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Thunderbird Saved My Bacon
Bob Woods, Webmaster, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
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www.uchug.org
webmasters@uchug.org

We recently needed to execute a factory restore to prove one of our touch screen laptop computers had a hardware failure in the touch screen. We knew it had failed, but you've got to jump through all the hoops to convince first-tier warranty repair technicians (sigh). Once the laptop was back from repair, successful I may add, we needed to reinstall all the applications and redo settings. Along this week long process, we discovered my wife's favorite email client, Incredimail, was no longer a viable solution. Upon trying to download and install the client our antivirus program, ESET, threw a fit. ESET not only found possible malware, a scan with Malware Bytes found two variants of Conduit which we removed. Upon checking the internet we found that the company that produces Incredimail, Perion Network, merged with the company that produces Conduit. The Incredimail client will now install a number of poorly written tracking and hijacking programs. So, what to do?

My wife liked the ease of use that Incredimail afforded. Adding stationary, emoticons and graphics was very simple. Our first attempt at a replacement was to try Microsoft Outlook. It is supposed to have emoticons and stationary. Upon installation and use we found a number of issues. Changing some of the menu font sizes was very challenging (we never did get the left side column right). We were able to set up a toolbar button for some default emoticons, but stationary required a multi-step through menus process. Since I had set up the accounts to use IMAP vice POP, deleting only did a strike through of the email titles. Instead of deleting it required a multi step select and purge to delete. There was also no way to easily work with spam and junk. After a few days my wife was cursing Outlook and I could see I was next in line for suggesting it. Back to the drawing board.

I use Thunderbird for my email client. When my wife looked at my plain vanilla Thunderbird setup she initially didn't like it. I do not bother with themes, stationary or emoticons so I didn't know if Thunderbird would allow them. A quick check on the internet uncovered the fact that Thunderbird does indeed work with them and there are add-on extensions and plugins to handle the extras. So, to ease her transition to Thunderbird, I initially set up all the additional features on my laptop. Along the way I found out a couple of bits of info that helped me.

Font size - To change font size and family globally as well as theme there is an add-on called Theme Font & Size Changer.
1. Open Thunderbird
2. Click on the three horizontal bars at the upper right to open the Thunderbird Menu

3. Click on Add-ons
4. In the Search all add-ons box type Fonts
5. Click the install button for Theme & Font Size Changer
6. There is now a Theme Font Size Changer button at the upper right and if you have the menu bar turned on another at the bottom of the drop down menu for Tools

Add Themes - Themes are the colorful banners at the top and bottom of the Thunderbird window and emails you create. This is the same setup as they use in the Firefox browser.
1. Open Thunderbird
2. Click on the three horizontal bars at the upper right to open the Thunderbird Menu
3. Click on Add-ons
4. Scroll to the bottom of the Get Add-ons screen
5. On the Featured Themes title click on See All
6. Select a category
7. As you hover the mouse over a theme it will show at the top and bottom of the Thunderbird window.
8. Clicking the Add button will set the theme and add it to your Appearance menu.
9. To change between already installed themes just enable the one you want

Add Stationery - Thunderbird was not originally set up to use stationery, as such, like Outlook or Outlook Express does. However, it does have templates. A savvy programmer has been kind enough to have created an add-on extension that mimics Outlook Express Stationery. There are excellent step by step instructions for installation and setup at http://thundercloud.net/help/tbird-new.htm. The Thunderbird for stationery add-on at this site is the same one as on the Mozilla site at https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/thunderbird/addon/stationery/. After the stationary add-on is installed and you have followed the instructions for using Cloudeight stationery you can download additional stationery through Cloudeight at http://thundercloud.net/stationery/. When you get to the download area, some of the stationery is listed for Thunderbird. Others will be listed for Windows Mail or Vista with no mention of Thunderbird. These are in the correct format for Thunderbird. Just do not download the Windows Live Mail version as it is not the correct format for Thunderbird.

Emoticons – Thunderbird comes configured with some basic emoticons built in. When you write an email the emoticon icon will be displayed on the formatting toolbar. The formatting toolbar looks like the following:
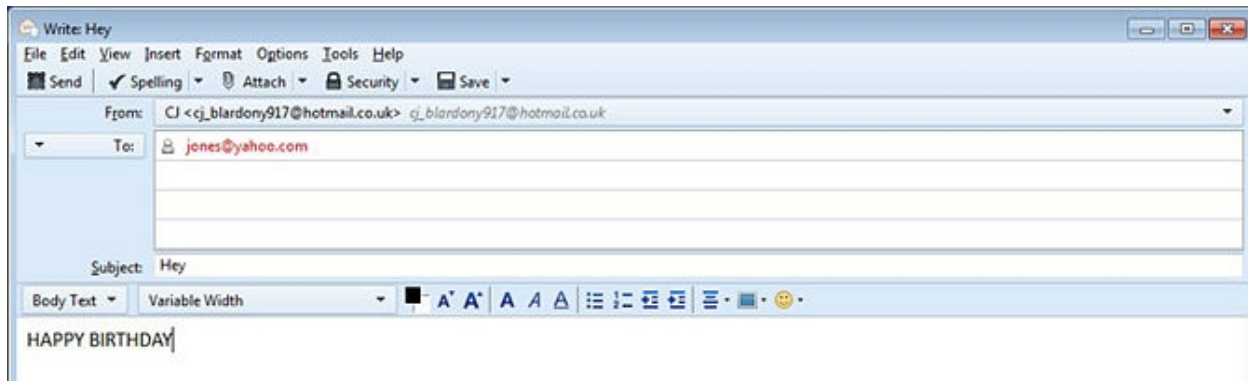
If you do not see the formatting toolbar (has the font size, type, etc.) you can turn it on by clicking on View, Toolbars and Formatting Toolbar. However, the default emoticons are pretty boring. I also found there is an alternate term for emoticons called Smileys. There are many add-ons and ways to add animated emoticons, but the one I settled on is from Smiley Central at http://emoticons.smileycentral.com/outlook-smileys.html. There are hundreds of Smileys built into the free version and they are ad free. The Smileys application is stand alone in that it has its own interface window rather than a button within Thunderbird. All you need to do to add a Smiley is:

1. Click to write a new email in Thunderbird.
2. Place the cursor in the new email where you want the Smiley.
3. If the Smiley window is not already open click the Smiley icon located down in the tool tray at the lower right located next to date and time (you will probably have to click the up arrow to see the icon). To insert the Smiley, browse to the one of your choice and click on it.
4. The Smiley will be inserted into the email at the location of the cursor.

Spam and Junk email – Thunderbird has a built in adaptive junk filter. Anything you tag as Junk ends up in the junk filter log. The next time an email arrives from the same source it will be automatically marked as junk. To set the junk filter follow the instructions at:
https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/thunderbird-and-junk-spam-messages#w_general-settings

The document also explains how to tag an email as "junk" or "not junk". I unchecked the box to "mark messages determined to be junk as read". That gives me a count of the number of junk messages that are in the junk folder. It is a good to reminder to review and empty it. Also, you can set the junk to automatically delete when tagged as junk. I recommend you initially do not do that. The filter needs to learn your email info so may make a few mistakes at first. If you find a valid email in the junk folder you can mark it as "not junk". That will remove it from the filter list and put it back in your inbox.

There is probably a lot more you will want to know about Thunderbird from time to time. The program is so well documented you will easily find info on how to set up or fix a problem out on the internet. Oh, and, by the way, the Concierge service at Costco was excellent. Everyone we talked to was in country and English speaking. You do need to

get past the first tier helpdesk personnel and to the actual repair depot but all were extremely helpful. At every step, from sending the packing box to receiving the laptop back, they phoned us. They told us when the packing box was sent, when received, when the laptop went onto repair, what they found, how long to get the new part, when the repair was complete and the laptop sent back to us and verified it arrived and we were satisfied the problem was resolved. This was done via second year Costco extended warranty at no cost to us.