

THIS & THAT

by
Bob Lunaburg



I get lots of questions about email attachments. Folks say I don't know how to attach a photo to my email letters, and when I download an attachment, I can never find it. These are frustrating experiences to say the least.

I don't have much space to cover this subject properly here, but it is covered in depth in our Internet Course (5 sessions). I will offer you a few ideas and suggestions here anyway.

Your email program acts like a word processor when you write a letter to someone. That letter becomes a complete unit of information when it is sent over the Internet. If you add an attachment to your letter, you actually add a second complete unit of information to it.

In computer terms, each complete unit of information is called a *file* (computer file). Your letter's file is written and read using an email program. Attachments are handled according to the kind of file they are, e.g. pictures, music, charts, or word processing documents.

These attachments are created with programs other than an email program. Those non-email programs make no assumption as to whether or not what you create will be sent over the Internet. They do assume that you

will save them on your hard drive though, that is if you want to keep them. After being save on your hard drive you can attach copies of them to your emails if you want, but you will need to know where they are on your hard drive (e.g. on my C: hard drive, and in my *My Documents* folder), and what their names are (e.g. *MyPicture.jpg*).

In order to attach a file, you will use your email's *file attachment* feature which helps you tell the program where the attachment is on your hard drive, and what its name is.

Once your email program knows this, it can make a copy of that file and include it (attach it) with your email file when you send the letter. Both go together at the same time, but remain as two separate files.

The situation is reversed on the receiving end of things. When you open an email, your email program handles the letter part of things as one operation, and the attachment as a second operation.

Some email programs can show you picture type attachments while you are using the program to read the mail. Others cannot.

In all cases, however, if you want to view the attachment using the same kind of program that created it (e.g. Microsoft Word or Word Perfect for text documents, WinAmp for music) you must download (store on your hard drive) a copy of the attachment.

The same requirements needed for saving the file when it was made are required when you download a copy of the file. You must determine where it will go on your hard drive (e.g. C: hard drive, AOL folder (1) and inside that the *Downloads* folder (2)). Next, you must remember the name the sender gave the attachment (e.g. *MyPicture.jpg*). If you forget

either of these two things it will be hard for you to find the attachment. If you easily forget this kind of stuff, I suggest you write it down.

With the attachment safely on your hard drive, you can start the appropriate program needed to view it, then use that program to open a copy of the attachment from the place you saved it on during your download.

See, I told you it was hard to explain this in such a small space. You might try our course if you are still confused. We spend a lot more time on this and you get a chance to ask questions. See you there.