# DID YOU GET MY EMAIL?

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According to an article published in The Guardian, 64 million unnecessary emails are sent every day in Britain alone. Many of these emails are about thanks, jokes, or greetings. In the content of the news, "Be rude, do not greet, but save the planet!" phrase is included. It follows that if everyone sends just one less email a day, 16,000 tons less carbon will be consumed per year. To give a more concrete example, this figure is equivalent to 80,000 people flying from London to Madrid.

Aware of the seriousness of the situation, Lancaster University Environmental Science Professor Mike Berners-Lee approaches it with an excellent example. "While you are preparing an email, your computer consumes electricity, when you send the email, it consumes a certain amount of electricity on the network it travels to, and eventually, when its journey ends, it is stored on a Cloud or local server. The servers where e-mail is stored or even backed up consume quite a lot of electricity." Berners-Lee continues: "This doesn't bother us because we can't see the smoke coming out of our computer, but the carbon footprint left by email is getting bigger and bigger."



Berners-Lee's book **"How Bad are Bananas?: The Carbon Footprint of Everything"** talks about the carbon footprints created by different email types. (Defined as carbon dioxide equivalent)

**Average spam email:** 0,3 g $CO_2$ (carbon dioxide equivalent)

**A standart email**: 4 g $CO_2$

**An email with long and large attachments**: 50 g $CO_2$

The numbers are really disturbing. It's like a chest X-ray of smokers. Perhaps some disturbing images should be published, just like on cigarette packs, to raise awareness on this issue. On the other hand, there are also principles for reducing carbon footprint such as Green IT and companies that adopt these principles. But in this book, we are talking about bad email habits and even culture that end users have and cannot be avoided. Although companies and email providers use automated solutions such as deduplication, retention policy, and data lifecycle to lighten the burden of email storage, the least they can penetrate is user habits.

The changes we will make in our e-mail usage habits can create a positive avalanche effect and reduce this huge burden on companies and nature.

In the next section, we will examine what factors we, as e-mail users, should pay attention to when exchanging e-mails. In other words, we're going to take a look at how to save the world.

## SECTION 3 – BETTER EMAIL IS POSSIBLE

Our individual efforts against many situations that endanger our world lose their effect due to the indifferent and negative attitude of society in general. But the e-mail subject is a little different. I think we are stronger in this regard.

After all, we are one of the stakeholders of a two-way message traffic. So, we can manage or manipulate this traffic as we wish. For example, By not sending or replying to an e-mail that you think is unnecessary, perhaps you will avoid a correspondence loop of 3-4 e-mails.

In this section, where we will touch on the end-user part of e-mail use, we will talk about misbehaviors that we hold tight to, even love so much that we are going into if we can. In order not to bore you and avoid repetition, I will touch on these with brief explanations, one by one. While reading the articles, you might ask, how do I pay attention to so many things? I would like to remind you again. Email is an asynchronous messaging application. In other words, no one expects an instant response or a serial correspondence traffic from you. So you have plenty of time to review the messages you've received or sent. Be sure that the time you

will spend during this time will not be wasted, as it will prevent the confusion and unnecessary message traffic that will occur later. In addition, these issues that you initially paid attention to will become a discipline after a while and become reflexes that you apply automatically.

### 1- Do not send or reply if not necessary

Remember, the more emails you send, the more emails you get. For this, you need to avoid starting or maintaining unnecessary email correspondence.

For this, it is useful to ask the following questions before starting an e-mail correspondence.

-Can the message you want to give wait for face-to-face communication?

-Should you really use this communication channel? How about instant messaging or voice communication methods?

-Is your reply just an unnecessary thank you or a joke for a topic that has already closed?

If the answer is yes, you know what to do. If the answer is no, let's continue with the next one.

### 2- Be sure you include everything in one email

Be sure to include everything you want to say to the other party in the e-mail or reply you send. You can even see a step ahead and attach a possible answer to a question that the other party may ask at the end of the text. Another thing you should pay attention to is not to prepare texts that the recipient will ask more questions or cannot make sense of. This can get you into a very long email loop.

### 3- Do not add more recipients to CC or BC

Remember that the more people you add to the recipient part of the e-mails you send, the more copies will take up space on the servers. Yes, I am aware that I am not providing very important technical information here. But consider the example of everyone we mentioned above sending an incomplete e-mail a day.

Every unnecessary user you delete from To, CC or BCC means an email you didn't actually send.

### 4- Do not use "Reply all" feature if it is not necessary

It is actually a very similar issue to the one above. A little attention factor comes into play here. Because you did not choose the recipients of the e-mail you received, you may be just one of the recipients. In this case, using the "Reply All" button by heart will cause your e-mail to reach many unnecessary recipients.

### 5- Beware of group membership and subscriptions

Although it seems like an administrative issue, one of our biggest problems is that we want to be a member of every group and be informed about everything. If everything that comes to a team does not concern you, you do not need to be in that team's e-mail group for very small and infrequent issues. Instead, you can request to be added to the recipient section of e-mails about you or to have the e-mail forwarded to you by team members. In fact, only e-mails on certain topics can be automatically forwarded to you through a rule you can apply on your e-mail server.

At the same time, it is useful to be selective in news, advertisement, and promotion subscriptions. If you are no longer interested in the e-mail channels you previously subscribed to, be sure to unsubscribe or create blocking rules for the sender. You can unsubscribe from the sender's e-mail list with one click by clicking the "unsubscribe" phrase in many of these messages you receive.

### 6- Check the email attachments

Earlier we talked about the average carbon footprint of emails. You will remember the difference between regular emails and emails with attachments. Exactly 12.5 times more. For this, let's try to minimize the size of e-mail attachments as much as possible. If we host the files we will send in an in-house location or cloud service, let's share the URL or the path of the folder instead of the file itself. Thus, the e-mails are delivered in a much smaller size, while the recipient can access the files in their original quality from the public area.

For example, in current versions of Outlook, you can attach files that you host in cloud-based storage areas such as OneDrive or SharePoint as attachments to the e-mail you send.
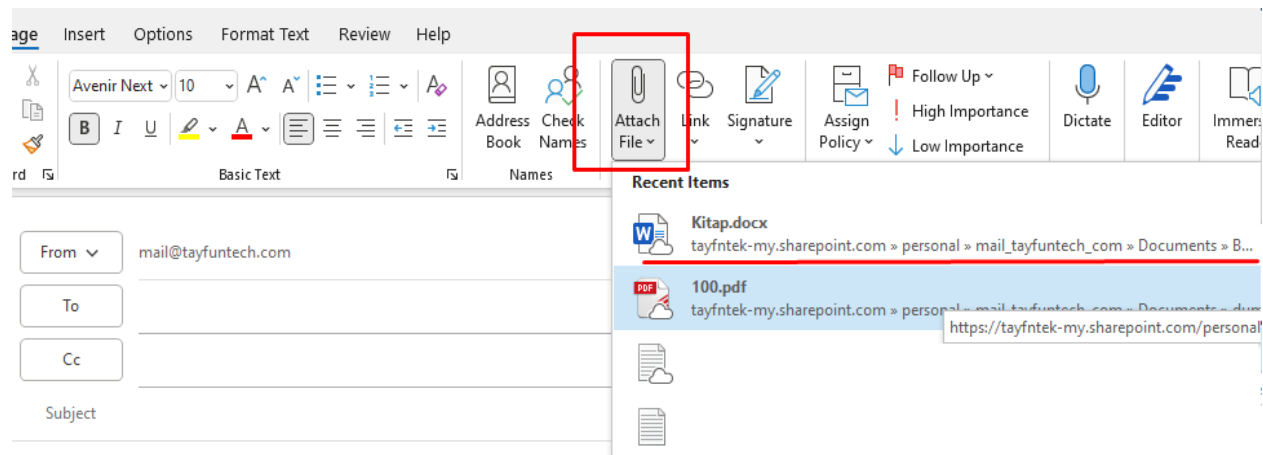


By using this feature, you can prevent the file in question from increasing the size of the e-mail during sending. You will also prevent each recipient from creating duplicate files by downloading separately. For this reason, it will always be more efficient to use the **"Share link"** option when attaching your file in OneDrive to an e-mail. Thus, recipients can both view the file online without having to download it and follow the latest version of the file.
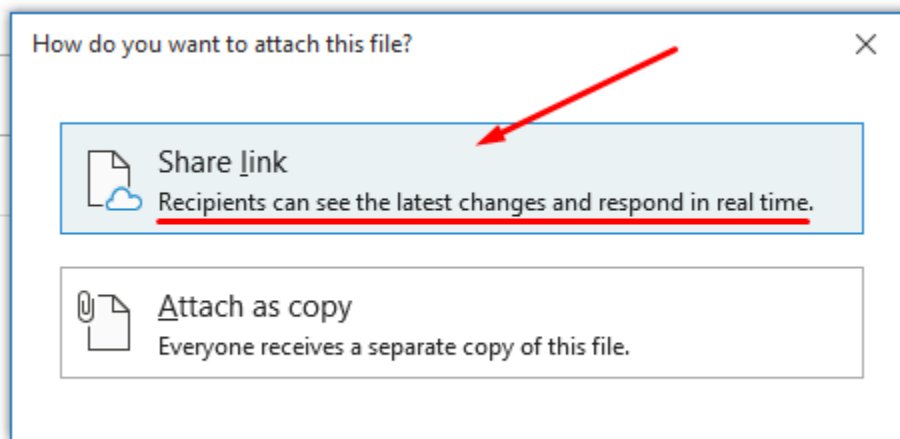


Also remember that Email signatures are often attachments. Images used in signatures increase the size of the email, while embedded links can cause you to be perceived as spam. Therefore, using a simpler signature is also very important in order not to interrupt your e-mail exchange.

If we implement these steps regularly, we will make our daily workflow more fluid and simple, while reducing the burden we will create on the ecosystem that is already in its heart. Be sure, this discipline, which seems to be one-sided, will attract the attention of your other teammates or allow you to direct them. Therefore, this e-mail attitude, which was only a sensitivity at the beginning, can turn into a collective consciousness after a while and can provide a great benefit from your target.