

Welcome

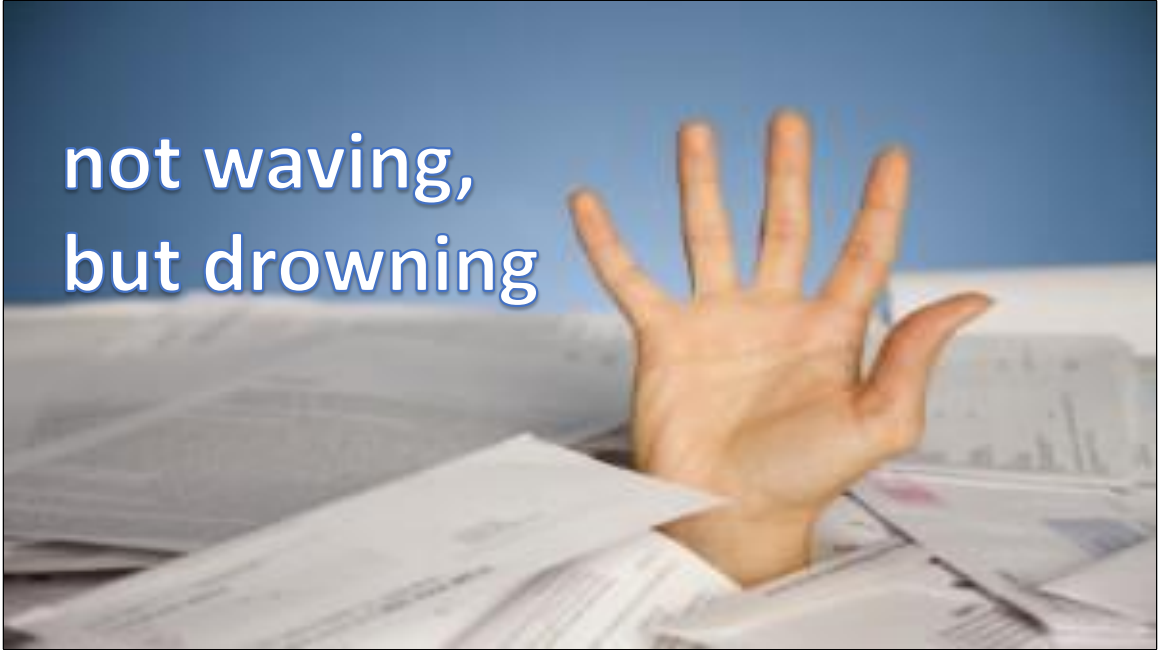
Remember to sign in

Introduce myself

Here to talk about managing email.

To start, I'd like to ask what brought you here today? Something like this?

not waving,
but drowning



How are you handling email?
How many emails in your inbox?
How many per day?
What's your experience?

This presentation might give you some ideas on how to get control of this.

I was always pretty good at email, though it may have been for the wrong reasons....

obsession

fear

pride

Dopamine hits

Terror that I'd miss something

I liked to tell people how cool I was to check my email obsessively.

The results of all this were predictable

feeling out of control
staying up too late
feeling overwhelmed
denying the problem
disappointing others

This last point was the tipping point, I the end.

Email served as my to do list; I'd scan my email to see what I needed to do.

Overwhelming, but I kept up.

Eudora/outlook = infinite scroll, so all I had to do stayed on the front page

Then came...



Front page has 100, not infinite.
Fell off the other end, like book on a shelf
Embarrassed = pain threshold / last straw.
Made me rethink.

Since I found Inbox Zero, I now work on three insights:



tool



tool



tool



not tool

1) Email is a tool. It's meant to serve me, not vice versa.

time and attention are limited



concept: joel spolsky

2) Our time and/or attention are like an empty box, with a specific amount of space. We have to fill that box with things—oddly shaped blocks—throughout the day. If we fill it with less important things (for example, email), we don't have room left for other things.

yes = no

3) When I say yes to one thing, I say no to an infinite number of other things

Yes to email at 11:30 pm = no to sleep (to bed later, maybe preoccupied with something I can't do anything about)

Yes to email at dinner = no to family

Yes to less useful email newsletters = no to students' (grading)

Yes email now = no to any number of things later, when energy is depleted

Inbox Zero

action-based email



Merlin Mann
Google Tech Talk

Merlin Mann: 43 folders ← David Allen, GTD
I've adapted this to my situation, but my version is informed by Mann's.

So what is inbox zero?

inbox zero is a system for
routinely processing
your inbox
to **zero**.

4 points to emphasize:

- 1) System: series of steps, algorithm, repeatable
- 2) Routine: regular (and limited) time – I'll be experimenting with 3 blocks @ ½ hour each
- 3) Processing: not= responding, necessarily; respond is one subset of 5 possibilities
- 4) Zero: don't take *too* seriously—but take it seriously. Don't want to replace email obsession with a zero obsession

can i **delete** this?

can i **file** this?

should i **delegate** this?

can i **do** this quickly?

should i **defer** this?

Ask these questions, in this order. When the answer is “yes,” do that thing and move on.

Delete (email newsletters no longer useful; bacn; book publishers)

File (info I may need later)

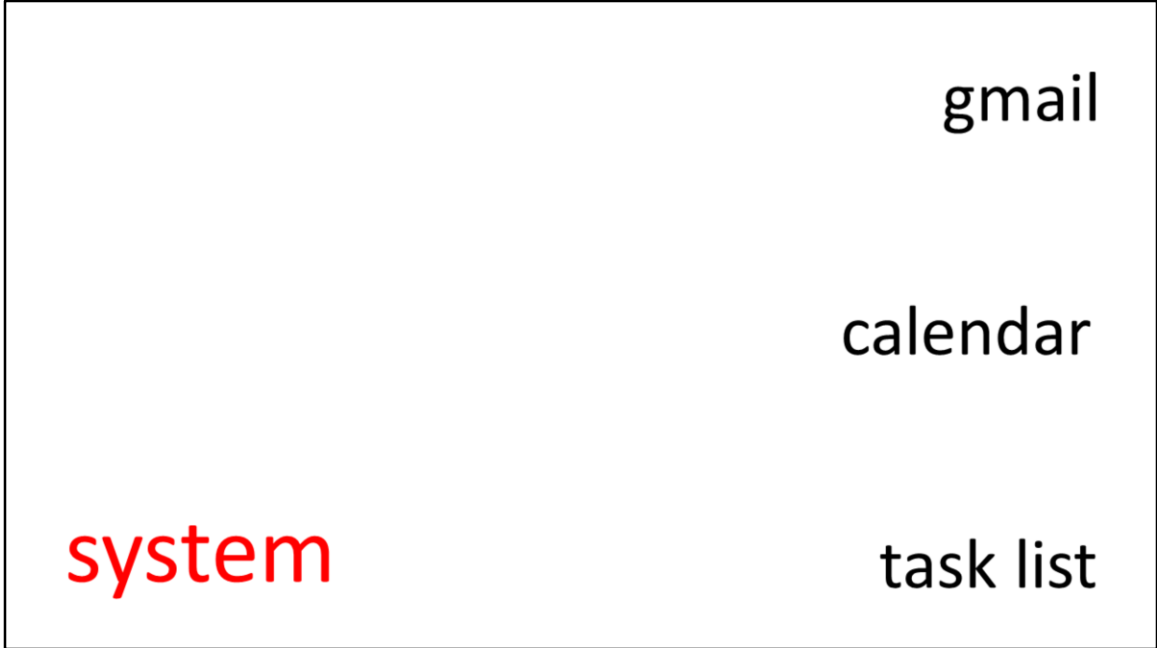
note: I archive (file) everything; I don't want to spend energy deciding between deleting and filing

Delegate

Do quickly = respond, do

Defer = get out of inbox and into larger system

NOTE: In can't defer, then of course you'd go on to do it.



I have a larger system, but this is the system as relates to email

3 components for my system

Gmail - inbox

Calendar – if “defer” is a meeting, etc., it goes here

Task list – if “defer” is an action it goes here AND IS TREATED LIKE ANYTHING ELSE I HAVE TO DO.

---email should not hijack the other things we’ve committed to.

tips
& tools

turn off notifications

unsubscribe

filter (rules)

limit folders

archive & search

Unsubscribe/filter = investment—spend time now to save time later

Limit folders: I use 3:

- a) Archive – pretty much everything goes here once it’s processed
- b) WFR – (“Waiting for Reply”) when I want to be doubly sure that I don’t drop the ball on something, I save the email here. Once a week I go through this. Insurance, more than anything.
- c) Project specific – these are temporary, for when I’ll need quick access to things. Example: students who want to add my online class. I save them in a folder so I can more easily see them and when they requested to get in. Once registration is completely set, I delete the folder.

RELY ON SEARCH. Even a search that struggles once in awhile is better than the accumulated time trying to sort things into folders.

templates
integrated calendar
& task list
tips sent from my iPhone
& tools five sentences

Canned messages (for Google; outlook.com might use “drafts”) for instructions, replies to common emails (for example, requests to get into class)

Outlook.com integrates email and calendar well. Google allows clicking on time/date in email and inserting into Google Calendar.

ToDoist has “Add” button allowing me to add an email directly to my task list

“Sent from my iPhone” (facetious, but people do it): put this in ALL signatures, as it excuses typos and shorter messages

<http://five.sentence.es> (also four, three, two) as signature explanation for brief responses.

commit
one fell swoop
little by little
get
started
email bankruptcy

How to start, especially if you're really far behind

Step 1: Commit *from now on*

Step 2: Clear out your current inbox. 3 options:

- a) Set aside a few hours and power through
- b) Decide on a number of days, divide the number of emails by that, then do that many per day (e.g., 5000 emails = 100 days @ 50/day)
- c) Email bankruptcy – archive it all and send a message announcing that if people need something to send it again.

inbox zero is **not** really
about an empty inbox

it's about resisting
the **tyranny** of the urgent

In the “Eisenhower Matrix” (made popular by Covey) we should focus on Important but not Urgent things (professional development, grading before it's late, prepping for class).

Email is Urgent and, often, not Important. Even if Important, it's not necessarily more important than other things on my plate.

System allows us to ignore the (contrived) urgency and place the email demands in the larger scheme. An urgent email **may** be important enough to displace other commitments, but it's not necessarily so.

Be intentional.

for resources, email me at
gkemble@yccd.edu

questions?