

# Summary of we've got mail always



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Email has become so entrenched in our lives that it has become the common mode of communication in the workplace, and for some, it has become a lifeline to the world as well. Many of us can hardly imagine life without it. That email enhances as well as complicates our daily business is a given.

In "We've Got Mail—Always," Andrew Leonard discusses how email "saves time and wastes it, makes life simpler and more complicated, brings us together and pushes us apart." (240-243) E-mail, can't live with it, can't live without it. Con artists and real artists, advertisers and freedom fighters, lovers and sworn enemies—they've all flocked to e-mail as they would to any new medium of expression. E-mail is convenient, saves time, brings us closer to one another, helps us manage our ever-more-complex lives. Books are written, campaigns conducted, crimes committed—all via e-mail. But it is also inconvenient, wastes our time, isolates us in front of our computers and introduces more complexity into our already too-harried lives.

To skeptics, e-mail is just the latest chapter in the evolving history of human communication. A snooping husband now discovers his wife's affair by reading her private e-mail—but he could have uncovered the same sin by finding letters a generation ago. Yet e-mail—and all online communication—is in fact something truly different; it captures the essence of life at the close of the 20th century with an authority that few other products of digital technology can claim. Does the pace of life seem ever faster? E-mail simultaneously allows us to cope with that acceleration and contributes to it.

Are our attention spans shriveling under barrages of new, improved forms of stimulation? The quick and dirty e-mail is made to order for those whose

ability to concentrate is measured in nanoseconds. If we accept that the creation of the globe-spanning Internet is one of the most important technological innovations of the last half of this century, then we must give e-mail-the living embodiment of human connection across the Net-pride of place. The way we interact with each other is changing; e-mail is both the catalyst and the instrument of that change.