Microsoft Outlook and the Junk Email Folder

Why is email suddenly ending up in my “Junk Email” folder?

We have always had a “Junk Email” folder appear in Outlook, but it has never done anything before now. This is because our old email system, (pre December 19, 2013) didn’t have any rules built in to ever move anything there. If an end user wanted to write a rule to utilize this folder, they could, but the system looked at it as just another folder.

When the college moved to Office 365, which is based on a Microsoft Exchange email system, the “Junk Email” folder came to life.

Please remember to check your “Junk Email” folder on a regular basis.

What is the purpose of the “Junk Email” folder?

The “Junk Email” folder is a place for Microsoft Outlook to put messages that it has determined contain some kind of risk. When placed in this folder, all functionality in the message, including links, are disabled to prevent the opening of something that could harm your computer.

How does Outlook know to place a message into the “Junk Email” folder?

Microsoft Outlook will take a number of factors into consideration before placing a message into the “Junk Email” folder.

- Outlook will look to see if a message is on your “Junk Email” Blocked Senders list or Safe Senders list. These lists are configurable through the Outlook “Junk Email” Options.
- Outlook will look to see if a prior Anti-SPAM or Anti-Virus system has flagged the message as suspect, such as our on campus email security system.
- Outlook will consider the contents of the message, much like other email security systems do.

If a message is placed in my “Junk Email” folder, can I still get to the message?

If Microsoft Outlook places a message in my “Junk Email” folder, but I have determined that it is safe to open, I can move the message back to my “Inbox” where I will be able to open it and all functionality of the message will be restored.

Just because a message ends up in my “Junk Email” folder, does that always mean it is unsafe?

As with any SPAM detection system, there is always the chance for a “False Positive”. In addition, what some people consider to be SPAM, others may actually want. An example of this would be a marketing newsletter that an individual has signed up for. If you can be certain that a message in the “Junk Email” folder is something that you really do want, you can move it back to your Inbox.
Why do some messages from the same sender go to the “Junk Email” folder, and others do not?

Since Microsoft Outlook does consider the contents of the message as well as flags from other email security systems, it could see a flag raised on a particular message that did not exist on another message.

How can I stop messages from going into my “Junk Email” folder?

Although it is possible to build a “Safe Senders” list in Outlook Web, the easiest way to do it is using the Outlook 2013 desktop client.

1. Navigate to the “Junk Email” folder in Outlook 2013.
2. Right-Click on a message that you want to add to your “Safe Senders” list.
3. From the drop down list of options, select “Junk”.
4. From the “Junk” drop down list, select “Never Block Sender”.
   • You will receive a pop up message that states “The sender of the selected message has been added to your Safe Senders List”.
5. Click OK.

Email messages from this sender should now be delivered directly to your “Inbox”. Please be aware that some marketing firms send messages out from more than one account, and therefore it may appear that a message you have added to your “Safe Senders” list is still being blocked. If this happens, simply follow the same procedure as listed above for adding a sender to your “Safe Senders” list.

I do not have any version of the Outlook desktop client and I have to add a sender to my “Safe Senders” list using Outlook Web. What do I do?

Using the Outlook Web client, you can Right-Click on a message in the “Junk Email” folder and select the option from the drop down menu “mark as not junk”. This will move the message from your “Junk Email” folder and place it in your “Inbox”. This does not add the sender to the “Safe Senders” list.

To add a sender to the “Safe Senders” list, you must do the following:

1. Click on the settings gear in the upper right corner of the Outlook Web window, next to your name.
2. Select “Options” from the drop down list.
3. On the left side of the Options window, click on “block or allow”.
4. In the “block or allow” window, you will see a “safe senders and recipients” list and a “blocked senders” list.
5. In the appropriate list, type in the email address you are wanting to block or allow and click the plus (+) sign.
6. When you are done adding senders to the appropriate list, click “save”. 
7. To return to your email boxes, click the arrow located on the left side of the window, just above the word “options”.