MailTags 1.2.2

Frequently Asked Questions

General

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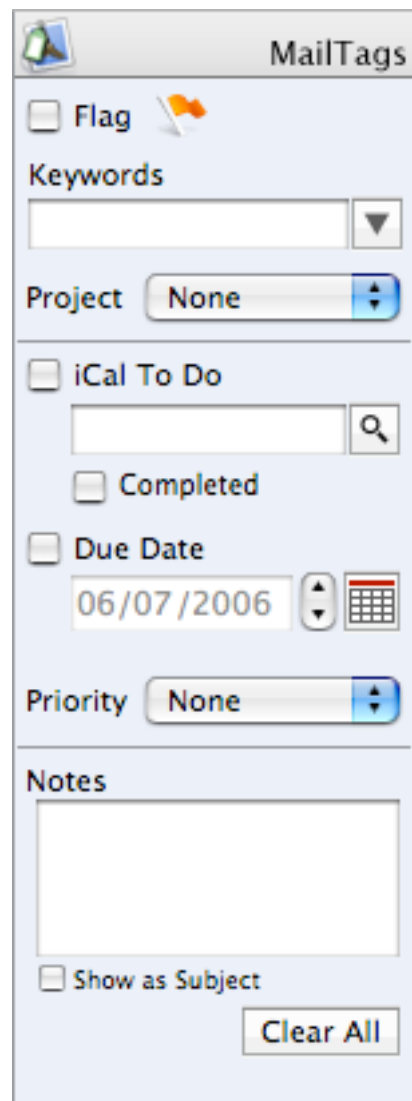
What is MailTags? What does it do?
MailTags is a plug-in for Apple's Mail 2.0 (for OS X 10.4 - Tiger) that enables you to tag messages with metadata such as comments, due dates, projects and priority. You can then use this information as a basis for searches, smart mailboxes, and rules.

What are the system and software requirements?
Mail 2.0+
Mac OS X 10.4 + (Tiger) (Spotlight must be enabled)

Does MailTags work with IMAP messages?
Use of MailTags 1.2.2 with IMAP is unsupported. While it can store tags for IMAP messages locally, it will not store tags for IMAP on the IMAP server. Full IMAP support is being developed for MailTags 2.0. See the section on IMAP messages below for more information.

The MailTags Side Panel

Using MailTags

1. How do I show the MailTags Panel?
2. How do I know if a message has tags?
3. Is it possible to see my project, priority, due date in the table list of messages?
4. Can I tag a message with a new arbitrary meta tag?
5. Is there a keyboard shortcut for showing/hiding the MailTags side panel?
6. Can I tag several messages at the same time?
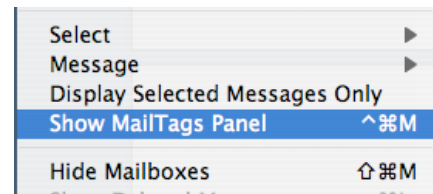7. Can I edit the subject line of messages?

How do I show the MailTags panel?

There are several ways:
MailTags adds a Tag icon to the top right of a message. To view the tags for that message, click on the Tag icon and the panel will appear.

Alternatively, you can toggle the panel with the Show/Hide MailTags Panel menu item under the view menu,
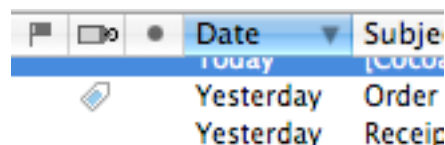
Last, you can add a MailTags toolbar button to your message viewer by customizing Mail's toolbar.

How do I know if a message has tags?

Activate the MailTags column in list view by selecting the MailTags menu item under the Columns submenu in the View menu. Tagged messages will have a tag icon in this column.

Additionally if you have the "Show MailTags icon in message window" checked, a MailTags icon will appear in the top right of the message. A grey icon grey indicates no tags set. A white and blue icon indicates tags set.

Is it possible to see my project, priority, due date in the table list of messages?
This is a feature coming in MailTags 2.0

Can I tag a message with a new arbitrary meta tag such as "status"?
No, but you can use either the keyword field to tag a message with arbitrary terms ore you can use the comment box to keep track of arbitrary information. If you think that MailTags can really benefit from a new "tag", let us know.

Is there a keyboard shortcut for showing/hiding the MailTags side panel or tagging messages.
Yes, the toggle for the side panel is now an item under the view menu – the shortcut is command-ctrl-m. If you wish to tag a message rather than just toggle the panel, use the Tag message short cut: command-ctrl-t. You can then use the tab key to advance through the tag fields.

Can I tag several messages at the same time??
Yes. Select the message you want to tag and select the MailTags to apply from the Message Menu (or right mouse/control-click the selected messages)

Can I edit the subject line of messages?
No, but you can set the note of a message to display as the subject line. When you check the "Show as subject" box, Mail will show the note as an italicize subject in the list view. When you view the message the original subject will still show. Search searching for email will look for the original subject for searches on subjects. To find email with your replaced subject line, search through notes or through the entire message.

Outgoing Messages

1. *Can I tag outgoing messages?*
2. *Can an outgoing message (reply, forward, redirect) inherit the tags of the original message?*
3. *Will the recipients of the message see the tags.*

Can I tag outgoing messages?
You can add tags to outgoing messages. When composing an outgoing message, hit command-ctrl-t to show the side panel (or select Tag Message from the MailTags submenu of the Message menu)

Can an outgoing message (reply, forward, redirect) inherit the tags of the original message?
Yes. By selecting the "Copy keywords and project when replying" option in the MailTags preferences, any reply will be tagged with the keyword and project of the original message.

Will the recipients of the message see the tags?
No. In MailTags 1.2.2, tagging outgoing mail is for your reference alone. MailTags 2.0 will allow the option to embed tags in the outgoing mail so that recipients can chose to adopt the tags that you specify.

iCal To Do Items

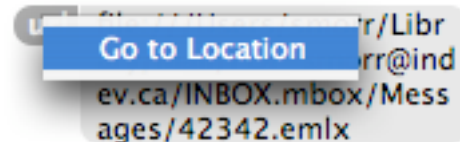**How do I link a message with iCal?**
You can create a single ical To Do item for any message but turning on the iCal To Do checkbox and giving a title to the To Do item. You can view the To Do item in iCal by clicking on the magnifying glass button to the right of the title box.

What calendar is my To Do item saved in?
MailTags uses the **Project** popup menu to determine the calendar for the To Do Item. If the calendar doesn't exist, MailTags will create it in iCal. If no project is selected, mailTags will use the default calendar stated in the iCal section of the MailTags preferences.

How do I link back to my original mail Message when I am looking at the To Do item in iCal?
MailTags stores the full address to message file in the **url** field of the To Do item. To return to your message, just left-click on the url label, and select "Go To Location". If you move your message to a different folder in Mail, MailTags will automatically update the url field with the new location, so you don't have to worry about the link being broken.

What happens if I change the To Do information from Mail?
MailTags will automatically update the information in iCal.

What happens if I change the To Do information in iCal?
MailTags will ask iCal for recent changes on a regular basis (frequency is set in the preferences) and update MailTags information from changes that are made. Additionally, if the refresh option is on, MailTags will refresh the iCal information anytime you view a message with an iCal link.

Can I set alarms/reminders for my To Do items from Mail?
The "**Set Alarm with Due Date**" option in the preferences allows you to specify a default alarm whenever you set a due date for an iCal To Do item.

If you wish to change the nature or time of a specific To Do alarm, view the To Do item in iCal by clicking the magnifying glass.

Does iCal have to be open to use MailTags?
Yes… and no. MailTags uses apple events to communicate with iCal, requiring iCal to be open for any communication. For refreshing data, MailTags will check to see if iCal is open. If it is not open, it will not refresh the data. If iCal is open, it will automatically refresh changes from iCal.

When I move messages, iCal sometimes opens -- Why?
In order to maintain a link between iCal and Mail, MailTags has to inform iCal when it moves a message so that iCal will be able to find it. In order to do this, it must launch iCal. (This will only happen when moving messages that has a todo item.)

Cost

1. *How much does MailTags cost?*
2. *What if I want to use throughout my company, institution, or organization?*
3. *What's stopping me from using MailTags without donating?*
4. *What do I do once I've donated?*
5. *Is MailTags Open Source?*
6. *Doesn't Open Source mean free?*

How much does MailTags cost?
We suggest a donation of $20 for individual use of MailTags. If you can't afford $20 or feel you are entitled to a discount (student, low income, etc), donate $10 or $15 (or whatever you can afford) and we're OK with that. Please try to make a donation. If you feel MailTags is worth more and you want to really encourage future development, we're OK with that too. All donaters to MailTags 1.x will receive a registration key for MailTags 2.0 when it is released.

What if I want to use throughout my company, institution, or organization?
We suggest that you donate something that better reflects the wider use you make of it. Go to http://www.indev.ca/donations.html for more information.

What's stopping me from using MailTags without donating?
Your conscience. This is not nag ware, or crippled software. There are no serial numbers or keys. You can technically use it without donating. We expect that if you find MailTags a great addition to Mail, you will recognize the effort put into it and support future development.

What do I do once I've donated?
First: Smile, knowing that you supported MailTags. Second: Click on the "I Donated" check box in the preferences. This will remove the donate button from the MailTags panel. (Woe be to those who click the button falsely!)

Is MailTags Open Source?
Yes. You can view the source and anonymously download of MailTags and Mail Act-On at http://trac.selwyn.ca/projects/MailActOn

Doesn't Open Source mean free?
Not necessarily. Like I said there is nothing stopping you from using MailTags without donating. However, we have put several months of work into MailTags and we feel that it provides significant added functionality to Mail.app. If you come to use MailTags regularly and depend on it, the onus is on you to recognize that and encourage future development. But if you feel you are entitled to use someone else hard work and expect future support without recompense, it really is up to you.

IMAP accounts

NOTE: IMAP support is NOT complete and there may be issues or problems – Consequently, we are not supporting the use of MailTags with IMAP messages/Mailboxes. Use MailTags with IMAP message at your own risk.

1. *Can I set meta data messages even though I have Mail set to not download any IMAP messages?*
2. *Will the meta data I set on IMAP message on one computer be available on any other computers?*
3. *When will you fully support tags in IMAP messages?*

Can I set meta data messages even though I have Mail set to not download any IMAP messages?
Yes! Even though mail does not download the body of IMAP messages, it still records a mail file for the subject and other information. This is enough to allow MailTags to associate the meta data with the message.

Will the meta data I set on IMAP message on one computer be available on any other computers?
Not yet. MailTags 1.0 stores the metadata only on the computer that it is set. Some IMAP servers support arbitrary tagging of messages and we are looking into the possibility of using this protocol support to enable tagging that follows IMAP messages from machine to machine.

When you fully support tags in IMAP messages?
MailTags 2.0 will fully support saving tags with messages on IMAP servers. We anticipate that MailTags 2.0 will be ready in late summer 2006.

Searching and Smart Mailboxes

1. *Is it possible to search project, priority and due date from the search field in Mail?*
2. *Is it possible to search Project, priority and due date through Tiger's system wide spotlight?*
3. *Can I set up Smart Mailboxes based on MailTags?*
4. *I've created a Smart Mailbox that use MailTags criteria and non-MailTags Criteria with the "Match Any Condition" setting. The Smart Mailbox is not turning up what I expected. Is this a bug?*
5. *I've turned off a MailTag that is a criterion for a smart mailbox, but the message is still in the Smart Mailbox listing. What gives?*
6. *How do I set up a past due Smart Mailbox?*
7. *How do I set up a Smart Mailbox showing messages due next week.*

Is it possible to search project, priority and due date from the search field in Mail?
Yes. This feature was added in version 1.1

Is it possible to search project, keywords, priority and due date through Tiger's system wide spotlight?
Yes. All MailTags data is indexed with Spotlight. You can also use the following spotlight keywords to narrow the search for the command line search (mdls). For example, if you use the command:
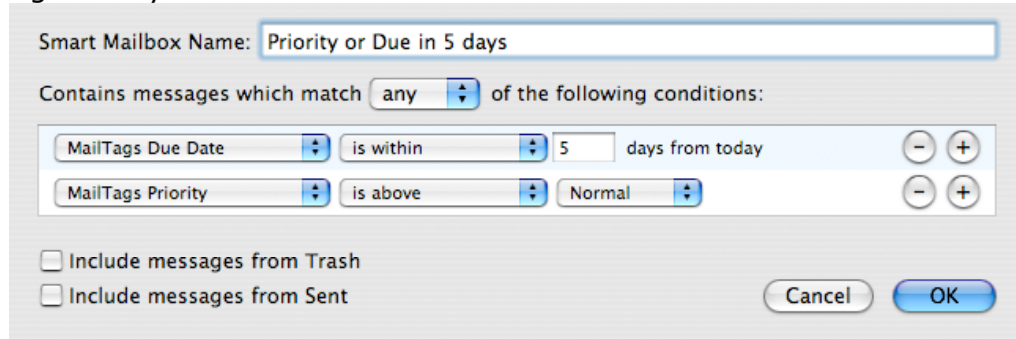   mdfind 'kMDItemProjects = MailTags'
it will turn up all messages with MailTags as the project but none with MailTags in the comment.

Tag	Spotlight keyword
Project	kMDItemProjects
Due Date	kMDItemDueDate
Priority	kMDItemStarRating
Note	kMDItemComment
Keyword	kMDItemKeywords

Can I set up Smart Mailboxes based on MailTags?
Yes! You can use any MailTag as a criteria for a smart mailbox. This feature can be quite powerful. For Example. Set up a Smart Mailbox for Urgent To Dos with criteria: "MailTags Due Date is within 5 days from today" and MailTag Priority is above Normal". Any message that has to be dealt with right away will be in the box.

Creating a Smart Mailbox using MailTags criteria.

I've created a Smart Mailbox that use MailTags criteria and non-MailTags Criteria with the "Match Any Condition" setting. The Smart Mailbox is not turning up what I expected. Is this a bug?
This is a problem in Mail itself. The same issue arises when you create a Smart Mailbox with Entire Message as a criteria and other criteria, even with MailTags not installed. Until this is fixed by Apple, MailTags will unfortunately inherit this bug.

I've turned off a MailTag that is a criterion for a smart mailbox, but the message is still in the Smart Mailbox listing. What gives?
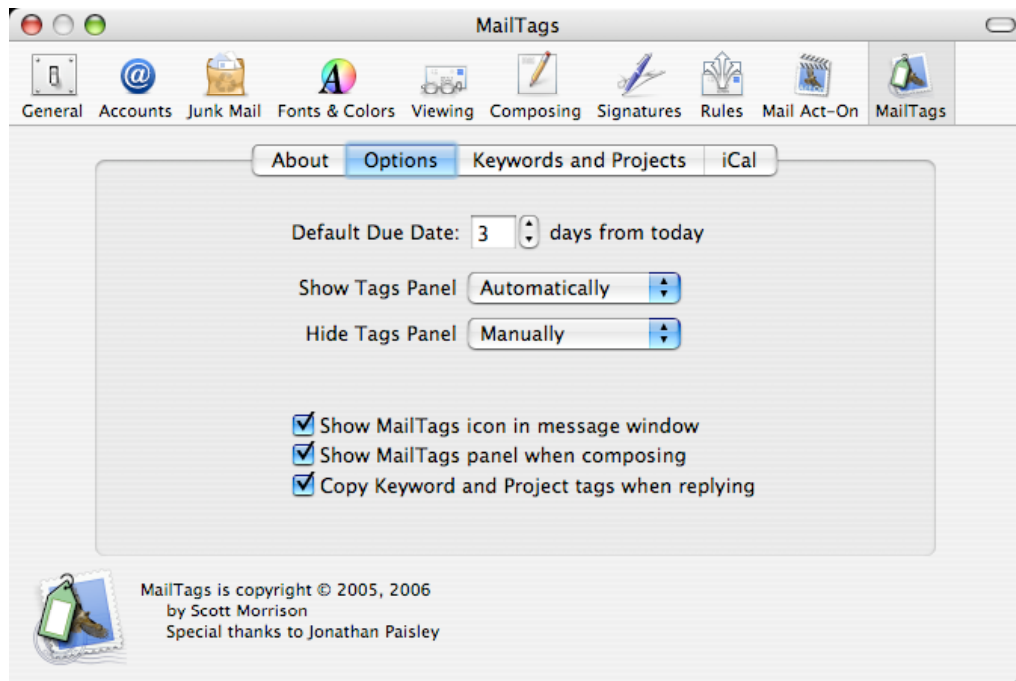To prevent frequent searching everytime a message's MailTags are changed, the listing of a Smart Mailbox is not updated until you revisit the smart mailbox after viewing a different mailbox.

How do I set up a Smart Mailbox showing messages due next week.
Create a Smart Mailbox where MailTags Due Date is after 6 days from today AND Mailtags Due Date is before 14 days from now.

Preferences

1. What does the Default Due Date preference do?
2. What do Show/Hide Tags panel do?
3. How do I reorder projects in the project list?
4. Can I add a separator line in the project menu?

What does the Default Due Date preference do?
It provides a simple way to defer messages automatically by a set number of days. For example. If today is August 18 and you have the Default Due Date set for 3 days from today, checking on the due date check box will set the due date to August 21. (You can adjust the due date from there.)

What do Show/Hide Tags panel do?
When you have them both set on automatically, messages will show and hide the tags panel when they do and don't have tags. Setting the Hide to Manually for example, will not close the tags panel when you view a message without tags. (you can click on the tag icon to close it yourself.)

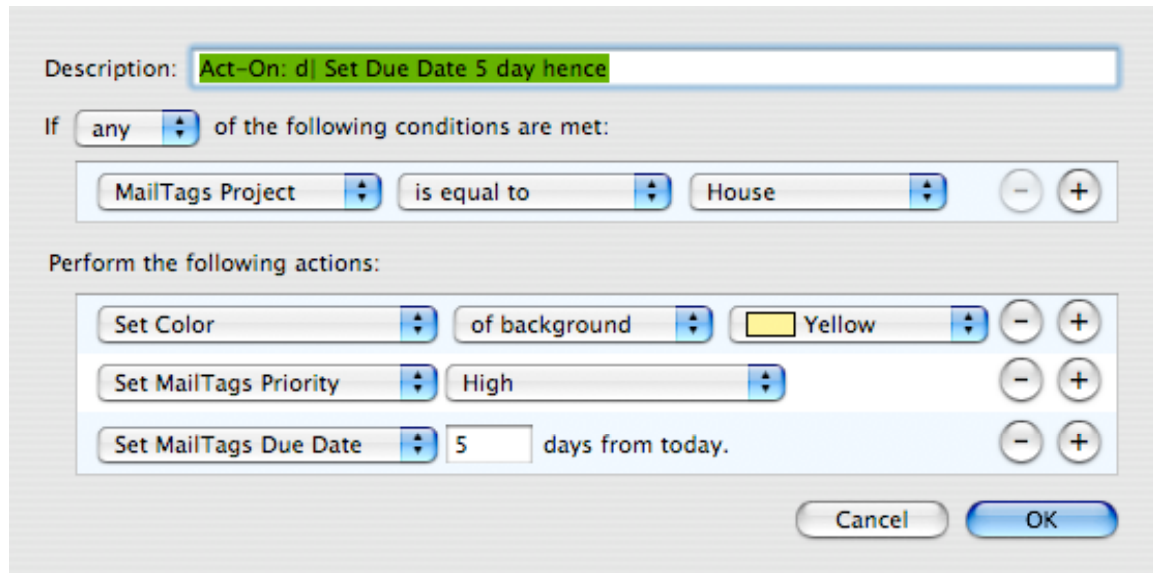**How do I reorder projects in the project list?**
Drag and drop the project into the order you want.

Can I add a separator line in the project menu?
Yes, make the name of the project a single hyphen -

Rules

1. *Can I set MailTags using rules?*
2. *Can I use MailTags as criteria for performing rules?*
3. *Does MailTags integrate with Mail Act-On?*

Description: Act-On: d| Set Due Date 5 day hence

If [any ⬍] of the following conditions are met:

[MailTags Project ⬍] [is equal to ⬍] [House ⬍] ⊖ ⊕

Perform the following actions:

[Set Color ⬍] [of background ⬍] [☐ Yellow ⬍] ⊖ ⊕

[Set MailTags Priority ⬍] [High ⬍] ⊖ ⊕

[Set MailTags Due Date ⬍] 5 days from today. ⊖ ⊕

(Cancel) (OK)

Can I set MailTags using rules?
Yes, we have added several new rule actions to Mail, allowing you to tag messages as they come in based on whatever criteria you like. For example, you can set a messages arriving from "boss@work.com" to have a due date 1 day in the future and be tagged with the "administrivia" project.

Can I use MailTags as criteria for performing rules?
Yes, any MailTag can be evaluated when performing a rule. You can set rules to only perform on certain projects, or within certain relative due dates or that have specific keywords in the comments.

Does MailTags integrate with Mail Act-On?
You bet! As should be suggested in the last two answers, the combination of MailTags and Mail Act-On is immensely powerful. You can create multiple act-On rules for keystrokes that will evaluate existing tags to set more tags or file messages. For example, create a rule: "Act-On: d | defer message" that will set the due date of selected messages to 3 days from today and move them into the _Action_ mail folder.

With a more complex example, create a rule: "Act-On: a | Archive Jones account" that will look for the project "Jones Account" and the word "Complete" in the comment with actions to remove due date and file it in an appropriate folder. Then create a rule "Act-On: a | Archive Smith account" that will look for the project "Smith Account" and the word "Complete" in the comment with actions to remove due date and file it in an appropriate folder.

Now when messages come in they could be moved to your action or respond folder and due dates set. Then you can select all messages in a folder and hit ctrl-a to perform all Act-On rules associated with the letter a. All completed Jones and Smith account messages will stripped of their due dates and filed accordingly.

Stability and Safety of Data

1. *Can MailTags break Mail?*
2. *Where is my MailTags data stored?*
3. *How can I backup my MailTags*
4. *Is MailTags safe? Can MailTags corrupt my Mail database?*
5. *What will happen if Apple updates mail? Will MailTags stop working?*
6. *What happens to my data, rules and smart mailboxes if I uninstall MailTags.*

Can MailTags break Mail?
We have tested MailTags extensively several months with dozens of beta testers and we are confident that MailTags is a safe addition to Mail. We cannot guarantee that Mail will never crash but we have put a lot of work into making it stable and reliable. If you notice any significant problems we would like to hear about it. Mail us at mailTags@indev.ca.

Where is my MailTags data stored?
Mail 2.0 stores information about messages in two places: in an internal sqlite3 database so that table listings of messages are fast and in individual email or "emlx" files so that Spotlight can find messages. In these emlx files, Mail keeps an xml dictionary of information about the message. MailTags transparently adds its data to this xml list. Also MailTags updates the system wide spotlight database as you add remove or change tags.

How can I backup my MailTags?
Because the tags for messages in a message are stored in the individual email or "emlx" files, the data is backed up when you back up your mail folder. With mailTags mdimporter (in ~/Library/Spotlight), the data will be properly indexed when a backup is restored.

Is MailTags safe? Can MailTags corrupt my Mail database?
Yes it is safe; It will not corrupt your Mail database. MailTags transparently inserts extra information in the actual message file and leaves the sqlite3 database untouched. We have been testing this functionality intensively for 4 months with over 100 beta testers and have had no reports or indication of data corruption problems.

What will happen if Apple updates mail? Will MailTags stop working?
We cannot predict the future and it is possible that Apple updates Mail in a way that stops MailTags from working. If this occurs, we would work our best to resolve any problems and get MailTags back running as soon as possible.

What happens to my data, rules and smart mailboxes if I uninstall MailTags.
The data will still reside in the emlx files and in the preference files for rules and smart mailboxes if you re-install MailTags. However, if you move messages without MailTags installed, Mail will no longer know about the extra data and will not move this information with the message. Additionally, rules and smart mailboxes that make use of mailTags alterations may not function properly and if you edit rules and smart mailboxes, you will lose the MailTags criteria and actions in those that you edit. If you re-install MailTags, any unaltered rule/smart mailbox should work as it did before.

Thanks to

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