

Outlook 365 with JAWS

Customising the Inbox Folder



Each folder in Outlook 365 can be customised to meet your specific requirements. As the Inbox folder is probably the most used folder in Outlook, you will probably want to make it as easy as possible to navigate with JAWS. In order to do this, you may wish to turn off some of the features that Outlook turns on by default. These may include the Folder Pane, the Reading Pane and the Show In Groups options. It is recommended to turn off these options, as they don't really help a JAWS user but they do have an impact on the overall performance of JAWS itself!

Turning off the Folder Pane

The first option which you may want to turn off is the Folder Pane. This is a window which sits at the left edge of your Inbox folder and contains a list of all of your folders. Whilst the Folder Pane does not actually stop you navigating your messages, it is not a necessary window to have onscreen, as you can always display a list of all folders whenever you like by pressing the **Go To Folder** command, **CTRL and Y**.

To turn off the Folder Pane, follow these suggested steps:

1. Press **ALT** to move focus to the upper part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the name of the currently selected Tab.
2. Press **RIGHT ARROW** or **LEFT ARROW** until the **View** Tab is selected and then press **TAB** to move focus to the lower part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the currently selected item. This is usually the Change View sub-menu.

3. Next, press **TAB** until the Folder **Pane** sub-menu is selected and then press **ENTER**. Upon doing this, a dropdown menu will be displayed and JAWS will read the name of the currently selected option. This will most likely be "Normal checked".

An alternative method of choosing an option from the **Office Ribbon** is to press a sequence of keys. The sequence of keys to press to quickly display the Folder **Pane** dropdown menu are as follows:

ALT followed by V then F

4. Press **DOWN ARROW** or **UP ARROW** until the **Off** option is selected and then press **ENTER**. Upon doing this, the Folder Pane will be removed from the left side of your Inbox folder.

Turning off the Reading Pane

The Reading Pane is a window which, by default, sits at the right side of the Inbox folder. Its purpose is to provide a sighted user quick access to the content of an email message, without actually opening it. When you select a message in your Inbox, the Reading Pane is automatically updated and the text from the selected message is displayed. With JAWS, you need to press **F6** until focus is in the **Reading Pane** in order to read the text, so it is no different from pressing Enter to open the message. Thus the Reading Pane does not provide the same benefit for JAWS users as it does for sighted users.

There are also security implications to using the Reading Pane. If an email contains a virus, simply opening it may be enough to trigger the virus activity, and as mentioned previously, the act of selecting a message in the Inbox folder is enough to open it in the Reading Pane. For these reasons, it is recommended to turn off this feature!

To turn off the **Reading Pane**, follow these suggested steps:

1. Press **ALT** to move focus to the upper part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the name of the currently selected Tab.

2. Press **RIGHT ARROW** or **LEFT ARROW** until the **View** Tab is selected and then press **TAB** to move focus to the lower part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the currently selected item. This is usually the Change View sub-menu.
3. Next, press **TAB** until the **Reading Pane** sub-menu is selected and then press **ENTER**. Upon doing this, a dropdown menu will be displayed and JAWS will read the name of the currently selected option. This will most likely be "Right checked".

An alternative method of choosing an option from the **Office Ribbon** is to press a sequence of keys. The sequence of keys to press to quickly display the **Navigation Pane** dropdown menu are as follows:

ALT followed by **V** then **P** then **N**

4. Press **DOWN ARROW** or **UP ARROW** until the **Off** option is selected and then press **ENTER**. Upon doing this, the **Reading Pane** will be removed from the right side of your Inbox folder.

Turning off Show in Groups

The **Show in Groups** option allows you to sort the messages in the Inbox folder by days, weeks or months of the year, by the Sender's name, the Size of the message etc. For example, you can have all messages received on a Monday grouped under a single heading. Each heading can be expanded or collapsed to be visible or hidden.

Whilst there are very good reasons to have **Show in Groups** turned on, it is recommended to turn this option off, as it can lead to confusion and it is possible to hide messages accidentally. Additionally, JAWS is a little sluggish when navigating messages in the Inbox with Show in Groups turned on.

To turn off **Show in Groups**, follow these suggested steps:

1. Press **ALT** to move focus to the upper part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the name of the currently selected Tab.

2. Press **RIGHT ARROW** or **LEFT ARROW** until the **View** Tab is selected and then press **TAB** to move focus to the lower part of the **Office Ribbon**. Upon doing this, JAWS will announce the currently selected item. This is usually the Change View sub-menu.
3. Next, press **TAB** until the **Arrange By** button is selected and then press **ENTER**. Upon doing this, a dropdown menu will be displayed and JAWS will read the name of the currently selected option. This will most likely be "Date button".

An alternative method of choosing an option from the **Office Ribbon** is to press a sequence of keys. The sequence of keys to press to quickly display the **Navigation Pane** dropdown menu are as follows:

ALT followed by **V** then **A** then **B**

4. Press **TAB** to select the **Show in Groups check box**. If JAWS reports this to be "checked", then press **ENTER** to turn it off. If JAWS reports this to be "unchecked", this means the option is already turned off, so press **ESCAPE** to close the menu without making a change.

Note: Each of the above options - Folder Pane, Reading Pane and Show in Groups, are turned on by default when you create a folder. They are also on by default in the Deleted Items and Sent Items folders. Therefore, you may wish to check out your other folders to ensure these options are turned off! If they are not, you now know how to do so!