Overview

What Is Google Takeout?

Google Takeout is a self-serve tool that helps you export and download **a copy of data** [from U of A Google Workspace services](#) like Gmail, Calendar, and more. In a few steps, Takeout creates an archive directly into My Drive to keep for your records. Depending on the amount of data in your account, the export process could take a few hours or up to a week and requires sufficient account storage.

Takeout **does not delete any data** from U of A Google Workspace services. You can then use the specific Google Workspace service to delete the data. Only delete the data after you have verified it is successfully exported and accessible.

IMPORTANT

IST can assist you in following the directions in this guide. However, Google Takeout is a [Google consumer app,](#) and support for this service is available through Google [help centers](#) and [forums](#).

As a University community member, you are entrusted with managing University information responsibly and following the [University's Information Management and Information Technology Policies](#).

What Google Workspace data can I export using Google Takeout?
You can export and download data from Google Workspace core apps:
- Email (Gmail)
  - Messages and attachments in your Gmail account are exported in MBOX format
- Contacts
  - Contacts and photos you added are exported in CSV or vCard format
- Calendars
  - Calendars are exported in iCalendar format
- Files you own in My Drive (Google Drive)
  - Docs, Sheets, and Slides are exported in Microsoft Office formats
  - Other file types are exported in the same format (e.g. a PDF is exported as a PDF)

For a full list of available Google services, visit the [Google Takeout](#) website (**sign-in required**).

Are there any limitations?
- Google Takeout can only export data in the file format specified unless otherwise noted (e.g. email messages export only to the open standard MBOX format)
- Creating an archive for Gmail is limited to **three** daily attempts, up to **seven** per week.
- If Google determines your actions seem risky, your actions may be delayed or unavailable to protect your account.

How to Create an Email Archive?

The following steps describe creating an email archive from a custom label or search in Gmail. Once you have verified that the Google Takeout export **was successful and the messages are accessible**, you can remove them from Gmail.

Example walkthrough

The goal is to archive all the email messages sent and received in 2020.
If you already have messages organized with a label (e.g., by year or topic), skip to the Export a Copy of Messages Using Google Takeout section.

Preparing messages with Labels in Gmail

To Search and Label messages sent and received in the year 2020:

1. Open Gmail and sign-in with your U of A account.

2. Click in the search box located directly above your email messages.

3. Type the following search terms to find all the messages from 2020, then press enter on the keyboard.

after:2020/01/01 before:2021/01/01

4. The results will appear in the message list window.

5. Click the **Select box** down arrow, then click **All** to select all the messages from the search.
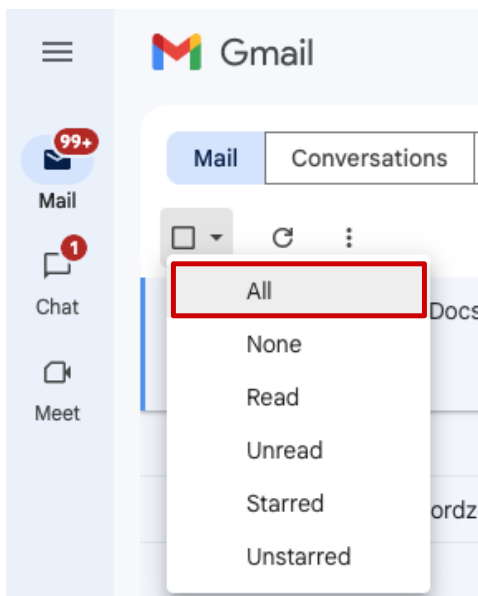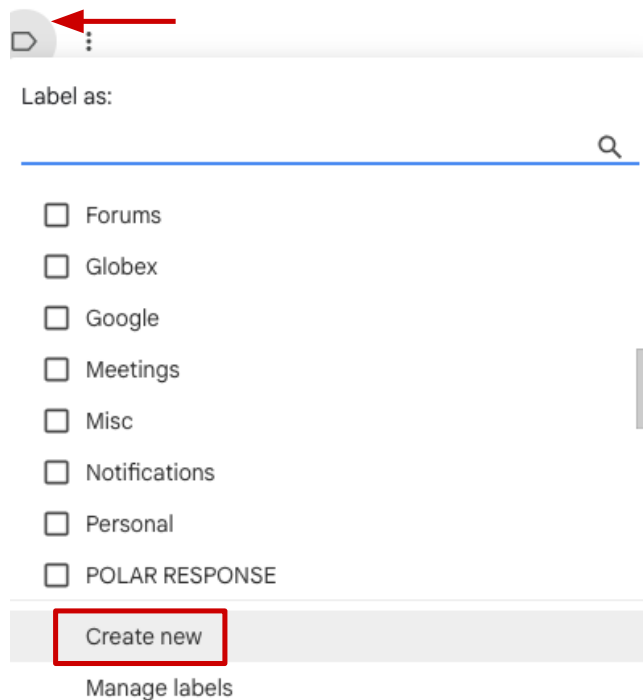
6. The search results may span multiple pages. To select those additional messages, click the link **Select all conversations that match this search** near the top of the window. This link will only appear if the search results can't be displayed in a single page.

    All **50** conversations on this page are selected. | Select all conversations that match this search

7. Next, click the **Label as** button and select **Create new** to create a new label.

    Label as:

    - ☐ Forums
    - ☐ Globex
    - ☐ Google
    - ☐ Meetings
    - ☐ Misc
    - ☐ Notifications
    - ☐ Personal
    - ☐ POLAR RESPONSE

    Create new

    Manage labels

8. In the New Label window, type a name for the label, e.g. **2020 Email Archive**, and click **Create**.

    New label ✕

    Please enter a new label name:

    ☐ Nest label under:

    Cancel   Create
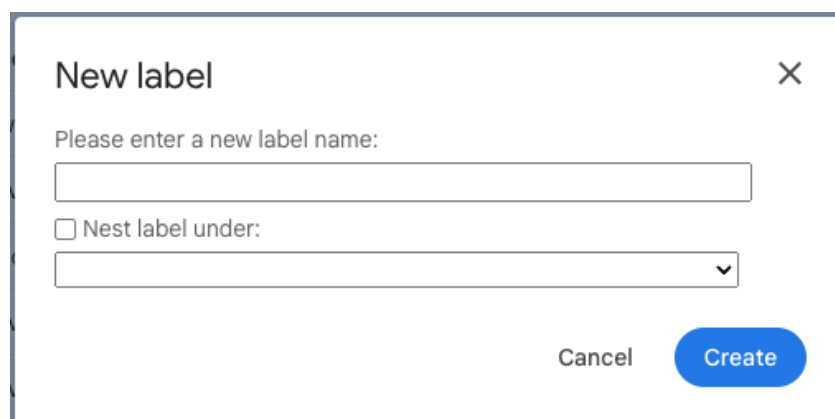
9. All selected messages will now have the new label **2020 Email Archive**. Review messages to confirm they are correctly labelled.

Export a copy of messages using Google Takeout

> IMPORTANT
>
> Google Takeout exports are generated as Zip archive files. Windows and MacOS have built-in tools that can extract or unzip the files on your computer.

To create and export an email archive using the **2020 Email Archive** label:

1. Visit Google Takeout (https://takeout.google.com) and sign in with your U of A account.

2. The first step in the **Create a New Export** section is to **Select data to include** in the export.

3. Click **Deselect all** to remove all the listed products. This is a crucial step to limit the archive creation to just **Mail**.

Your account, your data.
Export a copy of content in your Google Account to back it up or use it with a service outside of Google.

CREATE A NEW EXPORT

1	Select data to include	54 of 55 selected
	Products	Deselect all
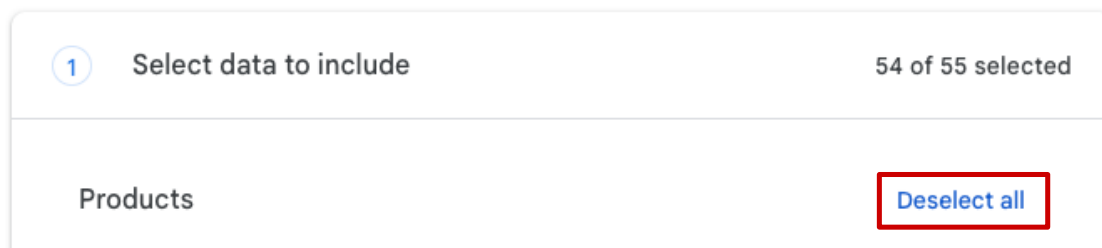
4. Scroll down the list of applications to find the **Mail** application.

5. Click on the checkbox on the right-hand side to select the **Mail** application.

Mail
Messages and attachments in your Gmail account in MBOX format. User settings from your Gmail account in JSON format. More info

☐ Multiple formats   ≔ All Mail data included   ☑
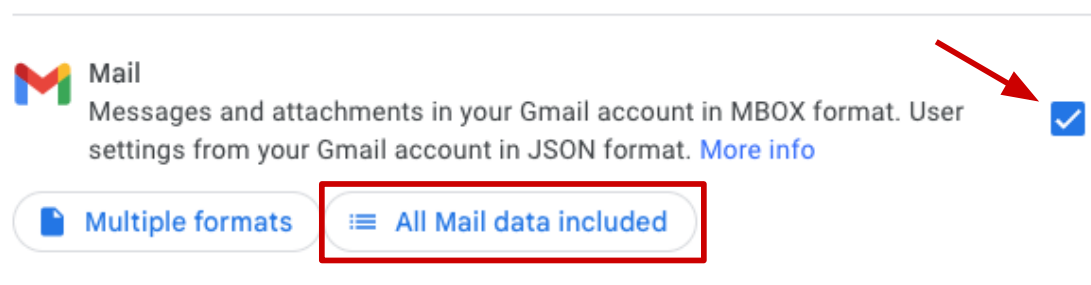
6. Click the **All Mail data included** to open the **Mail content options** window.

7. Uncheck the **Include all messages in Mail** to enable the label selection option.

Mail content options
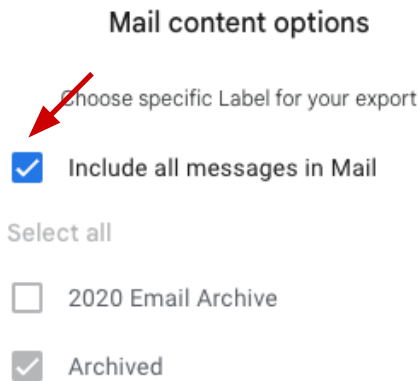
Choose specific Label for your export

☑ Include all messages in Mail

Select all

☐ 2020 Email Archive

☑ Archived

8. The default labels (e.g., Inbox, Sent, etc.) are automatically selected. To quickly remove all the default selected labels, click **Select all** to add a check on every label, then click **Deselect all** to clear all the label checkboxes.

Mail content options
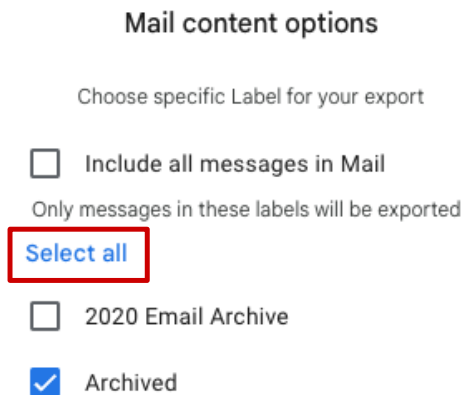
Choose specific Label for your export

☐ Include all messages in Mail

Only messages in these labels will be exported

Select all

☐ 2020 Email Archive

☑ Archived

9. Now find and add a check to the **2020 Email Archive** label. Review the list to confirm that no other labels are checked, then click **OK** at the bottom of the label list window.

Mail content options
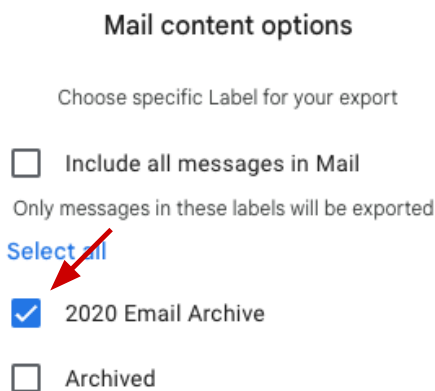
Choose specific Label for your export

☐ Include all messages in Mail

Only messages in these labels will be exported

Select all
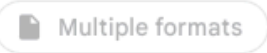
☑ 2020 Email Archive

☐ Archived

10. Scroll to the bottom of the window and click the **Next step** button.

11. On the **Choose file type, frequency & destination** section, select an option from the **Transfer to:** pull down menu. In this example, **Add to Drive** has been selected. This option will automatically save the archive export to a Takeout folder in the My Drive (Google Drive) of the account.

12. The default **File size**: is **2 GB** however, this option can be adjusted to 1 GB, 2 GB, 4 GB, 10 GB, or 50 GB if required.

13. Click the **Create export** button to start the export.

14. Depending on the amount of data in your account, the export process could take a few hours or up to a week and requires sufficient account storage. Creating an archive for Gmail is limited to **three** daily attempts, up to **seven** per week.

15. Once **the archive is ready, you** will receive an email notification. You can then close the Google Takeout window and continue to use your computer as normal, even shutting down the computer.

16. Once the export is complete, you can access the archive zip file from the **Takeout folder** in **My Drive** (Google Drive).

How to View an MBOX Email Archive?

Google Takeout exports a copy of Gmail messages using the open standard MBOX file format. MBOX files cannot be viewed or imported into Gmail. Third-party applications such as Mozilla Thunderbird (with the ImportExportTools NG add-on) must view email messages from MBOX files.

IMPORTANT
IST can assist you in following the directions in this guide. However, Thunderbird is free cross-platform email software (Windows, macOS, and Linux), and support is only available through the Thunderbird help website.

**Install Thunderbird (Microsoft Store - Windows)**
1. Open the **Microsoft Store application** from the Windows start menu.
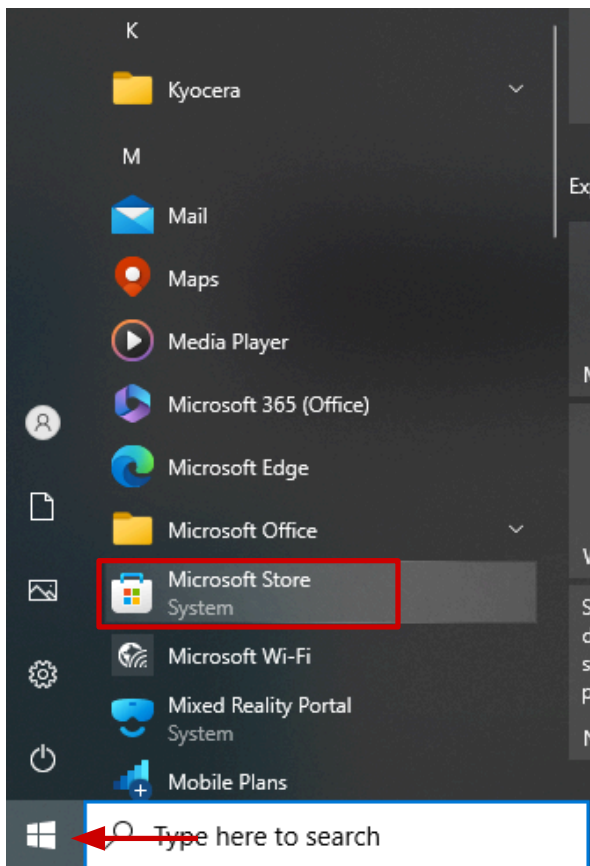
2. Type **Thunderbird** in the search box to quickly find Mozilla Thunderbird Email.

3. Click on **Mozilla Thunderbird Email,** then click the **Get** button to install Thunderbird.

4. Once installed, skip to the Setup Thunderbird section in this document to create an account.
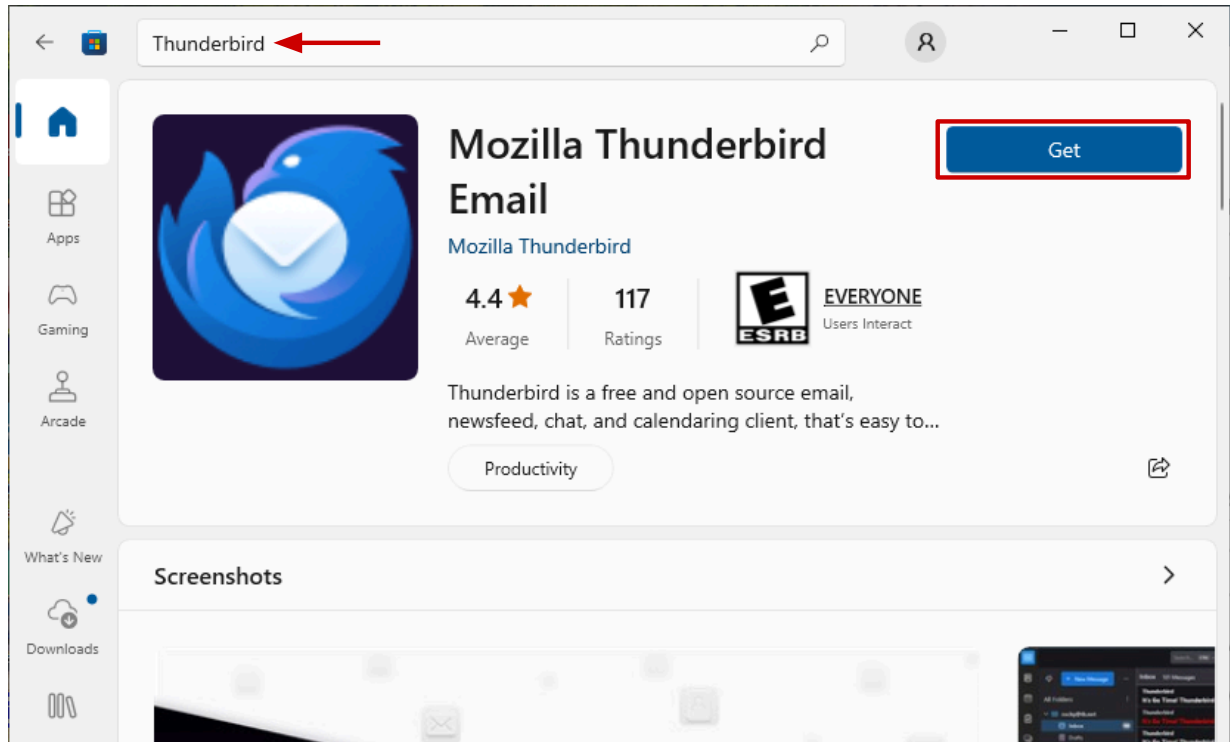
Install Thunderbird (Kandji - macOS)

1. Open the **Kandji self-service** software hub from the menu bar.
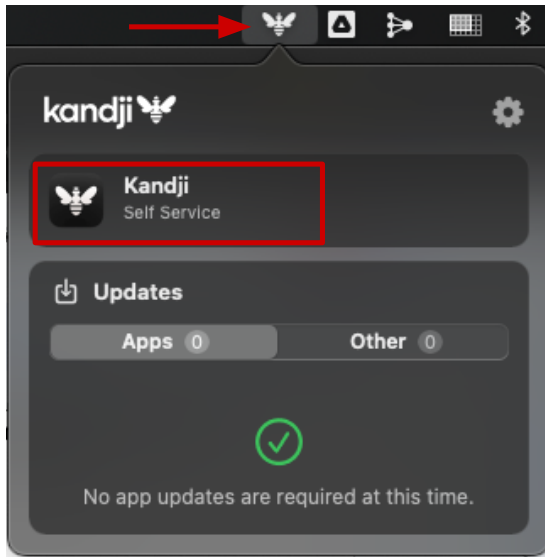
2. Type **Thunderbird** in the search box, then click the **Install** button to start installing Thunderbird.

3. Once installed, skip to the Setup Thunderbird section in this document to create an account.
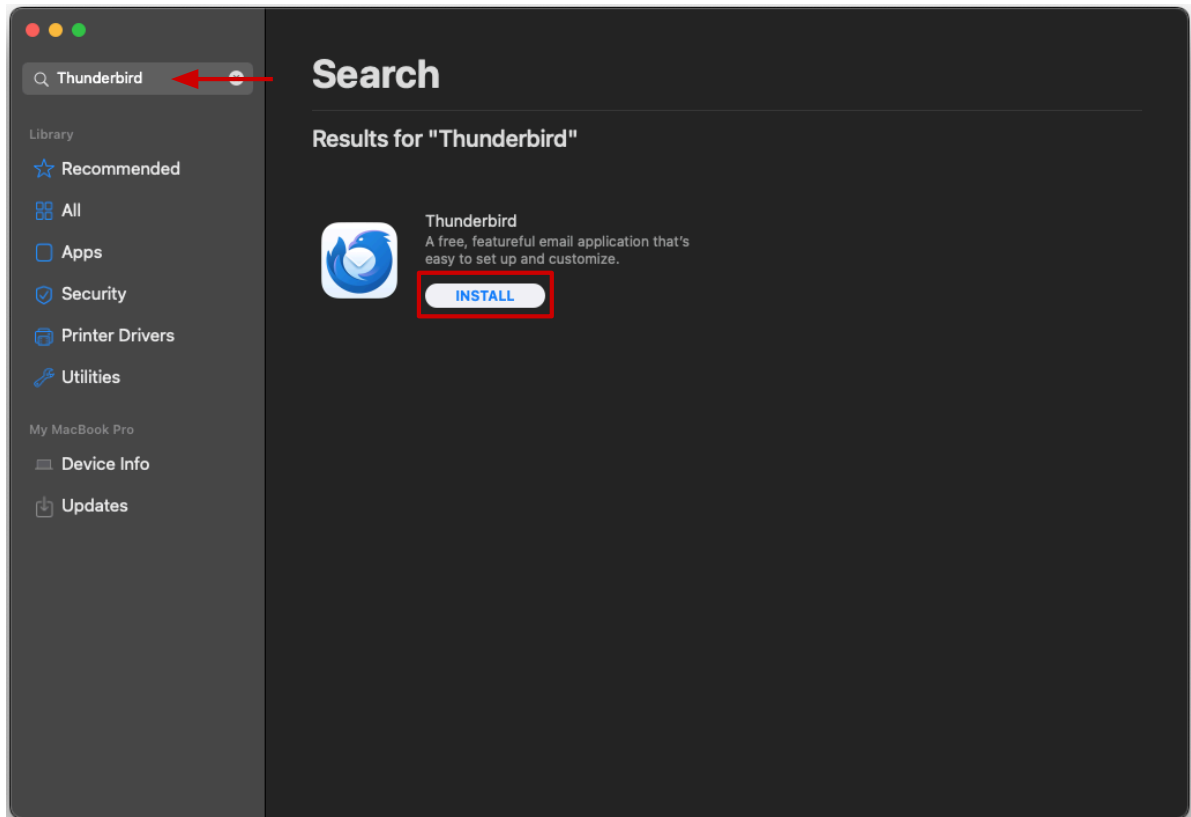
Install Thunderbird (Direct Download)

1. Visit the Thunderbird download page: https://www.thunderbird.net/en-US/. Note that administrative credentials are required to install using this method. If you do not have an administrator account, use the previous options (Microsoft store or Kandji).

2. Click the **Download** button to start downloading Thunderbird.

3. Once the download finishes, open the **Thunderbird Setup file** (typically in the Downloads folder) to start the **Setup Wizard**.

4. Click Next on the **Setup Wizard** window, then click Next on the **Setup Type** window with **Standard** selected.
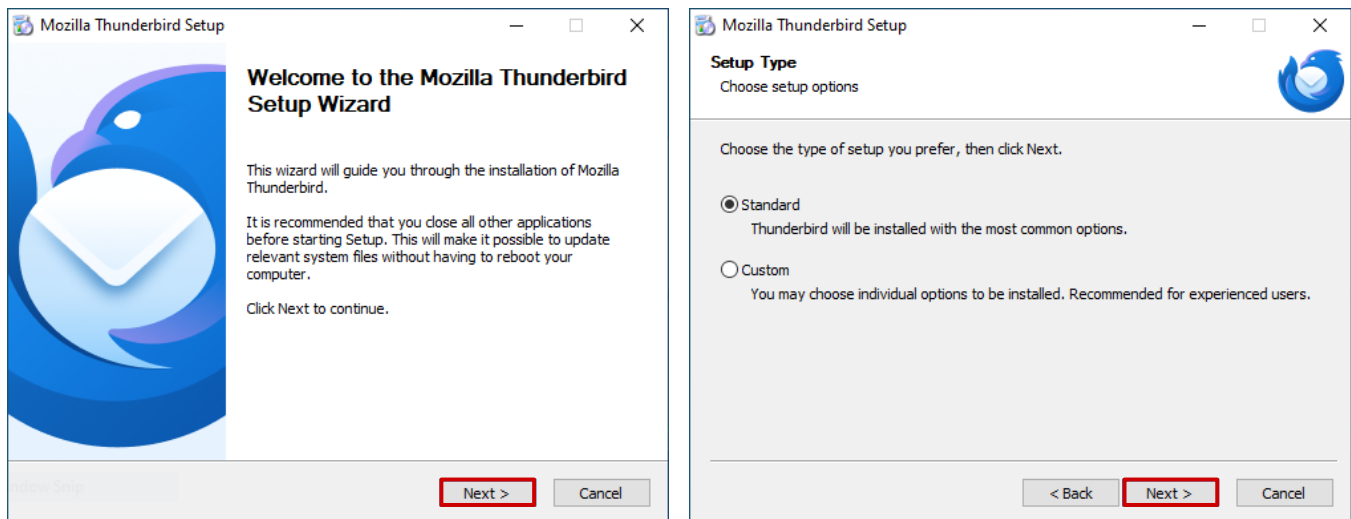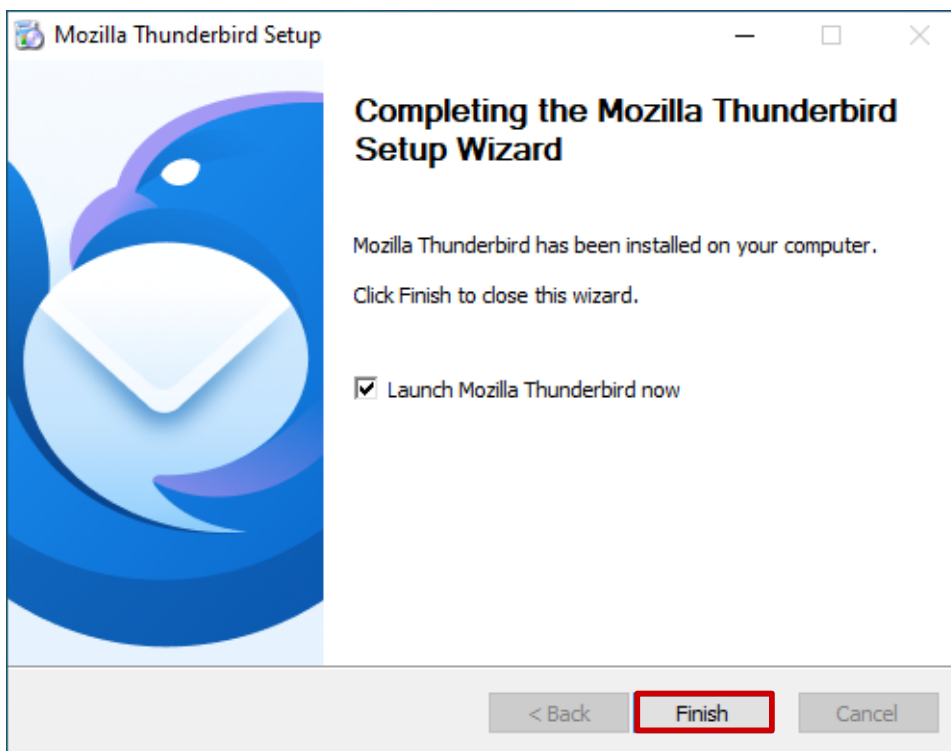
5. On the **Summary** window, uncheck the **Use Thunderbird as my default mail application** box, then click Install.
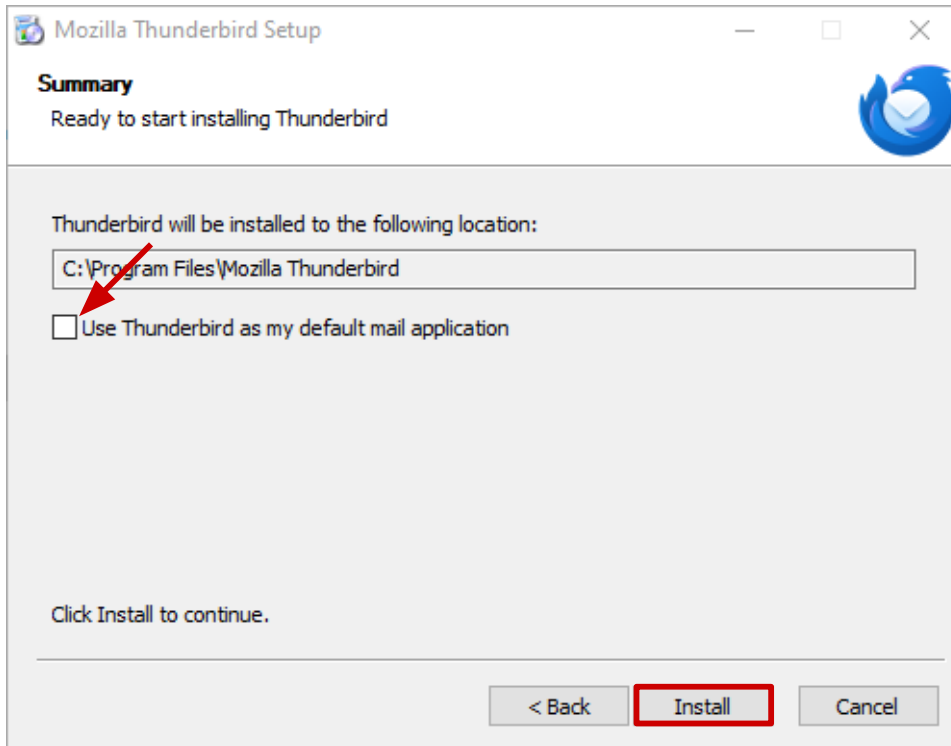
6. Once the installation is complete, click finish to launch Thunderbird.

Setup Thunderbird

The account setup tab will open the first time Thunderbird is launched. It is recommended that you configure Thunderbird with mock account information since it will only be used to view email archives.

1. Type in the following mock information:

   Your full name: **View Only**
   Email address: **view@only**
   Password: **leave it blank**

2. Uncheck the Remember password box, then click the Configure manually link to proceed.

3. Next, scroll to the bottom of the window then click the Advanced config link.

4. The Confirm Advance Configuration window will appear. Click Ok to finish the account creation process.
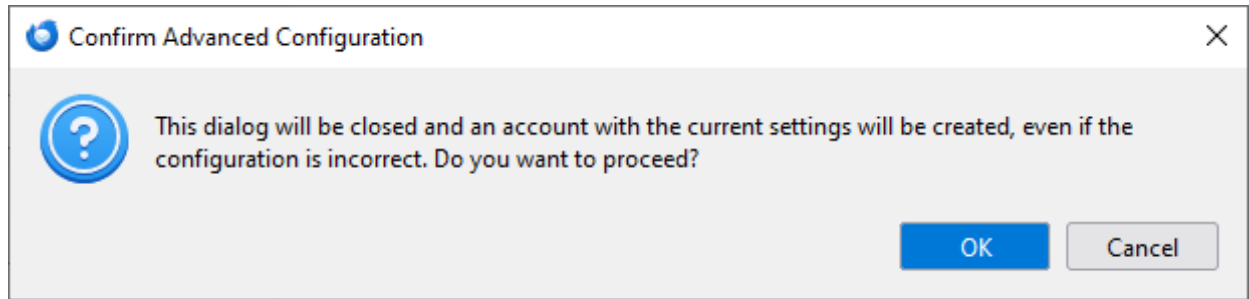
5. If you are asked to enter a password, click Cancel. In the Account settings, uncheck the **Check for new messages** option to reduce the frequency of this request, which is usually every 10 minutes.

6. If you are asked to Confirm Security Exception, click Cancel.

Install the ImportExportTools NG Extension in Thunderbird
The ImportExportTools NG add-on will help you easily import the MBOX files and convert it into a folder containing email messages and attachments.

Start downloading the ImportExportTools add-on from within Thunderbird:
1. Click on the hamburger menu (3 lines at the top) and select **Add-ons and Themes**.
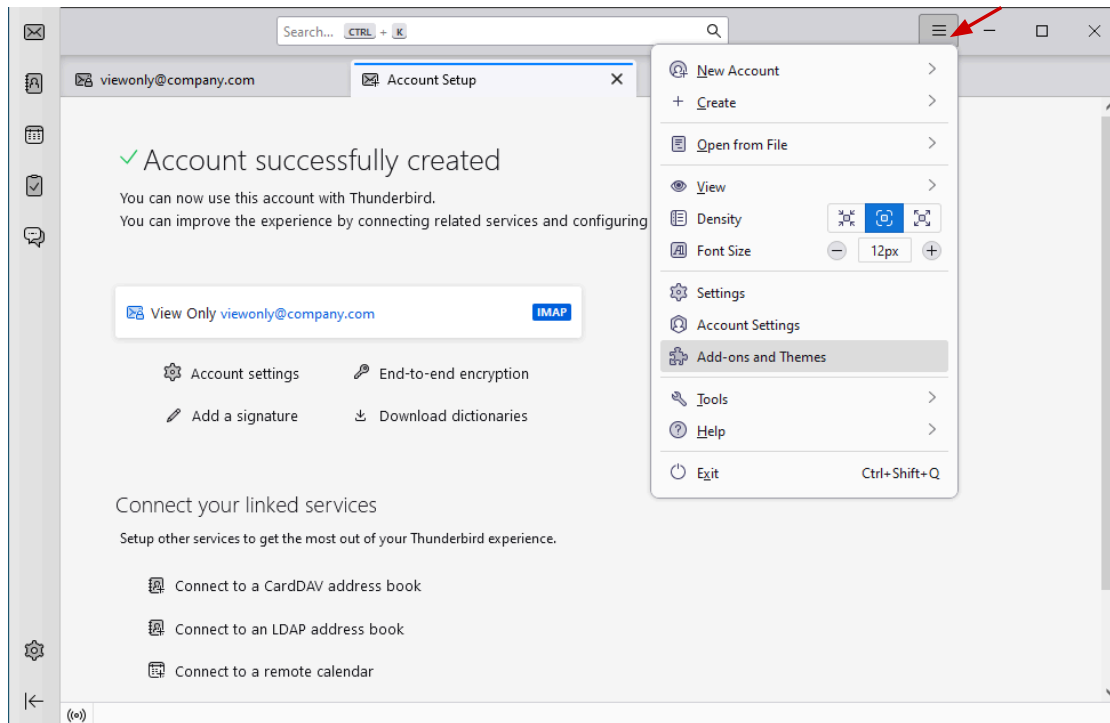
2. Type **mbox** in the **Find more add-ons** search box and press the **enter key**.
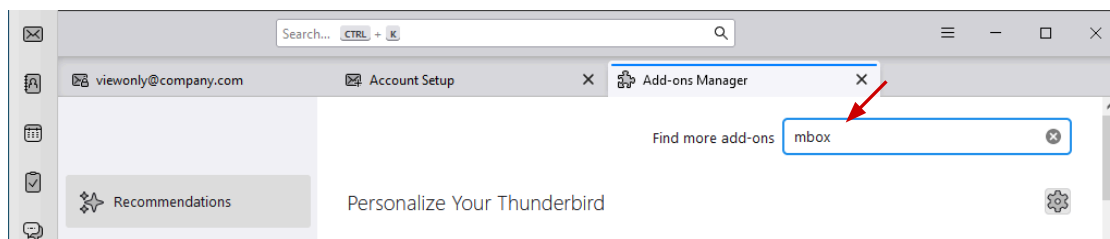
3. From the results window, click the Add to Thunderbird button next to **ImportExportTools NG**.

4. Click **Add** in the pop-up window, then click **OK**.

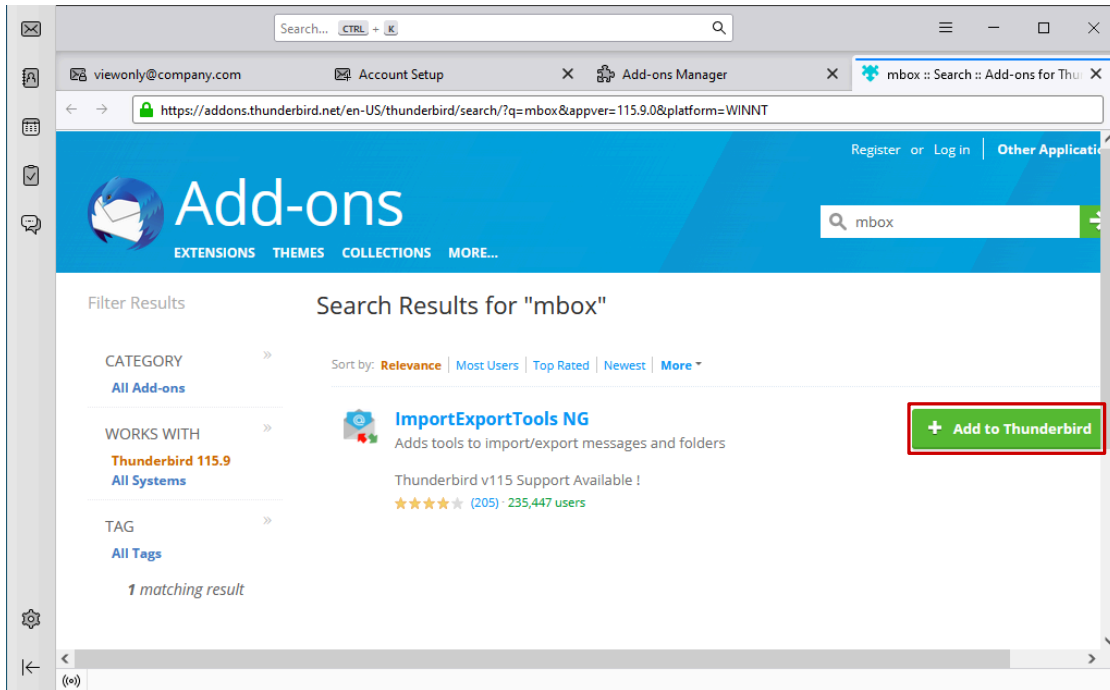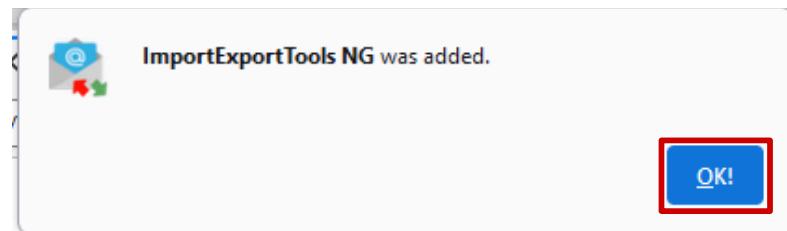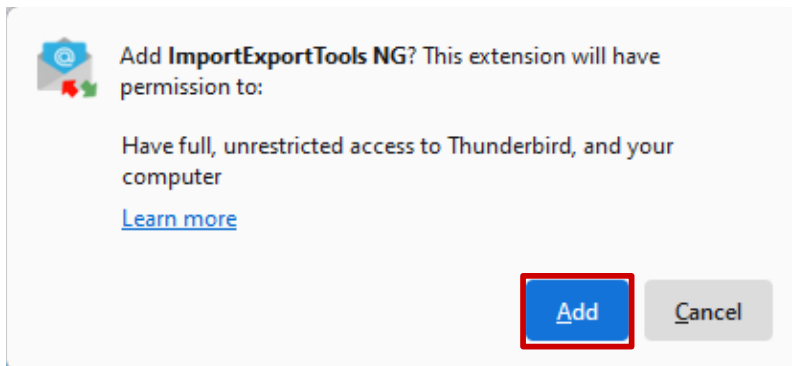**Import an MBOX file to view an email archive in Thunderbird**

1. Click on the Email button to select the email window.

2. Right-click on Local Folders from the left navigation to open the pop-up menu; the **2020 Email Archive** mbox file will be added there.

3. On the pop-up menu, select **ImportExportTools NG,** then select the Import mbox file and click **Individual mbox Files**.
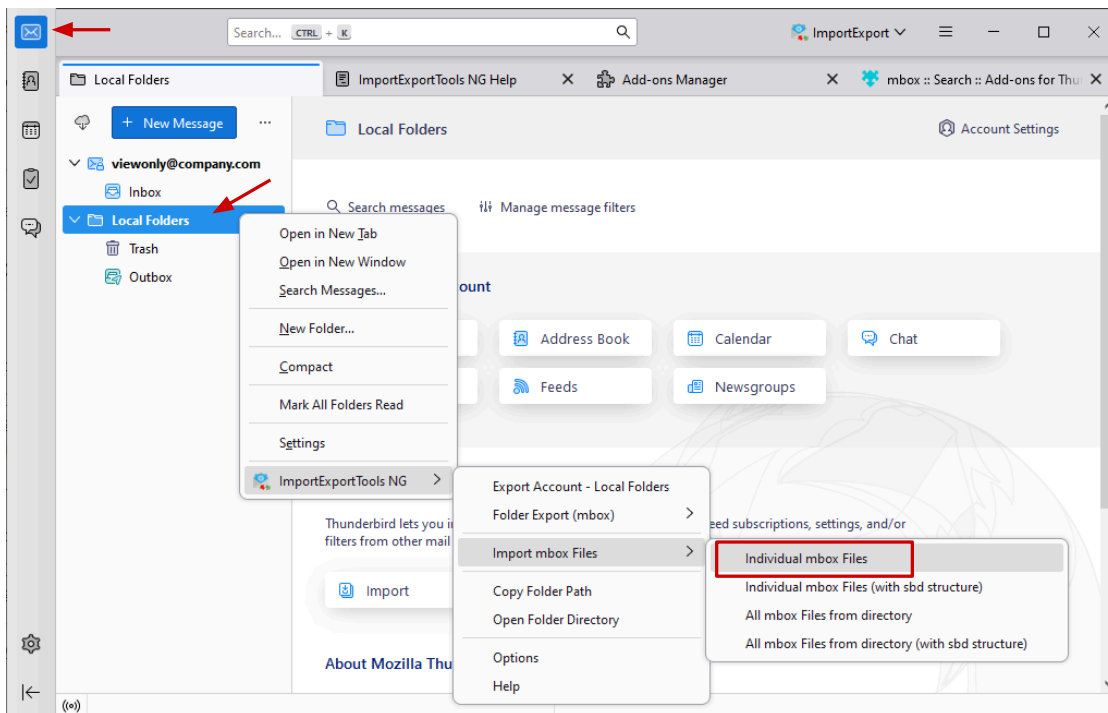
4. Navigate to the folder with the mbox file, select the required mbox file (e.g. **2020 Email Archive.mbox**) and click **Open**. The mbox archive will appear as a folder under the Local Folders with the imported messages.
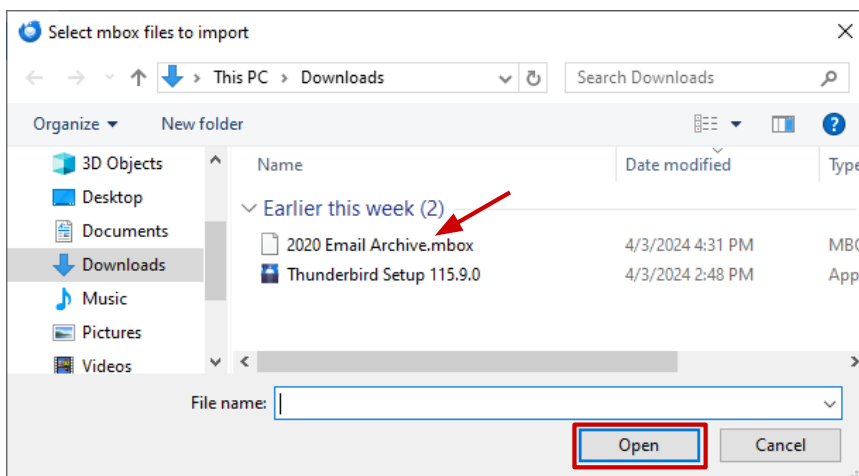
Additional Resources

Finding emails in Gmail
Search in Gmail
Using Gmail search operators

Common Gmail search operators

What you can search by	Search operator & example
Specify the sender	**from:** Example: **from:amy** *Narrow further by adding the email address* *Example: to:amy@company.com*
Specify a recipient	**to:** Example: **to:david**
Specify a recipient who received a copy	**cc:** **bcc:** Example: **cc:david**
Words in the subject line	**subject:** Example: **subject:dinner**
Messages that match multiple terms	**OR** Example: **from:amy OR from:david**
Remove messages from your results	**-** Example: **dinner -movie**
Messages that have a certain label	**label:** Example: **label:friends**
Messages that have an attachment	**has:attachment** Example: **has:attachment**
Search for messages sent during a certain time period	**after:** **before:** Example: **after:2004/04/01** Example: **before:2004/04/31**
Search for an exact word or phrase	**" "** Example: **"dinner and movie tonight"**
Messages in any folder, including Spam and Trash	**in:anywhere** Example: **in:anywhere movie**

Getting help for Thunderbird
Thunderbird help website
Find emails with the Quick Filter