# Rule your Inbox with Outlook

**ONE OF THE BIGGEST** problems with managing email is keeping it all organised. Even if you only receive a couple of dozen messages per day it doesn't take long for your Inbox to get out of control. David Peterson has some suggestions

In most inboxes, important correspondence can easily end up buried amongst personal emails (and the ubiquitous spam) – and after a week's holiday it can take a couple of days to sift through the mess waiting to greet you on your return to the office.

If you are one of the privileged few in this era of cost-cutting and downsizing to have a secretary or PA to manage your email for you then this won't be too much of a problem. For the rest of us, there's the Outlook Rules Wizard.

Last month I explained how to use the Outlook Rules Wizard to delete spam emails based on keywords in the subject and message body using the **Move messages based on content** template. So that's the spam taken care of, but what about managing legitimate emails?

The Outlook Rules Wizard provides a range of options for processing incoming emails depending on a user's individual requirements. If you want to sort your emails by topic, for example, you could create a new email folder for each project that you are working on and use the **Move messages based on content** rule template described last month (August issue, p. 56) to create sorting rules for each of them. If you are responsible for hiring new staff, for example, you could create a rule to move any email containing the keywords "CV" or "resume" into a separate folder.

You can also sort emails based on the sender – keeping emails from your boss, co-workers, friends and family and each of your customers in a separate folder:

**1** Create a new rule by selecting **Rules Wizard** from the **Tools** menu in Outlook and clicking **New...**

**2** Make sure that **Start from a blank rule** and **Check messages when they arrive** are selected.

**3** Check **with specific words in the sender's address** to add a list of email addresses or domain names. Click **Next**.

**4** Check **move it to the specified folder** to select where you would like the emails moved.

To make these rules easier to maintain, you may wish to consider using distribution lists by selecting **from people or distribution list** rather than **with specific words in the sender's address** at Step 3.

If you subscribe to several mailing lists, you may wish to sort these into their own folders as well – so that emails intended to be read at your leisure do not appear in the **to do** list of your Inbox. Some mailing lists can be identified by the sender, in which case the **sort by sender** style of rule described above will do the trick. Others are distinguished by the **To:** address, in which case you will need to use the **with specific words in the recipient's address** or **sent to people or distribution list** condition at Step 3.

These have just been a few examples of how you can use the Outlook Rules Wizard to help you organise your email but there are many more. By simply following the Wizard's prompts you can:
● quarantine emails containing attachments into a separate folder;
● automatically print new emails as they arrive; or
● even start a program or run a script when a certain type of email arrives.

Experiment for yourself and see what you can come up with!

**David Peterson is a principal consultant at Peterson IT Consulting (www.PetersonITConsulting.com) –** providing eBusiness and software engineering consulting services. He can be contacted by email at david@PetersonITConsulting.com.

ILLUSTRATION: MARK TREMLETT