

You've got no mail



When the calendar changed recently, I didn't change with it. I mean, I should have, but I resisted. Finally, ol' Father Time clocked me with his hourglass. Because he sent me a clear and unequivocal message: You've got no mail.

Setting some base parameters

Okay, first, let's get the specs out of the way:

I'm a desktop user. My operating software is Windows 10. I use few apps and play few games.

Mostly, I use my computer for tracking my investments and budgets (in Excel), reading from various sites on the web and this blog.

Oh, and I also use Outlook as my email client because I like

having all those emails resident on my hard drive. Plus, I kind of “grew up” using its scheduling and calendar software.

An old Outlook on email

However, I also don't like this recent trend toward “subscribing” to software. To me, that's a trap. Once there, you are stuck updating forever.

So, a number of software applications I *do* own are older versions. Quicken, which I find beneficial for gathering and summarizing my expenses, is 2016's version.

Outlook, is 2010. You read that right, it's coming up on it's 10-year anniversary.

Both software packages run just fine. Or, well, they did. And the latter, obviously, is the point of today's post.

Definition of insanity

Over the past six months or so, Outlook has been freezing. Not in the “wait or reboot and all is back to normal” freezing. More like the “close program and be unable to open it again” freezing.

Somehow, whatever virtual brain damage is occurring in the program is continually corrupting my mail data file (.pst). If

this sounds bad, trust me, it is actually worse.

If you build it...you will rebuild it

When the pst file is corrupted, I literally have to start over. The calendar gets corrupted, the contacts get corrupted, my mood gets corrupted.

It doesn't happen all the time. That would be too obvious. The software must have a "random meanness generator". There is no apparent rhyme or reason to the half-dozen times I've danced this dance.

And don't call me Sherlock

I've tried some tricky stuff on the software, to see if I can track down the root cause of the repeating corruption.

I've deleted and re-added email accounts, one at a time. Nah. I tried resetting ports for the specific accounts. Also nah. I even tried deleting all the email accounts entirely.

Well, that sort of worked. I was able to point to an old data file and save most of my contact and calendar information. Ta da, I can schedule and task assign to my heart's content.

Except, of course, for that little issue..."You've got no mail."

A little bird told me

Welp. I guess I need to find a new email program.

No, I don't want to log into 4 or 5 different accounts across various platforms. Fortunately, plenty of stuff is out there for reviewing and recommending email software.

I settled on something called "Mailbird". It does a nice job syncing all my email accounts into one big "belly". Still a little clunky about moving the files across platforms, but I didn't really do that before, so no biggie.

What *is* biggie is that the syncing feature is actually more efficient than Outlook in giving me easy access to all my email accounts. Nice.

I tried it for less than a day before buying it. No sense waiting. It does what I want and that's all I need. I suppose, one day, I might even look to see what *else* it does. But not anytime soon.

You've got no mail

Ah, sweet email, you're back again. No errors, no freezes and certainly no corruptions.

Yes, I now use two programs where once I used only one, but

it's actually pretty nice to have my calendar/tasks separate from the mail function. They really share very little when outside of the corporate environment.

And, I even changed the mail notification sound to the classic "you've got mail", for which I smirk, each time it plays.

Hey, don't judge! I actually am old enough to be one of the original AOL users (my Dad is, improbably, still using them as a platform). Plus, it certainly beats the unspoken error of "you've got no mail."