Have you tried the new Gmail Compose box?

Submitted: November 30, 2012 - 3:44pm

You may have noticed Gmail starting to offer you a new Compose option when you go to write an email. If you haven't tried it yet (it's optional until January 2013), it would be a good idea to give it a test run so you can familiarize yourself with the differences. It's simpler and more streamlined, but may take a bit of getting used to, as anything new does.

Take it for a spin

Click the **Compose** button, and then the "**new compose experience**" link right next to the Labels button at the top of the message. Until the change is fully launched in January, you'll be able to choose whether you use the new or current experience.

If you change your mind or if you need to use a feature that isn't available yet, you can switch back to the old experience at any time. Here's how:

1. Click **Compose**
2. At the bottom corner of the message pane, click the **More menu** icon next to the Discard button.
3. Select "**Switch back to old compose**."

The new Compose window

Instead of taking up your entire Gmail window, clicking **Compose** now opens a smaller window at the bottom of your screen. Here's how to navigate the new Compose window:

- **Recipients**: Click this text field to type email addresses. You can also click the **Cc** or **Bcc** links to add a new set of recipients. Drag and drop recipients from one field to another, or click the "x" to remove them from your message. Hover over the recipient to see details about them, or double-click on them to edit their address.
- **Text formatting**: Click the A icon at the bottom of the window to add formatting like font size, bold, underline, and bullets. Hover over each button to see the optional keyboard shortcut for that option. Alignment and indentation options are now both under the alignment icon.
- **Attachments**: Click the paperclip Attachment icon to attach files to your message. Hovering over the Attachment icon will also open the insert options menu (see below).
- **Insert options**: Hover over the plus icon to embed photos, links, emoticons, and Google Calendar events. This menu will also open when you hover over the Attachment icon.
- **Discard**: Click the trash can icon to delete your draft.
- **More options**: Click the down arrow at the bottom right of the window to see other tools such as spell check, plain text format, print, add labels, and including original attachments. Some options may not yet be ready; you'll see them in grey until they become available to use.
- **Window size**: The writing pane grows as your message gets longer. If you want the window to be bigger, click the middle icon at the top right of the pane to open the message in a new window. Use the other icons to minimize or close the window (which will also save your draft).
- **Saving**: Gmail automatically saves your drafts while you're writing, so we've removed the "Save now" button (but you can verify that it's saved if you see the word, "Saved" next to the Discard

button. Your draft will also be automatically saved when you close the Compose window.
- **Send mail as**: If you use Gmail to send mail from another address (like your work address), click into the "To" field, then click the "From" link to select which address you'd like to send mail from.

Changes when replying or forwarding

You'll also see some differences when replying to or forwarding messages. Most of the changes are similar to those that you'll see when composing a new message. Here are a few additional changes:

- **Recipients**: To change who your message should be sent to, click in the recipient field when you're replying and enter the new email addresses.
- **Type of response**: Click the arrow next to the recipient's name to choose whether your message is a reply, reply all, or forward.
- **Subject**: To change the subject of your message, click the arrow next to the recipient's name and click "Start separate conversation."
- **Respond inline**: If you want to see the previous message within your reply, scroll down until you see the "Show trimmed content" icon (ellipsis) and click it.

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