Email Provider vs. Email Client

Email Providers:

- **Proton**
- **Tuta**
- **Fastmail**
- **Startmail**
- **Gmail**
- **Outlook**
- **Yahoo**
- **Zoho**

Examples of Email Clients:

- **Thunderbird** (Desktop and Android)
- **Mailspring** (Desktop)
- **Evolution** (Desktop)
- **Outlook** (Desktop and Web)
- **Apple Mail** (macOS and iOS)
- **Microsoft Mail** (Windows)
- **K-9 Mail** (Android)
- **Spark** (Desktop and Mobile)
- **Mailbird** (Desktop)

Key functions of an email provider:

Account Creation
Email Storage (Inbox, Outbox, Drafts, Archived)
Email Sending and Receiving
 SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)
 IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol)
 POP3 (Post Office Protocol)
Spam Filtering and Security (Encryption via SSL/TLS as an example)
Webmail Access (most providers offer a webmail application for viewing in browser)

Key Functions of an email client:

Accessing Email (via IMAP, POP3, etc)
Message Organization (manage multiple email accounts, folders, filters, tags, etc)
Synchronization (Can sync across multiple devices)
Offline Access (example POP3 will store local copies of emails)

Example scenario

You have both Gmail and Outlook email accounts for personal/work
Using a client such as Thunderbird, you could import both Gmail and Outlook email accounts into Thunderbird email client, this allows you to check both Gmail and Outlook email on one user

interface, rather than logging into both email services separately. Additionally, you can now use Thunderbird on Android as of November 2024, this allows us to send/receive/manage any email we choose to import on both Desktop and Android instances of Thunderbird, with both devices providing full synchronization for easy access and use.

Gmail + Outlook → Thunderbird (Desktop and Android)

An **email provider** manages the infrastructure, while an **email client** provides the user interface and management ability under one roof.

Why use an email client?

Can you use an email provider as an email client?

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Thunderbird
Import Outlook into Thunderbird:

1. Install Thunderbird on Linux
sudo apt update && sudo apt install thunderbird

2. Launch Thunderbird (first time, a Setup Wizard will run automatically)

3. Enter your Outlook credentials (username / password) and any 2FA you have enabled
      Manually you can click on upper right menu icon and select 'New Account' > 'Email'
      Thunderbird should automatically configure the server settings
      IMAP is recommended for Incoming messages
      SMTP is recommended for Outgoing messages

      *If the automatic server settings did not work, you can configure it manually:

IMAP Settings under Server Settings:
    - Server: `imap-mail.outlook.com`
    - Port: 993
    - Encryption: SSL/TLS
  - SMTP Settings:
    - Server: `smtp-mail.outlook.com`
    - Port: 587
    - Encryption: STARTTLS
  - **Username**: Your full email address (`yourname@outlook.com`).
  - **Password**: Your Outlook account password.

4. Click 'Done' (double check the Port numbers with your email provider)

5. Other Steps to ensure full setup (Optional):

-Synchronize Folders
Settings > Synchronization and Storage

-Configure Email Signature
Account Settings > Click on the email you want to attach signature to
Adjust settings in > Composition and Addressing
Attach signature from file or type your custom signature in

-Add your Contacts (not automatically done when you import your email)
Menu (top right) > New Account > New Address Book and import

-Add your Calendar
Menu (top right) > New Account > Calendar and import

-Check IMAP Synching
Account Settings > Server Settings > IMAP and ensure folder(s) are selected

-Test Sending and Receiving Emails
Send test messages to ensure everything is configured properly and working

-Check Folders to ensure proper configuration to your liking

-Periodically check for Updates to Thunderbird to ensure you have the latest version

*If you have 2FA enabled on your Outlook, you may need an 'App Password' in order to import into Thunderbird. This is a special password different from your normal login password to Outlook
In Microsoft Outlook visit the Account Security Page: https://account.microsoft.com/security
Under 'Additional Security Options' find the Apps Password section
Click 'Create a new app password' and use this to set up Thunderbird

Other email imports will be very similar process (Gmail, Yahoo, Proton, Fastmail, etc)

Thunderbird is also very highly customizable with a ton of features for advanced search, folder management and other workflow customization and plugins. You can also configure PGP for full End to End Encryption (E2EE) ability. Other features that you can add/modify include custom themes, custom toolbars, message layout, font and color customization, and other add ons for security, languages, RSS feeds, autoresponders, custom key shortcuts and automatic actions and scripts.

Periodically you should **Export a copy of your email** and contacts to a local disk to ensure you have a backup that you can access at any time without any internet. This is something I do quarterly, but you may want or need to do so more or less often.

Email Encryption with Thunderbird

Thunderbird allows us to easily use **PGP (Pretty Good Privacy)** to encrypt our messages if we choose.

*If you are using Thunderbird to access your **Proton Mail** account, you will lose Proton to Proton email message encryption, in that case, you will want to use Proton's Email Bridge. This is an

application that you install on your desktop that ensures Proton message encryption is properly handled and forwarded to your Thunderbird instance, maintaining Proton's encryption.

To use PGP with Thunderbird on Linux, first we must install GNU-PG. Open a terminal and enter:

```
sudo apt install gnupg
```

Generate a key pair: `gpg --full-generate-key` (This generates a Public and Private key pair)

Open Account Settings > (select email account) > End to End Encryption and Import your GPG key

You can now encrypt and sign emails

To share your Public Key, use this command:

```
gpg --armor --export youremail@example.com
```

Encrypting Emails:

- When composing an email, Thunderbird will check if the recipient has a public key. If they do, you'll see an option to **Encrypt** the message.
- You can **Encrypt** by checking the encryption box in the compose window.

- **Signing Emails**:

- Similarly, you can choose to **Sign** your email. Signing adds a cryptographic signature to verify the sender's identity.
- This option will be available alongside the **Encrypt** checkbox when composing a message.

Encrypted Emails: When you receive an encrypted email, Thunderbird will automatically decrypt the email if you have the private key. You'll see the message content after Thunderbird decrypts it.

- **Signed Emails**: If an email is signed, Thunderbird will verify the signature and show you whether the signature is valid (e.g., "The signature is good" or "Invalid signature" if something is wrong).

By following these steps, you'll have **PGP encryption** (via OpenPGP and GPG) set up in **Thunderbird on Linux**, enabling secure email communication. You can encrypt emails to protect their contents and sign them to verify your identity. This setup ensures that only intended recipients with the correct private key can decrypt your messages, while anyone can verify that the emails you send are truly from you.

Use ChatGPT or similar AI to learn how to **import a Gmail account into Thunderbird**, try this search and use it to complete all necessary steps:

how can i import my gmail account into thunderbird on linux?