

## Outlook Cleaner V3.1

*Gain control of your Outlook.  
Identify viruses, spam, and old items and remove them!*

## Product White Paper

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# Foreword

*I want control over my Email!*

*A PersonalCRM Customer*

# 1 Introduction on Anti-Virus

## 1.1 The New World of Email Viruses

Two months ago, when the MyDoom Virus struck, it was astonishing how quickly the E-mail centric world came crashing down. Suddenly the anti-virus package that scans the incoming emails would inform the user that a particular email had a virus and that it would be "*Quarantined*". It was happening at a rate of 90 messages for every 5 minutes of virus infected email received in our company's mailbox. When the anti-virus software was instructed to delete any emails with viruses, it simply couldn't do it.

"*What good is it to have anti-virus software when the offending email cannot be removed?*", I asked my partner, Rick. Before the MyDoom virus, only a few emails per day would generate the virus warnings, however, mydoom was generating at least 50 warnings every 10 minutes. To further antagonize the invasion, these viruses could only be detected but not resolved by the most popular anti-virus software in the market!

The concept of popping up screens to the user and inform the user that nothing can be done has been a nagging issue with using anti-virus software to scan email. It is acceptable if it happens a couple of times/day, however, the rate of infection of the virus on other people's computers was simply stunning. In one single swipe, the mydoom virus and it followers have rendered anti-virus software for Email scanning almost useless. Enabling virus scanning means that the user has to be pressing OK all day to pop up messages. Disabling the scans hence allows viruses to come in via Email.

## 1.2 How Viruses Propagate

In the past, the most common form of virus propagation was the sharing of Floppy disks. The viruses would lodge themselves in the boot sector and then when activated, they would infect the system.

Today, the most popular virus propagation mechanism is Email. For example, the other day I received an email stating that my eBay account had to be updated and that this should be done by activating the attachment. Apparently, a lot of people clicked on the attachment because not before long, the net was flooded with emails and copies of the same virus. The cunningness of virus creators has also increased. The emails being created have become extremely realistic and deal with issues that falsely is perceived to have something to do with your business.

Sending attachments via the Net now is dangerous. Something that was considered harmless like a .zip file, is now the possible repository of a virus. As users, we still need to send attachments and documents via the Net. It is, after all, the most successful media of transferring data and information between users.

These viruses only propagate when the attachment is opened by the user. Not opening an attachment will prevent users from catching the virus. However, as it has been seen, there are many users opening attachments with viruses. I now get at least 200 emails/day that are virus-infected.

## 1.3 How Anti-Virus Packages Work

Anti-Virus packages are great to have on a computer. They will scan through the hard drive for "*virus signatures*" and then eliminate the viruses when possible. If it fails to eliminate the virus, it puts the file into the "netherworld" of Quarantine. The job of an anti-virus is to identify a signature and kill it if possible. It is recommended that the anti-virus software be run as often as possible.

The drawback of anti-virus software is that it only works after the fact i.e. once the *virus signature* has been identified by the creators of the anti-virus software. That is why the major anti-virus software manufacturers provide users with subscription services. The anti-virus software is then instructed to download the latest *virus definitions* from the subscription service in a form of *live update* of the virus definitions and the latest virus signatures are updated.

Research has been done into intelligent virus identification but for all that is known, no successful methodology has been developed to kill all viruses. That is why many of the articles on the computer press state "*The losing war against viruses*". For every detection, there is a way around it. Also, there is no financial incentive to develop a solution that has no perpetual income stream. Hence, it is not foreseen that an effective anti-virus solution will be developed in the short term, if ever.

Software viruses, by definition, mutate i.e. change. From a software developer's standpoint, it is really easy to change the *virus signature*. Change lines of code, select different registers, basically change the structure of the software and voila, a new virus is born. To propagate the virus, obtain a free web email account and send a couple of emails with the virus. In a matter of hours, the virus is now a global phenomena. That is why 17-year olds can create and propagate viruses so quickly. Unfortunately, since the *virus signature* has changed, the anti-virus software installed to scan emails will let the virus through and before you know it, you've got the flu!

#### Where Anti-Virus Packages Fail

Using current Anti-Virus solutions renders usage of email as a communication medium almost useless. Besides not being able to resolve the issues with email infection, it keeps reminding the user that an email with a virus has been found! For an active user of email, this means spending most of the day clicking on the OK or Clean or Quarantine button. In essence, if email is your medium, you must turn off the anti-virus software and find an alternative solution.

## 1.4 Why MyDoom and New Viruses are different

When MyDoom struck, the results were frightening. Sites were flooded with emails from all over the world. At one stage, some sites were receiving 60 new emails (infected) per minute. What did this virus do?

- **Phony Administrator Messages.** The virus sent phony admin messages to users of a domain. Upon clicking on the attachment, the virus sent the same email to a plethora of email addresses likely to have email accounts on that domain i.e. tom@mydomain.com, jim@mydomain.com, support@mydomain.com, etc..
- **Ebay and Paypal update messages.** Using the same strategy above, the virus sends messages re. an account at eBay and Paypal. In some instances, it is almost impossible to notice any difference. Upon clicking on the attachment, infection is immediate.
- **Domain Name Spamming.** The virus not only gathers the recipient's address book and sends emails using the address book, but it also sends emails to all the possible recipients in a domain but also masqueraded as a member of that domain so send emails to even more people.

MyDoom and the new virus writers have become extremely sophisticated. Not only are their messages believable, but they are delivered from email addresses that are valid within a company's daily dealings with email. Email viruses are here to stay and they are getting smarter every time. Unfortunately, current anti-virus technology, when used to scan emails renders email communication unusable.

## 1.5 Our Solution - Clean up the email

As a response to this onslaught, we recommend that the best way to keep from getting email viruses is to clean up the emails from any attachments that may be harmful. We developed an application that cleans up Outlook with a speed never seen. The product is, of course, named Outlook Cleaner.

## Outlook Cleaner - Major Features

1. **Identify Emails by Attachments.** Identify emails across multiple folders that have potentially harmful attachments i.e. .exe, .scr, .bas, etc..
2. **Permanent Deletion Capability.** Once the email has been identified, permanently deleted from the system. None of this hanging around in the delete folder business.
3. **Exception to the rule.** Allow the user to unselect any email I deem useful to keep i.e. identify the emails and then remove all but one (or unselected ones).
4. **Multi-Folder capability.** Scan multiple folders and present the data in just one screen.
5. **Profile Support.** The software supports multiple profiles with different settings that can be run and saved at the user's discretion
6. **Background Support.** Allow users to run filtering and cleaning processes in the background without having to interactively click the OK button!
7. **Advanced Filtering Capabilities.** Identify emails with a certain type of attachments, buy also identify emails with the following filtering capabilities:
  - *Email Address Identification.* Identify by email addresses.
  - *Domain Name Identification.* Specify a domain name to be searched
  - *Sender Name Identification.* Identify an email by the sender name
  - *Subject Filtering.* Identify emails by subject line inclusion of certain types of text.
  - *Date Filtering.* Filter out emails by date so aging procedures can be easily implemented.
  - *Text Filtering.* Specify a particular text and have the software search all the selected folder for emails with that text.

Apart from all the advanced filtering capabilities listed, combine and match different filters into different profiles i.e. have one profile to delete virus infected emails, have another to move a specific user emails address to a folder. etc..

8. **Speed and ease of use.** Last but not least, the software is easy to use that once setup, a simple click will execute the cleaning.
9. **Support Outlook.** The software supports Outlook 2000, 2002, and 2003.

## 2 Outlook Cleaner

### 2.1 Setting Up Outlook Cleaner to Remove Viruses

The basic premise is to permanently delete any emails that have harmful attachments.

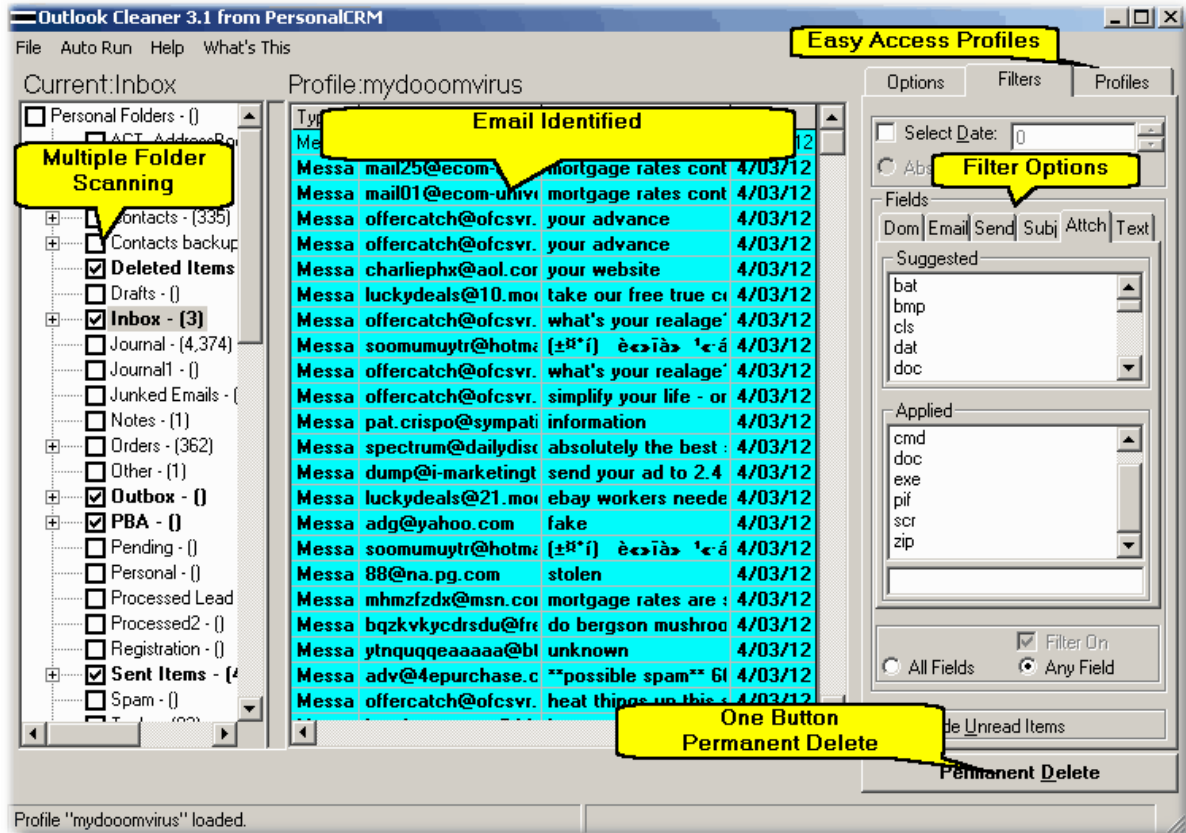
- First, disable email scanning by the anti-virus package. The anti-virus solution became more of an annoyance than a safety, not to mention the work stoppage from it going crazy on me.
- Next, schedule the anti-virus to scan the system every day.
- And now for the most important part. Install Outlook Cleaner on the system to recognize any email that has an attachment of the format that could be a virus, namely:

```
.bat
.cmd
.doc
.exe
.pif
.scr
.zip
```

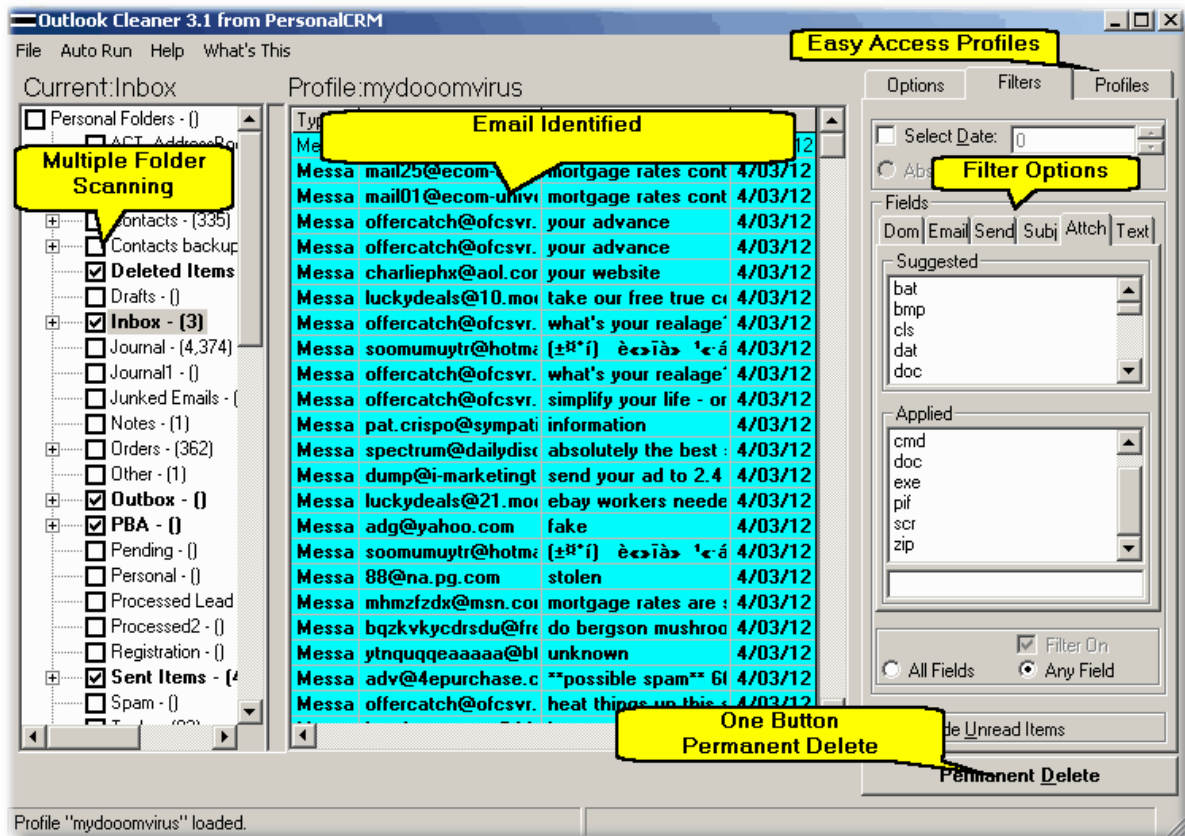
- Every time Outlook Cleaner is run, a list of all the emails with a possibly attachment is displayed and ready to be permanently deleted from the system.
- In addition, keep updating the subject string matching to include spam emails.

Basically, I identify the virus culprits and nuke them from my folder. One single press of a button and virus be gone...

## *I have finally regained control of my PC!*



## 2.2 Outlook Cleaner - An Introduction

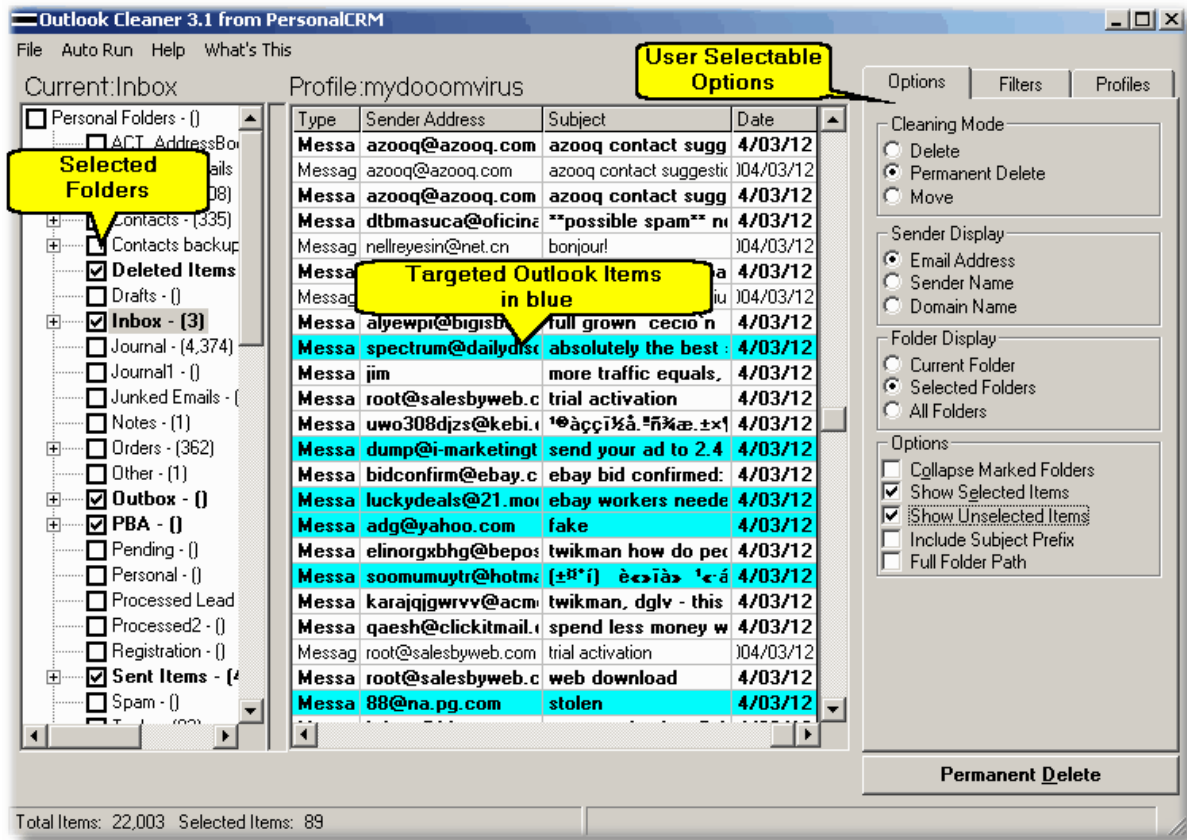


***Outlook Cleaner allows users to Delete, Move or Permanent Delete Outlook items (contacts, tasks, journal, emails, etc.) across multiple folders using a pre-set filtering identification criteria.***

*"It is without say that when I started to use Outlook Cleaner I became addicted."*

What would otherwise take hours to do using the standard Outlook interface, Outlook Cleaner cleans Outlook with just a few strokes of a button. No more continuous pop ups; scan for emails with viruses across multiple folders by simply check marking the folder. And even more, delete, move or even permanently delete emails from any Outlook folder! And all for just \$29.95! No subscriptions, just one single payment for the user of the PC.

## 2.3 Outlook Cleaner - A few details



There are 3 major areas of work in Outlook Cleaner:

1. **The Selected Folders Area.** By clicking on the check box, you select the folder you want to process and apply the filtering parameters that you've setup. If no filters have been setup, the whole folder is then selected! Hence, be careful.
2. **The Identified Area.** Outlook Cleaner highlights the Outlook items that have been identified in blue. You can select to only see the identified items by unselecting the Show Unselected Items. Remember, any and all items can be analyzed. Hence, you can even analyze your contact folder.
3. **The Options Area.** Here, you set what display options you want and what action you want to perform i.e. Delete, Move or Permanent Delete. Of particular interest is the Show Selected/Unselected Items where you can show only the items that you have selected to act on.

### Filters

This is the part where it gets exciting and interesting. I love playing around with the filters. You can select Outlook items by:

- **Aging.** By selecting a particular date, you can select items before a particular date or items that are 10 days or older.
- **Domain Name.** Select items belonging to a particular domain name
- **Email Address.** Select items from/to a particular email address.
- **Sender Name.** Select items from/to a particular sender name.
- **Subject.** Select items that match a particular word in the subject line.
- **Attachments.** Select items that have attachments with a particular extension
- **Text.** Last but not least, this compute-heavy option allows you to select items that have a particular text in the email body.

The exciting part of the filtering process is that you can select any number of Outlook Items and then decide what you want to do with them. The applications for these filters is tremendous. Just a few thoughts:

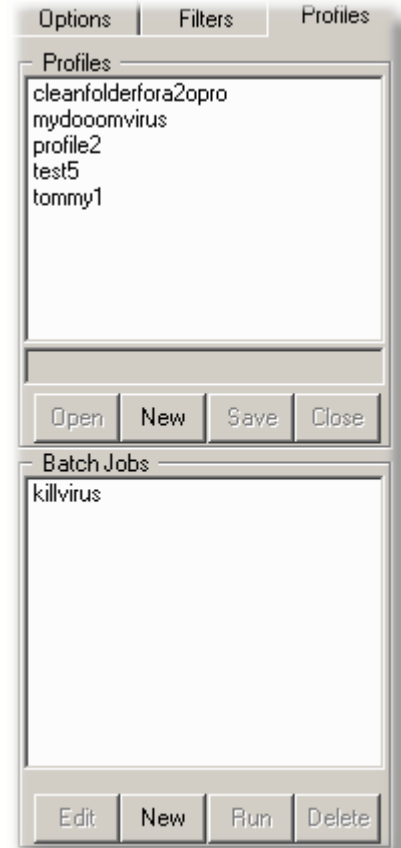
- **Virus Removal.** Remove any items with executable files attached.
- **Aging.** Remove items that go beyond a certain age.
- **Searching.** Search for items using multiple criteria.
- **Management.** Mangle Outlook items across multiple folders without being overwhelmed.
- **Automation.** Perform daily cleaning tasks with the simple click of the button.



### Profiles and Background Processing

Now that we've defined what filtering process we want to use, the best way to repeat the process is to save it as a profile. Once saved as a profile, you can simply activate it later with the click of a button. Even better, you can save multiple profiles i.e. one for aging, one for virus removal, etc. and then run one or more profiles from a batch job. Pretty neat!

I won't go into more details here but the beauty of having a desktop icon that is a batch job is nothing but beautiful. You can set it to run automatically or just run when you want it.



## 3 Conclusion

*"I've been running Outlook Cleaner now for 1 month and I'm finally getting the feel that I've gained control over my email. Even though Outlook Cleaner goes beyond email management into full Outlook item and folder management, for the small piece that I use it for, this tool has now proven to be a necessity in my day-to-day management of contacts and email on the internet."*

Take a test drive. Download it from the web at <http://www.personalcrm.com/outlook-cleaner.exe>

Tom Wikman  
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