

Mailsmith – Taking Control of Your Email

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Choosing an email client can be a pain staking process as migration and integration on the Mac has not always been a simple process. Fortunately, as the Mbox format has taken hold under OS X, shifting between mail clients has simplified and opened up options depending upon your needs.

For starters, Mailsmith is for the power email user. This does not mean you have to be technical -- just that if you spend a majority of your time working in email, this product was built for you.

Importing Mail from Other Applications

Upon first launching Mailsmith, a configuration menu is presented that prompts for migration of email from an existing client, options for using the OS X Keychain and Address Book. Both of the latter are recommended as this will store email account passwords and allow for central management of your contacts.

For my tests with the application, I imported my entire email library from Apple Mail. This included 4,295 messages including attachments, some HTML and most in text format. These messages were stored in more than 30 folders and sub-folders within Mail.app.

After about ten minutes of processing, I was presented with a successful email catalog in Mailsmith with no loss of data.

The program can import from older versions of itself, as well as Apple Mail, Eudora 4.0 through 6.0 and Claris Mailer 2.02v2 or later.

Reading and Writing Email

While virus risks are not currently as critical on the Macintosh platform. The core features of Mailsmith contribute to a more secure and private email environment.

HTML email does not function in the program. The app alternatively converts the web-based message into an attachment viewable in your default web browser and provides a text only version of the message for preview.

This feature can be convenient for evading the trackers implanted into unsolicited email when working in preview mode. For those messages

from sources you approve, you can simply click on the attachment and you can review the email in its entirety in your browser.

Composing email is also carried out in plain text format – not a big issue in most cases. In the event a message needs distributed in HTML format, it can easily be attached to an outgoing mail message.

For those needing more than POP mail accounts, namely IMAP users (.Mac is one example of an optional IMAP or POP account that support either protocol) -- this is one shortcoming in Mailsmith. For power users of email, this may not be a big detractor as localized control of mail data probably overrides the need for IMAP access.

Mailsmith has spell checking tools, but at first glance one might notice the grammatical assistance is not in real time as it is in other clients like Mail.app or Microsoft's Entourage. It is available under a program menu for post-composition review.

NOTE: IMAP, which stands for Internet Message Access Protocol – Is a standard protocol for accessing e-mail from your local server. IMAP is a client/server protocol in which e-mail is received and held for you by your Internet server. You can view just the heading and the sender of the mail and then decide whether to download the mail. You can also create and manipulate folders or mailboxes on the server, delete messages etc.

Searching

Probably one of Mailsmith's most powerful features is its search capability. Along with being a power mail user usually comes thousands of messages. This creates an obstacle to easy retrieval on demand.

A search can be initiated that looks in one or multiple folders holding messages. A basic search can find mail by sender, date, label, contents, status, headers, or any combination of attributes using an unlimited number of search terms. In addition, for advanced users the program supports search functions like those used on search engines (Boolean) and the use of regular expressions.

Being built by the same folks who created BBEdit, its ability to handle large amounts of text in a speedy fashion caps off this central feature.

Spam Control

Recently Bare Bones added incentives for potential new Mailsmith customers by way of a free license to Spam Sieve (a \$25 value), arguably one of the best spam filtering tools on the market for Macintosh users.

Spam reporting to SpamCop is also integrated into the program. Users who register an email address (free or paid versions available) can report spam to the service from their inbox, aiding in the identification and blacklisting of abusive spammers around the world.

Contact And Other Information

Manufacturer:

Bare Bones Software

Product Home Page:

<http://www.barebones.com/products/mailsmith/>

Description:

Mailsmith is a POP3 & SMTP e-mail client built around the BBEdit text engine.

Price:

US\$99 – Bare Bones (competitive upgrade for US\$79)

URL –

http://www.digitalriver.com/dr/v2/ec_Main.Entry?SP=10007&SID=48085&CID=0&CUR=840

Telephone:

(781) 687-0700

System Requirements:

- Mac OS X 10.2 or later required; Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later strongly recommended
- Fully compatible with Mac OS X 10.3 and later; Mac OS X 10.3.5 strongly recommended

Email Protocols:

- Mailsmith supports the POP3 and SMTP (including SMTP AUTH) protocols.

Platform For This Evaluation:

G4 Powermac 1.25 GHz with 768 MB RAM, Mac OS X Panther 10.3.5