

Ignore unwanted email conversations in Outlook

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Takeaway: Outlook lets you completely ignore an email conversation with a simple click or two of the mouse. Susan Harkins shows you how.

When things get to hectic at work, you can walk away from the water cooler and return to your space. If you're lucky enough to have an office, you can even shut the door. But, what do you do with Outlook conversations that aren't important to you? Even if you opt not to read them, you still have to delete them. There's good news; you don't have to read or even delete irrelevant conversations. Outlook lets you completely ignore them.

Before I show you how to ignore a conversation, let's make sure you know what a conversation is. Microsoft defines a conversation as follows: *A Conversation is the complete chain of email messages from the first message through all responses. The messages of a Conversation have the same subject.* You might be more familiar with the term thread.

Now, here's how to ignore a conversation:

1. Select the message in the Reading pane.
2. Click the Home tab, and click Ignore in the Delete group, or press [Ctrl]+[Delete], or right-click the message and choose Ignore from the resulting context menu.
3. Click Ignore Conversation.

That's it - that's a lot easier than wading through all those unwanted messages!

This quick solution will remove all emails belonging to this conversation from your Inbox (or folder). But there's more! Outlook will automatically detour new messages in that conversation, so it never even hits your Inbox.

The conversation's not really gone and you can easily reclaim it, as follows:

1. Select the Deleted Items folder.
2. Select any message in the conversation that you want to recover.
3. Click Ignore in the Delete group.
4. Click Stop Ignoring Conversation.

When you stop ignoring a conversation, Outlook will move all messages in the conversation back to your Inbox. In addition, you'll start seeing new messages in your Inbox as they arrive.

Contrary to what you might read elsewhere, you don't have to be in Conversation View to ignore or *un*-ignore a conversation. Unfortunately, there's no way for you, the end user, to view a list of ignored conversations. It's just up to you to remember that you've ignored a conversation. If you're on Exchange, your administrator can get a list for you, but they might not appreciate the extra work.