

# What's the difference between POP and IMAP?

You can connect to your Advanced or Standard mailboxes using both the POP (Post Office Protocol) and IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol). These methods of retrieving your emails work in slightly different ways.

## POP (Post Office Protocol)

If your email software is set up to use POP, each time you connect to your mailbox your computer will download all the emails within the mailbox on our servers and create a copy on your computer. By default, it will then delete the mails from the mailbox on our servers to free up space for new emails to arrive.

- **Advantages** The fact that the emails are stored on your local computer is useful if you like to keep all your emails, as you can store as many as you like (providing that you have room on your hard drive). In addition, if you then want to view your emails at a later date, when you have no internet connection, they are on your computer ready for you. Once you have downloaded your emails, POP is the quickest way of reading them at a later date.
- **Disadvantages** If you have a number of computers all accessing the same mailbox, this can become confusing. If one computer downloads your emails and removes them from the mailbox, then you attempt to retrieve your emails from a second computer, the emails will have already been downloaded and deleted, so there will be no emails for the second computer to see.

## IMAP (Internet Messaging Access Protocol)

If your email software is set up to use IMAP, each time your computer connects to the mailbox it will show you which emails are in the mailbox on our servers. It does not download the emails to your computer, and they will remain in the mailbox. If you then decide to read an email, it will download that particular email to your computer, leaving a copy within the mailbox. Also with IMAP, your sent mails and draft emails are sent from your computer to the mailbox, essentially synchronising your local computer with your mailbox.

- **Advantages** This means that if you have multiple computers connecting to the same mailbox on our servers, each computer will see the same thing in your inbox, sent and draft folders.
- **Disadvantages** You are now storing all your emails within the mailbox on our servers, rather than downloading them to your local computer, so you will need to keep an eye on the mailbox space you are using. In addition, as all emails are stored online, rather than on your computer, reading emails can be slower than POP, and you may not be able to read some emails while not connected to the internet.

## Frequently asked questions

### Which protocol is best for me?

- **POP** is best if you only use one computer to check your mailbox
- **IMAP** is best if multiple computers check the same mailbox

### How can I connect my mail software to my mailbox?

- The process will depend on the mail software you are using, and the type of mailbox you want to connect to.

### Can I connect to my mailbox using multiple computers with POP?

- Yes you can, there are certain limitations to this method, please refer to our POP tips for multiple machines document.

### Can I connect to my mailbox using IMAP, and keep a copy of my email on my local machine?

- Yes you can, our article IMAP tips will show you how

