T. B Y R D T R A I N I N G

UNDERSTANDING EMAIL

What is Email?

Email is a way to send and receive digital messages and content over the internet.

Snail Mail vs. Email

Address	Michelle Garcia 202 Cedar Lane Raleigh, NC 27601	mgarcia212@yahoo.com
Delivery	• Your envelop or package is delivered by a mail carrier • Received in a home mail box or post office box	• Your digital message is delivered electronically across the internet through various servers • Received online in the Inbox of your email service provider (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.)
Time	• Average of 2 days for letters • Average of 3-10 days for packages	Instantly or within a few minutes if servers are busy
Contents	May include packets with documents or packages with larger items	May include attachments for digital documents, files, images, video and more
Costs	The price of stamps or shipping for larger items	Free with internet connection

Email Advantages

Productivity Tools
Email is usually packaged with a calendar, address book, instant messaging and more for convenience and productivity.

Access to Web Services
If you want to sign up for accounts like Facebook, or order products from services like Amazon, you will need an email address, so you can be safely identified and contacted.

Easy Mail Management
Email service providers have tools that allow you to file, label, prioritize, find, group, and filter your emails for easy management. You can even easily control spam, or junk email.

Private
You email is delivered to your own personal and private account with a password required for accessing and viewing emails.

Communicate with Multiple People
You can send an email to multiple people at once allowing you the option of having a conversation with several people or sending out a message to a hundred.

Access Anywhere at Anytime
You don't have to be at home to get your email. You can access it from any computer or mobile device that gets an internet connection.

Email 101 - Introduction to Email

Introduction

Do you ever feel like the only person who doesn't use email? You don't have to feel left out. More than ever, email is easy to understand and use.

In this lesson, you will learn **what email is**, how it compares to **traditional mail**, and **how email addresses are written**. We'll also discuss various **types of email providers** and the **features and tools** they include with an email account.

Getting to know email

You may know that **email** (electronic mail) is a way to **send and receive messages** across the Internet, but do you know how individual emails are sent, or what they cost, or how email compares to traditional "snail" mail? To get a better idea of what email is all about, review the infographic below and consider how you might benefit from its use.

Understanding email addresses

To receive emails, you will need an **email account** and an **email address**. Also, if you want to send emails to other people, you will need to obtain their email addresses. It's important to learn how to write email addresses correctly, because if you do not enter them exactly right your emails will not be delivered or might be delivered to the wrong person.

Email addresses are always written in a standard format that includes a **username**, the **@** (at) symbol, and the **email provider's domain**. The **username** is the name you choose to identify yourself, and the **email provider** is the website that hosts your email account.

Review the graphic for examples of how email addresses are written.

About email providers

In the past, people usually received an email account from the same companies that provided their Internet access. For example, if AOL provided your Internet connection, you'd have an AOL email address. While this is still true for some people, today it's increasingly common to use a **free web-based email service**, also known as **webmail**. Anyone can use these services, no matter who provides their Internet access.

Webmail providers

Today, the top three webmail providers are **Yahoo!**, Microsoft's **Outlook.com** (previously Hotmail), and Google's **Gmail**. These providers are popular because they allow you to access your email account from anywhere with an Internet connection. You can also access webmail on your **mobile device**.

Visit the links below to compare the features of the three top webmail providers:

- **Yahoo! Features**
- **Outlook.com Features**
- **Gmail Features**

Other email providers

Many people also have an email address **hosted by their company, school, or organization**. These email addresses are usually for professional purposes. For example, the people who work for this website have email addresses that end with **@gcflearnfree.org**. If you are part of an organization that hosts your email, they'll show you how to access it.

Many hosted web domains end with a suffix other than **.com**. Depending on the organization, your provider's domain might end with a suffix like **.gov** (for government websites), **.edu** (for schools), **.mil** (for military branches), or **.org** (for nonprofit organizations).

Information management software

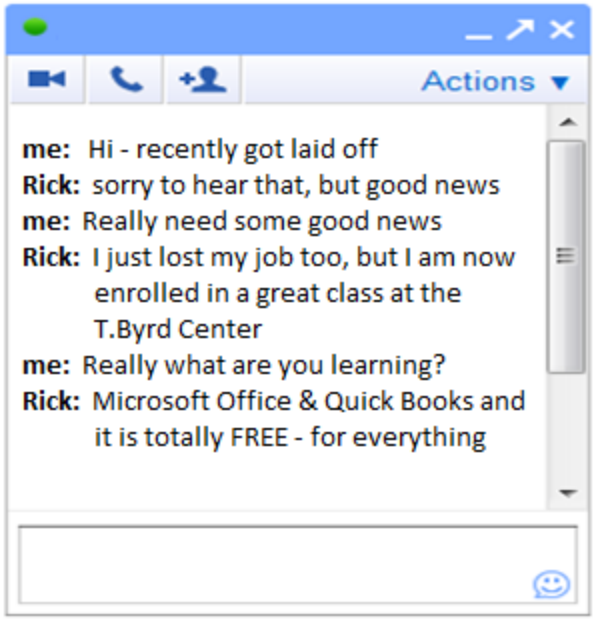
Many companies and organizations use an information management application, like **Microsoft Outlook**, for communicating and managing their email. This software can be used with any email provider, but is most commonly used by organizations that host their own email.

Visit our **Outlook 2010** tutorial to learn more about using this application.

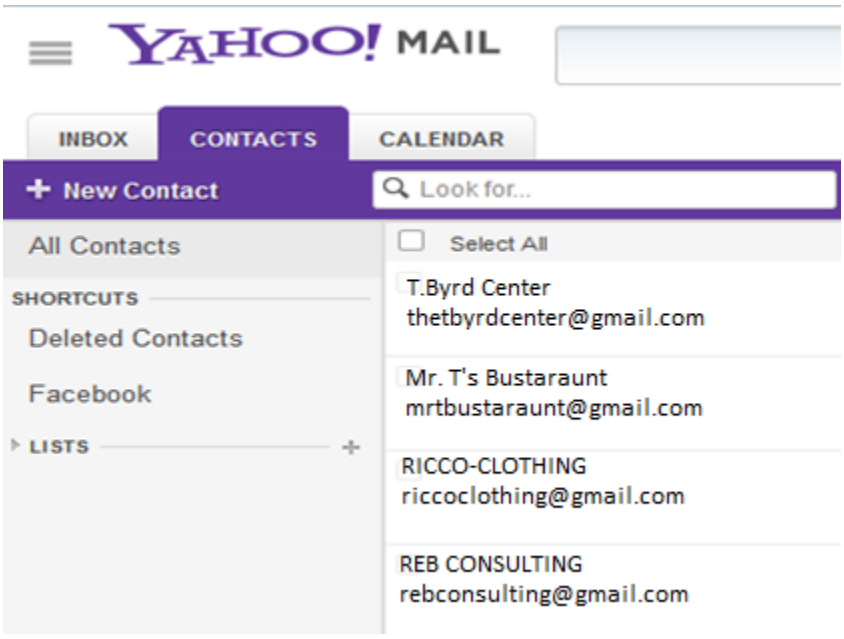
Email productivity features

In addition to email access, webmail providers also offer **various tools and features**. These features are part of a **productivity suite**—a set of applications that help you work, communicate, and stay organized. The tools offered will vary by provider, but all major webmail services offer the following features:

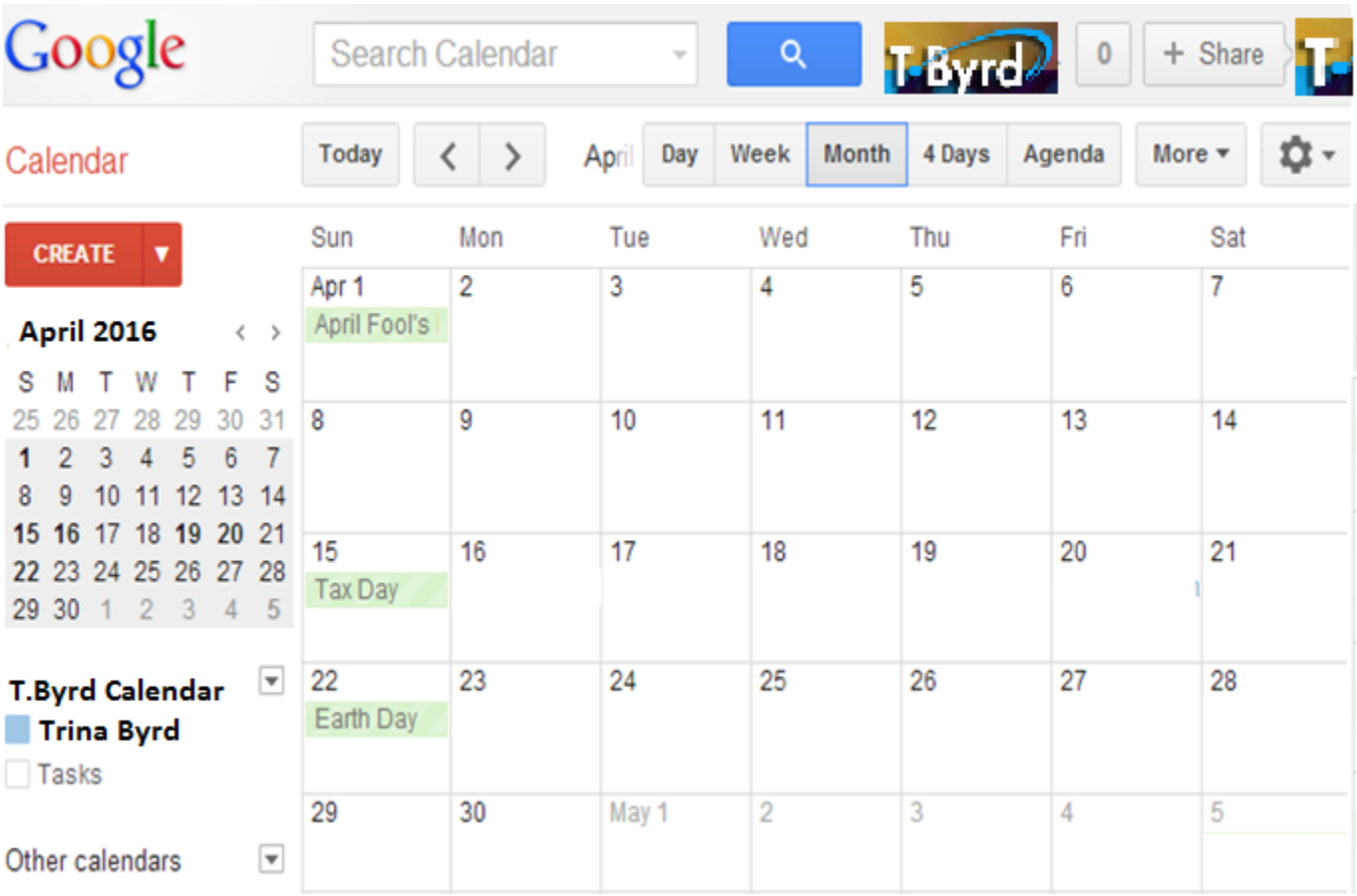
- **Instant messaging**, or **chat**, which lets you have **text-based conversations** with other users; check out our **Beyond Email** lesson to learn more about the basics of instant messaging



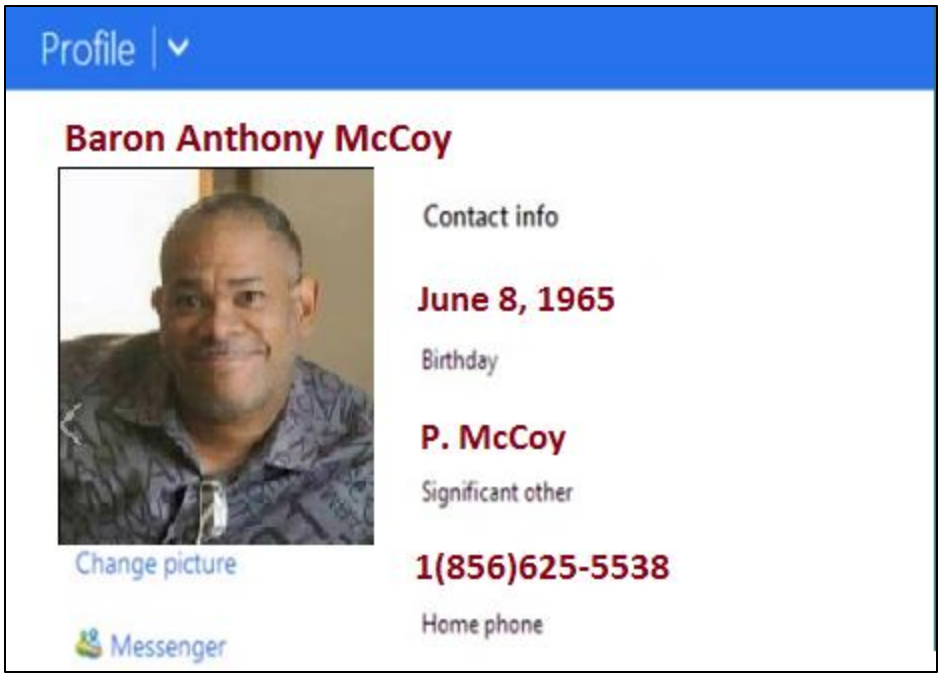
- An **online address book**, where you can store **contact information** for the people you contact frequently



- An **online calendar** to help **organize your schedule** and **share that schedule** with others



- A **public profile** that contains your name and basic contact information



In addition, each provider offers some unique features. For instance, when you sign up for Gmail you gain access to a full range of Google services, including **Google Drive**, **Google Docs**, and more. Hotmail, on the other hand, offers connectivity with **SkyDrive** and **Microsoft Office Web Apps.** You can visit our tutorials on **Google Drive and Docs** and **OneDrive and Office Online** to learn more.

Getting started with email

You should now have a good understanding of what email is all about. Over the next few lessons, we will continue to cover essential **email basics**, **etiquette**, and **safety tips**.

When you're ready, you can try one or both of the following:

Get your own email account:

If you want to sign up for your **own email account**, we suggest choosing from one of the three major webmail providers.

Follow the links below to sign up for an email account:

- **Yahoo! Mail**: Click **Create Account**
- **Outlook.com**: Click **Sign Up**
- **Gmail**: Click **Create an account**; you can visit our lesson on **Setting Up a Gmail Account** for help.

Learn how to use an email program:

Keep in mind that **Email 101** will not show you how to use a specific email account. For that, you will need to visit our **Gmail** tutorial. It's a useful course for learning the basics, even if you ultimately end up choosing an email provider other than Gmail, such as Yahoo! or Outlook.com. There, you will learn how to:

- Sign up for an email account
- Navigate and get to know the email interface
- Compose, manage, and respond to email
- Set up email on a mobile device

Beyond email: More ways to talk online

Once you've completed the lessons in this topic, you may wish to explore other popular ways of communicating and sharing online. Check out our **Beyond Email** topic to learn more about **online chat**, **text messaging**, **video chat**, **social networking**, and more.