

Using the “Bcc” [Blind Carbon Copy] Feature in MS Outlook Express

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Difficulty Level: Beginner
Time Required: One minute or less
Applies To: All Versions

Overview

The Bcc, or Blind Carbon Copy, feature of MS Outlook lets you send a hidden copy of any email to an additional recipient or recipients under separate cover. The term “carbon copy” comes from the former practice of sending actual carbon paper copies of paper documents.

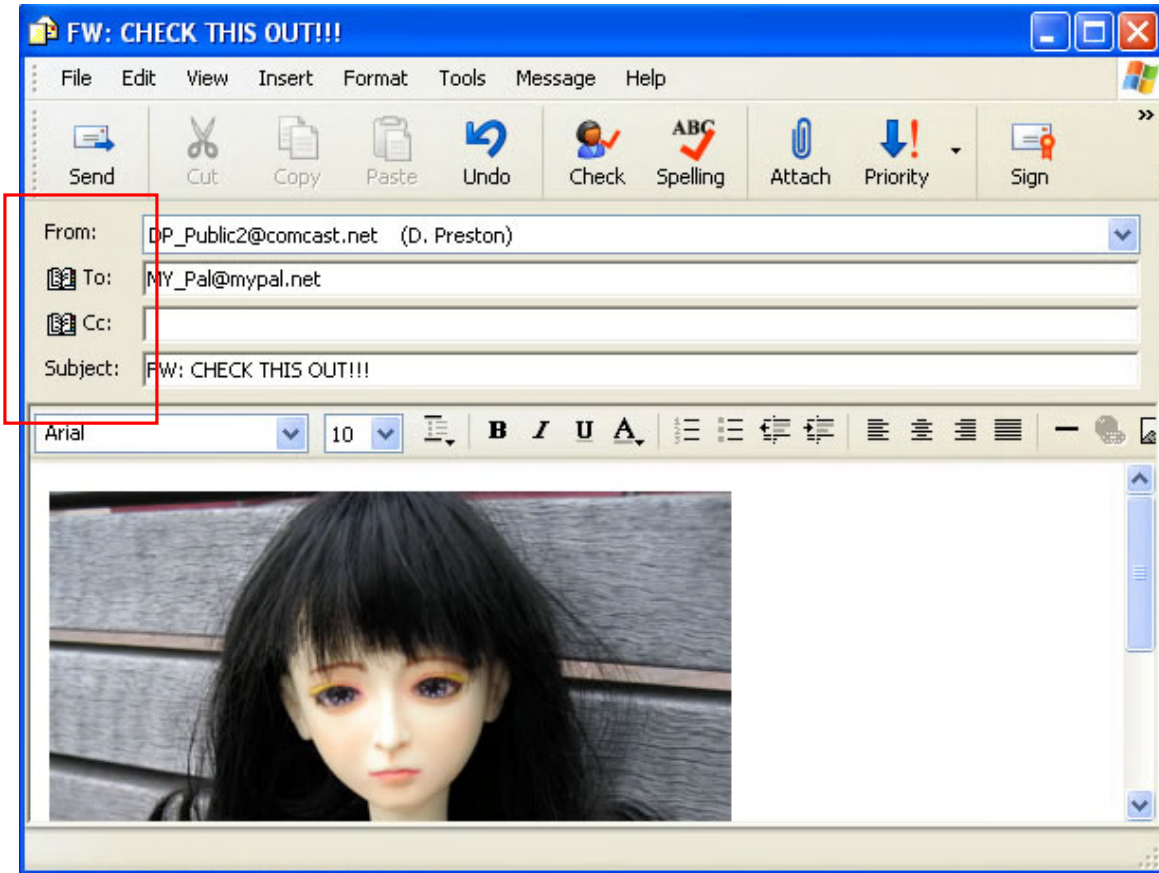
When you use the Bcc feature of MS Outlook, the main recipient of the email—the person listed on the “To:” line—does not know who the other recipients are, or even that you have sent a copy of the email to another party. The Bcc feature may be useful in the following situations:

- You want to send an invitation to a birthday party to several people at once, but you don’t wish the recipients to know who you’ve invited.
- You need to communicate with an employee regarding sensitive information and you need to keep a third party (say a personnel director) apprised of your communications without alarming the main recipient.
- You want to send a humorous email to a large number of recipients, but you want to mask the email addresses of the recipients from each other for security reasons, or in order to keep the email uncluttered.

After you send a Bcc using MS Outlook Express you will not be able to see the Bcc’d recipients in your copy of the email message, so don’t use this feature if you need to keep track of whom you’ve sent your email message to.

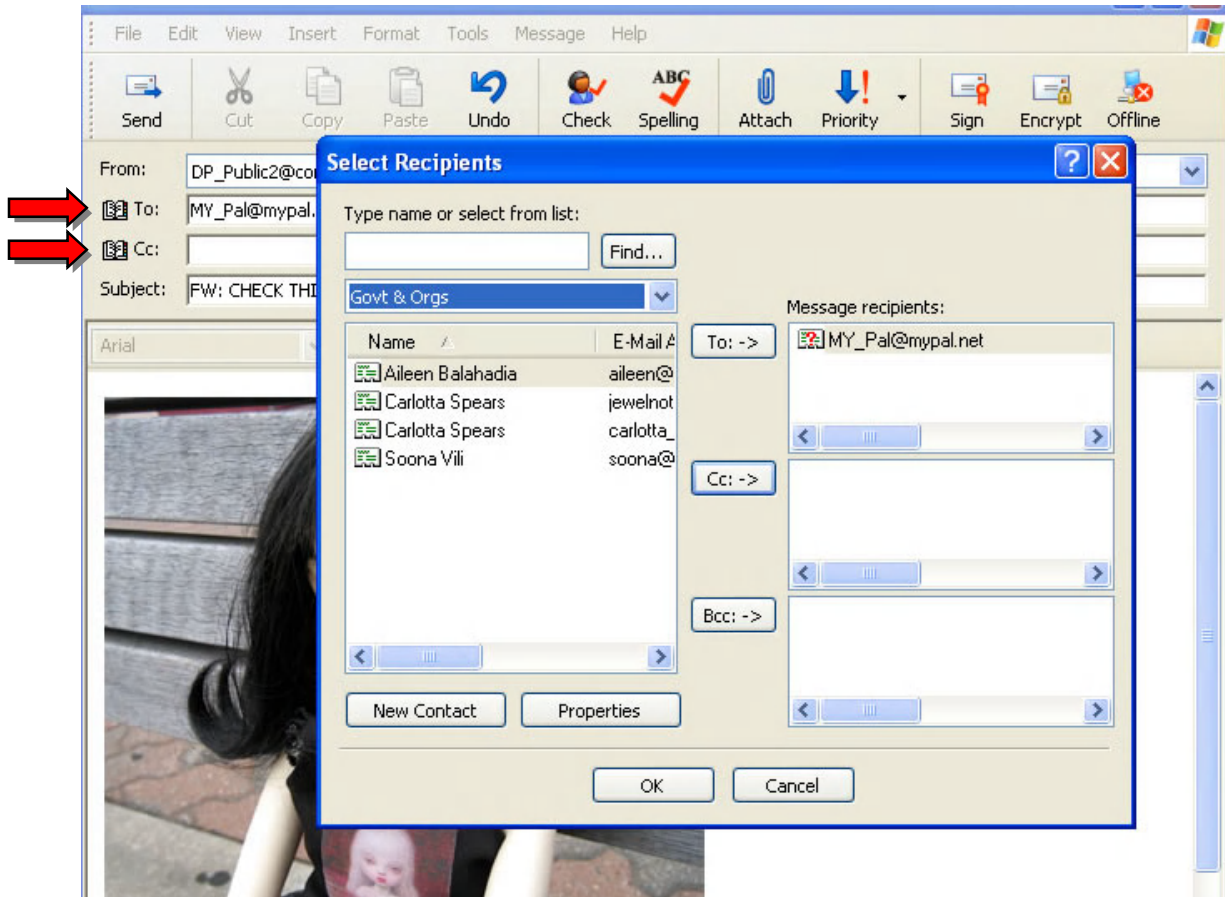
Step 1 – Open Outlook Express and create a new email message.

You should see the standard “From:” “To:” and “Cc:” lines at the top of the message.



Step 2 – Activate the Bcc field.

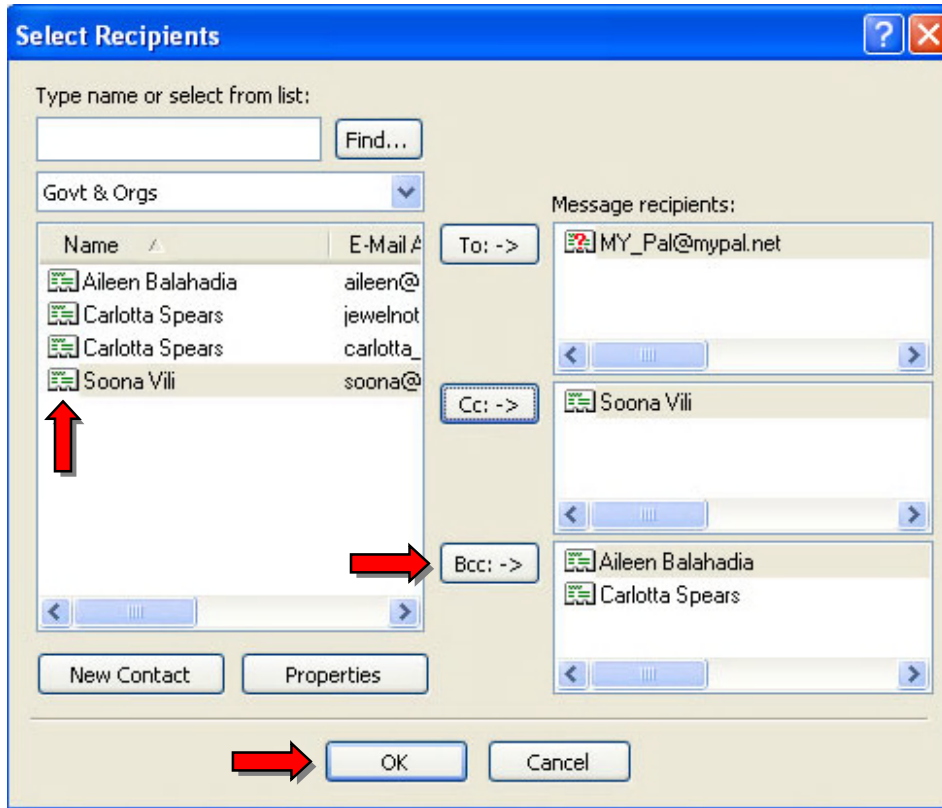
Do this by clicking on either the “To:” or “Cc:” address book icons on the left side of the screen.



This action will pop up the “Select Recipients” screen.

Step 3 – Select your Bcc recipients.

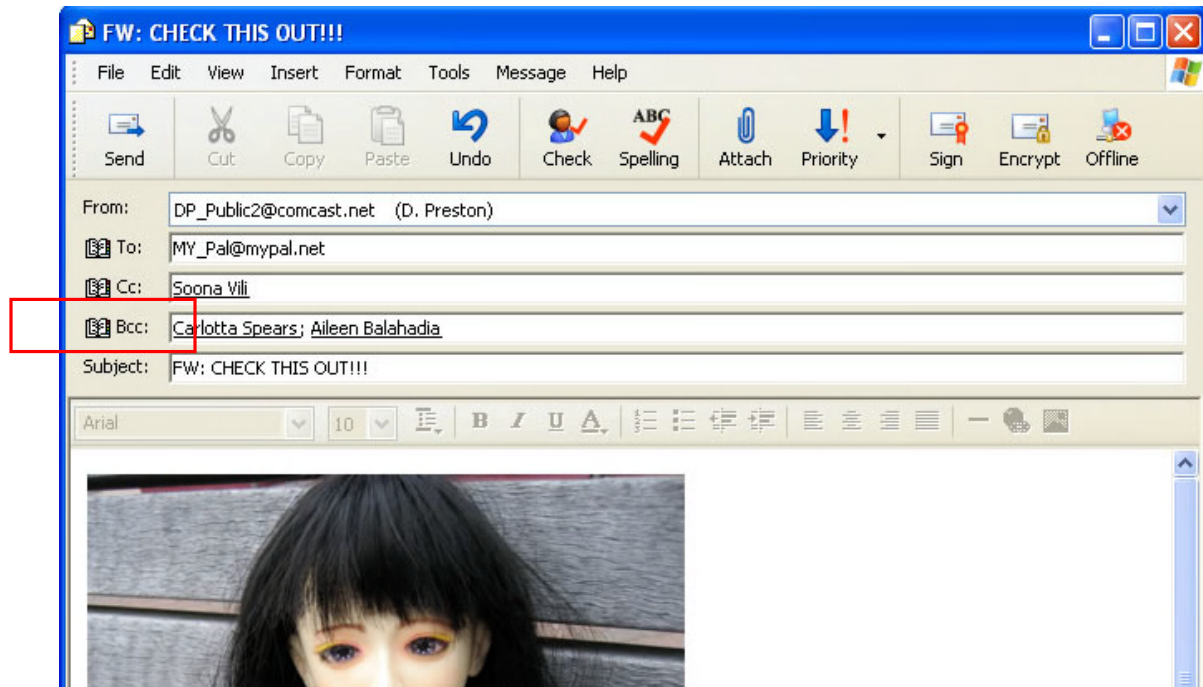
First select the name of the recipient you want to Bcc on the left; then press the Bcc button. The Bcc recipients' names will then appear in the Bcc field to the right. You can also add main recipients or "Cc" (regular carbon copy) recipients from this screen. Click the "OK" button when you're finished.



Tip: If you're using the Bcc feature because you want to hide recipients' email addresses for security reasons, put only *your* email address in the To: line and put all the other recipients in the Bcc: line.

Step 3 – Review and send the email.

Note that the Bcc line is now visible on the bottom of the screen.



Although these instructions apply to the MS Outlook Express email program, other email clients use a very similar process. Some email clients use a “File Menu” system for accessing the Bcc feature, so instead of pressing the To: icon you might look for the Bcc feature on one of the various pulldown menus at the top of the screen (“File,” “View,” etc.)

Important: As noted above, after you send the email you will **not** be able to see any Bcc recipients, so use this feature carefully. It’s also a good idea, when using the Bcc feature for sensitive information, to let the Bcc recipient know beforehand that you will be sending a blind carbon copy of an email. Otherwise the recipient may not realize that the email you’re copying to them is sensitive and they may forward it on to a third party—or even the main recipient—unknowingly.