

# Preventing Duplicates of Incoming Email Messages

Beginners' Kaffee Klatch  
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Receiving duplicate copies of incoming email messages is a common problem and it has happened to all of us at one time or another. We all receive duplicate e-mails every once in awhile or it might be all the time. What might be causing this?

First of all, if you are getting duplicate copies of any newsletters or other mailing list subscriptions that you are signed up for, you may be registered for it more than once. If so, contact the provider and ask them to check your account. If you are in their database twice, they can delete one entry and you'll go back to getting those e-mails only once.

What about regular e-mails that come from your friends and family? The problem could lie within the network server of the e-mail sender. Chances are, the sender is having some technical difficulties with his/her server and it's causing trouble within the delivery path. There may be a connection problem or if one of the computers along the path is really slow, it could cause system problems as well.

When this happens, most e-mail delivery clients will send the message again if they're unsure as to whether or not the first attempt went through. In most cases, the problems get worked out and the message usually gets sent correctly, but that second attempt is still made. The second attempt then makes another copy of the same e-mail and sends it out again. Therefore, you receive two copies of the same exact e-mail.

In the way of an explanation, when an e-mail is sent out, it goes through several computers before it lands at its final destination (your Inbox). Because of this, the network or server problem could lie within any of those computers. It's hard to tell which one will cause a problem beforehand, so when an e-mail delivery protocol is unsure of a successful delivery, it goes ahead and sends the same e-mail out again. The email service always wants to make sure you get your e-mail, so it will do whatever it deems necessary to get the job done. It may be annoying to get more than one of the same e-mail, but it's better than not getting it at all.