

## Boomerang for Gmail

Does anyone use the Boomerang browser extension for Gmail? I installed it yesterday because I really want the features it provides, but before using it I became concerned about privacy issues associated with using a third-party app to handle client communication. Does anyone else use it?

Actually, I can live without some of its features, but I'd like a way to schedule e-mails to be sent at a later time. As a true solo, I often work in the evenings or early in the morning but don't want to send e-mail to clients at such odd hours. Gmail doesn't offer native scheduling. I know I could use Outlook to schedule e-mail delivery, but making that change adds complexity that I'd prefer to avoid right now. Any other ideas?

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I have not used Boomerang, but why the concern about when the email is sent? I send email out at all sorts of times and days. I have never considered it a problem. If anyone asks, I explain that email is asynchronous communication, and I try to look at it every few hours when in the office. If I am in the office at 1 a.m., I will send the email then.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

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I use Boomerang - I've paid for it for 2 years and end up using more than 10 send later messages a month - the best example is billing.

If I create my monthly invoices at 4pm on a Sunday, I'd rather schedule them to go out at 10 am on Monday rather than on Sunday (I figure it's a higher likelihood that they will be read/responded to on a weekday).

I also use it when I travel to avoid time change issues and to make sure something goes out (for service).

Amanda L. Gordon, California

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LOL re Darrel's post. Over the years, I have had a few wacky obsessed opposing counsel, pro se or pro per parties send emails to me which show sent times in the wee early morning hours. Usually those emails are filled with invective, hyperbole, etc. making me think the sender was drunk or ....?

Michael Boli, California

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Before becoming a lawyer, I felt the same way as you about e-mail; just because I sent something at 2 AM doesn't mean the recipient has an obligation to respond any differently than if I'd sent it at 2 PM. I viewed it as simply being efficient, and, honestly, I still do.

However, particularly because I'm a one-person office, I'm also sensitive to the recipient's perception of receiving mail from me at odd hours. A client might view after-hours mail as an indication that I'm too busy to address her issue send it during the day, or that I'm NOT efficient because I can't manage to get things done during normal business hours, or that my work/life balance is out of whack, or that it's okay to communicate with me at all hours of the day, or - for those who are used to traditional postal mail - that I'm rude for intruding on his personal time. There are a whole host of negative perceptions that can result from sending e-mail after business hours, and they can be avoided by simply scheduling the e-mail to be sent at 8:30 AM the next day.

Your comment raises an interesting question, though. For the larger group, how many of you send e-mail at odd hours, and how many schedule mail for later delivery?

Andrew C. McDannold, Florida

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I send emails at odd hours. I am usually up and working around 5 or 6 am. I stop to take my kids to school. I stop to take my wife for a cup of coffee in the morning. I stop to pick kids up from school, attend a band concert for my 14-year-old, a soccer game for my 16-year-old, a dance recital for my 8-year-old. I stop to volunteer at the schools. I stop because, quite frankly, I don't like people and sometimes I just need a break. I will start working again at 7pm

and sometimes work until 9 or 10pm. During trial, I am working 18 or 19-hour days.

I just tell clients this up front. Not everyone likes it. And those people I refer to someone else. I have friends who practice in my practice areas and keep 8 to 5 schedules. I send the case that way, get a referral fee and move on. Happy client. Happy friend. Happy me. It works out for everyone.

Most of my clients appreciate it. Most of them are glad I am involved with these other things. I would just be up front with clients about it.

As for opposing counsel, I don't care what they think about when I send emails. Heck, with some of them, I email them after hours because I know their billable hour arse is waiting around for something to do and they will email me as soon as they get my email. I don't want to deal with them that much in a day, especially if they are from LA. LA attorneys are different!

Jonathan Stein, California

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One could attach a note to every email saying that our computer sends out emails at hours when the computing load is low.

Jordan Rosenberg, paralegal, California

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I tried Boomerang a couple years ago and for reasons I don't recall stopped using it. I don't like clients and opposing counsel knowing if I decide to work at 11 p.m. or 2 am or whenever, so I frequently will leave emails in the drafts folder if it's after 6 p.m. and then send it the next day after 9 am.

Ryan Ballard, Idaho

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Not sure how lying to your clients about why your email goes out at a particular time is a good idea.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

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We prided ourselves on responsiveness. I answered the phone and most email as they occurred, if I was awake. Only exception was if the person (usually OC) was disagreeable in some way. Those I would defer to morning. Tony would sometimes answer emails and inquiries that came in from the website after hours also. So the person would get two emails, which they all seemed to like.

Marilou Auer, a retired legal secretary who misses those days

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My firm uses Boomerang primarily for the purpose of having the ability to have emails come back into my inbox at a set time (e.g. I send a client info saying you have to file x document within 30 days and then set the email to come back to me at the 10 day mark so I can send a reminder if needed). This feature (which I would think is why it is named "Boomerang") works really well. We also use the extension for the ability to obtain read receipts to ensure that a recipient received an email. This feature works sometimes and not so well other times in my experience.

Hope that is helpful!

Curious what the privacy concerns are...

Ryan Shaening Pokrasso

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I use it as well, both to remind me of emails sent to me at a later time (like the one telling me I need to reup my bar referral at the end of the month) as well as the delayed send (works really well when faxes aren't going through to send them overnight)

Erin M. Schmidt, Ohio

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Thanks for your input. Maybe (probably?) my concerns about privacy are unnecessary, but after installing the Boomerang extension it asked me to allow access to my email account. Duh, it would obviously need such access to

do what it's supposed to do, but while staring at the dialog box I realized that my agreement would allow a third party to access confidential client communications and I got a little spooked at the thought. I suppose it's not all that different from giving Google access by virtue of its hosting of my Gmail account, but it seemed different enough to give me pause.

Since several SEZzers have reported using it, maybe I'm just being overly cautious.

Andrew C. McDannold

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I really want the read receipts. I used Boomerang on my other computer and it was fine. Do any other programs do this?

Andrea Goldman, Massachusetts

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Umm, and most computers waste the vast majority of their processing cycles. In other words, most of the time they're waiting for you. So, there's that, too.

Tim Ackermann

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I have predominantly business clients. None of them appear to care. I will say that generally the response to after business hour communication has been positive here.

All understand that if I am emailing I am physically in my office working. Whether early or late, on a weekend or holiday, at most I will get an occasional comment about how I should not be in the office at that time and should go home.

In my old office location, I had an exterior window, frequently with the blinds open. After hours, people knocked on the window so I would let them in the

building. A friend or two occasionally would drive by, knock on the window, and tell me to go home.

At the end of the day, any client or prospective client can be put off by a lot of different things. I spend my time on trying to get work done efficiently. I spend little time on trying to guess what clients or prospects think about.

It is my life and my business. Clients come in all forms with all kinds of perspectives. Not every client is a good match. No doubt I put some off for any of a multitude of reasons.

I try to be responsive and efficient, but I don't worry too much about perception, especially of a hypothetical client. If an existing client wants to meet after hours or on a weekend, I try to accommodate. If several clients tell me they wish I could do X, I consider it.

If a client told me not to send emails after 6 p.m. or some other rule, I would try to accommodate. I have not had a client make that request.

Darrell G. Stewart

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For those concerned about sending email at odd hours, what about writing the email whenever, leaving the finished product in drafts, and then hitting send during regular business hours?

Deb Matthews, Virginia

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Well, sure, but then you have to remember to do it. I was looking for a once-and-done solution.

Andrew C. McDannold

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In his book about going into practice without missing a meal, Jay Foonberg says if you are working late or on weekends, call the client with a question so

he will know you are dedicated to his case. Since phones are so passé, a late nite or weekend e-mail will serve the same purpose.

John Miles, Florida