Email tips and tricks

Mendlesham Computer Club

By Giles Godart-Brown

How does email work?

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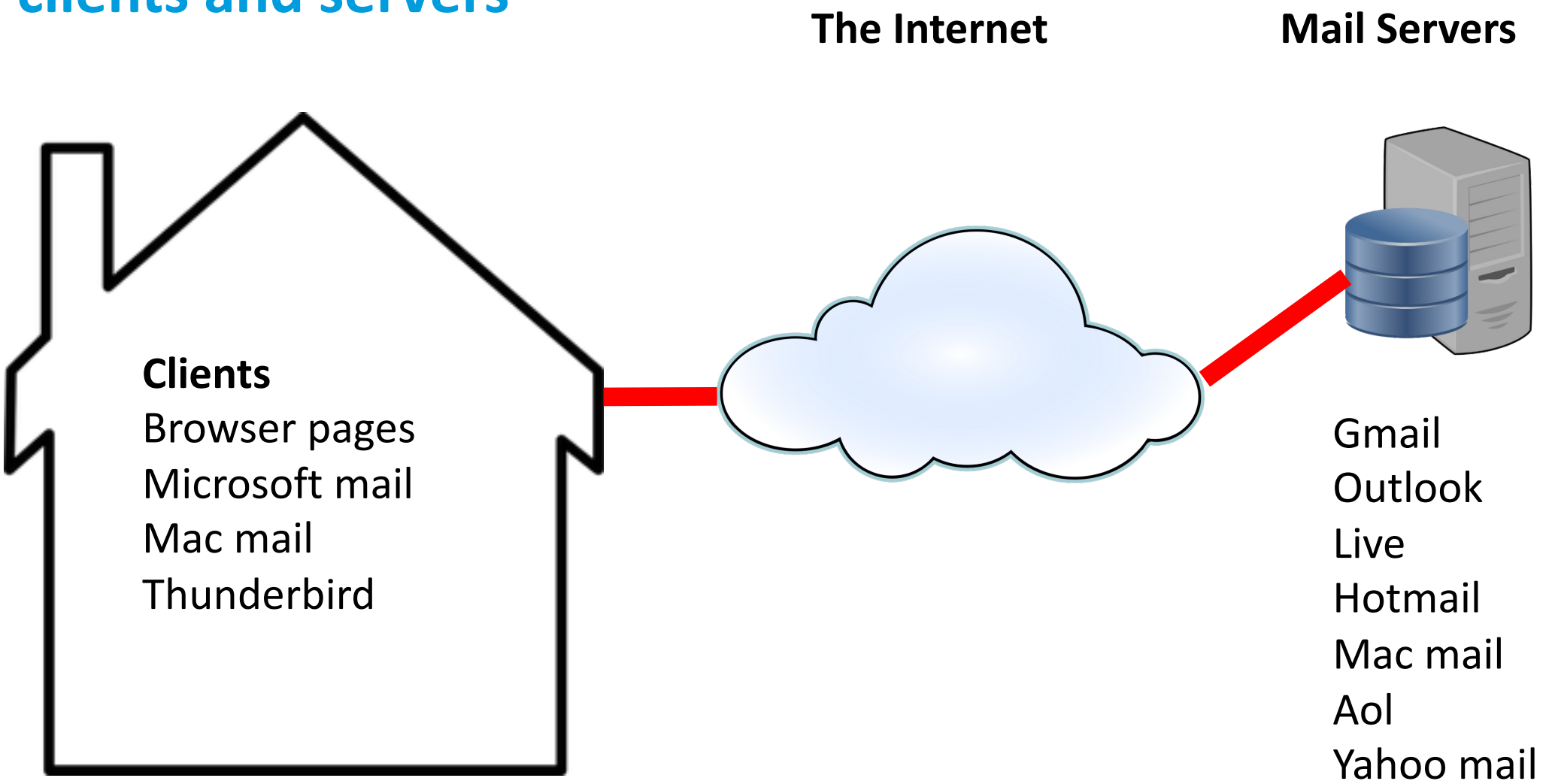
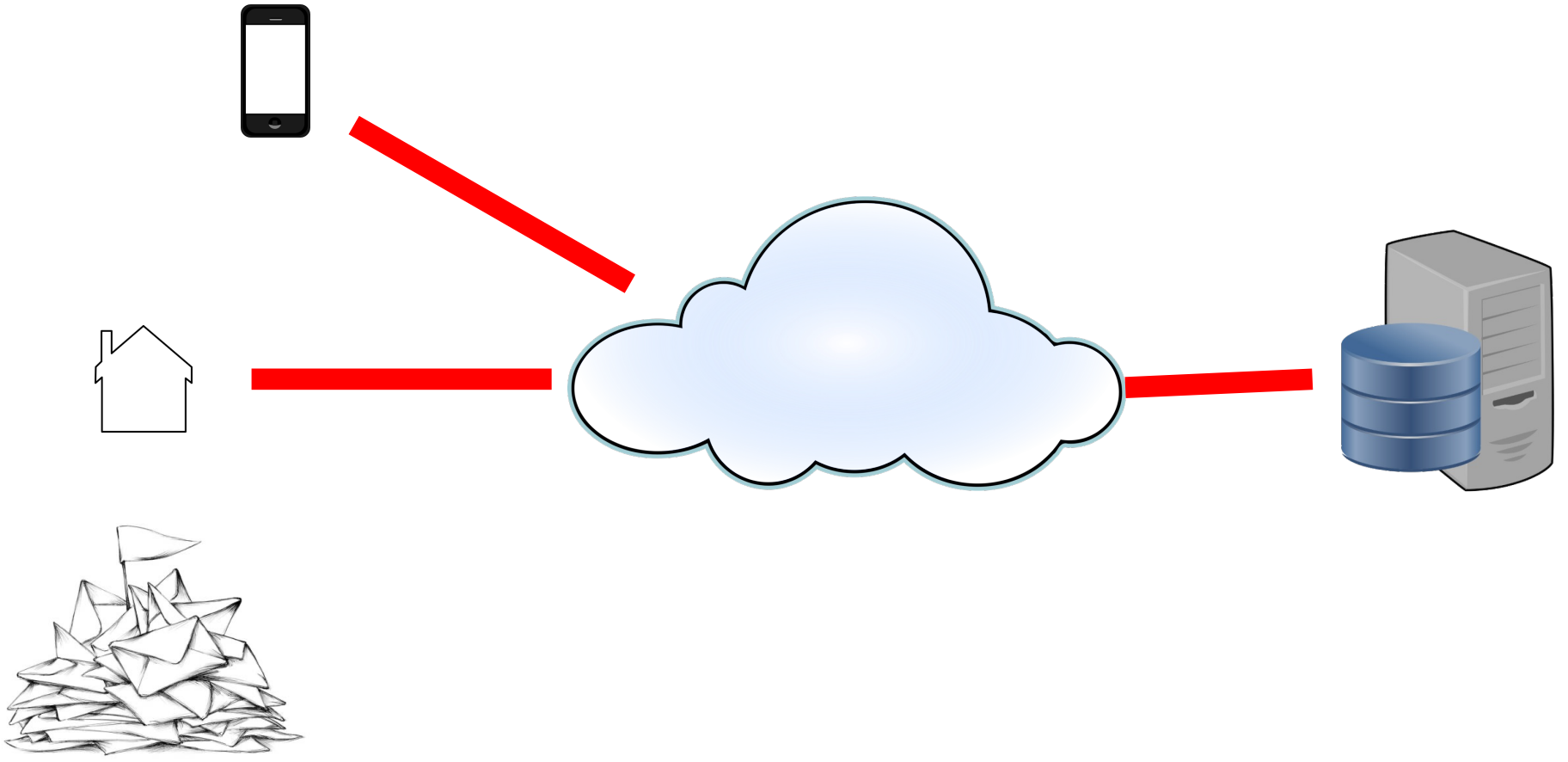
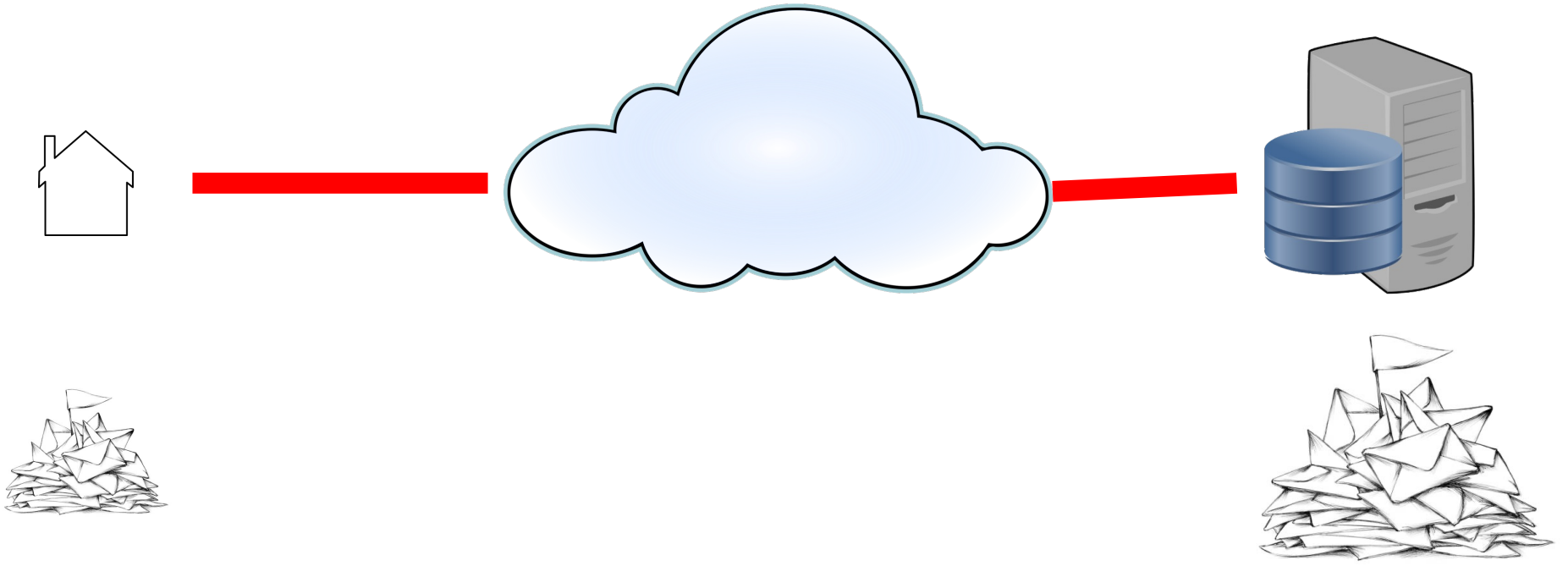
Mail clients and servers



Post Office Protocol (POP)



Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP)



What do you need to know to set up an email client

- Your email address and password.
- Most client applications will the be able to resolve the following from the email address, but in case they do not you need to use google to find what they are for your email address;
  - Protocol (always IMAP)
  - Incoming mail server (IMAP) and port
  - Outgoing mail server (SMTP) and port
  - Security (usually TLS)

What is an email and how do addresses work?

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What’s inside an email?

Email

Header

- Addresses, To, From
- Dates
- Subject and other things needed for mail to work

Body

Attachments

Traditional Letter

Envelope

- Addresses, To, (From)
- Dates – Franked by Post Office

Covering letter

Enclosures

Email addresses

- Email addresses are in 2 parts a name and a domain, split by the @ character,
  e.g. giles@godartbrown.co.uk, the name is giles and the domain is godartbrown.co.uk
- The domain usually indicates the mail server,
  e.g. @gmail.com = Google, @hotmail.com = Microsoft, @mac.com = Apple
- You can however rent a domain then set up your own, more easily remembered, email names,
  e.g. I rent godartbrown.co.uk and have email addresses for myself and Sonia
  - If you rent a domain you can set the mailboxes as either forwarders, or proper email boxes at a little extra cost.
    E.g. all mail to giles@godartbtown.co.uk gets forwarded to ggodartbrown@gmail.com
  - The other benefit of this is that you can change email providers and don't have to tell everyone you have changed, just change the redirect.

Tips for addressing

- Most email systems support distribution lists.
- Always use BCC (blind copy) when sending or replying to a list. This stops you from broadcasting the email addresses of the recipients (but you can still see who they are in your sent mail folder).
- Think twice (or more) before reply-all.
- Read-receipt is very seldom used nowadays and can easily be circumvented.

Attachments

- Attachments are files (Photos, documents etc.) that are sent with the body of the email, analogous to enclosures in an envelope in paper based email.
- Beware of opening attachments from senders you do not recognize, this is the most common way viruses are transmitted, if in doubt delete. NEVER open an attachment with a name ending in .exe.
- Its OK to save attachments to your local disk if say you want to edit them, but remember to leave them in a folder in your email system in case your PC dies.
- Some mailboxes have limits on attachment size, so beware of sending very large attachments, or lots of photos, send them in multiple emails if necessary.

Tips for writing emails

- To ‘Dear’ or not to ‘Dear’
  - Up to personal preference, but often not used in emails
  - Never in a reply
- Expressing emotion
  - Emoticons
  - SHOUTING
  - Use pseudo tags e.g. <sarcasm>Isn’t that clever !</sarcasm>

the Subject

- Use subject<EOM> (End Of Message) for one-liners e.g.

  Subject: Can you come to a party at 9PM on Saturday?<EOM>

  Then you can leave the message blank and the recipient can quickly see what the message is.

- Don’t be afraid to edit the Subject when a thread changes course.

Folders

- These are like the folders you have in a filing cabinet or on your disk drive. They contain emails and their attachments.
- If you are using IMAP the master for these is in the cloud and wont be lost if your pc fails.
- You should always aim to move items out of your inbox into a folder (preferably the trash) as soon as you can.
- There are 2 schools of thought on how to use folders.
  - Have a few folders and use search to find what you want
  - Have an extensive folder structure with folders within folders
- Every mail client differs slightly on how to use these, e.g. Gmail also calls them Labels, I will demo Microsoft mail.

Inbox management – Inbox Zero

The aim is to have no emails in you Inbox at the end of each day

- Process email periodically throughout the day, perhaps on the hour.
- First delete as many new messages as possible.
- Then forward what can be best answered by someone else.
- Immediately respond to any new messages that can be answered in two minutes or less.
- Move new messages that require more than two minutes to answer -- and messages that can be answered later -- to a separate "requires response" folder.
- Move messages which are waiting for someone else to do something to a “Waiting-for” folder and review this at the end of each week, chase if necessary.
- Set aside time each day to respond to email in the "requires response" folder or chip away at mail in this folder throughout the day.

How to get to Inbox Zero

1. Create a new folder called ‘old inbox’
2. Move your entire inbox to ‘old inbox’
3. Go to ‘old inbox’ and start from the oldest email and be ruthless
    1. Delete,
    2. Move into another folder for safe keeping
    3. Reply if you can deal with it in under 2 minutes
    4. Move it to ‘waiting for’ if you are going to deal with it later
4. Meanwhile, keep you main inbox empty.

Email Filters or Rules

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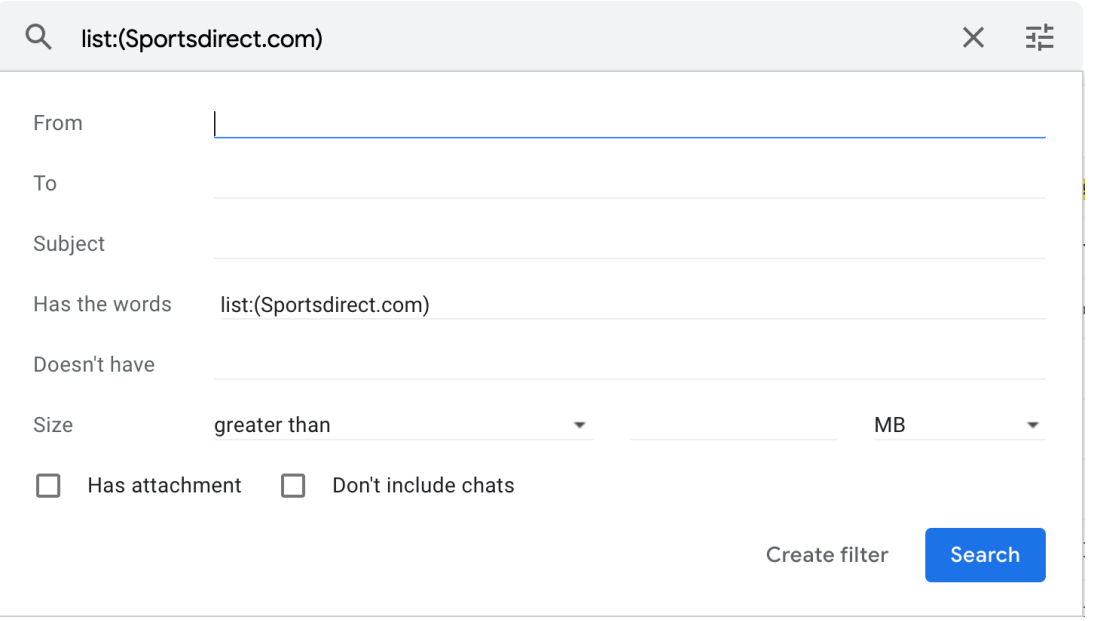
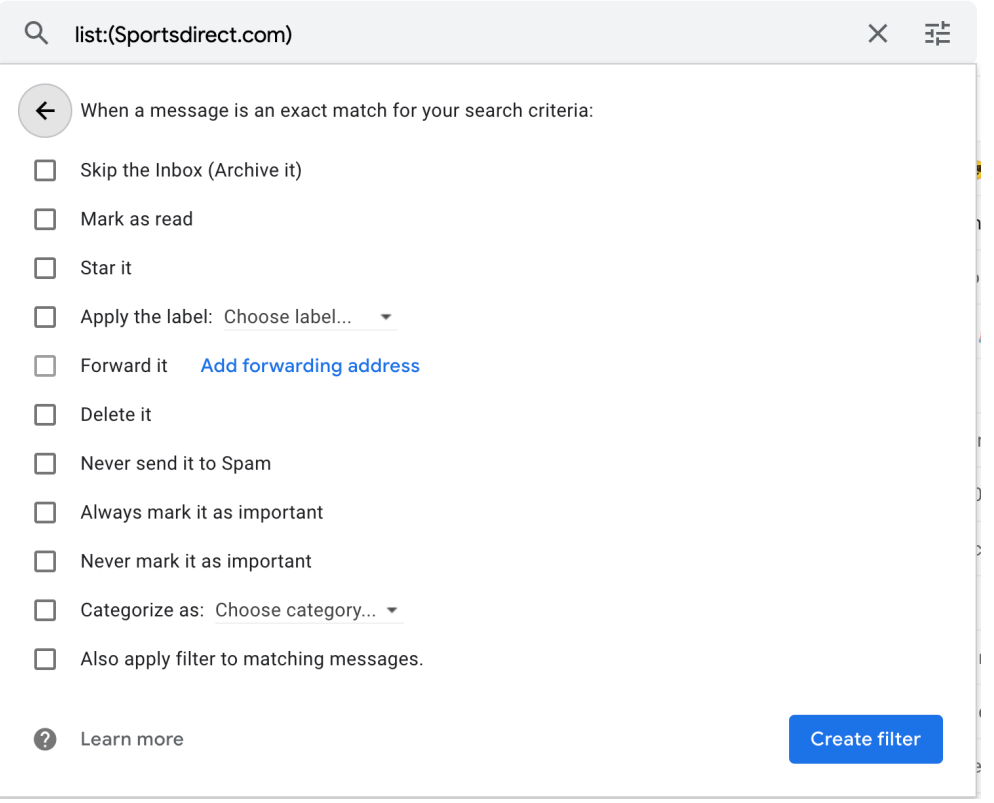
Inbox management – Filters or Rules

- Microsoft calls them Rules, Gmail Filters
- They automatically deal with your emails BEFORE they go into your inbox e.g.
  - Delete all emails from the chosen sender
  - Move all emails with a given subject to a chosen folder

- All email hosts support them, however how you set them up depends on the individual providers, here is are demos of how to do it in Gmail and Microsoft. (see https://support.google.com/mail/answer/6579?hl=en-GB0)

How to create a Gmail filter

- Go to Gmail in your browser (do not use the Windows mail client) https://mail.google.com/
- Open an email that you want to filter
- Click on the 3 dots for more ⋮
- Click **Filter messages like these**.