



Using SBOL Express - The Basics

Introduction

While upgrading our mail server in September 2003, we installed a tool that offers web mail to our clients. Our web mail feature is called Express. Express allows you to read, write and manage your email on the mail server instead of on your computer. It does not require a dedicated email program like Outlook. This is because it is browser-based. There are several advantages to this approach. Most browsers are free unlike email programs. Web mail is faster at displaying your inbox than email programs if you have a lot of new mail. This is because there is no downloading of the mail from the server to your computer.

Express' primary benefit is that you can access your email from *any* computer that has a browser installed. Since most, if not all internet connected computers include a browser this means just about any computer can be used to access your mail using Express. This is similar to the web mail offerings of Google, MSN, Hotmail, Yahoo, Earthlink and Comcast etc.

Starting Express

There are several ways to start Express. You can click on the following link, <http://www.sbolnet.com/express>. Starting your browser and entering the above address into the address bar will open Express. Another route is to access our web site at <http://www.sbolnet.com> and click on Login (below the SBOL Logo) or access the Members Area and click on the Express link therein.

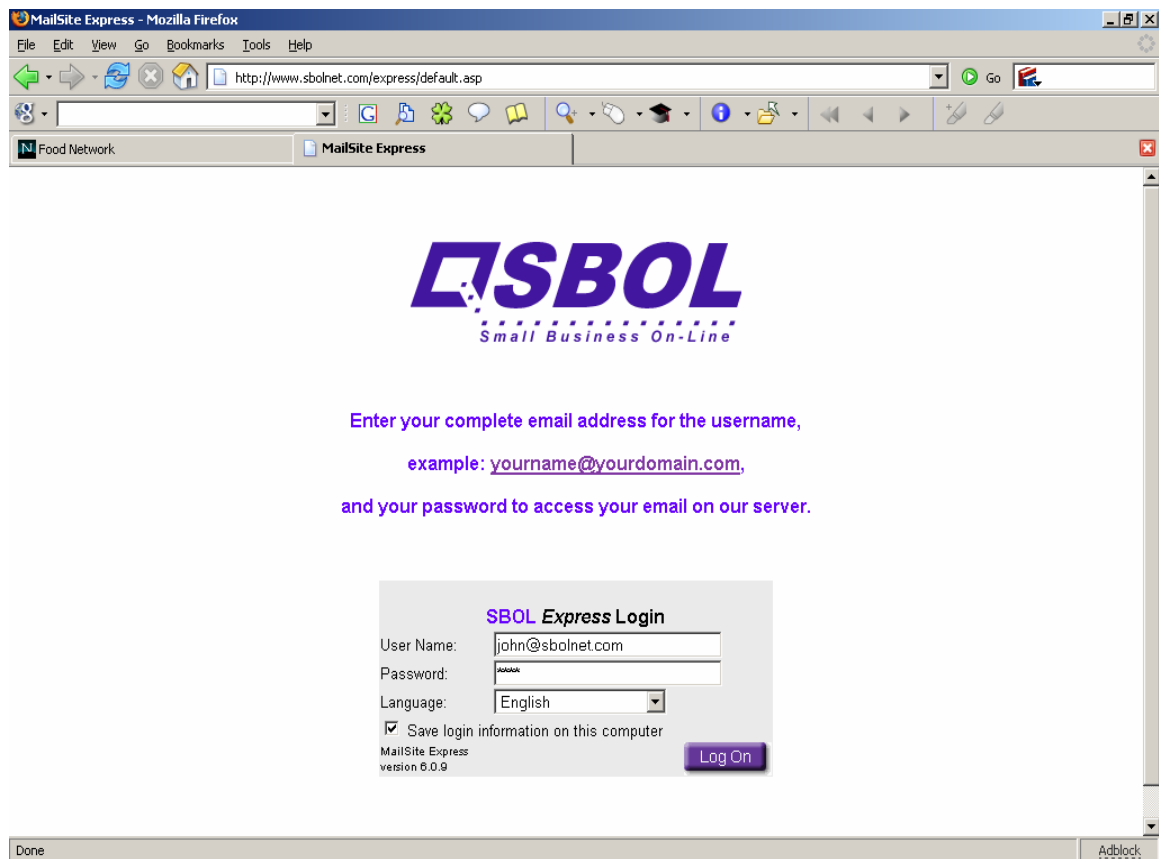
Yet another option is to create a desktop shortcut to Express. Start your browser, pull up Express using one of the methods above, right click in the web page area and select Create deskCut (Firefox) or Create Shortcut (Explorer/Netscape). Later, when you click on the

shortcut icon on your desktop, the browser will start and go to the Express login screen.

I recommend book-marking Express by pressing Control + D when this screen is open in your browser. Once it is bookmarked, then you can access this screen from your browser at any time from the favorites menu/folder.

Express Log On

No matter how you start Express, you will always have to login to your email account. Forced authentication assures security for your email accounts and our server.



The SBOL Express Login Screen

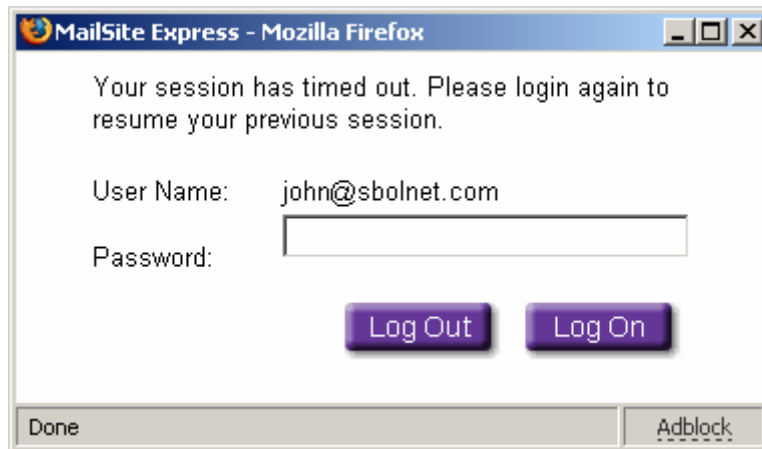
To login, enter your full email address as your User Name and your email password as your Password. Note that you can check a box to "Save login information on this computer" which will save you these steps in the future. Do not enable this feature if you share the

computer, otherwise other people will be able to access your email. The language feature will be discussed in the Advanced Features document. Then press [ENTER] or click on Log On to access your inbox.

After logging in, Express authenticates your entries. It checks the mail server for a matching email account name and password. If no matches are found, Express will display a login error screen. This screen does not inform you which entry has the problem, just that there was an Invalid Username/Password combination. This is to make it harder for someone trying to guess their way into the mail system. The error screen includes a link back to the login screen or you can hit the back button or Control + Left Arrow to return to the login screen so you can try again.

Session Timeout

If your "session" is idle for too long, Express assumes you forgot to logout and breaks the connection. When you try to continue what you were doing you either will see a blank inbox screen with the message, "session timed out" or your browser might pop up a window like below...

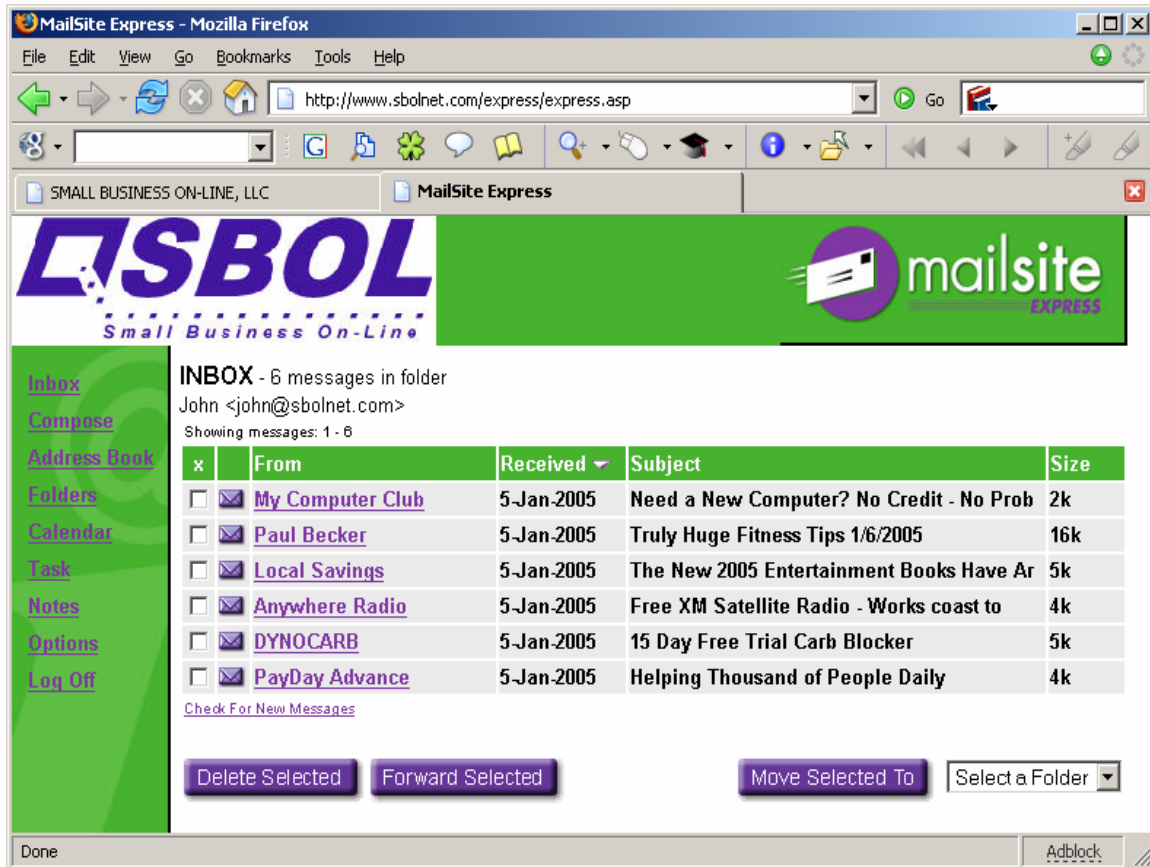


The SBOL Express Session Timed Out screen

As the above screen states, to resume what you were doing, enter your password and Log On again.

The INBOX

Upon successful authentication Express automatically displays the contents of your inbox. The INBOX is the main purpose of Express and all web mail. We will discuss every component and feature of this screen in the following pages.



The SBOL Express Inbox screen

The screen is divided into areas called frames. The left frame contains the Express Menu. The top frame is a set of graphics containing the SBOL and MailSite Express logos. The rest of the screen forms the main frame and therein Express presents you your Inbox. We will cover each item shown in detail below...

• Folder Name

This indicates which folder you are viewing. Upon entering Express this will always be the Inbox. In the Advanced Features document we will cover the use of other folders.

- **Messages In Folder**

This indicates how many messages are in the folder.

- **Logged In Account**

This indicates which account/email address is logged in.

- **Message Range Display**

This is an indicator of the beginning and ending message currently displayed (if you have more messages than can be displayed on one page this will help you navigate through your messages – if you have say 100 messages and you are viewing 25 at a time and are on the 2nd screen then it will indicate that you are viewing 26-50 of 100).

- **Space Available**

This is an indicator of how much space remains in your mailbox quota. SBOL clients are given a default of 50MB of space for all the contents of their mailbox including calendar, address book, tasks, notes, folders, filters and dictionary. This display only appears if mailbox quotas are in effect. Once a threshold level is reached you will receive emails concerning approaching your quota limit. To end these messages and avoid non-reception of email requires either downloading the mail into an email program such as Outlook or deleting items and removing them from the server. This will be discussed in more detail in the Advanced Features document.

- **Messages**

The majority of this screen displays the messages themselves. Four more controls are below the messages. Every item will be explained in further detail below.

Messages are displayed in a grid of the following columns: Selection Status, Read Status, From, Received, Subject and Size. The columns are fixed and cannot be customized. The green column header bar contains a single mouse-able control which allows you to select the sort order of the Received column - this determines whether you view the messages in most recent to oldest or oldest to most recent order. To change the order, click on the word "Received". You will notice that the arrow indicator changes direction after each click and serves as a visual cue regarding the sort order.

Inbox Message Columns

- **Selection Status**

This is a checkbox control allowing you to select multiple items for mass actions such as delete selected items, forward selected items, and move selected items to a selected folder. Deleting and forwarding selected items are pretty self-explanatory. More about these actions and the move option in the Advanced Operations document. The control is a toggle and you can turn the checkbox on and off with the mouse or [SPACE BAR].

- **Read Status**

The Read Status column is controlled by Express and indicates whether or not you have read a specific message. It uses a graphic that shows a closed envelope for un-read items and an open envelope for read items.

- **From**

The From column indicates the sender of the message. Notice that the sender's name is a link and is clickable. To open a message you need to click on this link.

- **Received**

The Received column indicates when the message was delivered to the server and then into your inbox.

- **Subject**

The Subject column shows the message subject.

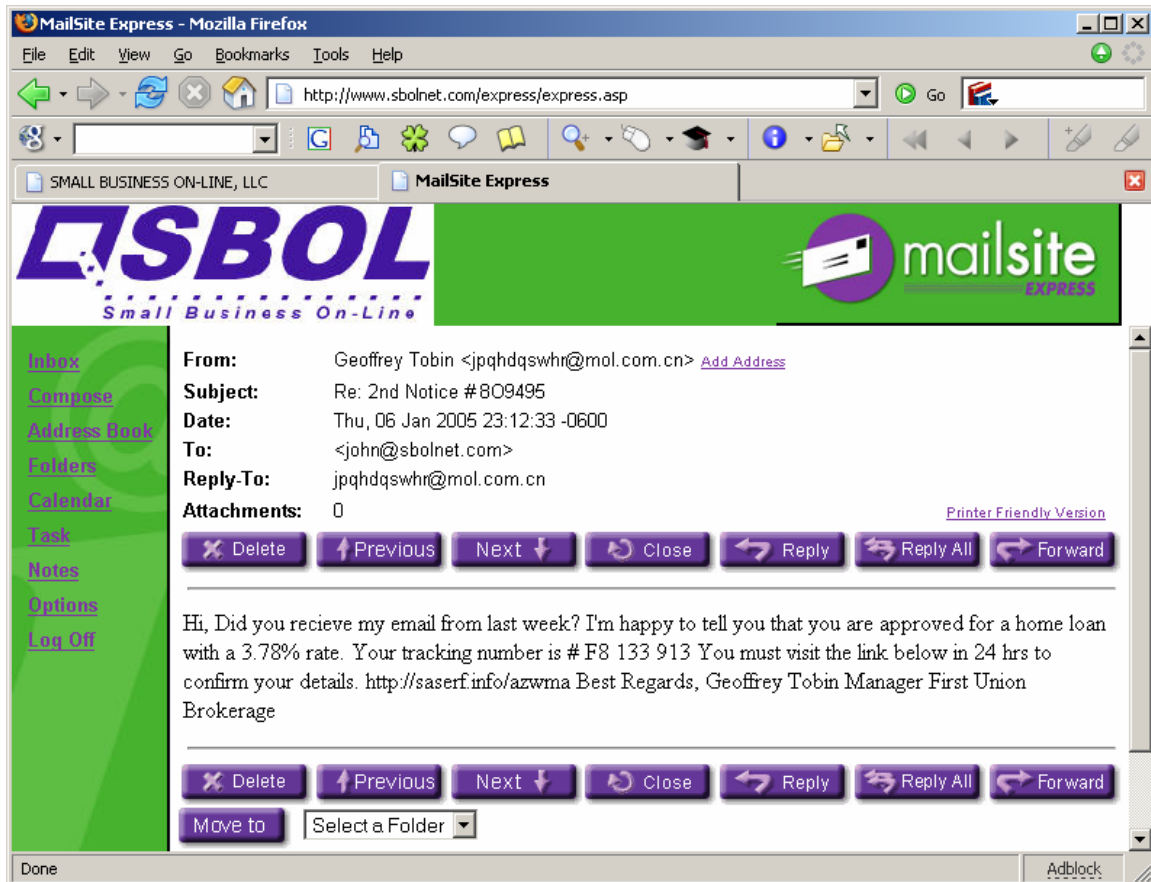
- **Size**

The Size column shows the size of the message. Express does not show the size of included attachments, if any.

Inbox Operations

- **Opening a Message**

To open a message, click on the From hyperlink - click on the purple underlined text in the From column for the message you want to open.



The SBOL Express Open Message screen

Despite this item being a piece of SPAM, it illustrates your options when reading mail. The Open Message screen shows who sent it, the subject, the date received, who it was addressed to, the Reply-To address, and the number of attachments. Far to the right, Express also includes a link to display the same message in a printer friendly format. Below the above information, Express presents a menu of buttons, the message itself and an identical menu of buttons with the addition of 2 more controls.

Open Message Controls

• Delete

This button deletes the message. Unless turned off (Advanced Operations), deleting an item in Express places it in the Deleted Items folder from whence it can be restored. After deleting an item, the next item in your inbox is opened.

- **Previous**

This button closes the current message and opens the previous message.

- **Next**

This button closes the current message and opens the next message.

- **Close**

This button closes the message and returns you to the inbox page.

- **Reply**

This button opens a copy of the message for responding back to the sender. The entire contents of the original message are included as a commented portion of the response message. We will cover the features Express offers, when composing or responding to email, later in this document.

- **Reply All**

This button opens a copy of the message for responding back to the sender ***and*** to all the other recipients of the original message. The only difference between a Reply and a Reply All is that Express includes all extra recipients who were either CC'd or BCC'd.

- **Forward**

This button opens a copy of the message for forwarding on to other recipients along with your comments and attachments if any.

- **Move to**

This button moves the open message item from the inbox to the selected folder. Folders can be selected from the drop-down list control to the right of the Move to button. As a reminder, you need to select messages using the Selection check box at the left of each message and you need to select a destination folder, then click on the Move to button.

Express Menu

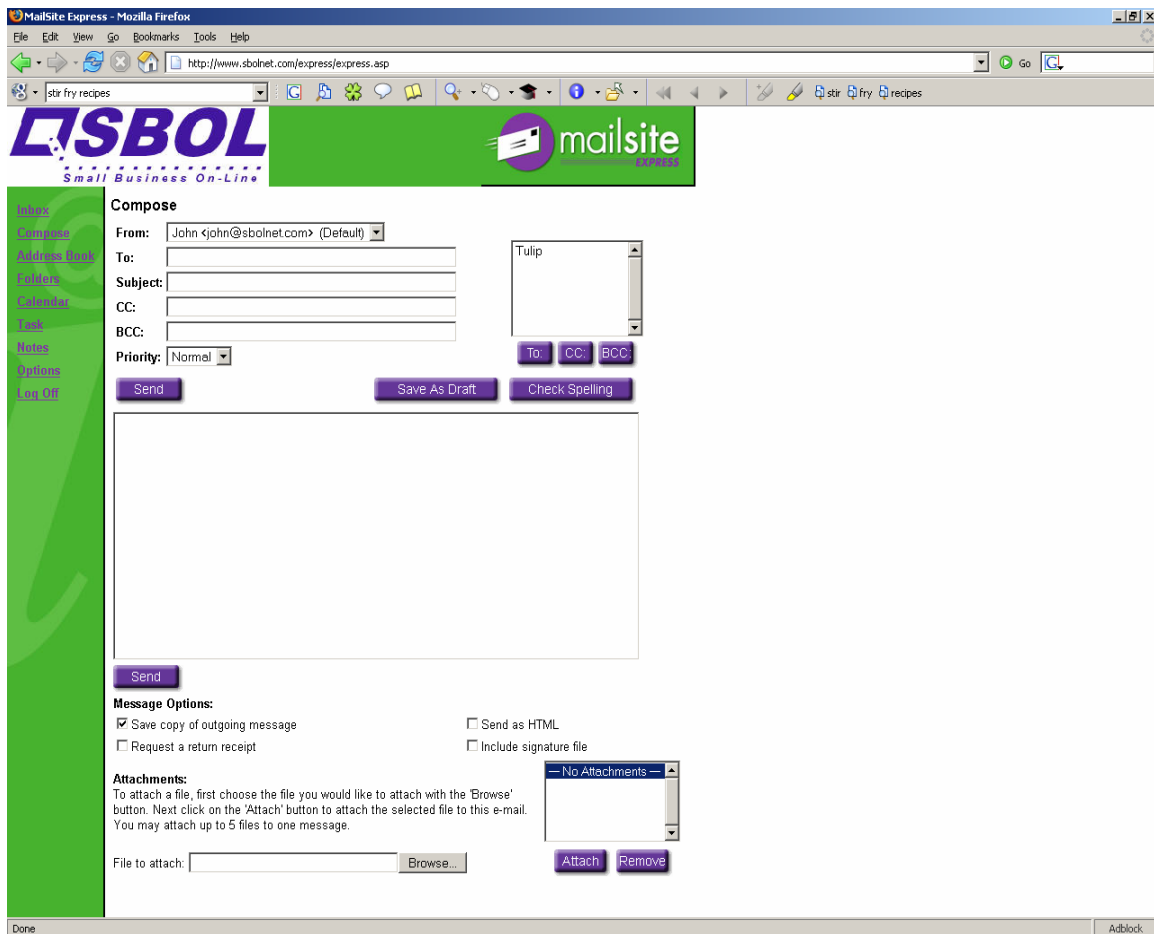
Express Menu options are hyperlinks in the left frame. To select a menu option, click on the purple underlined text. This, being a document about the Basics, will only discuss the most basic menu options – InBox, Compose and Logoff. The rest of the menu options will be documented in the Advanced Operations document.

•>> InBox

This menu option returns you to the Inbox screen. This is the method for exiting the Compose screen and other such screens.

•>> Compose

This menu option opens the Compose screen. This same screen is displayed when writing a new mail message, replying to a message, reply to all, or forwarding a message.



The SBOL Express Compose Mail screen

Compose Fields and Controls

• From:

This field indicates which email account is sending the email. Since Express allows you to access multiple email accounts (described in the

Advanced Features document), the From field allows you to select which account to use for sending the new message via the pull-down control. To see the list of available accounts, click on the down arrow. To select a different account, click on the desired account within the list the control displays.

- **To:**

This field allows you to enter the addresses to send the mail to. If replying, reply all or forwarding, this field will already have email addresses supplied for you. Multiple addresses can be entered, using commas to separate them. Do not use semi-colons like you would with other email programs.

- **Subject:**

This field allows you to enter the subject of the message. Many mail servers block email messages that lack a subject, so I recommend including some sort of subject. Including text that describes the purpose of the message is the general convention here.

- **CC:**

This field allows you to enter more email addresses to receive a “carbon copy” of the message. Again, multiple addresses are allowed using commas to separate them.

- **BCC:**

This field allows you to enter more email addresses to receive a “blind carbon copy” of the message. As with the To an CC fields, multiple addresses are allowed using commas to separate them.

- **Priority:**

This field allows you to indicate the relative importance of the message. Presumably people read higher priority messages first. Some spammers mark their mail as high priority thus diluting the usefulness of this indicator. To change the priority marking of your message, click on the pull-down arrow and select a priority level.

- **Mini Address Book:**

The mini address book appears to the right of the To:/Subject: etc area of the compose screen. It contains a list of addressees (from your Address Book – refer to the Advanced Features document) and a button menu of To:, CC: and BCC:. To add an addressee, highlight the person by clicking on their name in the list and then click on any of the 3 buttons. Express will allow you to insert the same address multiple times so be careful to click once.

You can select multiple addressees in the list box by clicking on the first name and then pressing control + click on each additional name. When you click on any of the buttons, you will see the selected names appear, separated by commas. Additionally you can select a range of names by clicking on the first and then shift + click on the last name. All the names between the first and the last will appear as selected.

- **Send:**

This button appears above and below the message entry box. When you are finished composing your message, click on Send to actually send the email. Express will return to a new empty Compose screen with the addition of a message at the very top saying "Message was successfully sent".

- **Save As Draft:**

This button, when clicked, saves a copy of the email in a special folder called, "Drafts." This enables you to save your message until later allowing you to continue where you left off. Opening messages saved in the Drafts folder will be covered in the Advanced Features document. After saving your message, Express returns to the same composition screen with draft message still open for composition. It adds a message to the top of the screen informing you that the message successfully saved as a draft. Unlike Outlook, when you send a message that has been saved this way, it remains in the draft folder.

- **Check Spelling:**

This button invokes the spell checker which is covered in the Advanced Features document.

- **Message Area:**

This text entry area fills the majority of the screen. This is where you enter and edit your messages.

- **Message Options:**

There are four message options, all controlled by checkboxes which can be toggled on and off with the mouse or the [SPACE BAR].

- **Save copy of outgoing message:**

This option places a copy of the message in your Sent Items folder. It does not make a copy until you have clicked on the Send button.

•• Send as HTML:

This option allows you to send the message in HTML format instead of text format. HTML format enables you to use the formatting controls and features of HTML in your mail. An HTML formatted message will become plain text if the recipient is not set to receive mail in that format.

•• Request a return receipt:

This option will is intended to cause a receipt to be sent when the message is read so you can verify that it was received and opened. Not all mail servers will allow this. Spammers can use this feature to learn if an email account is real. If allowed, when the recipient opens the mail item they will be asked if they want to allow a return receipt to be sent. If they agree and the mail server allows it, then a message will come back to your inbox indicating that your message to: <recipient email address>, subject: <subject line>, sent: <date and time> was read on <date and time>.

•• Include a signature file:

This option enables you to include a signature at the end of your email. The default signature file is empty for all mailboxes so you will need to create such a file first. Further discussion of this subject can be found in the Advanced Features document.

• Attachments:

Express allows you to attach up to 5 files to your email message. The following controls enable you to indicate to Express what files you want to send with the message.

Bear in mind that many internet service providers (ISP) limit the size of allowed attachments. If you try to send files to a recipient using an ISP with such a limit and the file size exceeds that limit, the message will not be delivered.

•• File to attach:

This text entry area lets you key in the path to the file on your computer, if you know it. Otherwise click on Browse and navigate to the file you want to attach. The Browse button opens the Explorer on your system and allows you to select the drive and folder to view. This can include network drives if you have a network. Once you have located the file you seek, highlight it by clicking once on it (left click) and then click on Open. This closes that window and returns you to Express. The file you selected will now appear in the text entry area

(preceded by the path to the file). It still is not attached but has been uploaded to the mail server.

•• **Attachments List:**

To the right of the entry area is a list box containing the text No Attachments. To add your selected file to the attachment list, click on the Attach button. Doing so adds your file to the list. You can remove files from this list by highlighting their name and clicking on the Remove button.

•>> **Log Off**

This menu option should be used when you are ready to exit Express. It closes the connection with our mail server and protects your inbox.

This concludes our discussion of the Express Basics. Further information can be found in the companion document called Advanced Features. You can also refer to our growing FAQs pages once they become available.

You can always contact me should you require further assistance with using Express at support@sbolnet.com.

Best Regards,

John Gammon
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Small Business Online, LLC