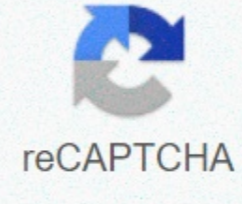




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Image: Brendan Hessel isn't a stretch to assume you might be using Gmail—it seems that most of the world does, today. That reality has created a conternation on some recent privacy and security-related changes to Gmail and Google Chrome. This is not a sudden pivot. Over the years, Gmail and Chrome have changed from what has ever been some of the most flexible and open internet tools out there, to something closer—and, in some cases, less secure. These privacy concerns are part of an era of deeper data security risks than just Google, and for some, it's a question of privacy from various government agencies. However, creepy and concerned because the government has access to our data possible, most people are not on the NSA's radar. And if they are, no matter what email service you use. On the other hand, the real threat to the privacy of most people is private businesses and entities that want to buy, sell, and mine your data. Let's throw away random examples: say, maybe Google data mines your inbox so it can advertise you better, for instance? We don't blame you if you want to put that stop off, so let's take a look at the best Gmail alternatives currently available. Is Gmail really bad? To be fair, although this post is anti-Google by nature (insofar as we try to change its proprietary email service for something else), there's still plenty of merit to use Gmail and other Google services—these posts, in fact, are largely enacted in Google Docs. The point here is not necessarily to spell doom and glory about Google or its privacy practices, but to provide a viable alternative that can solve some of Gmail's overall shortcomings. In the following section, you'll find a paid and free alternative that includes everything from enhanced security features to in-depth customization tools for private users and businesses. G/O Media may get commission. The real threat to the privacy of most people is a private business and entity that wants to buy, sell, and mine your data. Paid Alternative Why pay an alternative to something free? Well, because these email services do as much as possible, if not more, as Gmail does, but without ad support and with stronger privacy defenses. Plus, you won't spend more than an average of \$5 or \$6 a month through most of these services. If you're after an upgraded email solution, sacrificing a cup of coffee every month may be worth it. Head used for most of the services here: If the email client you're interested in doesn't track your data, it doesn't save your password, either. Make sure you keep those written somewhere safe, and if necessary, set up a redundancy account in case. Kolab Now Screenshot: Kolab-based company Now This Switzerland is probably the most attractive and competitive alternative to Gmail. Gmail available (and Microsoft Office Suite, for that matter). Users will gain access to not only email services, but the entire package of ad-free online applications such as calendars, file editors and more, which can be synced with all your devices and is collaboratively accessed as in Google Docs. Any privacy concerns you have with Gmail are moots with Kolab Now. Not only does Kolab Now keep your data and files safe from business prying points, but email servers are also hosted in Switzerland, a country with very strict data privacy laws. This service only stores your debug report log when necessary—otherwise it's entirely hands-off. Moreover, the whole thing is built on open source software. Two packages are available, an individual plan (about \$4.56 per month based on currency conversions) that includes all of the features mentioned above, and the Group's plan (about \$5.56 per user, per month) that adds custom domain support, admin tools, and support for up to 100 users on one plan. You can test either option with a 30-day free trial as well. The Proton Mail Proton Mail is another Swiss company, but it focuses solely on secure emails, rather than the software suites that Kolab Now provides. Users can fully register anonymously, all e-mail is completely end-to-end encrypted, and no IP information is tracked by the service—and because it's hosted in Switzerland, your e-mail server is off limits. In addition to web-based customers, there is also a Proton Mail app available for Android on iOS, and all are built from open source programs and have the same iron-clad security and encryption. Users can sign up for a free account, which provides up to 500MB of storage for a single user, but charges a daily limit of 150 messages and tech support collected. However, paid options are far more attractive: Plus: \$5 per month, or \$48 a year. Includes single user support, 5 addresses, 5GB of storage, up to 1000 messages per day, email files, and autoresponder features, as well as better tech support. Professional: \$8 per month, or \$75 a year. Supports up to 5000 users, 5 addresses per user, 5GB of each user, unlimited messages and folders, as well as priority technical support. Visionaries: \$30 per month or \$288 a year. Only support a maximum of 6 users, 50 addresses, and 20GB of storage volume, but added ProtonVPN access, plus all features from a professional level. You can also choose additional storage, addresses, and domains at additional monthly prices. FastMail Screenshot: Fast Mail FastMail is a very popular, and possibly email service first you'll see mentioned if you're looking for a serious paid alternative to Gmail. The service provides full mobile synchronization for push notifications and contacts, plus direct technology support on each subscription package, which costs as follows: Basic: \$3 per month or \$30 per year, per user. Standard: \$5 per month \$50 per year, per user. Professional: \$9 per month or \$90 per year, per user. A 30-day trial exists, but only for Standard options, and only covers a maximum of five users. The Basic Package gives you 2GB of storage per user, while Standard and Professional offer 25GB and 100GB. Professional clients will also get unlimited archive space and data retention. One thing to keep in mind is that \$5 and \$9-level customers can use their own domain address, while \$3 users can only use the Freemail address. The company sends @freemail address details if it's no longer in use—so if you cancel your freemail account, it's possible that others can wind up with it. While it is not possible, this presents potential privacy concerns, so if you can use your own domain, we recommend doing so. Regardless of the package you choose, Quick Mail doesn't track any of your data, and doesn't use ads. Temporary Tutanota some of the options here include business options, and in some cases tailored specifically to them. Tutanota is primarily for smaller individuals or groups, and the price reflects this. Users start by creating a free account, which includes 1GB mailbox storage and a Tutanota domain address. From there, you can upgrade your account to either premium (about \$1.20 to \$1.40 per month) or Pro (about \$5.88 to \$7.06 per month) of accounts, plus the ability to further customize your subscription with expandable storage and more email aliases. Aside from the price flexibility, the main draw here is security. Like the Proton Mail, Tutanota provides end-to-end encryption on your email. It hosts your email in Germany, which benefits from stricter EU data laws than what we have in the United States. Zoho Mail Screenshot: Mail Zoho Mail Zoho is primarily built around business needs, rather than individuals (although email accounts only are available for individuals). Thus, the \$3 monthly Standard Zoho Workplace package includes multi-account access to the Zoho Office Suite for all customers, which provides editing apps for documents, spreadsheets, and slideshows, password protected sharing, cloud drive storage, and Zoho Cliq live messaging apps. \$8 per month Professional Stage matches the deal with three other applications: Zoho meeting for video conferment, Zoho Connect for task management (such as Trello or Asana), and Zoho ShowTime remote meeting software. There is a free E-mail account available as well, which supports up to five users limiting users to a single domain address, a 25MB limit for attachment size, storage per user, and only accessible via a web client. Microsoft Exchange Online Yeah, we know — switching from Gmail to Microsoft is not a lot of changes, but in terms of software packages, data and analysis, and overall power, Microsoft Server Exchange is a definite competitor. You will be out \$12.50 a each user, but you'll get the entire Microsoft Office and Services Suite in addition to the e-mail service. Business-only class email options are available too—a \$4 monthly subscription provides 50GB of mailbox storage per user, while paying \$8 monthly will take you 100GB per user. A free alternative When it comes down to free email options, some can match Gmail in terms of feature breeding, flexibility, and ubiquity. However, instead of jumping ship to something like Yahoo, we would recommend looking into the free packages available from some of the companies above, in particular Tutanota, The Proton Mail, and Zoho Mail. The only other free options we recommend are iCloud. Apple has a more user-friendly privacy policy when it comes to data collection. It is also available on almost every iOS and Apple device and provides many of the same functions as other Google Drive services. If you want to go all out and change the platform completely, going from Google Drive to iCloud isn't a bad idea. It won't give you the same level of flexibility or privacy as some deluxe Swiss options, but it's a viable alternative however. Screenshot: Apple Otherwise, what's left is someone else of the email world: AOL, Yahoo, Outlook, AOL, Mail.com, GMX, Yandex, etc. These options are ad-backed, hosted in the United States, Russia, or other countries with more lenient data privacy laws, and are mostly owned by larger companies with their own potential skeezy tracking practices. So yes, AOL, Outlook, and Yahoo can technically be a viable free alternative to Gmail in the most basic sense, but it would be absurd to say that they don't come up with their own primary red flag—Yahoo, for example, as if having a rocky track record when it comes to keeping their users data safe from hackers. However, if you're more Gmail and just want something new, this will take you that for free. Hosting your own email server There is one of the last options to consider, and that's hosting your own email server. If you consider this option, you are a bold soul. Organizing an e-mail server can be a complicated and challenging project that requires at least an intermediate habit with the Linux operating system (in particular Ubuntu), server software, and PC hardware just the same. There is a service, called Mail-in-a-Box, which aims to make the process easier to set up and reduce some of the hardware requirements that run email servers self-indicuating. Screenshot: Mail-in-a-Box However, although mail-in-a-box streamlines many processes, the entire project still takes a few hours, and that doesn't include the time it takes to build the server's own computer. Additionally, if you decide to try Mail-in-a-box, pay attention to the project goals, as stated by the creators on the official page: Make usage a good mail server easy. Encouraging innovation, and privacy on the web. Have an automated, auditable, and idempotent system configuration. Doesn't make a server completely untenable, NSA-proof (but see our security practices). Doesn't make something that power users tailor. The last two are important, especially if they conflict with your ultimate goal behind running a private email server. There is technically a method for creating an email server approaching fort Knox digitally, but only seriously skilled users should try something like that. In fact, unless you come here looking for specific tips to set up your own personal email server, it's better to leave this one to a professional. Professional.

