



ESL Podcast 532 – Using an Online Email Program

GLOSSARY

email program – a computer program that sends and receives email messages, giving people ways to organize and find messages

* Which free email program would you recommend: Yahoo!, Hotmail, or Gmail?

interface – the way in which a person interacts with a computer program; the way in which information is displayed and people are asked to enter information

* The database at work has a horrible interface, and our employees have to make at least 10 clicks to enter even the most basic information.

intuitive – easy to understand, even without an explanation

* Quantum physics isn't intuitive. You'll have to study a lot if you want to do well in this course.

to sort – to put something in order so that it will be easier to find later, maybe alphabetically or by date

* These receipts are sorted alphabetically by the customers' last name.

inbox – the folder in an email program where one can see all new messages, and where messages stay until they are moved to another folder or deleted

* Mikhail went on a two-week vacation, and when he came back to the office there were more than 1,000 new email messages in his inbox!

to compose – to write something, especially a letter, essay, or email

* Cory composed an email to ask Di out on a date, but he was too nervous to send it.

cc: – carbon copy; an abbreviation used to send a copy of a message to additional people who aren't the primary (most important) recipients

* When you finish the report, please send it to me and cc the client.

bcc: – blind carbon copy; an abbreviation used to send a copy of a message to additional people who aren't the primary (most important) recipients, but in a way so that no one else can see who received it

* Giorgio never responds to my emails on time, so to prove it to his boss, I decided to start bcc'ing her. That way she'll know when I send him messages, but he won't realize his boss knows it.



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draft – something that has been written but still needs to be edited or finished and isn't ready to be shared with other people

* If I have to send a lot of emails early in the morning, sometimes I write them the night before and save them as drafts. That way, I can send them as soon as I get to the office the next day.

to refresh – to make a computer program display the most recent, up-to-date information

* This display refreshes every five minutes, but if you want to see new information more quickly, just push F9.

sent mail – the folder in an email program where there are copies of all the messages one has sent

* Let me look in my sent mail to see which day I sent that note to you last week.

to archive – to move a message out of the inbox in an email program, but not delete it, so that one can find it later

* Once I reply to an email message, I archive it. That way, the only new emails in my inbox are ones that I still need to respond to.

junk – garbage or spam; email messages (or mail) that one does not want to have and wishes one had not received

* Why do I get so many junk email messages from online stores?

contact – a person with whom one communicates, keeping that person's name, email, phone number, and/or address in an address book

* Abe has thousands of contacts, but most of them are people he has communicated with only once or twice.

to drag – to click on something in a computer program and continue holding down the button while moving one's mouse toward something else, "pulling" the object to a new position

* In this computer game, you get points every time you drag gold coins into your character's bag.

spam filter – a computer program that recognizes junk or unwanted messages and moves them to the spam folder without letting them appear in the inbox, so the account owner never has to see them

* I found some of Oliver's messages in my spam folder, so I guess my spam filter is too strong and I should change the settings.



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to block – to not allow something to happen, especially to not allow an email message to come into one's inbox

* How can I block all these email messages about store sales?

to forward – to send an email message that one has received to another person, usually without adding any additional information or even a note

* Gebb likes to forward jokes via email, but I think reading them is a waste of time, so I just delete them.

to deprive – to not let someone have or do something that is nice, fun, pleasant or desirable

* Our family didn't have very much money while we were growing up, so we were deprived of most of the toys that our friends had.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you move a message out of your inbox?

- a) Compose it.
- b) Refresh it.
- c) Archive it.

2. What belongs in the "contacts" folder?

- a) Sent mail.
- b) Other peoples' email addresses.
- c) Spam filters.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

draft

The word "draft," in this podcast, means something that has been written but still needs to be edited or finished and isn't ready to be shared with other people: "I'm sorry I sent that message to you. It was a draft, and it wasn't ready to be sent yet." The phrase "the draft" refers to a system during a war where men are required to join an army, whether or not they want to: "If the U.S. Army doesn't have enough volunteers, the country might need to use the draft." Finally, when talking about sports, a "draft" is the process through which teams invite college players to play with them: "How many students from the University of Nebraska have been picked in the draft for football?"



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contacts

In this podcast, the word “contact” means a person whom one communicates with, keeping that person’s name, email, phone number, and/or address in an address book: “Gretchen sent an email to all her contacts, giving them her new address and phone number.” The word “contact” also means touch: “Children who don’t have enough human contact while they’re growing up have a lot of emotional problems later in life.” The phrase “to stay in contact with (someone)” means to continue to communicate with another person: “They stayed in contact with each other for years, even after he moved across the country.” Finally, the phrase “point of contact” refers to the person whom one can call with any questions or problems during a project: “This is Marcos. He’ll be your primary point of contact during our work together.”

CULTURE NOTE

In the past, people complained about unwanted junk mail, like “catalogs” (books with pictures and descriptions of many things that are for sale) and advertisements from local businesses that were sent to their home. Today, they are much more likely to complain about unwanted email.

Most people agree on what types of mail are “spam” (unwanted emails sent from people one does not know). Spam messages include many emails related to online sales of medicine or “dubious” (questionable) moneymaking opportunities.

But people sometimes disagree on what “constitutes” (makes up) junk mail. Some people like to read emails with funny jokes and stories, and they forward them to their friends, family members, and “colleagues” (co-workers). But people who don’t want to receive those types of messages think of those same messages as junk mail.

On birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions, some people send “ecards” or “electronic cards,” where the “recipient” (the person who receives something) clicks on a link to view an image or video and text. Some people love receiving ecards, but other people “delete them” (throw them away) without opening the link.

“Chain emails” are another type of unwanted email. These emails have a story or message, and then state that unless the recipient forwards the email to a certain number of other people, he or she will have bad luck. Some people forward these messages to all their friends because they don’t want to have bad



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luck, but most people think these kinds of message are very “annoying” (bothersome; not fun or interesting). They also slow down the “servers” (large computers that are used to send and receive email) and sometimes even contain “viruses” (hidden computer programs that can damage the recipient’s computer).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 532: Using an Online Email Program.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 532. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. If you want to support this podcast you can go to the website and become a Learning Guide member, which will allow you to improve your English even faster by downloading a Learning Guide for each of our current episodes. Or, if you'd like to make a small donation, you can do that on our website as well.

This episode is called "Using an Online Email Program" (or email service). It's a dialogue between Luigi and Selma using a lot of common vocabulary that we "employ" (that we use) when we talk about using email online. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Luigi: What do you think of this new email program?

Selma: I don't know yet. I just started using it. The interface is pretty intuitive, but I haven't figured out how to sort my inbox by date.

Luigi: That's easy. Let me show you. All you have to do is hit one of these buttons and it'll sort automatically.

Selma: Oh, I see. Let me try to compose a message. I'll cc: myself and I'll bcc: you to make sure it goes through. It looks like if I don't want to send it right away, I can save the message as a draft. If I do send it, does it save a copy?

Luigi: Yes, it should. Refresh the page and it should show up in "sent mail."

Selma: Oh, yeah, there it is. Let's see, I can also archive messages or mark them as junk or send them straight to trash. How do I add contacts?

Luigi: You can put contacts into your address book by dragging an email address into your "contacts" folder, like this.



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Selma: Okay, one more thing: I want to set up spam filters and some other filters to block unwanted emails.

Luigi: You can do that in this window, see? Whose emails are you blocking?

Selma: Yours, if don't stop forwarding all of those stupid jokes every day.

Luigi: And deprive you of the fun? Never!

[end of dialogue]

Luigi begins by saying, "What do you think of this new email program?" A "program" is a piece of software that is used on a computer for certain purposes, in this case for checking your email. Selma says, "I don't know yet. I just started using it. The interface is pretty intuitive." The "interface" is what you see on the screen for that program. It's the way that you interact with the program; the way information is displayed to you on the screen for the program. She says, "The interface is pretty intuitive." Something that is "intuitive" is easy to understand; it doesn't require an explanation. Selma says, "I haven't figured out how to sort my inbox by date." "To sort" means to put something in order, usually so that it's easier to find something later. You could sort things alphabetically, beginning with A, B, C, and so forth. You could sort things by date, with the most recent email messages first. Those are both ways of sorting your "inbox," that is what we call a "folder" in your email program where you see all of your new messages. You have different folders on a typical email program. Just like you have a physical folder where you put paper, an email folder is where you have certain kinds of email. The inbox is where all the new messages arrive on your computer program.

Luigi says that it's easy to sort her inbox by date. He says, "Let me show you. All you have to do (meaning the only thing you have to do) is hit one of these buttons and it'll sort automatically." Selma says, "Oh, I see. Let me try to compose a message." "To compose" means to write something, such as a letter, an email, an essay. We sometimes also use this verb when talking about those that write music; we call them "composers," they compose symphonies and songs for example.

Selma says, "I'll cc: myself and I'll bcc: you to make sure they go through." "To cc: (someone)" means to send a copy of a message to other people in addition to the primary person you are sending your message to. So I may be sending a message to my brother, but I'll cc: my sister; she'll also get a copy of the email. We use the letters "cc" because they come from an old term, which is "carbon



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copy.” Before the days of copiers (of photo-static copiers) the only way to make a copy of a document was to put two pieces of paper into a typewriter, and you would put a piece of black or blue carbon paper in between the two pieces of paper. And when you typed on the first page, the carbon would also mark the second page and you would have a copy of that particular document. However, you had to do it when you were typing. If you typed it without putting the extra piece paper and the piece of carbon paper it wouldn’t work. I remember using carbon paper back in the 1970s, when I was in high school. “Bcc:” is a adaptation of the old term into a new context. “To bcc: (someone)” means to blind carbon copy someone. This is a concept that only exists in modern email technology. A “bcc:” is when you’re going to send another copy of your message, but you’re not indicating to the primary person that you are sending a copy to this other person. So for example, I send a message to my brother, I cc: my sister, and then I bcc: my mother. That means that my mother gets a copy, but my brother and my sister don’t realize it. That’s why we say it’s “blind.” “To be blind” means to be unable to see, so “bcc:” is when you are sending a copy of something that other people who receive the message aren’t aware of. They don’t know another copy is going to someone else.

Selma says she wants to make sure the message “went through,” meaning that it was received, that it was actually sent out. “It looks like if I don’t want to send it right away,” she says, “I can save the message as a draft.” A “draft” is something that you write, but it needs be edited; it needs to be finished. It’s not the final version. “Draft” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Selma says, “If I do send it, does it save a copy?” meaning does the program (the email program) save a copy of the message. Luigi says, “Yes, it should. Refresh the page and it will show up in ‘sent mail.’” “To refresh” a web page means that you make sure the page or the program is displaying the most recent information. On your web browser, the piece of software you use to look at things on the Internet, there is usually a refresh button. You hit that button and the page we say “loads” again; it comes onto your screen again with the most recent version of that page. Luigi says, “Refresh the page and the message will show up in ‘sent mail.’” “Sent mail” is the folder in your email program where you find copies of all the messages that you’ve sent. There’s a third folder on most email programs called an “outbox.” An “outbox” contains the messages that you are ready to send, but haven’t actually sent yet. So your outbox contains messages ready to send; your sent mail folder contains messages you’ve already sent in the past.



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Selma says, “Oh, yeah, there it is.” She refreshes the page and she sees her message. “Let’s see, I can also archive messages or mark them as junk or send them straight to trash.” “To archive” your messages means to take your messages out of your inbox, but not delete it; save it in another folder for later. Most people have different folders with different kinds of messages, so that you can find your messages easily later on, but you take them out of your inbox. If a message is “spam,” if it is an advertisement that you didn’t request or some email from someone you don’t know that you don’t want, we sometimes call that “junk mail” (“junk” is garbage). Email messages that you don’t want and you no longer want to see in your inbox, you can mark them as junk and then put them in your trash to get rid of them (to delete them).

Selma says, “How do I add contacts?” “Contact” is a person with whom you are communicating. Usually you have the person’s name, their email address, perhaps their phone number, their “physical” address, meaning where their house or their office is. This is information you would find in your contacts. So, she wants to add a new contact. Luigi says, “You can put contacts into your address book by dragging an email message into your ‘contacts’ folder, like this.” So on Selma’s email program, you can take an email address and “drag it,” that is click on something, continue to hold down the button on your mouse, and you move it to another part of the screen, and then you let your mouse go. That’s to drag things on your computer.

Selma says, “Okay, one more thing: I want to set up spam filters and some other filters to block unwanted email.” A “spam filter” is a part of a program that blocks the junk (unwanted messages) that you get on email. “To block” means not to allow something to happen; in this case, not to allow email messages to come into your inbox. Luigi says, “You can do that in this window, see? Whose emails are you blocking?” Selma says, “Yours (meaning Luigi’s), if don’t stop forwarding all of those stupid jokes every day.” This means that she’s going to start blocking Luigi’s email address so that emails that he sends her will not appear in her inbox. Why? Well, Luigi likes to “forward,” likes to send an email that he received from one person to another person. It’s very common for people to send an email message that contains something they think is funny to someone else. Often, however, the other person doesn’t want this email, and doesn’t think the joke is very funny. I am one of those people; please do not forward me any jokes!

Luigi says, “And deprive you of the fun? Never!” meaning that if Selma blocks his emails, she’ll be deprived of the fun (the fun from reading the messages). “To deprive” (deprive) means not to let someone have something or do something that is considered nice, fun, or pleasant. “I’m going to deprive you of your coffee



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today,” you want it, but I’m not going to let you have it. Since I don’t drink coffee anymore, that wouldn’t bother me at all; I only drink tea!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

I won’t deprive you of the knowledge of who wrote today’s wonderful script. It was Dr. Lucy Tse.



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From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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