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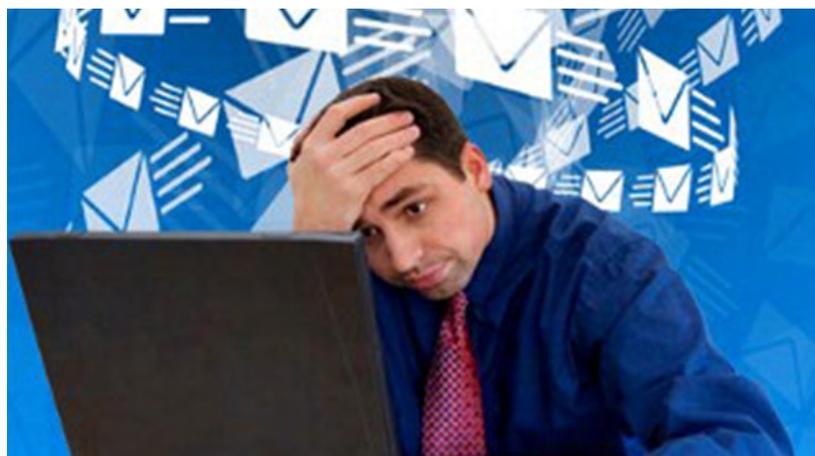
Tips for taming the email beast: Part 2

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Love it or hate it, email is part of your daily life. Handle it properly, put the beast in its place, and you'll uncover a new, supremely productive self. [Last week we shared seven tips](#) for taking control. Here are six more, collected over the years.

1. Your message is not private

It should be pretty clear by now that nothing you send over the Internet and via email is private. The FBI, the National Security Administration and other government agencies, as well as private corporations and Internet providers themselves, can tap into your private correspondence with tremendous ease.



Facebook is not your friend. Google has collected more information on you than could ever imagine. Forget about what you've already done. Going forward, be cautious about what you send. Everything you do on the Internet can be captured and preserved. For eternity.

2. Use 'reply by' folders

For key correspondents, and particularly when I'm waiting to hear about a certain issue, I park such email messages in a reply by (date) folder. I can check this folder and quickly surmise who's been giving me the answers I need in a timely manner and who has not.

This system also lets me remind correspondents that I'm awaiting their reply. Everyone is understandably overwhelmed these days with emails coming in and going out that not getting a timely reply doesn't denote disrespect, inefficiency or lack of caring. Sometimes people are overwhelmed and haven't gotten to your important message within the time frame you would have preferred. A gentle reminder can work wonders.

3. Handle the chippies immediately

When you get an email that requires only a quick "yes" or "no," or a "proceed" or "don't proceed," fire it off. This may be common sense, but many people let the chippies pile up. Then, even though each would take a minute or less to address, the accumulated burden begins to loom large.



4. Unsubscribe with vigor

In our quest to stay on top of it all, we too often subscribe to information services that look enticing. Then we find ourselves oversubscribed and getting constant reminders or reports from this vendor. So, with resolve, unsubscribe to as many items as you can. You'll find you don't miss most of them. You can always re-subscribe later.

5. Tackle email in waves

Top achievers tell me they've gravitated to handling emails "in waves." In other words, when they do check email, they attempt to handle four, six or eight at a time, as opposed every email that has arrived.

If you're working on a project, for example, and like to proceed in 20-minute stretches, handling email in waves works well. By the time 20 minutes pass, new emails have joined those you haven't replied to yet. Pick any four or six that you can handle, then and there. You'll feel good about your accomplishment and be able to return to the task at hand for perhaps another 20-minute stretch. Sometimes you can handle more than eight, but other times, you might not be able to handle any.

6. Predetermine when you'll check email



This recommendation is perhaps the best of all. If you can predetermine when you'll check email, your productivity will shoot up. We often check email as often as we can, anytime there's a spare moment, anytime we're flustered on another task, anytime we feel the urge. Checking email provides a form of instant gratification.

From a productivity standpoint, however, nothing compares to working for uninterrupted stretches throughout the day, week, year and your career. Work to keep email in its proper place, and it serves you. It doesn't control you.

If you want to establish a routine where you check email once in the morning, once before lunch, once after lunch, once in midafternoon and once at the end of the day, proceed! Those check-in periods will work as well as anything. You'll stay on top of your email and remain productive throughout the day.