Tips for Dealing with Email Overload

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Reduce email for yourself and others:
- Don't email large attachments
- Don't send a response or a thank-you if unnecessary
- **Use the right tool:**

Get a quick answer	Collaborate	Meet as a group	Share files
- Instant messaging - Phone - Face-to-face	- Wiki - Chatter - Google Docs	Desktop conferencing (Jabber, Skype, etc.)	UCSF Box

Clean out your Inbox:
- Schedule regular, brief times to process email
- Two Minute Rule: if it takes <2 minutes, do it **now**
- Use a Hold folder (can use Trash if you don't delete automatically), periodically delete
- Delete all but the most recent email in a thread
- Remember that the Sent folder is an archive, too
- Or try a "file everything" approach, so you don't have to deliberate over each email

Don't let email rule you:
- Turn it off when you need to focus
- Turn off pop-up notifications
- Manage expectations so people don't expect instant replies

Identify your "type" and embrace it:
- Filer vs. Searcher vs. Tagger
- It works for some to keep to-do list in Inbox, but not for others
  - Be diligent about removing everything that isn't an action item

If you are a **Filer**:
- Simplify your system - get rid of complex hierarchies of folders
- Sort by sender or subject to quickly find and file

If you are a **Searcher**:
- Archive everything -- move everything to a single Archive folder
- Get familiar with your email's search tools (e.g., activate Instant Search in Outlook)
- MailStore (Home version) - Khang Nguyen mentioned this program that can improve searching: http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-home.aspx

Tags / labels / categories:
- More useful in combo with searching and filing, not on its own
- Pro: an email can only physically reside in one folder, but can have multiple labels if appropriate
- Customize your Category labels (don't need to use Outlook's defaults)

Try a hybrid system:
- Save most of your email in one big archive, but set up folders for major projects
- Use a *few* Categories (e.g. receipts, technical info, important) across different folders
- Keep it simple!

Other tips:
- Use To and CC lines so it's clear which recipient needs to respond
- FYI in subject line if it doesn't need a response
- Set up Rules/Filters if you haven't already (good for listservs)
- Sort by size to delete large attachments (or remove and save elsewhere)
- Set up an Outlook "Quick Step" to turn an email into Calendar appointment or task:
  - In Outlook 2010, look in the ribbon for the Quick Steps box.
  - Choose Create New. Call it "Create an appointment with text of message."
  - Under Choose an Action, click the dropdown arrow. Scroll down to Appointments section.
  - Choose "Create an appointment with text of message" and click Finish.

Resources
- Erik Wieland's Email Tips: http://tiny.ucsf.edu/emailtips
- David Allen, "Getting Email Under Control"
- Best Practices for Outlook 2010, Microsoft Support: http://bit.ly/eDZdgK
- *Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home* - David Shipley, Will Schwalbe