# Crabby's favorite Outlook 2007 features

Applies to: Microsoft Office Access 2007, Outlook 2007, Access 2003

**Crabby Office Lady**

**Last week I talked a bit about the new user interface: the Ribbon. This week it's all about the changes we made to Outlook— a lot of them based on customer feedback.**

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I want to keep stressing that we often make changes due to your feedback. You asked, you whined, you cajoled, and yes, sometimes you insulted. We take none of it personally but we do make a point to take it to heart. If you're not getting your work done as efficiently as possible, and if you find yourself frustrated more often than not, we're not doing our jobs. With this new version of Outlook, we hope that we've addressed some of your more pressing issues. (In fact, I do believe we've ironed some of them, every pun intended.)

# Crabby's new favorites

With anything, be it software, cheese, or sports, when you like something, it's usually a specific aspect that calls out to you (ease-of-use, stinkiness, or the fact you can throw people to the floor all in the name of fun). With Outlook, it might be the aforementioned RSS integration. For me, it's a combination of things. And if I know anything about my readers, these might just well become your favorite features too.

- **View your upcoming appointments, mail, and tasks...all in one window** This has been a very popular request among Outlook users. You were getting very tired of having to either switch from Mail to Calendar to Tasks. Now we have the new To-Do bar, which gives you a consolidated view of your daily priorities by integrating tasks, e-mails flagged for follow-up, upcoming appointments, and calendar information. And the coolest thing is that the To-Do bar can take up the right side of your Outlook window (when your mail is showing) or you can minimize it so that it's a horizontal list that you open with just one click. Now you can see your Mail Folders list, your Inbox, your Reading Pane, and your To-Do bar...all at the same time.

  Learn more about the To-Do Bar in Outlook 2007.

- **A tisket, a tasket, a task inside my basket** (Or, rather, a task inside my calendar.) Sometimes I have a list of tasks so long that I don't know where to start. And sometimes I have an e-mail that I just want to add to that growing list (because I'm a glutton for punishment). Luckily for me, tasks in Outlook have gotten a bit of a face-lift. One of my favorite things about them now is that I've often wished that Outlook tasks could be handled like meetings and appointments are, that a certain block of time is not only carved out, but it stays there — it doesn't just disappear after the meeting is over. With previous version of Outlook, sure, you could drag a task to the calendar and set some time to complete it. But after you did, the task would just *poof* disappear from your calendar, leaving no trace of the time you spent working on it. With Outlook 2007, after you've completed that task, the time "sticks" to that day, meaning you now have a visual record of the work you performed and how long it took.

  Learn more about Tasks in Outlook 2007.

- **Color code all your Outlook items** I've often been asked if you can color code your e-mail messages so that you can see, at a glance, which e-mail pertains to which category (such as who it's from, if it relates to a certain project, and so on). So far, that hasn't been possible. But now, color categories can be assigned to messages, contacts, appointments, tasks, and so on. I love this because I may have a message, a task, and a calendar item all relating to the same project and when I see that they've all been flagged with the same color, I know that they're all part of one big happy family.
  For an existing message in your Inbox, you just right-click it, point to **Categorize**, and then click a color category. If it's an open message, on the **Message** tab, in the **Options** group, click **Categorize** and then click a color category. You can change the color associated with a category at any time and you can create a new color category. And, to make things even easier, a **Categorized Mail** search folder has been added to **Search Folders** in the Navigation Pane and provides a view of all your categorized mail items.

  Learn more about Color Categories.

And there you have it — my top three favorite new things in Outlook. However, I don't want to give short shrift to the other new features, so let me list some of the bigger ones here and provide some additional links so that you can dig a bit deeper:

- **Attachment previewer** Preview attachments in the reading pane, before you open them. Learn more about how to Preview messages.
- **Instant Search** Search through your tangle of e-mail messages and attachments, calendars, contacts, and tasks….all at the same time. Learn more about Instant Search.
- **Calendar publishing, snapshots, and overlay mode** Now you can post and share your calendar (publishing), provide a visual way to share your calendar with folks outside your organization (snapshots), and view and navigate multiple calendars at once (overlay mode). So now you have no excuse to be late…ever (and neither do your coworkers.) Learn more about what's new with calendar and scheduling.
- **Security** Although the word "security" might not move you sufficiently to jump out of your chair and pound your fist in the air, shouting a resounding "YES!" this topic is of the utmost concern to us and to you. With new features such as the Outlook E-mail Postmark (which ensures that e-mail reaching your Inbox is legitimate and that all mail sent by Outlook 2007 will be trusted by your recipient's computer), as well as improved anti-phishing and junk e-mail technologies, you can rest assured that you will have less spam and other nasty stuff to deal with. Learn more about the Junk e-mail filter.

Of course, this isn't *everything* that's new; I just grabbed a few of the more dramatic changes to highlight for you.

# Crabby's old favorites with a new twist

While there are some brand new features in Outlook 2007, there are also improvements to some of the existing ones. The improved features I want to highlight today are ones that work in tandem with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

- **Scheduling capabilities** Scheduling meetings for large groups of people is a lot easier now that Outlook, in connection with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, can suggest ideal meeting locations and times for everyone involved.
- **Out of Office capabilities** Using Outlook 2007 with Exchange Server 2007, you can schedule your auto-response messages for a specified date and time and send different messages to internal and external contacts.
- **Free/busy information management** Outlook 2007, when used with Exchange Server 2007 gives you the ability to determine and set a variety of levels as to who can view your free/busy information. Now that three-hour lunch need not show up on your shared calendar. (Don't think I don't know who you are, Mr. Martini.) In other words, you're in control of your personal information.

For a more in-depth look, learn how Office Outlook 2007 and Exchange Server 2007 can simplify your communications.

As you can tell, a lot has happened with this new release of Outlook: RSS integration, that cool To-Do bar, and the new Ribbon, a component of the Microsoft Office Fluent user interface, just to name a few cool new enhancements. I suggest you hop in there and start playing around. You never know what changes and improvements you will find to make you feel better about your job, your organizational skills, and even your work life in general.

**"We're supposed to be perfect our first day on the job and then show constant improvement." — Ed Vargo (major league baseball umpire)**

# About the author

Annik Stahl, the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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