



university of
 groningen

Digital CleanUp Week

Sustainable Digital Behaviour Guide



The Digital CleanUp Week is organized by the **Center for Information Technology (CIT)** and the **Green Office**.

www.rug.nl/DigitalCleanUp

TIPS FOR DIGITAL SUSTAINABILITY

Only keep things in the cloud when they need to be accessible online



GMAIL

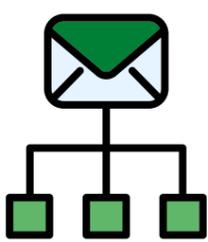
BASIC RULES

- 1 **Delete** emails as soon as you no longer need them
- 2 **Archive** what is really useful
- 3 Be **mindful** of what you send and receive



DELETING

1. **Mass delete** common emails (newsletters, calendar notifications etc.), old and large emails
2. Use **categories** to find more common emails to delete
3. As soon as you receive an email decide if **deleting** it or **archiving** it.
4. Clear out **spam** and **trash** folders!



STRUCTURING

1. **Label** emails based on projects/groups/courses, so you know when you can safely delete them
2. Create **filters** to make mass deleting easier
3. Create an **archive** of emails you'd like to save



SENDING AND RECEIVING

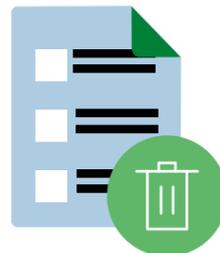
1. **Unsubscribe** from newsletters you don't really read
2. Use **reply** instead of reply-all whenever you can
3. Prevent **unnecessary** emails



DRIVE

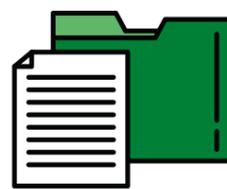
BASIC RULES

- 1 **Archive** on Y-drive or Corsica, or **store** locally
- 2 Move files **offline** if you do not need them online anymore
- 3 Be **mindful** of what you put in the online drives



DELETING

1. **Mass delete** unnecessary and redundant files, especially if large and outdated
2. Use the "list view" to **sort files** by date and size so it is easier to delete them
3. Have a look at **shared folders**; if they're outdated, ask the owner to delete them
4. Don't forget to empty the **trash**!



STRUCTURING

1. Create a **folder** for each project
2. Use a red **color** to mark outdated projects so you can mass delete them easily
3. Use the **star** function to mark important files that should not be deleted



GROUP PROJECTS

1. When the project is ending, **schedule** a date with the team to delete online files.
2. **Appoint** one person for archiving & deleting materials when the project is over.



EMAIL



DELETING EMAILS

1. Common emails

There are quite a few types of emails that you'll receive as a member of the UG and that you probably **don't need to keep**. Luckily, you can easily find them and delete them all at once by searching these:

Students:

Course notifications → 'do-not-reply@blackboard.com'

LibCal Workspace reservations → 'libcal'

Students and staff:

UKrant → 'ukrant'

Calendar notifications → 'invite.ics'

Google Docs comments → 'comments-noreply@docs.google.com'

Newsletters → 'unsubscribe'

Staff:

Afas notifications → 'no-reply-afas@rug.nl'

2. Old/large emails

Use search queries to find old and large emails, so you can easily delete them all at once. Simply write the query into the search bar. For instance:

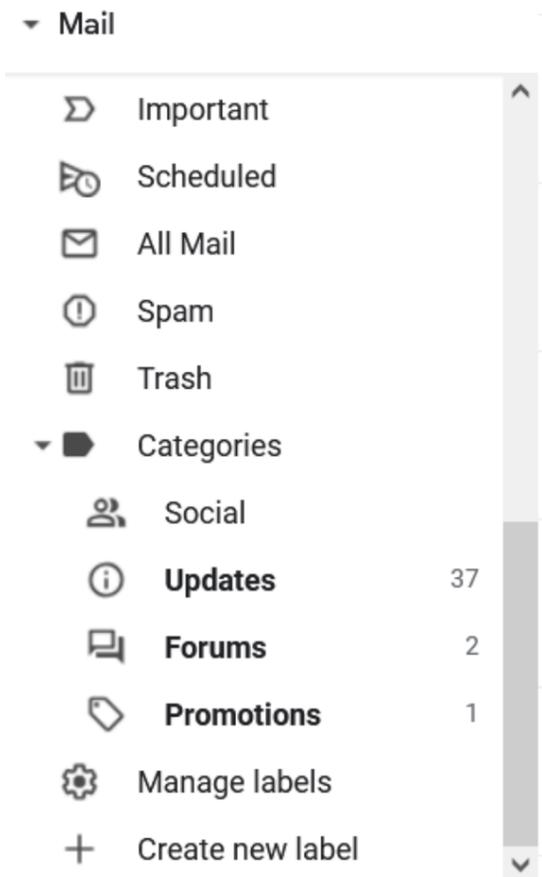
Date: older_than:1y (for years), older_than:100d (for days), older_than:3m (for months)

Size: larger:5m (for files that are larger than 5mb)

Mails with attachments: has:attachment

3. Categories

Google automatically sorts emails into categories. This can also be a great way to **find emails you no longer need**. You can find them on the left-hand side (you might have to click 'more' to make it pop up!).



4. Fine deleting

After deleting emails that are obviously no longer needed, it's time to critically look at the remaining emails. In order to **stay in a flow**, it's important to make the time you have to spend on each email as small as possible.

- For each email, ask yourself: **Can I delete this?**
 - ✓ **Yes:** delete it!
 - ✗ **No/Not sure/I need to do something with this (now!)/Literally anything else:** put it aside, by giving it a label
 - The quickest solution is a **broad label**, such as 'look-at-later'
 - Using labels for projects is smart (more tips are in the 'structuring' section!)
 - You can give each mail **multiple labels**, so feel free to also use labels for actionable tasks like reply/research/purchase, etc.

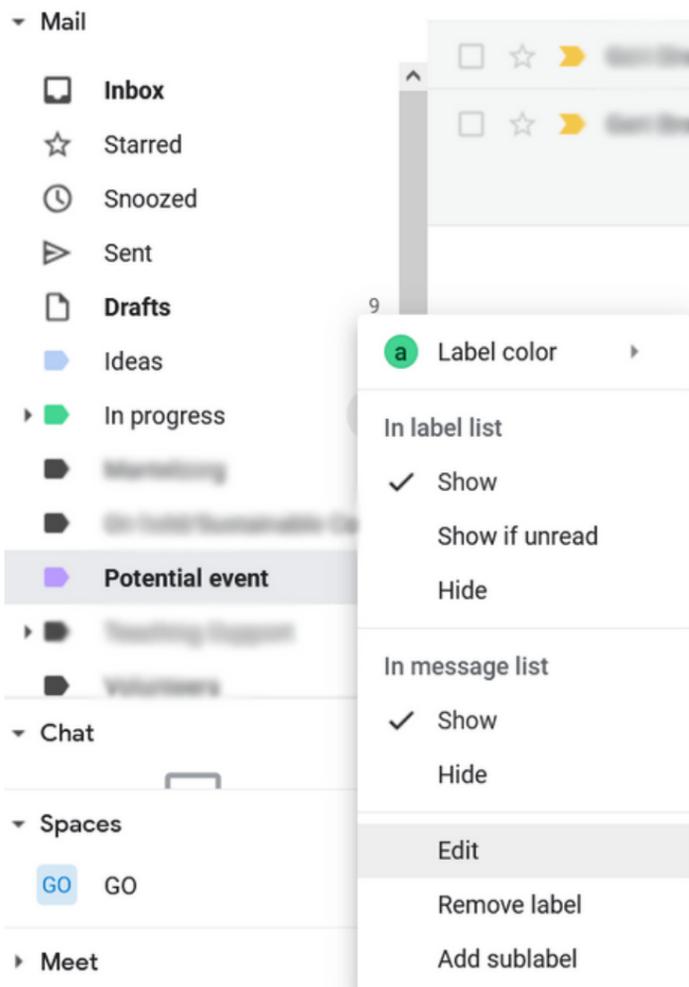


STRUCTURING EMAILS

1. Labels

Make **future cleaning efforts easier** by creating labels. By using labels for projects/courses/working groups etc. it's easier to know when you can safely clean up emails related to these things. It's all about creating a system to make cleaning up easier!

- **Cleaning up a label** means: deleting emails that are no longer necessary, as well as archiving emails that you need to keep.
- You can **nest labels** to create a clearer structure. Just click the dots, go to 'Edit' (see picture) and use the 'Nest label under' option. For example, you can use categories like these (adjust to your own situation):
 - **Ideas**: for projects that haven't started yet
 - **In progress**: things that are ongoing
 - **On hold**: things that were started, but are now on hold
 - **Completed**: things that have been completed, but still need to be cleaned up



2. Filters

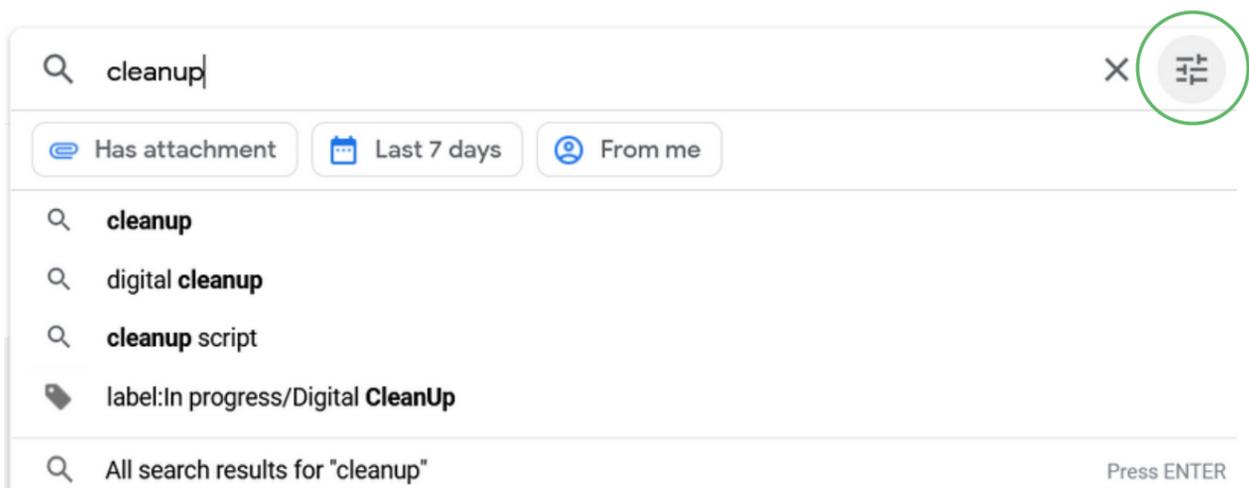
Setting up filters is another way to **speed up your future cleaning efforts**. Filters are simply saved search queries. You cannot just use them to quickly find all emails that fulfill these criteria, but also to automatically do something when these emails arrive in your inbox (such as: give them a label, star them, delete them, etc.).

Setting up a filter is simple:

1. Type something into the **search bar** and click on the slider icon (see picture below).
2. Adjust the filter to your liking by filling out the different **options**.

For inspiration: see the tips we've listed in the deleting section!

1. Click the **'Create filter'** button to create a new filter.
2. A new window will appear. Here, you can specify **what Gmail should do** when you receive an email that corresponds to the filter.



Search all conversations

From

To

Subject

Has the words

Doesn't have

Size greater than 2 MB

Date within 1 day

Search All Mail

Has attachment

Create filter Search

Some nice things that you can do automatically with filters:

- Label emails with certain **projects or courses**, for example, based on the sender or a keyword.
- Label emails that you'll probably want to **delete quickly** so that you can go through them and delete them when you have the time.
- Delete emails that you **never read** but can't unsubscribe from.
- Label or delete **Calendar notifications**, by including 'invite.icsl'.
 - If you do want to receive notifications when meetings have been changed, simply add '-canceled' and '-updated'

When creating filters, using **search operators** can really help to select the right emails. The following operators might come in handy:

- "" to find an exact **phrase** (for example: "Green Office" will find emails that include the term Green Office, while Green Office on its own will also include emails with just the term green and office, but not necessarily next to each other)
- + to find exact **terms** (for example: +lectures to find emails with the word 'lectures' but not the word 'lecture')
- - to find emails that do **not include a specific term** (for example: -updated to find emails without the word 'updated'; which comes in very useful when filtering Calendar notifications)

3. Archiving

Archiving is a way to **declutter your inbox** by putting emails that you want or need to keep for future reference in designated folders. Do you have emails which you don't need anymore, but perhaps think that you would like to refer to them in the future? These are the candidates for archiving.

Archiving is simple:

- Create **designated folders** for archiving in Gmail. Depending on your preference, you can make one big archive or create sub-folders based on content on projects.
- Every once in a while, **have a look at your archive** and see if it needs cleaning. You will probably approach this differently from the main inbox, since you already saved these emails for a reason in the first place.
- **Staff(!)**: Be aware that archive-worthy materials (typically attachments such as memos) are to be archived in the archiving system for UG (**Corsa**), your mailbox is not the right tool to archive these.

Advantages of archiving:

- If done well, the archive consists only of emails you would like to keep. This makes it easier to **find those emails** when you need them.
- Reduces the number of emails in your active mailbox, which makes it **lighter to work** with.
- Depending on your position within the university, you might be required to archive certain emails. Having a conscious archiving practice will help you **pull up emails** when necessary.



SENDING AND RECEIVING EMAILS

1. Prevent unnecessary emails

Every email you send has an impact on our planet. So, try to avoid sending and receiving emails that could easily have been circumvented. Some tips:

- Include **as much information as necessary** in your email, to avoid unnecessary emailing back and forth. For example: if you expect the recipient might want a meeting, already mention your availability.
- Try not to send **short, unactionable responses** such as 'Thank you', 'Received', 'Have a nice weekend' etc. You could always add them in advance to your last email with actionable content, or you could mention it in your signature. For example: "The average email emits 4 grams of CO₂, so thank you in advance!"
- Use **'reply'** instead of 'reply all' whenever you can.

2. Unsubscribe from newsletters

Newsletters end up in our mailboxes (nearly) every day. Often, these will include lots of pictures, increasing their impact even more. Unsubscribing from newsletters is a great way to **reduce your impact!**

- An easy way to do this is to unsubscribe whenever a new newsletter flies into your inbox. Just hit that unsubscribe **button!**
- If you have more time, you could also do it **while deleting** your emails,
- Some newsletters are just the best way to stay up-to-date. If you'd really like to keep receiving the newsletter, check if the mailing list offers a **less-frequent version**.



Don't forget to empty your trash folder after deleting

The following tips are aimed at the **files stored in the 'My Drive'** portion of Google Drive. Just like with Gmail: any files that get removed will be placed in the trash. Don't forget to empty the trash after you're done cleaning up!

These guidelines do not concern research data, research data management has to be treated in a more specific way depending on its nature, the [Digital Competence center](#) can help you with it!

Keep the central tip in mind:

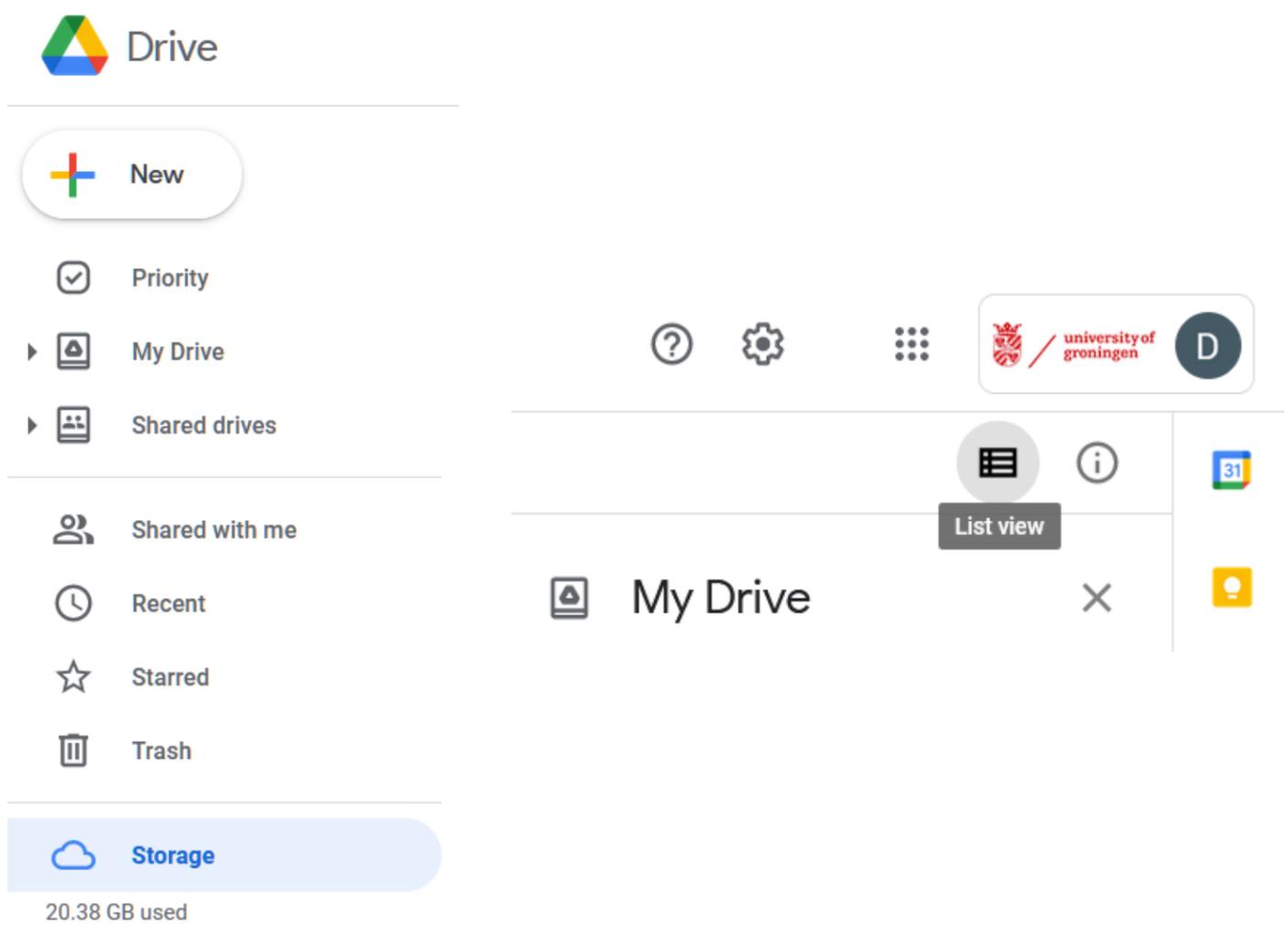
only use cloud storage for things that need to be accessible online. This means that your Google Drive should only be filled with things you're working on right now and that need to be accessible online (for collaboration, accessing them from home, etc.).
Never use the Drive for archiving materials!

DELETING

Old/large files

On Drive, too, age and size are good ways to quickly find files to delete.

- **Big files:** clicking on '**Storage**' in the menu on the left (see image) will show a list of files on your Google Drive, from big to small.
- **Old files:** Use '**list view**' (see image) to easily find files that haven't been modified in a long time. You can sort the list by date by clicking on the arrow next to 'last modified'.



Archiving

If you're a staff member, some of the materials you're using in Google Drive might need to be archived. Archiving is important for all information the UG needs for the **day-to-day administration and accountability** of the UG's actions, both self-created and received from third parties; e.g., resolutions, complaints, meeting documents, policy memoranda, etc. Keep in mind that:

- The UG uses the application **Corsa** for archiving materials. Everything that needs to be archived for UG purposes should be archived through that.
- If you want to archive materials for personal usage, do so on **local drives** (your device, external hard drives) or on the **Y-drive**. The Y-drive gets backed up by the UG. Use the Y-drive for work-related data that needs to be kept.
- You can delete **non-archive-worthy files** such as drafts whose process has been completed, personal notes, and working documents (informal working arrangements, etc.).



STRUCTURING

1. Creating a folder structure

Just like labels in Gmail, these folders will help you keep your files **organized** and will make future cleaning easier.

- Since Google Drive should only be used for ongoing projects, you could make a folder for each project and another folder for **finished projects** that you can't delete straight away (for example: because it's a shared folder and you'll need to talk to the other participants first).
- Using colors can be a great way to help you gain a visual overview of your folders! Simply right-click the folder and **select a color**. You could, for example, use colors to differentiate between different aspects of your Drive (research, teaching, and admin tasks).
- Keep in mind that files can only be in **one folder at once** (unlike Gmail's labels).
- For an even better overview, create an **index doc** in the root of the Drive. This is simply a Google doc in which you can keep track of your folders on the Drive and when you plan to archive them.

2. Archiving files from old projects

Start **reorganizing** your Drive.

- Start with **loose files** (files that are not in a folder). Either delete them or put them in a folder if you still need them to be on Drive.
- For each **folder**, ask yourself:
 - Is this an **ongoing project**? Does it need to be on Google Drive?
 - ✔ **Yes** → keep it on the Drive; check if there are any unnecessary files, but otherwise let it be for now (consider marking it with a color, so you know you've checked it).
 - ✘ **No** → move on to the next step
 - **Optional**: to stay in the flow, you can temporarily put folders that you want to archive in a '**To be archived**' folder. This prevents you from getting held up by trying to archive a large folder while sorting out which folders need to be archived.
 - Is the folder or are the contents of the folder shared with people that still need them?
 - ✘ **No** → Archive the folder by **deleting files** that you no longer need and **downloading** the remaining files to your computer. From there, you can archive them in the appropriate location. Archive-worthy materials should be archived in the archiving system Corsica. The Y-drive provides secure backup for employees. Data types that are less sensitive can be stored locally, for example on your computer or an external hard drive.
 - ✔ **Yes** → contact the other **users of the folder**. Depending on the situation, you could ask them if it's okay to delete the files or schedule a meeting to archive the folder together.

3. Shared folders

After going through My Drive, you could also have a look at **shared drives** and **shared with me** (both can be found in the menu on the left). These files are not stored on your drive, but on other people's drives - so just deleting them from your Drive won't do much. Instead, consider reaching out to the owners of the folder or file if you spot any finished projects. You could use our example mail or, even better, schedule a meeting to catch up and archive the folder together!



STRUCTURING

Often, Google Drive gets used to collaborating with students or colleagues on joined projects. While this is where Drive shines, it does complicate cleaning your Drive quite a bit. **When can you delete a file?** Maybe someone will need it in the future. You could email all the people that you've shared the folder with - but most likely you'll just let it be where it is.

To prevent such worries in the future, use these tips:

- **Appoint one folder owner**. They will be responsible for deleting the folder after the project has finished. Let them communicate the deadline for downloading files.
- Decide (at the start of the project) **when to delete the project files** from Drive and mark this date on your Calendars. This way, everyone knows by when they have to download everything they want to keep.
- You could use a **designated folder** for all files that need to be archived (such as final versions). Make sure multiple people download this folder, to avoid losing important files.

The making of this guide would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Green Office team (student assistants and staff members) and the CIT department.

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