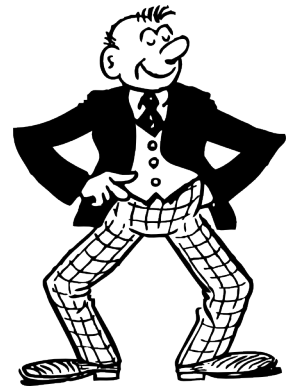
Figure 160: Save Message As

The email messages are now saved to the USB flash drive. Each message is named after the subject of the email. If you want to open them in Thunderbird, all you have to do is select **Open Saved Message** from the Thunderbird **Files** menu, and select the saved email messages.

6 Putting It All Together

Do you feel like an expert now? OK, maybe not an expert, but you now know your way around Thunderbird better than most people. After all the new tools that you and Mary have learned about in your journey from a fresh installation of *Mozilla Thunderbird 3.1* to here, you should have no problem keeping your email from becoming a tangled forest of dread!

We started off learning more effectively ways to view your email messages by grouping related messages in *conversation* tabs and by grouping folders with **Unified Folders**. We also saw how the powerful search tools at your command in Thunderbird makes finding email messages a breeze. Especially useful for Mary are the **Saved Search** folders, where she can group email message by nearly any criteria she wants and have the results automatically updated.



Another couple of great tools for finding email messages to view are the **Quick Filter** and **Mail Views**. Using these to filter the email displayed messages really helps Mary zero in on the messages she need to look at.

Next, we looked at how Thunderbird can help you organize and prioritize email messages by sorting, grouping, **Marking**, **Tagging** and running **Message Filters** them. By sorting and grouping her email messages, Mary is able to deal with the important ones quickly and leave those that aren't until later. **Tagging** and **Marking** are very helpful for making the important email messages stand out from the rest, and **Message Filters** let Mary automatically deal with many of her email messages.

Finally, in the the section on **Archiving** and deleting email messages, Mary discovered that not only is **Archiving** and deleting email messages a good way to clean up her folders, but it also helps Thunderbird run more efficiently and prevents corrupted messages. In the rare case that there is a problem, Mary also learned how to back up her email messages.

6.1 Some Best Practices

To wrap up this guide, we should probably take a quick look at some of the 'Best Practices' you should take away from it. These are important things to remember, and can help you manage your email and keep Thunderbird running smoothly:



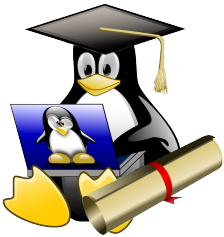
- The number one best practice is to back up your email! The best way to do this is to copy the Thunderbird *profile* directory to somewhere other than your computer.
- Keep the number of email messages in a folder to a minimum. Bloated folders are a sure way to end up with corrupted email messages. Move messages out of your Inbox, and if your saved folders get too large, create additional folders.
- **Compact** your folders regularly. If you don't compact your folders regularly, they may get too large and slow Thunderbird down, if you are lucky. If you are unlucky, you may lose email messages!
- Use **Message Filters** to help identify important, and not so important messages, and then automatically move them out of the Inbox.

6.2 A final word

Like many products, Mozilla Thunderbird and *Ubuntu* are constantly updating themselves and evolving. This guide was written for Ubuntu 10.10 and Thunderbird 3.1, and future versions of the software will almost certainly have changes. If you find that things don't work quite the same way as was explained in this guide, you may need to visit the support site for the software, or your local users group.

The *Mozilla Messaging* Support Web site is a good place to find information about using Thunderbird, however, you may have better luck asking your questions about running Thunderbird on Ubuntu at the *Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo*. Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo is an Ubuntu users group for Vancouver, Canada. Being a local users group, the members are happy to help other locals learn the joy of Ubuntu. If you don't live in the Vancouver area, *Meetup.com* is a good place to find a users group near you. *Launchpad* can also be a valuable source of information about using Thunderbird and Ubuntu.

- Mozilla Messaging Support:
 - <http://www.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/support/>
- Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo:
 - <http://www.meetup.com/ubuntuvancouver/>
- Meetup.com
 - <http://www.meetup.com/>
- Launchpad:
 - <https://launchpad.net/>



Well, you made it! You have found your way through the Email Forest and tamed your email. You now have all the tools you need to master the fine art of Thunderbird email. You'll never again need to complain that you have 'just too much email!', and the only time 'Arrgh!!!' should escape your lips is when the boss sends you, yet another, change to a project you are working on!

Good luck and happy emailing.

Glossary

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address Books Group | A container in Thunderbird's Address Book used to group common email addresses. |
| After Classification | A Thunderbird <i>filter</i> term for running Message Filters after email messages have been checked by the Junk Mail Controls . |
| All Folders View | A Thunderbird email folder view that groups email folders based on the <i>email account</i> they are in. |
| All Mail Folder | A <i>Gmail account's</i> email folder that holds every email message in the account. It is also created in Thunderbird when a Gmail <i>IMAP</i> account is created. |
| Archive Folder | A Thunderbird email folder that email messages are moved to for long-term storage. |
| Archive | (n.) See <i>Archive Folder</i> . (v.) To move email messages to a folder for long-term storage. |
| Best Practice | A method of doing something that is generally accepted as the best to use in a situation. |
| Children | Hierarchical email folders or computer directories that are contained within another folder or director. |
| Client | Connects to a <i>server</i> to perform tasks or access data. |
| Column Header | A label at the top of a column of data that identifies the type of data in the column. |
| Compact | A Thunderbird term for permanently removing previously deleted email messages from an email folder. |
| Computer Operating System | Computer software that provides an environment and framework for other software programs to operate within. |
| Conversation | A Thunderbird term for a series of email messages and replies in response to an original email message. More commonly called a <i>thread</i> . |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Conversation Tab | A Thunderbird display component that shows email messages from a single <i>conversation</i> in a tab. |
| Custom Message Views | A Thunderbird <i>view filter</i> that uses Search Rules to limit the email messages that are displayed in the Message List Pane . |
| Debian | A version of the <i>Linux computer operating system</i> . |
| Email Account | A service, and the associated logon information, provided by an <i>email provider</i> that allows a user to send and receive email messages, generally for a single email address. |
| Email Client | A computer software program that accesses email services on an <i>email server</i> . |
| Email Provider | A company that provides users with access to email services. |
| Email Server | A software program or computer that transfers email messages between computers on the Internet. |
| Evolution | A free, <i>open-source</i> software program that contains tools for using email, contacts, calendars, notes and to-do lists. |
| Expunge | To permanently remove deleted email messages in <i>IMAP</i> Inboxes. See also <i>Compact</i> . |
| Favorite Folders View | A Thunderbird email folder display method that limits the folders shown in the Folder Pane to only those that the user has specified. |
| Field | Computer terminology that refers to a single piece of information in a group of related information. For instance, the sender's email address in an email message or the city in a postal address. |
| Filter | <p>(1) (n.) Option(s) that limit the selection of email messages.</p> <p>(2) (v.) To limit the displayed email messages to only those that match defined Search Rules.</p> <p>(3) (v.) To search for email messages that match defined Filter Rules and perform actions on them.</p> |
| Filter Rule | A Thunderbird method of searching for email messages that specifies where to look for, and how to match a single <i>search criteria</i> . A Message Filter is made up of one or more Filter Rules and associated actions, while a <i>view filter</i> only has Filter Rules . |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Filters Options | See <i>Global Search Filters</i> . |
| Firefox | Free, <i>open-source</i> software developed by <i>Mozilla</i> to allow users to view and interact with Internet sites. |
| Folder Pane | The area of the main Thunderbird window that displays the email folders. |
| Global Search | A text-entry box at the top of the main Thunderbird window that allows a user to enter terms, addresses, etc., to search for in email messages. |
| Global Search Filters | A Thunderbird method of limiting the email messages displayed in Global Search results. |
| Global Search Results Tab | A Thunderbird display pane that shows previews of Global Search results, and <i>filters</i> to limit which results are shown. |
| Gmail | A web-based email service provided by Google.com. |
| GNU | A humorous recursive acronym that stands for “GNU's Not Unix”. A project to develop a free alternative to the <i>UNIX computer operating system</i> . |
| GPL | See <i>GNU Public License</i> . |
| GNU Public License | The most widely used free software license. |
| Graphical User Interface | Computer software that allows a user to interact with a <i>computer operating system</i> in a graphical, as opposed to text-based, manner. |
| Groupware | Computer software that allows collaborative work by multiple users. |
| GUI | See <i>Graphical User Interface</i> . |
| IMAP | See <i>Internet Message Access Protocol</i> . |
| Index File | A special Thunderbird file that identifies where in an email folder's text file an email message is located. |
| Interface | A computer hardware device or software that allows a user to communicate with the computer. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Internet Message Access Protocol | A communication language used by <i>email servers</i> and <i>clients</i> to transfer email messages over the Internet. |
| Junk | A Thunderbird indicator that an email message is <i>junk mail</i> . |
| Junk Mail | Email messages that are unsolicited and/or unwanted. Often called <i>spam</i> . |
| Junk Mail Bar | The part of a Thunderbird Message Pane that indicates an email message has been marked as Junk . See also <i>Junk Mail</i> . |
| Junk Mail Controls | Thunderbird tools to automatically identify <i>junk mail</i> and perform actions on it. See also Junk . |
| Junk Status | A Thunderbird indicator of whether an email messages has been marked as Junk . The junk status of an email message can be shown in a column in the Message List Pane . See also <i>Junk Mail</i> and <i>Status</i> . |
| KB | Kilobyte |
| Launchpad | An internet site, launchpad.net , that provides a suite of tools that allow people to communicate about computer software. |
| Linux | A <i>computer operating system</i> developed by Linus Torvalds, based on <i>UNIX</i> and available for free under the <i>GPL</i> . |
| Local Folders | A group of Thunderbird email folders that store messages on the local computer's hard drive and are not associated with an <i>email account</i> . |
| Log | A list of actions performed. |
| Macintosh | A personal computer and <i>computer operating system</i> manufactured by Apple Inc. |
| Mail Views List | A Thunderbird <i>view filter</i> that limits the email messages displayed using Filter Rules . |
| Mark | To set the <i>status</i> or <i>junk status</i> of an email message. |
| Message Filter | A Thunderbird tool to find email messages using Filter Rules and automatically perform actions on them. |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Message Header | (1) The part of the Thunderbird Message Pane that displays an email message's sender, recipients, subject, date, etc. (2) Information about an email message used by <i>email servers</i> to send email messages. |
| Message List Pane | The part of the main Thunderbird window that displays a list of email messages and information about them in columns. |
| Message Pane | The part of the main Thunderbird window that displays an email message and its Message Header . |
| Message Priority | An indicator set by the sender of an email message that specifies how importantly the message is. The message priority of received email messages can also be changed by Thunderbird Message Filters . |
| Mozilla | A computer software developer that produces non-profit Internet software. Officially known as the Mozilla Foundation. |
| Mozilla Messaging | The division of the <i>Mozilla</i> Foundation that is responsible for the development of the Thunderbird <i>email client</i> . |
| Newsgroup | And Internet forum on the <i>Usenet</i> service containing messages discussing various topics. |
| Open-source | Computer terminology for software that provides access to its programming “source code” and is licensed to allow modification and redistribution. |
| Order Received | A number set by Thunderbird that indicates the order that email messages were received by an account. On some versions of Thunderbird this number that might not be consecutive as they are based on the email message size added to the previous Order Received number. |
| Parent | A hierarchical email folder or computer directory that contains subfolders or directories. See also <i>Root</i> . |
| POP | Informal slang referring to downloading email from a <i>POP3</i> email server. See also <i>Post Office Protocol version 3</i> |
| POP3 | See <i>Post Office Protocol version 3</i> |

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| Post Office Protocol version 3 | A communication language used by <i>email servers</i> and <i>clients</i> to transfer email messages over the Internet. |
| Priority | See <i>Message Priority</i> |
| Profile | A Thunderbird term for all the email account information and associated email messages that Thunderbird holds. This information is stored in a hidden folder, called “.thunderbird”, in the user's Ubuntu “Home Folder”, |
| Quick Filter | A Thunderbird tool to quickly limit which email messages are displayed in the Message List Pane . |
| Quick Filter Icons | Icons on the Quick Filter toolbar that quickly limit the email messages displayed in the Message List Pane to messages that; haven't been read, have Stars , are from contacts in your Address Book , have Tags , or have attachments. |
| Recent Folders View | A Thunderbird email folder display method that limits the folders shown in the Folder Pane to only those that the user has viewed recently. |
| Retention Policies | A Thunderbird setting that automatically deletes email messages based on their age, or the number of messages in an folder or account. |
| Root | (1) A hierarchical folder or computer directory that contains all the other folders or directories. (2) The administrative user on a <i>UNIX/Linux</i> based computer. |
| Rule | See Filter Rule . |
| Saved Search Folder | A special Thunderbird email folder that continuously collects email messages matching a set of Filter Rules . |
| Search Criteria | The part of a Filter Rule that specifies what the <i>rule</i> must match, or not match, in an email message. |
| Search Messages Tool | A Thunderbird tool that uses Filter Rules to find and display email messages. |
| Search Rule | See Filter Rule . |

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| Server | A computer software program or computer that answers requests from a client. |
| Snail Mail | A slang term that refers to physical postal service mail. |
| Spam | See <i>Junk Mail</i> . |
| SpamAssassin | A <i>junk mail</i> filtering product. SpamAssassin is not part of Thunderbird, but can be used to help determine if an email message is <i>junk mail</i> . |
| SpamPal | A <i>junk mail</i> filtering product. SpamPal is not part of Thunderbird, but can be used to help determine if an email message is <i>junk mail</i> . |
| Star | (1) A method that Thunderbird and Gmail use to indicate important email messages. (2) An indicator on the Message Header of an email message that shows if an email address is in Thunderbird's Address Book . |
| Status | Indicates if an email message has been read, is new, has been replied to, or has been forwarded. See also <i>Junk Status</i> . |
| Tag Priority | The order a Tag shows up in Thunderbird's lists of Tags . Thunderbird's default Tags have the highest priority, followed by user-created Tags in alphabetical order. |
| Tag | A Thunderbird method of categorizing email messages with colours in the Message List Pane , and labels in an email message's Message Header . |
| Thread | See <i>Conversation</i> . |
| Thread View | A Thunderbird method of grouping email messages in the Message List Pane by <i>conversation</i> . |
| Thunderbird | Free, <i>open-source</i> software developed by the <i>Mozilla</i> Foundation to receive, view, respond to and compose email or <i>newsgroup</i> messages. |
| Ubuntu | (1) A free, <i>open-source</i> computer operating system based on <i>Debian GNU/Linux</i> . (2) The Southern African Bantu word for an ethical ideology that promotes humanity towards others. |

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| Ubuntu Vancouver Local Community | A computer users group in Vancouver, Canada, focusing on the <i>Ubuntu Linux computer operating system</i> . |
| Ubuntu Vancouver LoCo | See <i>Ubuntu Vancouver Local Community</i> . |
| Unified Folders View | A Thunderbird email folder view that groups email folders based on the type of folder they are, regardless of their <i>email account</i> . For instance, the Inboxes of all <i>email accounts</i> will be grouped under a <i>parent</i> folder called Inbox. Inbox, Drafts, Sent, Archives, Junk and Trash folders are all grouped when Unified Folders are being displayed. |
| UNIX | A trademark for a <i>computer operating system</i> , developed in 1969 at the AT&T Bell Laboratories, that can be used by more than one person at a time. |
| Unread Folders View | A Thunderbird email folder view that displays only folders that contain unread email messages. |
| USB Flash Drive | A device that can be plugged into a computer that uses solid-state (no moving parts) memory to store data. Also called, key drive, pen drive, or thumb drive. |
| Usenet | An Internet communication system that transmits news and discussions. |
| UVLC | See <i>Ubuntu Vancouver Local Community</i> |
| Vacation Response | An automatic reply to received email messages. Often used to notify senders that the recipient is on holidays and they will reply when they return. |
| View Filters | A Thunderbird method of limiting the email messages displayed in the Message List Pane . See also Global Search and Quick Filter . |
| Webmail | An Internet-based service that allows users to receive, view, respond to and compose email messages using a Web browser. |

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