

What is the difference between POP3 and IMAP?

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In simple words, IMAP mail remains on the server whereas POP3 mail is downloaded to the local drive on your computer. This has both advantages and disadvantages:

- IMAP allows you to access your mails **from any computer** . They remain available until you manually delete them from the server. Once POP mail is downloaded to a pc, pda ... from that moment it is only available on that device, so mail can be scattered over several devices.
- With IMAP you will have to **remove email quicker** because they remain on the server and your mailbox has a limited size. POP3 mail is stored locally and you have as much space as there is free space on your hard drive.
- Some IMAP mail clients support **IMAP-IDLE** . This enables push-email which may be interesting when you are on the road with your laptop, pda, iPhone ...
- In order to read IMAP mails you need to be online. POP3 mails can be read offline.

If you wish you can **combine** both technologies. For instance you can read your mail with IMAP during the week on your laptop and download your mails to your home pc once a week with POP3.

Both POP3 and IMAP accounts are protected with **spam and virus filters** .

Posted : [Nick Corne](#) - Tue, Nov 18, 2008 3:10 PM. This article has been viewed 5461 times.

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