

How can I configure Outlook 2003 to block spam?

By Daniel Petri

Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 includes features and functionality designed to help block much of the junk e-mail messages (or spam) that you receive. These features give you more control over the kinds of messages delivered to your Inbox, and from whom you want to receive messages.

Although these features are not customizable in any way, they do provide a means for reducing the amount of incoming spam. In combination with good rules that you manually create - you can get an 80% spam blocking rate.

How Outlook 2003 Helps Block Junk E-Mail Messages

These Outlook 2003 features are designed to work together to help block unwanted e-mail messages.

- **Junk E-Mail Filter:** Outlook 2003 uses state-of-the-art technology developed by Microsoft Research to evaluate whether a message should be treated as a junk e-mail message based on several factors—such as the time the message was sent and the content and structure of the message. The filter does not single out any particular sender or type of e-mail message. Rather, it uses advanced analysis to determine how likely it is to be thought of by you as a junk e-mail message.

By default, this filter is set to a low setting designed to catch the most obvious junk e-mail messages. Messages caught by the filter are moved to a special Junk E-mail folder, where you can access them later. If you want, you can make the filter more aggressive (perhaps mistakenly catching more legitimate messages), or even set Outlook 2003 to permanently delete junk e-mail messages as they come in.

- **Safe Senders List:** If an e-mail message is mistakenly marked as a junk e-mail message by the filter, you can easily add the sender of that message to your Safe Senders List. E-mail addresses and domain names on the Safe Senders List are never treated as junk e-mail messages, regardless of the content of the message. Contacts are trusted by default and messages from them will never be treated as junk e-mail messages. When your company uses Microsoft Exchange Server, messages from within the organization will also never be treated as junk e-mail messages. You can configure Outlook 2003 to accept only messages from the Safe Senders List, giving you total control over which messages you receive.
- **Blocked Senders List:** E-mail messages from a certain e-mail address or domain name can easily be blocked by adding the sender to your Blocked Senders List. Messages from people or domain names on your Blocked Senders List will always be treated as junk e-mail messages, regardless of the content of the message.

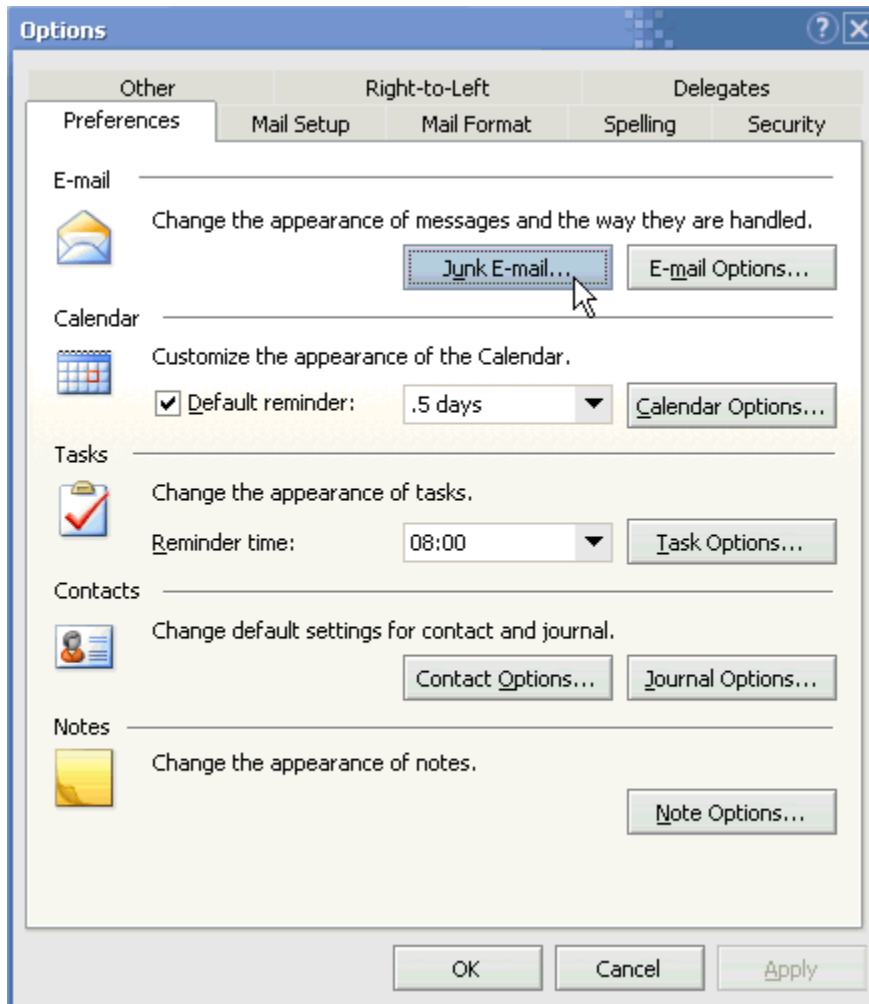
- **Safe Recipients Lists:** An e-mailing list or group that you are a member of can be added to your Safe Recipients Lists. Any messages sent to the e-mail addresses or domain names on this list will not be treated as junk e-mail messages, regardless of the sender or content of the message.
- **AutoUpdate:** You can update your Junk E-Mail Filter with periodic updates from Microsoft so you have the latest methods to block unwanted messages. Microsoft is committed to providing periodic updates of the Junk E-Mail Filter. However, in Microsoft Office 2003 Beta 2 the AutoUpdate feature is not included.

Setting Junk E-Mail Filters in Outlook 2003

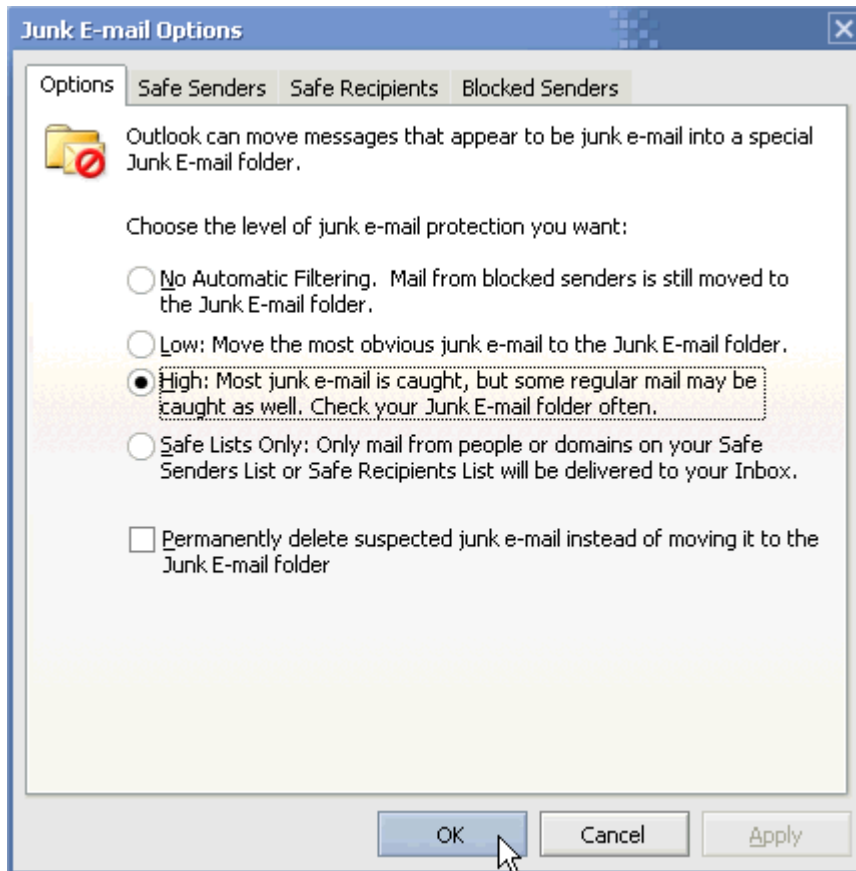
In Outlook 2003, the Junk E-Mail Filter is turned on by default. The first time Outlook 2003 moves a message to the Junk E-mail folder, it will notify you with a dialog box.

To change junk e-mail settings in Outlook 2003:

1. On the Tools menu, select Options.
2. In the Options dialog box, in the E-mail section, click Junk E-mail.



3. Choose the level of junk e-mail message protection you want.



Click OK.

4. You can also add or remove email addresses or sending domains to the Safe Senders list. That list can be exported and imported to another computer.

The screenshot shows an Outlook email window. The left pane displays a list of messages, with the selected message from Anastasia Ransom (17:04) titled 'How to copy DVD...'. A context menu is open over this message, and the 'Junk E-mail' option is selected. A sub-menu is open, showing options like 'Add Sender to Blocked Senders List', 'Add Sender to Safe Senders List', and 'Add Recipient to Safe Recipients List'. The main pane shows the email content, which is a promotional message for 'Easy DVD KIT'.

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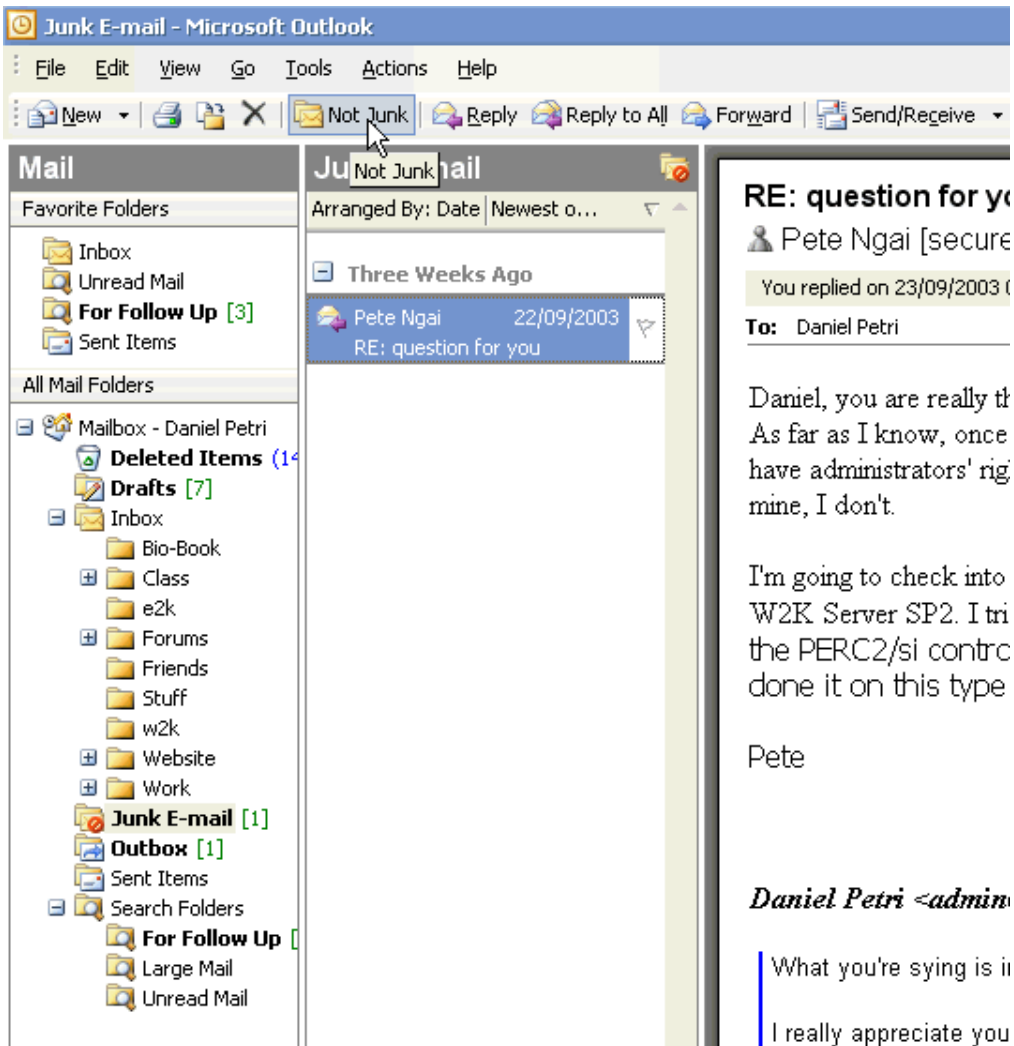
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To remove a sender's address from the list of junk mail senders:

1. Click on the message that you wish to mark as Not Junk.
2. Click on the Not Junk button in the Outlook toolbar.



Note: For versions of Microsoft Exchange Server without Cached Exchange Mode, junk e-mail filtering must be installed and configured on the Exchange Server.

Links

Prevent Junk E-Mail Messages with Outlook 2003

(<http://www.microsoft.com/office/preview/editions/junkmail.asp>)

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