

Outlook Express is not recognizing *some* HTML emails

Asked 16 years ago Modified 13 years, 1 month ago Viewed 7k times



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I'm using HTML emails for a client's newsletter. Not using HTML mails is **not** an option. I've used PHPMailer for mailing, but I've also tried using PHP's mail() function directly. In both instances, I get the same problem described below. I've tried sending as multipart as well as sending just the HTML version.

In every email client I tried, the emails arrive just fine. By that I mean the email is recognized as an HTML email and the content is rendered. Except on some accounts on **Outlook Express**. I've not been able to discern why it works for some people and why it doesn't work for others (all using Outlook Express). I have forwarded HTML emails to this account (from gmail as well as from outlook express) and they show up just fine. So the Outlook Express version is definitely capable of showing HTML emails.

Now, in these failing cases, the Outlook Express ignores a significant part of the mail header. I can actually see this: when I view the **original source** of the email, it shows a part in bold - the header - and a part not in bold - the body.

Below is the email message. I've redacted some "personal" parts.

This part is in bold, recognized by Outlook Express as the header:

```
DomainKey-Status: no signature
Received: (qmail xxxx invoked by uid xxx); 22 Dec 2008 21:04:33 +0100
To: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Subject: Test
Date: Mon, 22 Dec 2008 21:04:33 +0100
```

And this part is not in bold, and shows up in the mail content panel of Outlook Express.

```
From: Root User <xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
Message-ID: <xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
X-Priority: 3
X-Mailer: PHPMailer (phpmailer.sourceforge.net) [version 2.0.3]
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
    boundary="b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce"

--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce
Content-Type: text/plain; charset = "iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
```

test

```
--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce
Content-Type: text/html; charset = "iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
<p>Test</p>

--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce--
```

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edited Dec 31, 2008 at 11:32



[Oliver Giesen](#)

9,421 ● 6 ● 51 ● 85

asked Dec 22, 2008 at 20:17



[Wouter Lievens](#)

4,029 ● 5 ● 43 ● 67

Are the failing clients using Outlook 2007? Is it consistently failing for certain clients OR do certain clients sometimes work and sometimes fail? – [EndangeredMassa](#) Dec 22, 2008 at 20:42

I can reproduce it on Outlook Express 6 Build 6.00.2900.5512 But only for a particular email account, and it only fails (but does so consistently) for my mails. Other HTML emails forwarded to this account work fine. – [Wouter Lievens](#) Dec 22, 2008 at 20:46

What happens if you select "Show HTML"? (control-shift-H) – [Chase Seibert](#) Dec 23, 2008 at 3:04

4 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default)



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Okay, I think I solved the problem. The various lines in the header were separated by `\r\n` and apparently Outlook expected them to be separated by `\n` only. Even PHPMailer seems to do this, so I'm using PHP's `mail()` function now.



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answered Dec 23, 2008 at 18:37



[Wouter Lievens](#)

4,029 ● 5 ● 43 ● 67



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Adding a newline before the HTML in the second MIME block will fix your issue. You can also set "Content-Disposition: inline" on that block, if you want. In my tests, I still had to hit Alt+Shift+H in Outlook Express, as it defaults to plain text for security reasons.



Here is the final working EML:



```
DomainKey-Status: no signature
Received: (qmail xxxx invoked by uid xxx); 22 Dec 2008 21:04:33 +0100
To: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Subject: Test
Date: Mon, 22 Dec 2008 21:04:33 +0100
From: Root User <xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
Message-ID: <xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
X-Priority: 3
X-Mailer: PHPMailer (phpmailer.sourceforge.net) [version 2.0.3]
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
    boundary="b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce"

--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce
Content-Type: text/plain; charset = "iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
test

--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce
Content-Type: text/html; charset = "iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
Content-Disposition: inline

<p>Test</p>

--b1_cb79043f473b53e87bfa759755fce3ce--
```

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answered Dec 23, 2008 at 14:49



[Chase Seibert](#)

15.8k ● 8 ● 53 ● 58

I will try this the minute I get home (to my PC where I can reproduce the problem) in a couple hours. If this works, you're my hero. – [Wouter Lievens](#) Dec 23, 2008 at 14:54

Sorry, that doesn't solve the problem here :-(Also, the alt-shift-h option is grayed out in the menu... it seems like Outlook doesn't trust this email. – [Wouter Lievens](#) Dec 23, 2008 at 18:28



0



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answered Oct 16, 2009 at 9:18



[Tomas P.](#)

1 ● 1



Try to change creating of boundaryies:

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```
/* Set the boundaries */
$uniq_id = md5(uniqid(time()));

$this->boundary[1] = '-----01' . $uniq_id; // was started by b1_

$this->boundary[2] = '-----02' . $uniq_id; // was started by b2_

Tomor.cz
```

Edit: Thats not the solution: :/

But I found that, if i use phpmailer via smtp server it's ok and when I send email via mail() function it's problem in outlook then..

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edited Sep 22, 2011 at 4:59



CoolBeans

20.8k ● 10 ● 87 ● 101

answered Oct 15, 2009 at 12:15



Tomas P.

1 ● 1