



Bug-Bytes

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CAN'T START IE?

MALWARE MAY BE THE CULPRIT



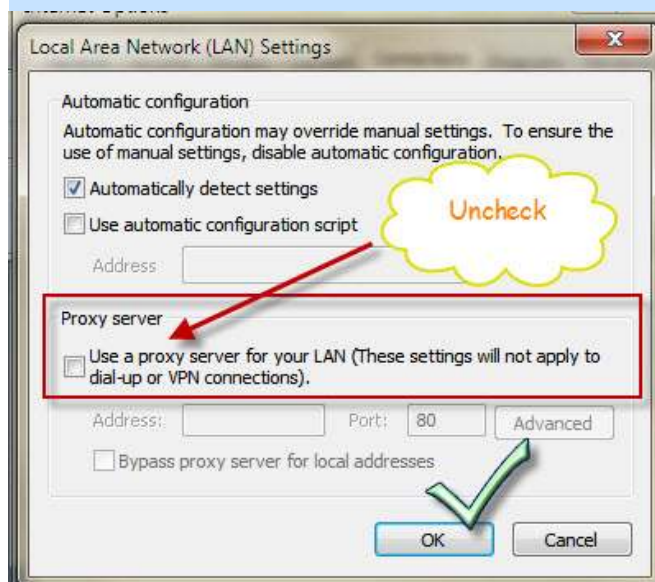
If you cannot get IE to open, the problem may have been caused by a malware program, such as *Banker Fox*. Such problems are often caused by your clicking on the link of an unknown and untrustworthy vendor.

The typical scenario is a pop-up that says that your computer is infected with a virus. Your computer will not be infected until you click on the warning notice from the bad guys. Then, you are really infected. Unscrupulous vendors hook unwary users this way.

What they want is for you to pay for a program to remove the malware they install on your computer. The changes that they make to your computer may be very hard to remove.

One method is that they change the Tool, Internet Options, Connections, Lan Settings and force you to use their "Proxy Server." That is a fancy way of saying they direct all web traffic to their server. They then have the control.

The first fix is to uncheck the box for Proxy Server.



See the screen shot example in the previous column.

REMOVE THE MALWARE

While your security suite may identify the virus infection of something like Banker Fox, it may be unable to automatically remove the infected files.

Scan your computer with your antivirus program.

- ✓ Run **Super AntiSpyware**. The program is free. If you are lucky, that program will remove the infected files.
- ✓ Use your search engine to search for fixes for the specific infection discovered by your internet security product.
- ✓ Follow the instructions item by item. In some cases, you will be asked to download a special malware removal tool specifically crafted to remove that particular infection. Your security suite vendor may not have such a tool. However, often it is necessary to rely on detailed removal instructions identified by your search engine. The instructions may include doing some registry editing. That can be scary.
- ✓ Run the Network Diagnostic Tool in Win 7. See [this useful Microsoft link. http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/networking/expert/russel_diagnostics.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/networking/expert/russel_diagnostics.mspx)
- ✓ If all else fails, take your computer to your friendly computer repair place.

OTHER STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

If your budget will afford it, use a top-notch security suite. Currently, many security suites provide full protection from viruses, spam, hackers, and malicious malware. Some vendors offer packages that protect three computers for a year for about \$70. That is a bargain.

Keep your security programs up to date, and periodically manually scan your computers to supplement the automatic scans. The data and sanity you save it your own.

Regularly use Super AntiSpyware and run it along with Advanced SystemCare. Both programs are free.

WHICH BROWSER AND E-MAIL PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



A message from a member to our list server reminded me that computer users have very strong likes and dislikes when it comes to their browser, or for their e-mail program. For example, Gerry Tank prefers Mozilla Thunderbird as his e-mail program. Just

know that as a computer user you are the king or queen. You can pick whichever programs best satisfy your needs.

Fortunately, there are many very fine programs from which to choose. You be the judge. It is easy to download and try browsers until you find the one that feels just right for you. It is also easy to remove the programs you did not like as well

Who can say why some people pick their brand of car over all the other brands and models that are available? They just do. So it is with browsers and e-mail programs. It is okay to like and use different products. They offer different feature sets and benefits. What one user prefers, for perfectly valid reasons may not hold true for other users.

The different browsers vary in how they display data, how they handle security, and how they control pop-ups. They also differ in the availability of plug-ins, add-ons, widgets, and how they manage those.

Browsers may differ how they handle tabbed browsing (tabs to multiple open windows) and the apparent speed which they load web pages. Actually, users may see little difference in such speeds. They are all pretty fast.

Popular Browsers

Following is a list of the more popular browsers. For a complete list of browsers go to the link below.

www.webdevelopersnotes.com/design/browsers_list.php3

Internet Explorer (Microsoft) [Internet Explorer](#)

Firefox (Mozilla) [/www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox](http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox)

Opera (Opera) www.opera.com

Avant (Avant) www.avant.com

Safari (Apple)

Chrome (Google)

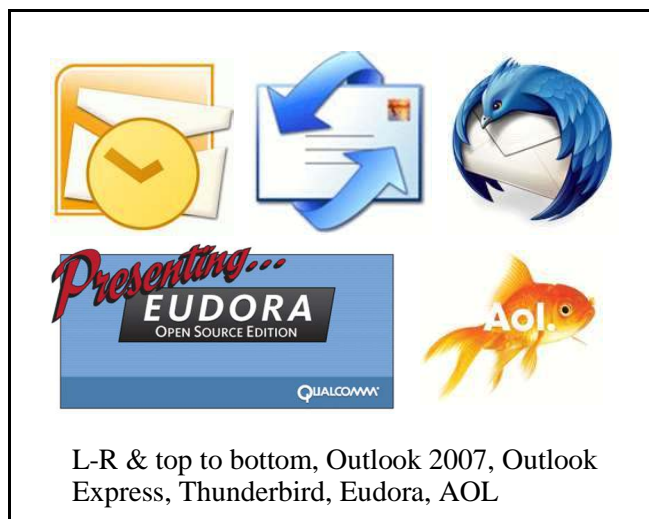
SeaMonkey (Mozilla)

The two most popular browsers are Firefox and Internet Explorer in that order. See the next link. www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp

Competition is very keen among the browsers. Therefore, the ranking can and do change quickly as the vendors bring out new versions.

Ignore the statistics and the hype. Experiment until you find the browser with which you are most comfortable. Periodically check to see whether or not your current choice is the best choice for you based on what is then available.

MOST POPULAR E-MAIL PROGRAMS (CLIENTS)



L-R & top to bottom, Outlook 2007, Outlook Express, Thunderbird, Eudora, AOL

Windows Live Mail - Windows Mail - Outlook Express

Windows Outlook

Thunderbird (Mozilla)

Eudora (Uses Thunderbird code base and is now open source). [The program is now free.]

AOL (Companion of AOL webmail)

Yahoo Mail (webmail)

Gmail (webmail)

These programs support stationery (Outlook Express, Windows Live, and IncrediMail) Windows 7 Live Mail does not support stationery. IncrediMail is the only stationery solution for Win 7 users. IncrediMail offers a free

version with ads and a Plus version without ads. The plus version offers additional features, such as e-mail backup, spam filtering, and includes some artwork.

THE BOTTOM LINE



You are in the catbird seat. If you are happy and comfortable with your browser and your e-mail program choices, don't change them. But, be aware that other choices are available to you—choices that offer different features and ways of going about your business.

If you are in an experimental mood, go ahead and try something new. For Windows 7, fortunately, it is easy to settle on a new choice and to remove whichever program you no longer want or need.

For XP and Vista users, you are better leaving your current browser and e-mail program still installed. Just download and use any new choice. You can then still open your old standbys if you want to, and do quick comparisons.

SO, YOU SAY YOU CAN'T DOWNLOAD YOUR E-MAIL MESSAGES?

ONE OR MORE BAD E-MAIL MESSAGES MAY BE THE CAUSE



Sometimes, one or more e-mail messages may not download properly from your ISP's server. As a result, your e-mail program chokes on the message or messages and hangs during the attempted downloads. Therefore, you can't get past the hung messages to download the rest of your e-mail messages. You close your e-mail program and then reopen it. No joy! Your e-mail program hangs at that same spot.

The problem message may be due to a particular attachment or a corrupted e-mail message. Fortunately, the fix is usually pretty easy. Open your browser and insert your ISP's address in your browser's address field. For Charter,

that might be www.charter.net. Sign in with your ID and password. You can now view each of your e-mail messages stored on your ISP's server. Normally, the messages are automatically downloaded from the server to your computer when you open your e-mail program. You can do one of two things. (Check your e-mail account settings to see if you chose to leave a copy of your messages on the server. If you did, look for the most recent messages to find the problem message.)

1. You can look for the probable hanging e-mail message and delete it. Look for messages with attachments, or for e-mail from people that you don't know and trust.
2. You can read all of your messages and then delete all of the messages that you see. In the second method, you don't have to identify the particular message that is causing the problem.

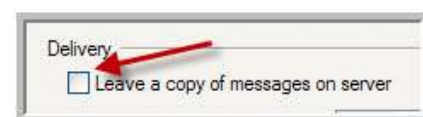
Once you have deleted either the message or messages you think might be the problem (method 1) or read and deleted all of the messages on the server (method 2) exit from your ISP's web mail. Now, open your e-mail program. In most cases it will now open correctly.

Note, when you delete messages on your ISP's server, they will no longer be available to you, and the deleted messages will not download to your e-mail on your computer in the future.

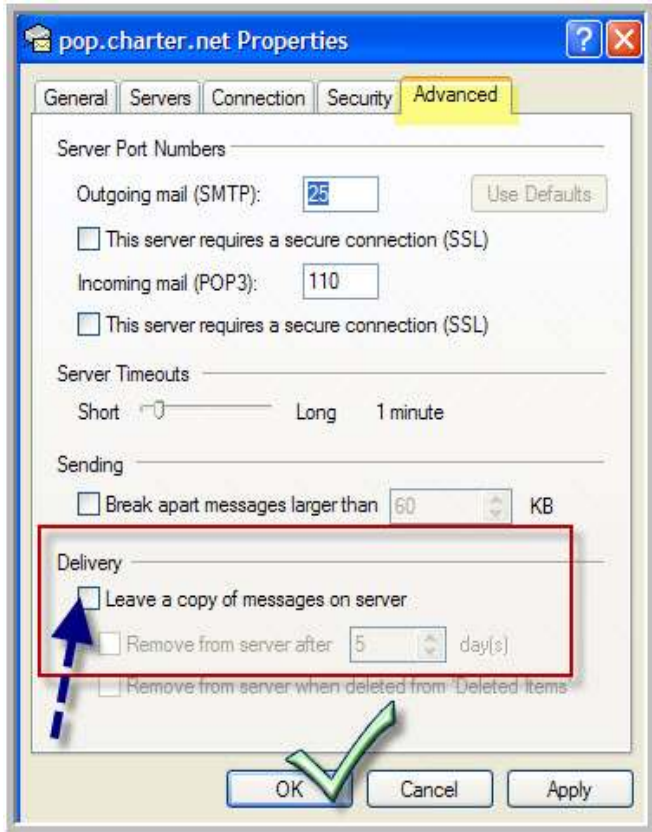
I suggest that you do not leave your messages on your ISP's server unless you want to download the messages to multiple computers in your household. If the "Leave a copy" option is unchecked in your e-mail account setting, those messages are deleted on the server as the messages are downloaded to your computer.

The trade-off is that if you read messages from different computers, duplicates of the messages will not be stored on your other computers. That is not a problem if you make it a rule to only read messages on your main computer. Alternatively, you can forward messages to your main computer so that your messages are stored in one place.

Open Outlook Express. Window Mail, or Windows Live Mail. Click on Tools, Accounts. Click on your default account, Properties, Advanced. Selection or deselect the Delivery option to select how you want your e-mail to be handled. See the screen shot below.



In XP, here is a screen shot that shows you what you see on the advanced tab of your e-mail account. There is a similar manual setting in Windows Mail and Windows Live Mail.



EMAIL ACCOUNT CORRUPTED?

THAT MAY BE WHY YOU CANNOT OPEN YOUR E-MAIL



When you first setup your computer, a wizard asked you questions and setup your e-mail account. Open Outlook Express, Windows Mail, or Windows Live Mail, click on Tools, Accounts, and choose your e-mail account. Click on Properties and you can review the settings.

However, if you are unable to open your e-mail program, it may be that your e-mail *account settings* have become corrupted.

Start your computer in Safe Mode. As you recall, you press the F8 function key a few times as your computer first starts up. Sometimes, it also helps to unplug your broadband

modem so that it is not trying to connect to your e-mail program while you are making changes to your e-mail account, or click on File, Work Offline, if you are able to reach the settings for your e-mail program..

Click on the link in Accounts and create a new account (as when you first setup your computer). The software wizard will ask you the same questions—questions such as who is your internet provider, what is your ID and your password. Under server, normally you enter pop.charter.net (substitute your ISPs address for Charter.net) for incoming mail and smtp.charter.net for your outgoing messages. Give your new account a unique name, one that you can distinguish from the old account name. Make your new account the default e-mail account.

Now, restart your computer and open your e-mail. You should be back in business, if your previous problem was a corrupted e-mail account setup.

HAS MALWARE HIJACKED YOUR E-MAIL SETTING?

If you have a broadband connection, open Internet Explorer. Click on Tools, Internet Options, Connections, Lan Settings. Be sure that the Proxy server setting is NOT checked. Malware sometimes hijacks your e-mail substituting their server address as the proxy.



If malware has hijacked your e-mail, their IP address will show up in the address field. You may also receive a warning message from your antivirus/malware protection program about a virus installed by the malware program.

Be careful which links you click on the web!