

POP vs. IMAP

The main difference is the way in which IMAP or POP controls your e-mail inbox. IMAP is quickly becoming the preferred method, since it gives you complete access to all email and all email folders, from multiple computers or mobile devices.

When you use IMAP you are accessing your inbox on Reagan.com's central mail server. IMAP does not actually move messages onto your computer. Although the messages appear on your computer while you work with them, they remain on the central mail server.

POP does the opposite. Instead of just showing you what is in your inbox on Reagan.com's mail server, it checks the server for new messages, downloads all the new messages in your inbox onto your computer, and then deletes them from the server. This means that every time you use POP to view your new messages, they are no longer on the central mail server. Those messages exist only on the computer that downloaded them using POP.

If you're trying to decide between using POP and IMAP, we suggest you use IMAP. IMAP provides a better method to access your mail from multiple devices. If you check your email at work, on your mobile phone, and again at home, IMAP ensures that new mail is accessible from any device at any given time and that what you view is consistent across devices.

Note: Microsoft Exchange users access their mailbox data via the Exchange server, rather than using a POP or IMAP connection.

POP

When you check your email with a POP connection, new email messages are downloaded to your computer and are then deleted from the email server.

- **Access:** Since your email is stored on your computer, you must be at your computer to access your email.
- **Storage:** You don't need to worry about running out of online storage space. Since you're downloading your emails to your computer, you can keep as many emails as your computer can store.
- **Backup:** You should implement an effective backup system for your computer, in case you need to retrieve lost or deleted emails.
- **Internet Connection:** You will need an Internet connection to download email, but you can view your downloaded email **offline** (i.e., without an Internet connection).

IMAP

When you check your email with an IMAP connection, you are accessing and managing your email directly from the email server.

- **Access:** Since the emails are stored on the email server, you can access and manage your email and email folders from multiple computers or mobile devices.
- **Storage:** If you have limited online storage space, you may need to delete some emails periodically to avoid exceeding your storage capacity.
- **Backup:** Email is automatically backed up every evening; so, if you accidentally delete an email, your email administrator can retrieve it—even up to 14 days later.
- **Internet Connection:** If you do not have an Internet connection, you cannot access your email.

Note: By default, email software applications (e.g., Outlook, Thunderbird) store your sent, draft, and trash email on your computer, rather than storing it on the email server (as it should with an IMAP connection). You may need to make some adjustments to your email software setup so that sent, drafts, and trash email will be stored in your online Sent, Drafts, and Trash folders.