Apple iPhone with VoiceOver Creating and Managing Folders in the Mail App

This document introduces you to the concept of working with folders in the Mail app on an Apple iPhone, in conjunction with VoiceOver and iOS 14.8.

Why Use Folders?

As time goes by, you will accumulate a lot of email messages in your Inbox. Whilst this isn't a serious problem, it could make finding a particular message time consuming, as you will probably have to scroll through a long list in order to find it.

Think of your Inbox as your doormat underneath your letter box. As post arrives, you pick it up, check to see if it is important and do one of three things:

a) Throw it in the paper recycling box.
b) File it away for safe keeping.
c) Put it to one side and deal with its contents later in the week.

Ideally, any email messages that you no longer need should be deleted. Those which you want to refer to at a later date should be filed away in a folder, and those which you intend to deal with soon should be left in the Inbox. This way, you will find managing your email messages much easier!

Creating a New Folder

The Mail app allows you to create new folders. Apple refers to folders as Mailboxes. This can be a little confusing, as the word 'Mailbox' can also be used to refer to an email account. In this document, a Mailbox and Folder are the same thing. They are storage areas for mail messages.

To create a new folder, in conjunction with VoiceOver, follow these suggested steps:

1.   In the Mail app, ensure that focus is in the Mailboxes screen. To do this, activate the "Back" button, situated at the upper left corner of the screen, until VoiceOver announces "Mailboxes".

2.   Activate the "Edit" button, situated at the upper right corner of the Mailboxes screen. Upon doing this, you will be in 'edit mode', where you will be able to perform various editing actions.

3.   Locate and activate the "New Mailbox" button. For reference, this button can be found at the bottom right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, the New Mailbox screen will be displayed.

4.   In the New Mailbox screen, focus will be in a Text Field labelled Name. VoiceOver will announce "text field, is editing, name, character mode, insertion point at start". Essentially, this means you are ready to start typing.

5.   At the bottom of the screen, you will find a virtual keyboard. Use the keyboard to type the name you would like to use for your new folder. When you have done this, explore the screen upwards, until you've located the Name Text Field. You should find that the name you typed is now present in this field.

6.   Now, you need to specify where you'd like the new folder to appear. Perform a Next Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe to the Right, until VoiceOver says "button". For reference, this is situated immediately after the heading labelled "Mailbox Location".

7.   Perform a One Finger Double Tap to activate the button. Upon doing this, a list of all existing folders will be displayed. This list will start with the name of your email account. Beneath this, you will find all of the folders associated with the account.

8.   You now need to specify where in the list you want the new folder to appear. A new folder will be created directly beneath the folder you activate. So, explore the list and   activate the folder you want the new folder to appear beneath.

9.   Now locate and activate the "Save" button, situated at the upper right corner of the New Mailbox screen. Upon doing this, the new folder will be created and you will be returned to the Mailboxes screen, in 'edit' mode.

10.   Finally, locate and activate the "Done" button, situated at the upper right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Mailboxes screen.

To check that the new folder has been successfully created, first locate the item in the list associated with your email account. Be careful here, there are 2 of these. The first is a shortcut to the Inbox folder for the email account. The second item is the one you want. When you select this, VoiceOver will announce "button" after the name. Then, VoiceOver will announce the number of unread messages in that account, followed by either "Collapsed" or "Expanded". If VoiceOver says "Collapsed", perform a One Finger Double Tap to activate the item. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will announce "expanded" and all folders associated with the email account will be displayed. Explore the resulting list of folders. All being well, you should find the folder you created in the list!

Moving Messages to a Folder

Now that you have created a folder, let's go through the steps for moving a message into it.

1.   From the Mailboxes screen, locate and activate the first item in the list associated with your email account. This is the shortcut to your Inbox folder. To check this, explore towards the top of the screen. All being well, you should find a heading labelled "Inbox".

2.   Locate the message you wish to move to your newly created folder.

3.   Perform a One Finger Swipe Up until VoiceOver announces "More". Then, perform a One Finger Double Tap to activate it. Upon doing this, a list of options will be displayed.

4.   Locate and activate the option labelled "Move Message". Upon doing this, a screen titled "Move this message to a new mailbox" will be displayed. This screen contains all of the available folders you have in your email account.

5.   Locate and activate the folder you created earlier. Upon doing this, the message will be moved into that folder and focus will return to the Inbox folder.

Congratulations! You have successfully moved a message from the Inbox to a specific folder.

Renaming a Folder

Sometimes, you will need to rename a folder so that it more accurately reflects the information stored inside it. The Mail app allows you to do just this!

To rename an email folder, in conjunction with VoiceOver, follow these suggested steps:

1.   Ensure that focus is in the Mailboxes screen. Remember, to do this, activate the "Back" button, situated at the upper left corner of the screen, until VoiceOver announces "Mailboxes".

2.   Activate the "Edit" button, situated at the upper right corner of the Mailboxes screen. Upon doing this, you will be in 'edit mode', where you will be able to perform various editing actions.

3.   Locate and activate the folder you want to rename. Upon doing this, the "Edit Mailbox" screen will be displayed.

4.	In the Edit Mailbox screen, focus will be in a Text Field which contains the current name of the folder. VoiceOver doesn't announce anything, so to be sure, perform the Next Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe Right, followed by the Previous Item gesture, a One Finger Swipe Left. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will announce "text field, is editing, folder name, character mode, insertion point at end".

5.	At the bottom of the screen, you will find a virtual keyboard. Use the Delete key on the virtual keyboard to delete the existing name. Then, type the new name for the folder.

6.	Now locate and activate the "Save" button, situated at the upper right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, your folder will be renamed and you will be returned to the Mailboxes screen in 'edit mode'.

7.	Finally, locate and activate the "Done" button, situated at the upper right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Mailboxes screen.

 That's it, you have successfully renamed your folder. Explore the list of folders. You should find the newly renamed folder nestled nicely in the list!

Deleting a Folder

When a folder is no longer required, it is best to delete it. This will keep your folder structure nice and tidy.

To delete a folder, in conjunction with VoiceOver, follow these suggested steps:

1.	Ensure that focus is in the Mailboxes screen. Remember, to do this, activate the "Back" button, situated at the upper left corner of the screen, until VoiceOver announces "Mailboxes".

2.	Activate the "Edit" button, situated at the upper right corner of the Mailboxes screen. Upon doing this, you will be in 'edit mode'.

3.	Locate and activate the folder you want to delete. Upon doing this, the "Edit Mailbox" screen will be displayed.

4.	In the Edit Mailbox screen, focus will be in a Text Field which contains the current name of the folder. VoiceOver doesn't announce anything, so to be sure, perform the Next Item gesture, followed by the Previous Item gesture. Upon doing this, VoiceOver will announce the name of the folder.

5.	Perform the Next Item gesture until you have selected the "Delete Mailbox" button. Then, perform a One Finger Double Tap to activate it. Upon doing

this, a message will be displayed which informs you that deleting the mailbox will result in all messages in that mailbox being deleted from your email account.

6.   Locate and activate the "Delete" button. Upon doing this, the folder will be removed and focus will return to the Mailboxes screen in 'edit mode'.

7.   Finally, locate and activate the "Done" button, situated at the upper right corner of the screen. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Mailboxes screen.

Congratulations, you have successfully deleted a folder.

This is the end of the introduction to working with folders in the native Mail app, found on the Apple iPhone.

If you require more information regarding the Mail app, in conjunction with VoiceOver, please contact the author, Gary Eady, using the following email address:

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