THUNDERBIRD

Outlook Express remains the default mail client for most Windows users.. Most people are used to it, and it does an acceptable job of getting and sending mail. Furthermore, Outlook Express has a built in news reader. I've mentioned newsgroups in the past, including my column on Firefox two weeks ago. I'll mention them again later in this column.

Outlook is the application of choice for people who use its scheduling, calendar, and contact functions. While not quite a full fledged personal information manager or business contact manager, it has many of their functions. It is sufficient for a single person or a small office. If used in conjunction with a truly wonderful Microsoft product called OneNote - more on this in a future column - it fulfills this function adequately.

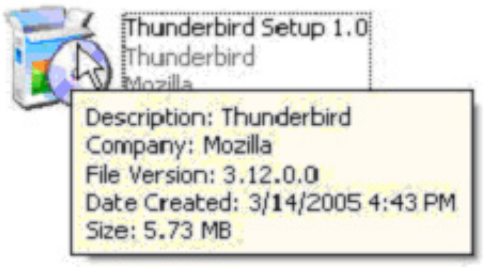
And in offices where the system servers run Microsoft Exchange, Outlook is often the only option for emails.

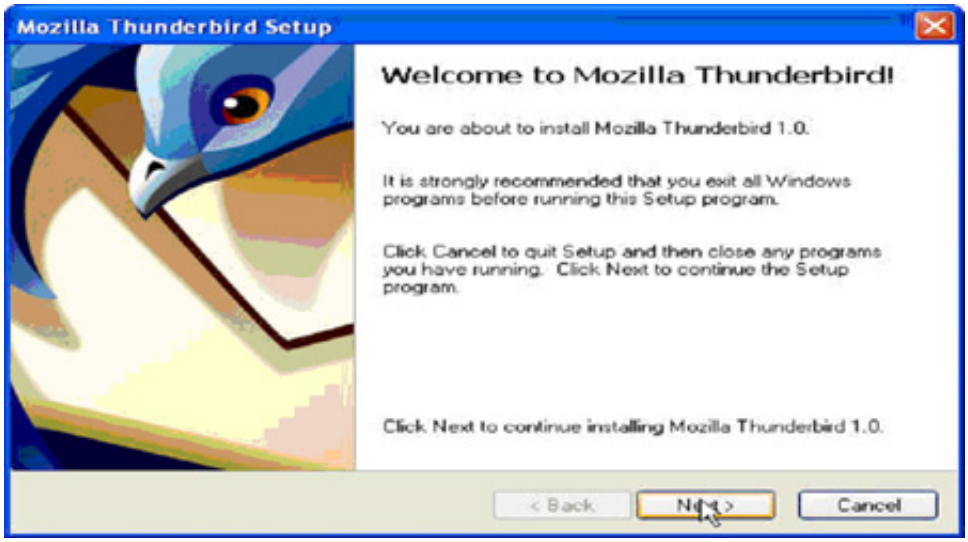
Unfortunately, Outlook does not have its own news reader. Until I began using Thunderbird, I needed Outlook for email and Outlook Express for newsgroups. That's two applications instead of one, a drain on resources.

If you feel comfortable with Outlook, and rarely use newsgroups, by all means keep using it. Microsoft's programs work perfectly with Microsoft's operating systems. If, however, you want a fast, efficient, easy and - perhaps most important - expandable e-mail program, you should switch to Mozilla's Thunderbird, companion to the Firefox browser.

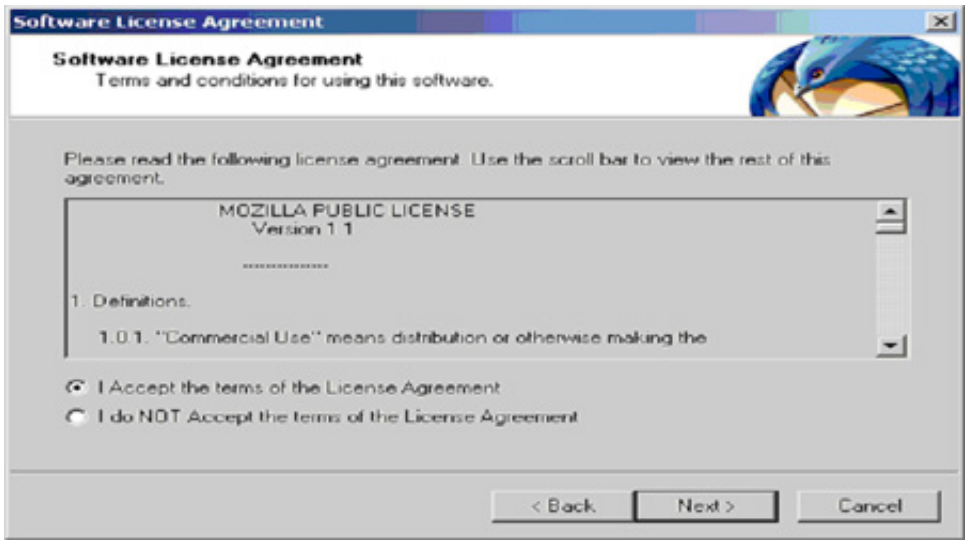
Now let's switch our attention to Thunderbird. Go to Mozilla's home page at http://www.mozilla.org and download Thunderbird.

After the download is completed, double click the setup icon.





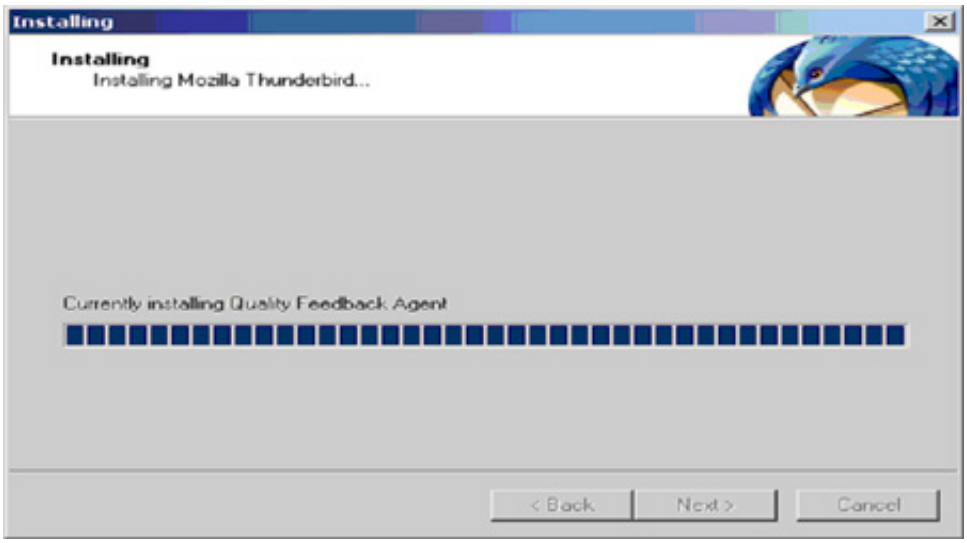
If you have any applications open, close them before clicking next.



Read the agreement. If you agree, click the Accept button, then click Next.

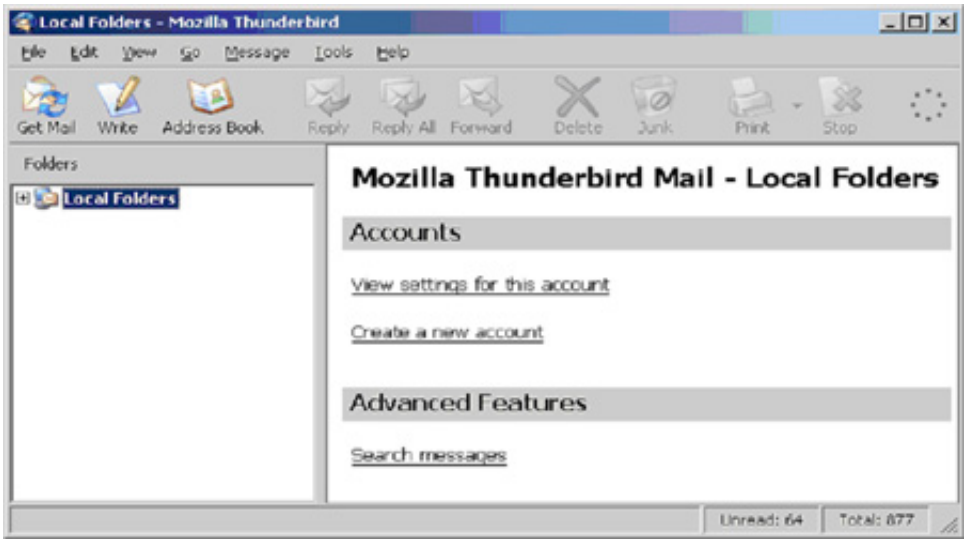
The next window asks you what kind of installation you want. Click Standard, the default. The following window summarizes you choices. Click next.

Afterward, you'll get the typical installing window,

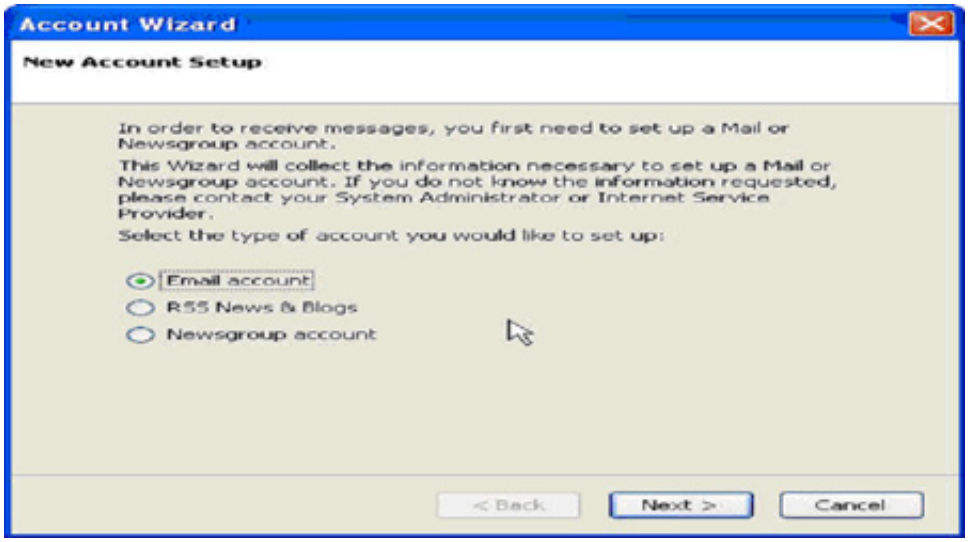


And finally, you'll get the installation complete window. By default, a checkbox opens Thunderbird when you click Finish.

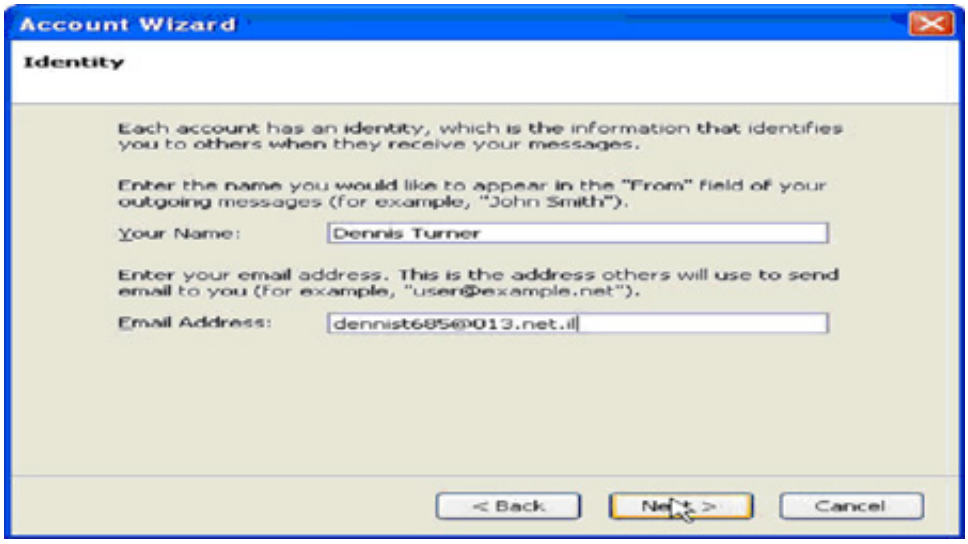
When you open Thunderbird for the first time, you have to create a new account. Click 'Create a new account'.



Select email account and click 'Next'.

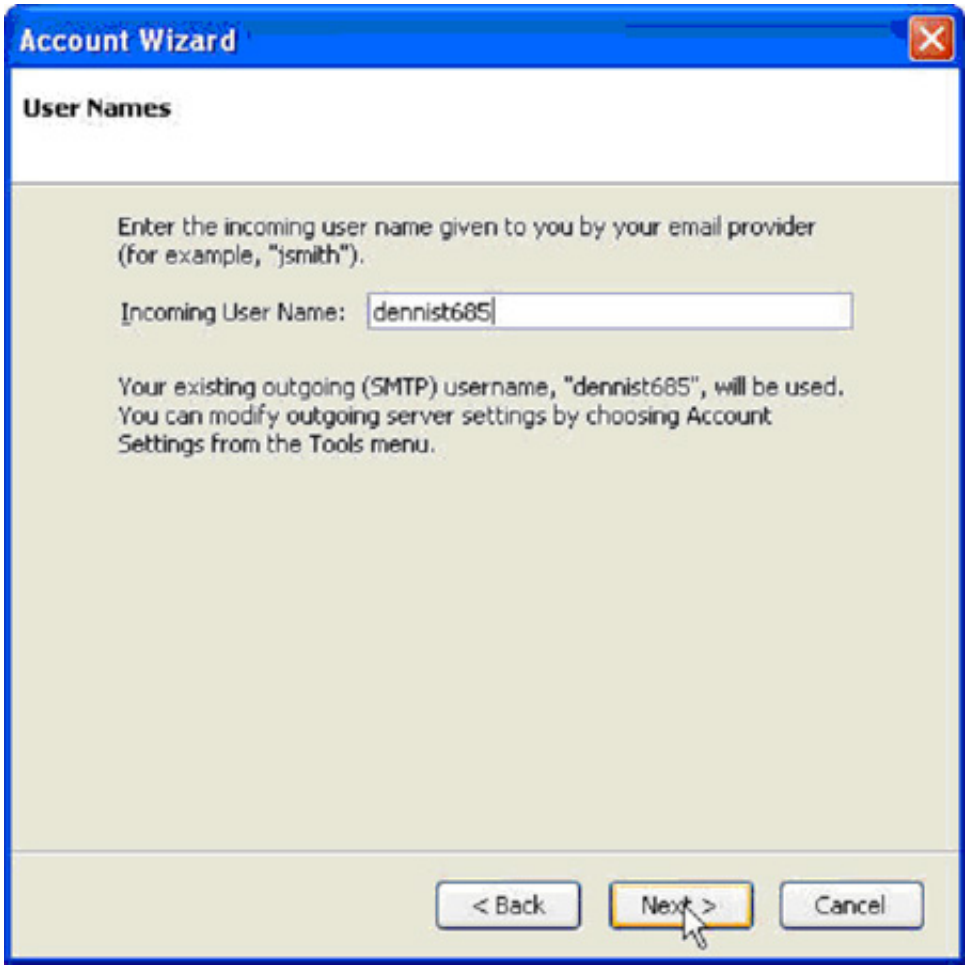


Fill in your name and email address. Click ‘Next’.



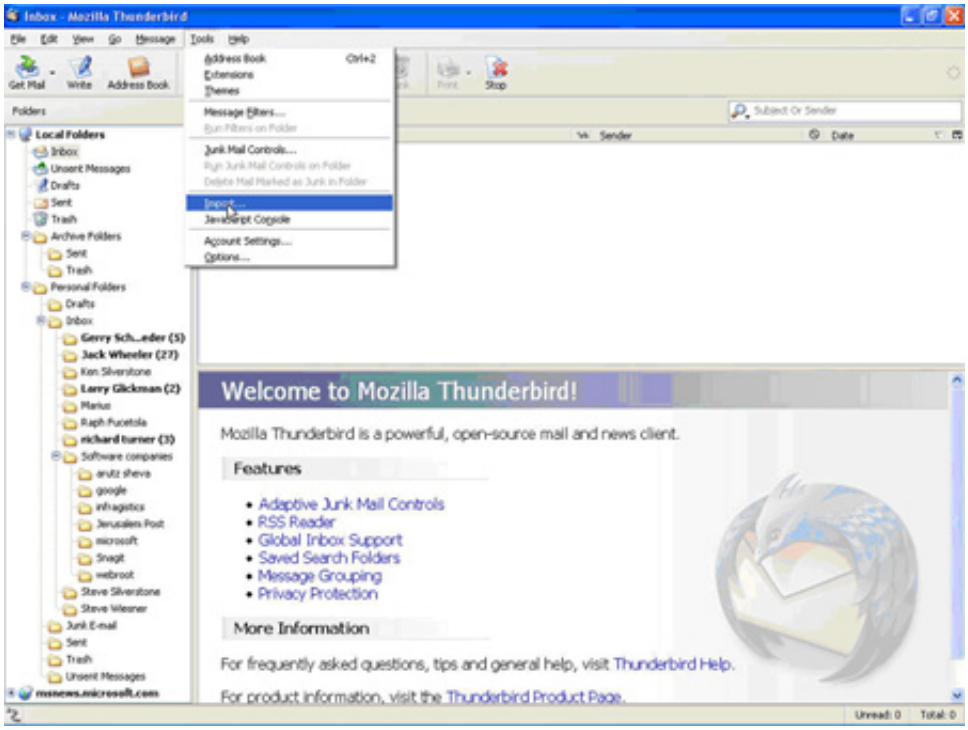
Now you are asked to type in your incoming server name. It’ll be the same name as you’re using with Outlook or Outlook Express. You can call up your ISP, if need be, and get it from them.

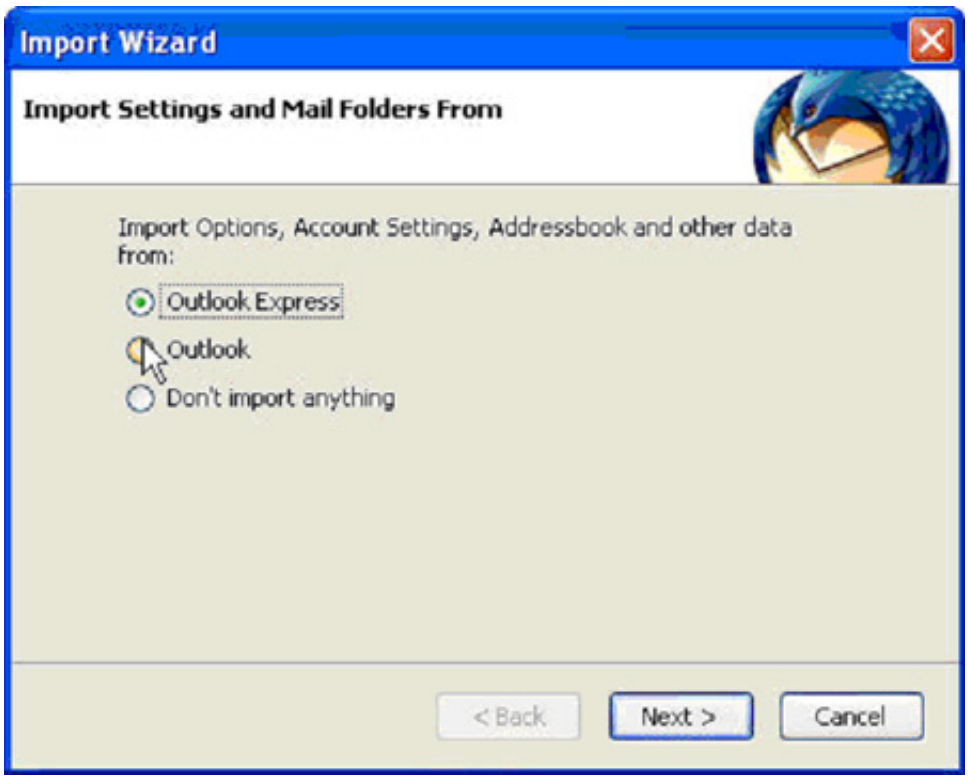
You'll now be asked to type in the user name given to your by your ISP.



Now you'll be asked what you'd like to call the account. Choose for yourself. Lastly, a screen will appear announcing you've successfully opened your new account.

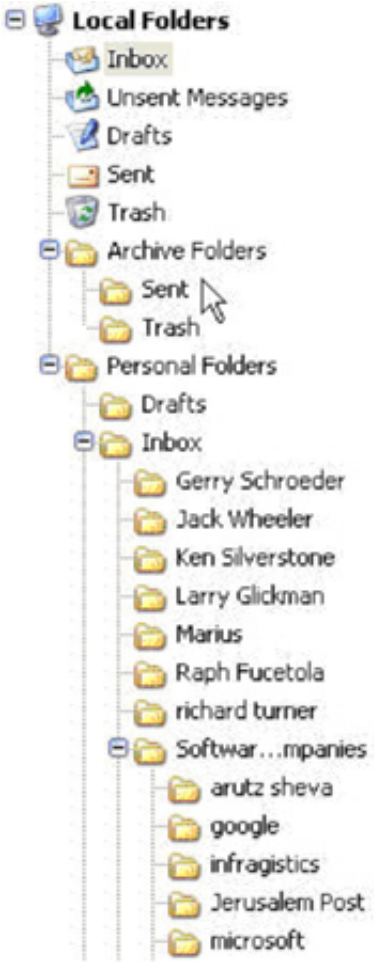
After opening your new account, you'll probably want to import your folders and address book into Thunderbird, and the emails contained within the folders. Click the 'Tools" menu on the menu bar, and then slide your mouse down to the 'Import' item and click again.





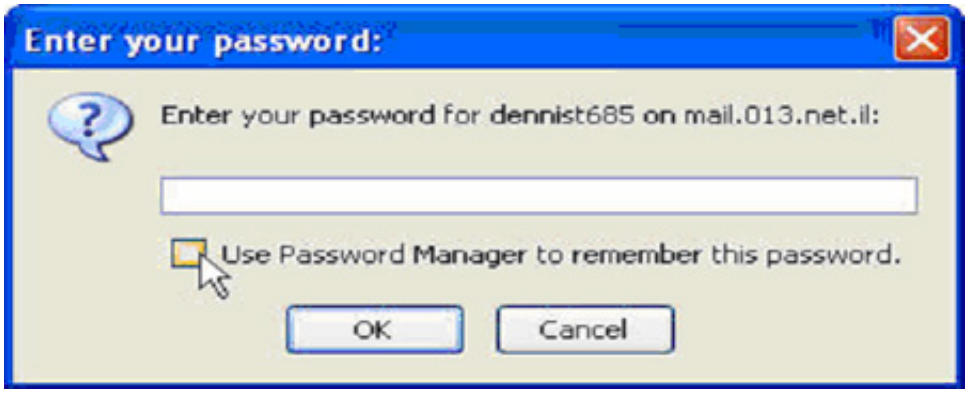
The default setting is Outlook Express, but I clicked the Outlook option button since my default email client had been Outlook. Click ‘Next’. Thunderbird then imports all the relevant data.

My personal folders were all imported, put in the right order, and contained the emails assigned them.



My address book was intact. I'm only showing a few of them.

To get your email, click the 'Get Mail' icon on the left of your toolbar. The first time you do this, you'll get the following input box:



That’s all I have time for this week. Next week we’ll discuss using the filtering and sorting functions of Thunderbird. We’ll discuss newsgroups and extensions. Like Firefox, Thunderbird has scads of free extensions. Some add the features of information management.

Dennis Turner