Searching, Sorting, and Filtering in Microsoft Outlook 2016 for the PC

Searching
There are several ways to search in Microsoft Outlook 2016 for the PC. The following describes the various ways to search, refine your search, and add search tools to the Ribbon to locate any email message you want to find.

Search Tools
The Following is a list of search tools available when the Search Tools tab is activated:

- **Current Mailbox** - Searches messages located in all folders within the mailbox.
- **Current Folder** - Searches messages located only in the current folder.
- **Subfolders** - Searches messages in current folder and subfolders of the current folder, but not all folders in the mailbox.
- **All Outlook Items** - Searches all items in the mailbox, calendar, tasks, etc.
- **From** - Search for messages from a particular address or name.
- **Subject** - Search for messages containing a particular subject.
- **Has Attachments** - Search for messages with attachments.
- **Categorized** - Search for messages assigned a particular category.
- **This Week** - Search for messages within a particular period (e.g., Today, Yesterday, This Week, Last Week, This Month, Last Month, This Year, Last Year).
- **Sent To** - Search for messages by sent to method (e.g., directly to me, cc, not sent directly to me).
- **Unread** - Search messages that are marked as unread.
- **Flagged** - Search messages containing a flag for follow-up, review, etc.
- **Important** - Search messages marked as high priority.
- **More** - Allows you to define and add more options and fields to the search.
- **Recent Searches** - Provides a drop-down menu listing previous search parameters used.
- **Search Tools** - Provides additional search tools, including an advanced find search.
- **Close Search** - Closes the search and returns the mailbox which is displayed using your default settings.

Figure 1 - Search Tools
The Search Bar

When viewing messages, any folder selected will display a search bar in the message pane above the list of messages. The Search Bar helps you quickly find items in your mailbox. Click in the Search Bar to view the Search Tools contextual tab for search refinements or simply begin typing in what you are looking for. Outlook will highlight text that matches what you entered. As you continue to type, the search will be refined and messages filtered according to the text you entered.

![Figure 2 - Search Bar](image)

Note: The Search Bar defaults to searching the current mailbox; however, you can click the drop-down menu in the Search Bar or click one of the buttons in the Scope group of the Search Tools contextual tab to change the scope of the search.

The Search Bar will also present a drop-down menu with suggestions for your search, such as a list of prior searches performed and search from or to information, depending on the folder you are currently searching. Once you begin a search, a Search contextual tab appears containing search tools to narrow search results to find exactly what you are looking for. The following explains how to search messages using the Search Bar and tools:

1. Click in the Search Bar.

![Figure 3 - Search Bar](image)

2. The Search Tools contextual tab appears with tools to define and/or refine your search.

![Figure 4 - Search Contextual Tab](image)
3. You have several options for proceeding with your search:
   a. Begin **typing** in the *Search Bar*. Messages containing the search term you entered will appear with the matching text highlighted and the messages filtered accordingly.

   ![Figure 5 - Search Term](image)

   b. Click various **buttons** in the *Search* contextual tab to define your search parameters. In this example, in the *Refine* group, **From** is selected.

   ![Figure 6 - Search Using Search Refine Tools](image)
c. Use a combination **search term** entered in the *Search Bar* and **buttons** in the Refine grouping of the *Search Tools* contextual tab. In this example, project is the search term and From is selected in the refine group tools.

![Figure 7 - Search Term & Refine Tool](image)

**Figure 7 - Search Term & Refine Tool**

d. Click one of the items in the suggestions drop-down menu.

![Figure 8 - Suggestions Drop-Down Menu](image)

**Figure 8 - Suggestions Drop-Down Menu**

4. When ready to close the search and return to your default message view, click the **exit (x)** button in the *Search Bar*.

![Figure 9 - Close Search in Search Bar](image)

**Figure 9 - Close Search in Search Bar**
5. You may also click the **Close Search (x)** button in the *Search Tools* contextual tab.

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**Adding the Search Tab to the Ribbon**

If you begin typing in the *Search Bar*, a *Search* contextual tab appears containing tools to help you refine your search as needed. However, you have the ability to add the Search tab to the *Ribbon* to access at your convenience. To add the *Search* tab:

1. **Right-click** any space not occupied by a button on the *Ribbon*.
2. Click **Customize the Ribbon**....

![Figure 11 - Customize the Ribbon](image)

3. **Under Choose commands from**, click the **drop-down arrow** (See Figure 12).
4. Click **All Tabs** (See Figure 12).

![Figure 12 - Click All Tabs](image)
5. Under Search Tools, click Search (See Figure 13).
6. Click the Add button to add to the Ribbon (See Figure 13).
7. Search is added to tabs in the Ribbon (See Figure 13).
8. Click OK (See Figure 13).

![Figure 13 - Add Search Tab](image)

**Note:** You can modify the tab order by clicking the up and down arrows next to the tab list.

9. The Search tab now appears in the next to the Home tab in the ribbon, where you will have access to the tools at any time.

![Figure 14 - Search Tab Added to the Ribbon](image)

**Note:** When added to the Ribbon, the Search tab will be visible regardless of which item you are viewing in Outlook.
Sorting Messages

Sorting involves rearranging items in a particular view. By default, messages in your inbox and in other folders, are arranged by date in descending order (i.e., the newest message is displayed on top). Outlook provides various ways to arrange messages. You have options available to change the columns displayed, sort order and other settings to your preferences and even create custom views. The following explains how to sort messages in the Microsoft Outlook for the PC:

Arrangement Options

- **Show as Conversations** – Allows you to view all messages that share the same subject in a group or collection of messages within one view window.
- **Message Preview** - Allows you to set the number of lines visible in the message preview pane (e.g., Off, 1, 2, or 3 lines).
- **Date** - Sorts messages by date (and time) received. (Clicking the Reverse Sort button changes the arrangement back and forth between ascending and descending order).
- **From** - Sorts messages alphabetically by sender.
- **To** - Sorts messages alphabetically by recipient.
- **Categories** - Sorts messages by assigned category.
- **Flag Start Date** - Sorts messages according to the assigned start date.
- **Flag End Date** - Sorts messages according to the assigned end date.
- **Size** - Sorts messages by size including attachments.
- **Subject** - Sorts messages alphabetically by subject line.
- **Type** - Sorts messages into item types, separating meeting requests from messages.
- **Attachments** - Sorts messages based on whether or not the message contains attachments.
- **Account** - Sorts messages by mailbox account if you are managing multiple email accounts.
- **Importance** - Sorts messages based on assigned priority.
- **Show in Groups** - Displays messages in groups by any arrangement option selected.
- **Reverse Sort** - Reverses the current message sort order.
- **Add Columns** - Allows you to add columns to any view display.
- **Expand/Collapse** - Expands or collapses grouped messages.

![Figure 15 - Arrangement Options in the Ribbon](image-url)
Sorting Using Arrangement Options

1. From within the folder you want to modify, click the View tab (See Figure 17).
2. The sort order is set to date in descending order by default. In the Arrangement group in the Ribbon, click one of the other arrangement options. For this example, we have selected From (See Figure 17).

3. Show in Groups was also selected; therefore, the items are grouped by sender in alphabetical order and sorted in the group by date.

**Figure 16 - Arrangement Options In Tell Me**

**Figure 17 - Arrangement Options**

**Figure 18 - Sorted & Grouped by Sender**

**Note:** To display in alphabetical order without grouping, simply click the drop-down arrow in the Arrangements group and uncheck Show in Groups.
Adding Columns to Your Current View

There may be instances where you want to use one of the pre-defined arrangement options, but you want to view more column information. To add columns to your arrangement:

1. In the Arrangement group, click Add Columns.

![Figure 19 - Add Columns](image)

2. The Show Columns window appears showing available columns to add in the left pane, and columns currently in the active view on the right. To increase or decrease the number of lines to show in message preview, click the drop-down arrow for Maximum number of lines in compact mode (See Figure 20).

3. To change the type of fields displayed from Frequently-used fields to another category, click the drop-down arrow next to Select available columns from (See Figure 20).

4. Click the column you want to add to your view (See Figure 20).

5. Click Add (See Figure 20).

6. Click the Move Up and Move Down buttons to position the columns in the desired order (See Figure 20).

7. Click OK to save selection (See Figure 20).

![Figure 20 - Add Column](image)

Note: You can add a new custom column by clicking New Column and entering a new column name.
**View Filtering**

A view filter involves defining items you want to appear in a particular view to display only items that meet the conditions you specify. For example, when searching for a particular message or group of messages within a folder (e.g., Inbox, Sent Items, Personal Folder, etc.), you may want to use certain criteria such as the sender name to find particular message(s) received from a particular person. The following describes the functionality of pre-defined filter options, how to apply them, and how to define and apply a custom filter.

**Filter Tools**

Microsoft Outlook for the PC possesses a number of pre-defined filters available for use as well as the ability to define your own filter. Following is a list of filter options available:

- **Unread** - Displays messages that are marked as unread.
- **Has Attachments** - Displays messages containing attachments.
- **This Week** - Shows time ranges from which to choose (e.g., Today, Yesterday, Last Week, etc.) to display messages for the period selected.
- **Categorized** - Shows categories from which to choose to display messages for the category selected.
- **Flagged** - Displays messages containing a flag for follow-up, review, etc.
- **Important** - Displays messages marked as high priority.
- **Sent To: Me or CC: Me** - Displays messages sent to or copied to the user.
- **More Filters** - Allows you to define your own filter.

![Figure 21 - Filter Email](image-url)
The following explains how to filter email messages in the Microsoft Outlook for the PC:

1. In the Ribbon, click **Home**.
2. Under the **Find** group, click **Filter Email** (See Figure 22).
3. A drop-down menu appears. Click any of the **filters** (e.g., Has Attachments, This Week, Categorized, Sent To Me, etc.) to view only emails that match the criterion selected (See Figure 22).
   **Note:** A more items arrow appears next to the tool if there are options to further define the filter.

4. Click the desired **filter** (in this example, *Last Week* is selected) (See Figure 22).

   ![Figure 22 - Select Filter](image)

5. Search results display only items indicated by the defined filter.

   ![Figure 23 - Search Results](image)

6. To clear the search results and view all items in the select folder, click the **close** (x) button in the **Instant Search** box.

   ![Figure 24 - Close Search](image)
7. You may also close by clicking the **Close Search (x)** button located in the **Search** contextual tab in the **Ribbon**.

![Figure 25 - Close Search in Search Tab](image)

**More Filters (Define Your Own Filter)**

You may also want to define a new filter not listed in the pre-defined filter tools. To define our own filter:

1. In the Ribbon, under the **Find** group, click **Filter Email** (See Figure 26).
2. Click **More Filters** (See Figure 26).

![Figure 26 - More Filters](image)

3. The **Search Box** appears to allow you to define your filter.

![Figure 27 - Instant Search Box](image)
4. Use the buttons in the *Refine* and/or *Options* group to enter the parameters for your filter (See Search Tools on page 1).

![Refine & Options Group](image)