



What it does

With new switchers coming to the Mac every day, it struck me that there was one rather important file format that can only be opened by Windows. That's right. Outlook. So, if you're stuck with a stack of .msg mail files that you don't know what to do with, MailRaider could be the answer to your prayers. Sure, it isn't perfect (you'll most likely lose the pretty formatting of the e-mail) but it's perfect enough to retrieve the text and also any attachments that the mail might contain.

Installing MailRaider

Double click on MailRaider Installer package, and follow the instructions contained within. You will be prompted to enter an administrator username and password - if you don't then you can't install MailRaider.

Why Authenticate?

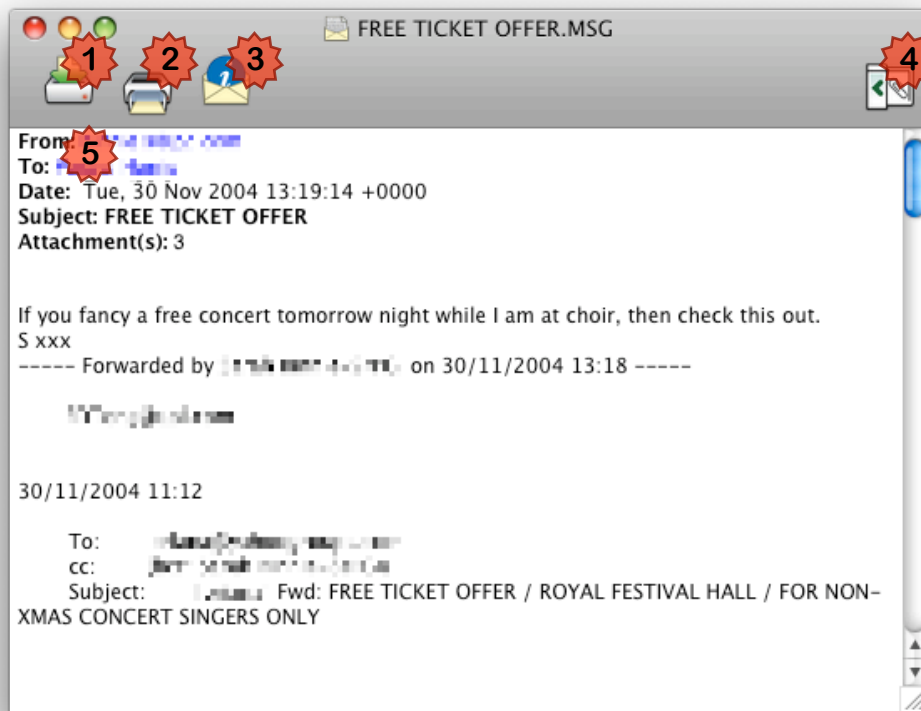
Ordinarily, I'd advise you to steer clear of any little app which requires your username and password. After all, MailRaider only needs to open Outlook files, right? Right. But, strictly speaking, it isn't MailRaider that requires authentication. MailRaider relies on a framework called MOLE. MOLE needs to be installed in your /Library/Frameworks and, in order to be installed there, authentication may be required. If you want to learn more about MOLE, read on to the end of this document.

If MailRaider is already installed then rerunning the installer will update the currently installed version.

How to use it

MailRaider works as any other Mac application does. You launch it by double clicking on the application icon, or by double clicking on a supported document - which, in MailRaider's case means an .msg file generated by Microsoft Outlook for Windows. If you launch it by double clicking on the application (stopping to admire the rather attractive icon) then you will need to open the .msg file by selecting the 'File → Open...' or 'File → Open Recent' menu item.

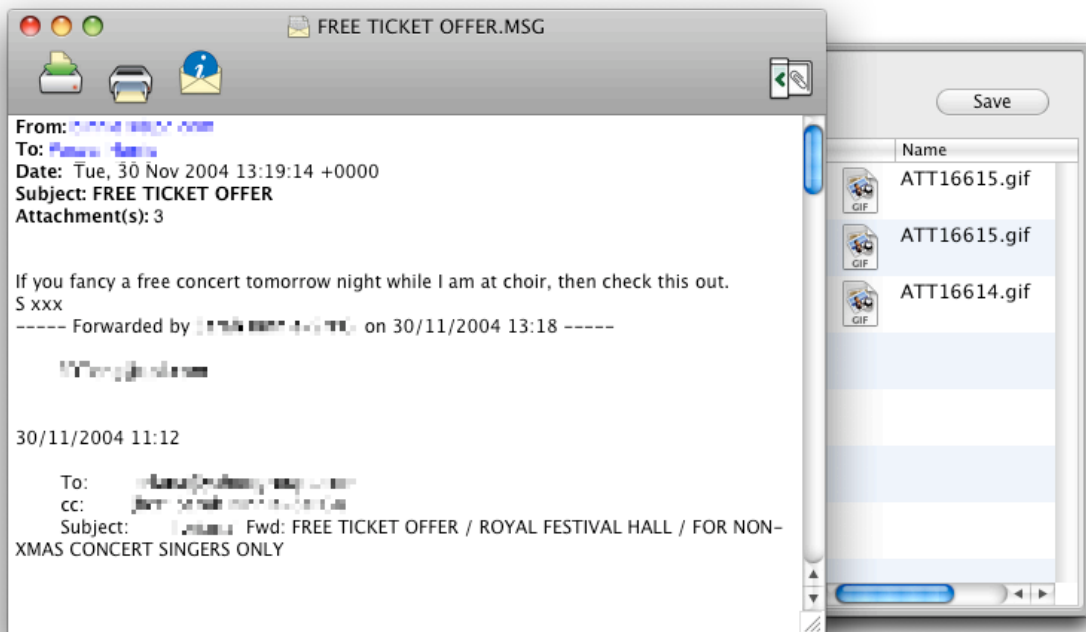
Once opened, MailRaider will display the contents of a Microsoft Outlook file rather like this:



Let's take a quick tour of this window.

- 1 Save Text Clicking this button will save the email. You have two options here:
 - ★ You can choose to save the text content of the e-mail as an RTF document which can be opened by most text editors.
 - ★ You can also save the entire content of the e-mail, including the attachments, as .EML - which you can then open and reply to in Apple Mail (or virtually any other e-mail client that you choose to use).You can, of course, also save by selecting 'Save As...' from the File menu.
- 2 Print Clicking this button will print the text content of the e-mail. You can also print by selecting 'Print...' from the File menu.
- 3 Show Header This option will display the meta-data buried in the e-mail. So if you have a hankering to see how the mail got routed, this is your best friend. If you find yourself wanting to do this on a regular basis you probably need all the friends you can get!
- 4 Show Attachments If your e-mail has any attachments then you can display a list by clicking the Show Attachments drawer button. If your email has no attachments then this button will not be visible. More on this in a little while.
- 5 Email Text The top part of the screen shows a brief summary of the e-mail, who it's from, who it was sent to, the subject and the number of attachments that the e-mail has. The actual message content of the e-mail follows this.

Clicking button 4, the Show Attachments button, opens the attachments drawer. The e-mail in this example has three attachments - but the drawer can hold as many attachments as your e-mail contains. Hm. Does anyone else think that the last sentence might be just the temptation that some people need to break MailRaider?



The save button in the attachments drawer saves the attachment to the location of your choice. If you select only one attachment before clicking the save button then you may rename the file before saving it. Multiple attachments can be selected for saving in one go, in this case though you can only choose a location to save to - you cannot also rename the files. Of course, you can also just drag the file out of MailRaider to the location of your choice.

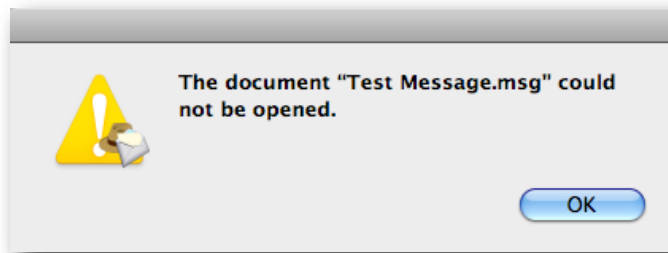
Updating MailRaider

Thanks to the incredibly useful and clever Sparkle Framework by Andy Matuschak, MailRaider can update itself automatically. There is no need for you to check for updates - MailRaider will do this for you. If you do want to check manually, just click 'Check for Updates...' in the MailRaider menu.

And if you prefer to download the full installer you can, of course, still do this.

FAQ

- 1 *I tried to open a .msg file but MailRaider just displayed an error - what's gone wrong?*



Sadly, there are many other programs out there which use the .msg file extension. If your .msg file wasn't written by Microsoft Outlook then MailRaider won't be able to read it. If you're able to open the content in an editor like TextEdit then it may be that the file will open happily in Apple Mail if you just change the extension to .eml.

- 2 *When I saved an Outlook .msg file using MailRaider, it changed the file format to .rtf. Why?*

MailRaider is a converter - not an editor. When MailRaider saves a file, it converts it into a format that everyone can read - RTF. So this is correct, and expected, behaviour.

- 3 *MailRaider opened my message - but there doesn't seem to be anything there!*

It's possible that there genuinely isn't anything in the mail. Maybe, for example, the mail contains text - it just contains an attachment which is itself a mail message. If this is the case then MailRaider probably won't open it correctly because of a bug in MOLE. I know. I need to fix that!

About MOLE

Trust me. If you're not a programmer you really don't need to read this bit. Seriously. It confuses the hell out of me.

When I started to work out the Microsoft Outlook .msg file format I discovered that it used OLE as a 'wrapper'. Given that OLE is a bit of a nasty beast, I hunted around for a general purpose OLE framework which I could use as the engine for MailRaider. Unfortunately, it turned out that there was no such thing. So I started to write my engine right in to MailRaider.

Once the engine was finished (with, it must be admitted, a good deal of help from the OpenOffice documentation - standing on the shoulders of giants and all that), it occurred to me that I was about to continue propagating a problem. After all, there are lots of private OLE readers for Mac OS X. Microsoft Office has one. iWork has one. OmniGraffle and OmniPlan have one. But nobody is sharing. So I split MOLE out from MailRaider and turned it into a framework. MOLE can't write yet, because MailRaider doesn't need to be able to write OLE formatted files. But it's dead good at reading them - and I'll teach it to write later.

So there you have it MOLE is a general purpose, and documented OLE reading framework for Mac OS X. And, if you're writing an application for Mac OS X which needs to be able to read OLE files, you might want to give it a whirl. MOLE is free for you to use, but there are a few minor caveats - especially if you're planning to charge for software which uses it, so make sure you read the license carefully. The documentation is also free, and you're welcome to use the sample code in almost any manner that you might wish.

Conditions of use

This software has been tested on two MacBooks, two PowerMacs, and an Intel iMac. It's hardly representative of the Mac community at large - which is why I need your help. Naturally, I hope that this software will be useful to you - which is why I didn't release it until the basic functionality was completed - but it may be that some small bugs have escaped detection. You may use this software freely on the condition that:

1. If you discover a bug, other than one documented here, you send me an e-mail documenting exactly what happened and the impact (screen-shot, console output etc. to be included if relevant).
2. If you think of useful missing functionality, other than functionality documented here, you send me an e-mail describing the function and exactly how you think it should work.
3. You understand that you use this software at your own risk. I believe that there are no serious bugs in this program, but I don't guarantee that there aren't any. I do promise that I will fix any serious bugs that you find - or withdraw this software in the event of a real show-stopper.

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Document History

- 21 June 2009 First version
- 23 July 2009 Update to accompany version 0.2.0, update to add a FAQ.
- 7 August 2009 Version history updated for Version 0.3.0 / 0.3.1. Sorry, you'll have to explore the new goodness yourself to find out what's changed. There'll be a new update soon - and, with that, new documentation.
- 23 Aug 2009 Updates for version 0.4.1. Quite a few changes!

Version History

- 3 July 2009 Version 0.1 First public release for testing
- 11 July 2009 Version 0.1.1 Bug fix to allow inline attachments to be read, improvements to memory allocation.
- 14 July 2009 Version 0.1.2 Bug fix to allow MailRaider to read older Outlook formats. More improvements to memory allocation.
- 23 July 2009 Version 0.2.0 Bug fix to make text editor field read only (MailRaider is a viewer and converter, not an editor), and to correct the code which sorts whether the mail being read is ASCII or Unicode formatted.
- 7 Aug 2009 Version 0.3.0 / 0.3.1 Update to ensure that the Sparkle framework is working correctly (it is - and this explains the two version numbers for otherwise identical software!). New functionality has been added to:
1. Add a timestamp to the e-mail.
 2. Add a view header option.
 3. Correct the URL creation code so that a new email can be generated by clicking on the senders e-mail address.
- 23 Aug 2009 Version 0.4.1 In a fit of enthusiasm I added more updates that I can reliably remember. Let me see now...
1. Help has been added. It's rudimentary, I admit, but it's a start.
 2. I reworked the UI. The old one was ugly and the icons were merely placeholders. I got around to making real icons. Ones that I like.
 3. Some support has been added for calendar entries. At the moment they don't decode into calendar entries - they just look like funny e-mail
 4. MailRaider checks for unsupported file types rather more carefully now. Which should mean that it no longer appears to do nothing.
 5. There were a few more improvements to memory usage.
 6. Ah yes! I added the option to convert mails to .eml as well as to .rtf.
- There were probably some other changes too. But I forget what they might have been.
- 23 Dec 2009 Version 0.4.6 Added error checking to handle the condition where .msg files have been attached to .msg files. This results in a hierarchy too deep for MOLE to follow (must fix that) and it caused MailRaider to ditch the message entirely. Now, at least, MailRaider will try to load the message and ignore only the attachment.
- The downside? Well, I had to fix MOLE too (up to a point). If you updated using 'Check for Updates' you'll be running an up-to-date MailRaider with an out-of-date MOLE. Not that that should cause you any problems at the moment.