Get a Free Personal E-mail Account

E-mail is *electronic mail*. You can access a Web-based e-mail account anywhere Internet access is available. You can use your e-mail account to send and receive messages.

You can apply for a **free e-mail account** from a variety of free e-mail providers on the Web. Here are some popular **examples of free e-mail providers**:

Provider:	Website:
Google Gmail	**www.gmail.com**
Microsoft Outlook	**www.outlook.com**
Yahoo! Mail	**www.yahoo.com**

Whatever provider you choose, please read their **terms of service** and instructions carefully.

Applying for an E-mail Account – How It Works

Each **e-mail provider** asks basic questions, such as your **name** and **telephone number**. For security purposes, some providers now *require* you to be able to receive **text messages** on a cell **phone** or **smartphone** so they can send you a **confirmation code**, which you will need later in order to **confirm your account** the first time you try to access ("log into") your e-mail.

Carefully answer the e-mail provider's questions. You will be asked to choose a **user name** and **password**. The **user name** will become **the first part of your e-mail address** (as in **user1234567**@emailprovider.net). Since *millions* of people have e-mail accounts, you might *not* get the user name you want at first. An e-mail provider might present you with *alternative* names – or you can try entering a *different* user name.

Passwords typically contain **letters** and **numbers**. The password you select must meet your e-mail provider's requirements (e.g. contain one or more **numbers**, **capitalized letters**, or **punctuation symbols**). Any password you create should *not* be easy to guess. Please choose your e-mail account password carefully and **write it down**, if necessary. <u>Never</u> **share your password** with anyone *or* any other website that asks for it!

When done signing up for your account, try **practicing sending** and **receiving** messages by **composing a message to *yourself*** (i.e. sending a message to *your* e-mail address). New messages arrive in your *Inbox*.

When **finished** accessing your e-mail, always make sure you **log out of your account** to keep it safe. Look for the "log out" (or "sign out" or "log off") prompt, click it, and wait until you are *completely* out of your e-mail.

Please access your account *regularly* (e.g. monthly), or a provider might *deactivate it* due to *inactivity*.

Some Tips & Considerations

When logging into your account, make sure the **CAPS LOCK key** is **OFF**; if it *isn't*, your password (which is "case-sensitive" – as in sensitive to *upper* or *lower case letters*) will *not* work.

Beware of scams! Even e-mail *appearing* to be from someone you know could be **fake** and an attempt to gain **personal information**, such as user names, passwords, or account numbers.

Beware of file attachments! They might be included in messages, and opening them can be hazardous if they contain **viruses**, which can ruin your computer or make it unsafe to use.

At some point you will encounter **junk mail** ("**spam**" or "unsolicited e-mail"): delete it and do not respond to it, or you will receive more *junk mail*. Many e-mail providers include a "junk mail" or "bulk mail" folder to catch unwanted messages. Please keep in mind that *valid* e-mail messages can also get routed *incorrectly* to a "junk mail" folder. Regularly check <u>all folders</u> for incoming messages.

Once you feel comfortable getting and sending messages, try to **learn more about the e-mail service** you are using. Most providers allow you to **create folders** for your messages, so you can store and retrieve messages more easily in the future. **Message filters**, if available, can help you automatically **sort incoming e-mail** into various folders. The provider's **message search** box can also help you sift through hundreds of messages quickly to find information you might need.