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Review of Web Mail Service Providers

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Abstract— The evolution of computers during the last decades has changed the industrialized parts of our world dramatically. While the computer originally was used only as a calculator, it now has evolved to a communications device that links people to each other and to information. The most widespread computer application today used for person-to-person communication is electronic mail (email). Email facilitates communication by its high speed, asynchronousness, and computer processability and provides opportunities to increase productivity, worker satisfaction, and organizational viability. Among Internet users, email is considered as the most important application on the Internet. In Sweden the number of users connected to the Internet has doubled each year for several years. This growth involves new groups of users in the email community and this makes email usage and its impact on workplaces important to study.
Keywords— Email, Yahoo Mail, AOL, Gmail, Web Mail

I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic mail, email, is one of the most widespread computer applications today. While email in general is very popular among its users, there are also drawbacks with email usage: an increasing amount of messages that overwhelm users, systems that are too complex for naive users and at the same time do not support the needs of experienced users. In order to answer the main research question "Which design solutions could improve the situation of individual email users in a working context when it comes to communication and handling large numbers of incoming and stored email messages?" three studies conducted in email users' working environment are described. The studied organizations are one academic research laboratory, one technical company, and one primary medical service organization. The studies are focused on email usage, organization of email messages, novice versus experienced users' needs, managers' email usage, and information and communication overflow.
Webmail (or web-based email) is any email client implemented as a web application running on a web server. Examples of webmail software are Roundcube and SquirrelMail. Examples of webmail providers are AOL Mail, Gmail, Outlook.com and Yahoo! Mail [1] Practically every webmail provider offers email access using a webmail client, and many of them also offer email access by a desktop email client using standard email protocols, while many internet service providers provide a webmail client as part of the email service included in their internet service package. ProtonMail, founded at the CERN research facility in 2013, is a Web-based email service which automatically provides secure encryption.

II. HISTORY OF EMAIL

In the late 1960s the first electronic mail systems made it possible to send messages to other users on the same computer. In the 1970s many computers in the United States became connected by a network called ARPAnet1. Email soon became one of the most used applications and definitions of common headers became necessary (Palme 1995a). Mail headers have been in use in other communication for a long time. Yates (1989, pp 216 & 239) describes examples of usage of the headers From, Subject, To, arrival date, and reply date as early as in the 1880s on stationary used at the chemical company Du Pont in Delaware. One hundred years later local area networks (LANs) made it possible to develop email systems for use within these LANs. During the last decade LANs, and wide area networks (WANs) have been connected to form the Internet. Two views of the evolution of email systems follow: a user's and a technical point of view. Pliskin (1989) gave a description of the advantages "a wonderful dream come true; to be in touch, daily and for free, with dear colleagues" and problems of email. She reported her own experience and described the following problems with email:

A. Addressing Difficulties

When communicating with people outside the home site there are often problems with finding their addresses. A similar function to the phone message "The number has changed, the new number is #" would mean a lot.

B. Unreliability Issues

There is no possibility to know whether a message has reached its destination or not, until the addressee responds to it.

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C. Medium Limitations

It is impossible to send anything but plain text and there are no possibilities to send a signature (e.g. on a contract).

D. Interface Problems

Users often have to retrain when their mail box is transferred to another combination of host computer and network.

Pliskin's list of desirable improvements included: simplification of address codes, automated address directory compilation, interfacing to other media and automatic message tracing. Since Pliskin's study was made a decade has passed and the problems she described have been solved. There are still no complete catalogues of email addresses, or no service for handling changed addresses, but attempts have been made to make Internet information more structured with WHOIS++ (Deutsch, Shoultz, Fältström & Weider 1995), and the World Wide Web has also increased the possibilities to find email addresses. Headers are defined to enable for the receiving email system to issue "confirmation of reception messages", but the functionality to handle this is still missing in most email systems (Palme 1998). Messages with other content than plain text are possible to send today with MIME – Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension (Borenstein & Olle Bälter: Electronic mail in a working context Freed 1992) that defines how messages containing e.g. formatted text, audio, images, and video should be interpreted. Retraining is limited for those users that transfer between different graphical direct-manipulative emails systems. Users that transfer to or from command-based systems still have the same retraining problem as Pliskin described in 1989, but the number of users with such systems is diminishing.

III. WEB MAIL

With web mail, you read or send email through your browser and the web mail interface. Some examples of web mail are:

Yahoo! Mail

Gmail

Hotmail

The web mail service provided with your web hosting

The web mail service provided with your ISP (Internet Service Provider) account

A. Accessing Web Mail

When you access a web mail account you use your browser.

You will be given a web address to access your web mail. We'll use Yahoo! mail as an example. The web address to access Yahoo! mail is: https://login.yahoo.com/config/login_verify2?&.src=ym.

Next, you will need to login. This requires your user name and password. Continuing with our example, enter your Yahoo! id and password, then left click, Sign in. If there is an option to remember your login information, avoid this, particularly if you are using a public computer. The login information is saved to a cookie on the machine. The next person who uses the computer will have access to your web based email account if you use the Remember me feature. Once logged in, you can now read the emails sent to your web based email account and send emails from this email address.

IV. COMPARISONS OF DIFFERENT WEB MAIL

If you're fed up with your existing email service or you're looking to make a new email account then there are a number of free email options to choose from. Gmail has led the field for years, but competitors like Yahoo Mail, Outlook.com (formerly Hotmail) and AOL Mail have revamped their designs and features in a bid to attract new users. Comparisons of popular free email services are explained below.

A. Best Free Email Services: Google Gmail

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Rating: 5/5

Gmail has a lightweight, minimalist design for speed and most of the screen is taken up by the inbox. At one time you couldn't view the inbox and an email at the same time, but a new 'labs' feature splits the view horizontally or vertically with the inbox in one half and the current email in the other. Folders for organising messages aren't supported and instead you attach labels, such as work, personal and family. Clicking a label lists all the messages tagged with it. It's merely a different way of organising email, and arguably more effective. It takes some getting used to, but if you know the right commands to enter into the search box, you can do some clever filtering that isn't possible with rival services. There are many different ways to view email and the default shows messages in date order. Priority inbox puts at the top messages Gmail thinks are important, and this works well.

Gmail can automatically sort messages by content into primary, social, promotions, updates and forums and these are accessible on tabs. It's nice to have lots of different ways of viewing email.

B. Best Free Email Services: Microsoft Outlook.Com

Rating: 4.55/5

Microsoft should stop attacking competitors (Google), and simply tell people how goodOutlook.com is because it really does have great features. The interface is similar to traditional email clients with a folder list on the left, including inbox, drafts, and sent. Most of the screen lists the contents of the current folder, such as inbox, with the option to show a vertical or horizontal reading pane, enabling you to browse the inbox and read emails at the same time. Like most email services, folders are used to organise emails and adding new folders is straightforward. Messages can be dragged to folders and rules created to automatically sort incoming mail. A Quick views section automatically categorises messages to a degree, like Gmail's tabs, but there are more categories. You can also create rules to assign incoming messages to categories too. Click a Quick view category and you can see all unread emails, ones with picture or document attachments, flagged messages, bills, and social networking updates and so on.

C. Best Free Email Services: Yahoo! Mail

Rating: 4/5

Yahoo! has a modern look and feel, and themes are available with plain or photographic backgrounds. The attractive design is ruined by an advert, but you can go ad-free for £30 a year. There's a panel with the inbox, sent, spam, trash and other system folders, and a list of email on the right from whatever folder is selected. A preview pane can be added to enable you to browse folders, such as the inbox, and read messages at the same time. Tabs are optional and when turned on they enable multiple messages to be opened on different tabs, and new messages to be created on a tab. It makes it easy to switch from reading to writing to browsing the inbox without losing the current view. Menus under the tabs provide access to all the functions for replying, moving, deleting, flagging messages and so on. Clicking Folders on the left enables you to create extra folders to organise messages. They can be dragged and dropped into folders and there are facilities for creating filters that automatically sort incoming mail into the right folders. Messages can be starred and filters created from them to deal with similar ones. Other email accounts elsewhere can be added so you can see all your messages in one place, holiday responses are available, extra email addresses can be linked to the account and disposable addresses can be created. Contacts with Facebook, Google and other import options, and a calendar are available. It's good, but Outlook or Gmail are preferable though.

D. Best Free Email Services: AOL Mail

Rating: 3/5
AOL used to be huge. 20 years ago it was the leading internet service provider. That was when everyone used dial-up access and once broadband took off, people's interest in AOL waned. It has struggled since, but it's still around and it still provides a free email service. Unlike other email services, when you log into AOL most of the screen is taken up by a news feed showing the latest headlines. This is a throwback to the days when it was a content provider too. The news feed is distracting and you'll find yourself clicking links and reading stories when you should be dealing with your mail. Another distraction is the theme.

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There are lots to choose from and nearly all contain cartoon-like artwork and there's only one you would want to use on a work computer. AOL Mail is clearly designed to entertain home users. You get the usual folder list on the left that includes inbox, drafts, sent and more, and additional folders can be created to enable you to organize and store messages. They can be dragged from the inbox, moved from the menu, or rules can be created to place incoming mail in the appropriate folders. In terms of features, it's similar to iCloud Mail. All the basic features are present, like spam settings, a holiday message, and filters, but you can't collect email from another account. It does have contacts, events and to-dos though and it is best for lightweight use by home users.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Mailing Systems provides convenience for sending mails to the other person. **Electronic mailing system** sends the mails spontaneously without requiring the parties to be available at the same instant. This application can be used by anyone as it is a convenient way of mailing and staying in touch with your friends and family. An Email message takes a few seconds to reach its destination. With email service the internet had proved to be a rapid and productive communication tool for millions of users as it is faster.

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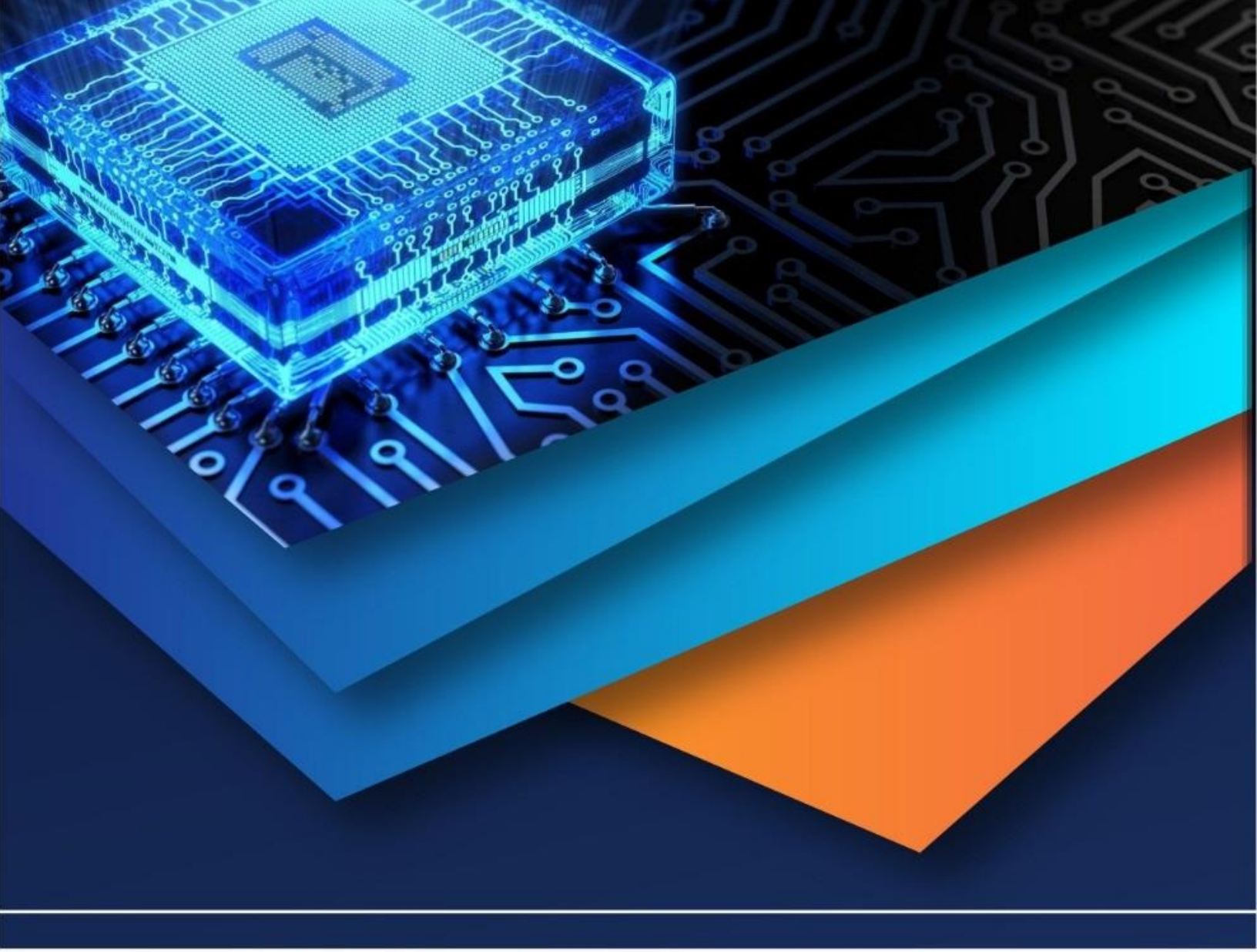

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