

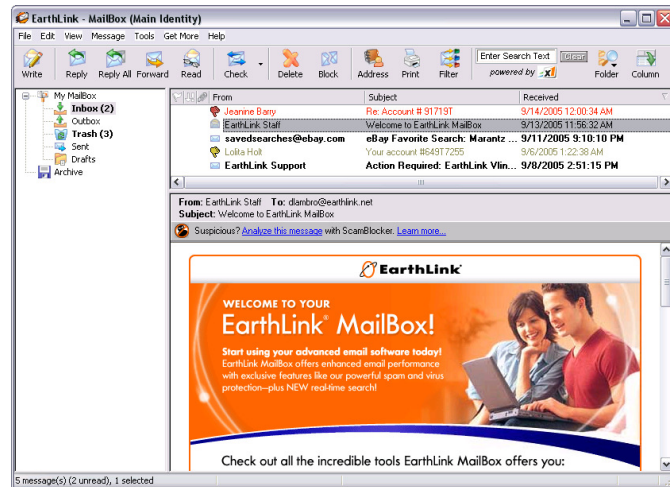
EarthLink MailBox Help System (Excerpts)

Introduction

This document features excerpts of a help system I created for EarthLink MailBox, a Windows email client. It also describes challenges I faced and explains my solutions to those challenges.

Product Description

MailBox is a POP/IMAP client. In addition to the standard features found in most email programs, MailBox includes some EarthLink-specific features, such as integration with EarthLink's server-based spamBlocker service.



Target Audience

The primary audience is EarthLink customers, who have access to all of MailBox's features (such as spamBlocker integration). The secondary audience is non-EarthLink Internet users, who have access to all of MailBox's features except for spamBlocker integration.

Help Objectives

The help system's goal is to explain how to perform basic email tasks (sending, receiving, writing, replying, etc.) using MailBox and to familiarize EarthLink customers with the customer-only features of the program.

My Contribution

The original help system was created by another writer who did not have time to maintain it. I took over the project, revising and reorganizing existing topics and adding new topics for new product features (particularly spamBlocker and the anti-phishing ScamBlocker features). I used RoboHelp to format and build the final Compiled HTML Help (.chm) file for delivery to the engineering team.

Excerpts

ScamBlocker

One help section I wrote from scratch describes MailBox's ScamBlocker feature (Figure 1). ScamBlocker is an anti-phishing tool that analyzes incoming email messages and displays alerts if any phisher-like content is detected.

- **The Challenge:** Because ScamBlocker has four different alert levels—and because the differences between each level are often subtle—my help copy had to clarify the distinctions as clearly as possible.
- **My Solution:** For each alert level, I described the conditions that might cause an email message to be flagged and, perhaps more importantly, suggested how the user should react to each alert (see Figure 2 for expanded descriptions).

Figure 1 – Topic describing ScamBlocker analysis results.

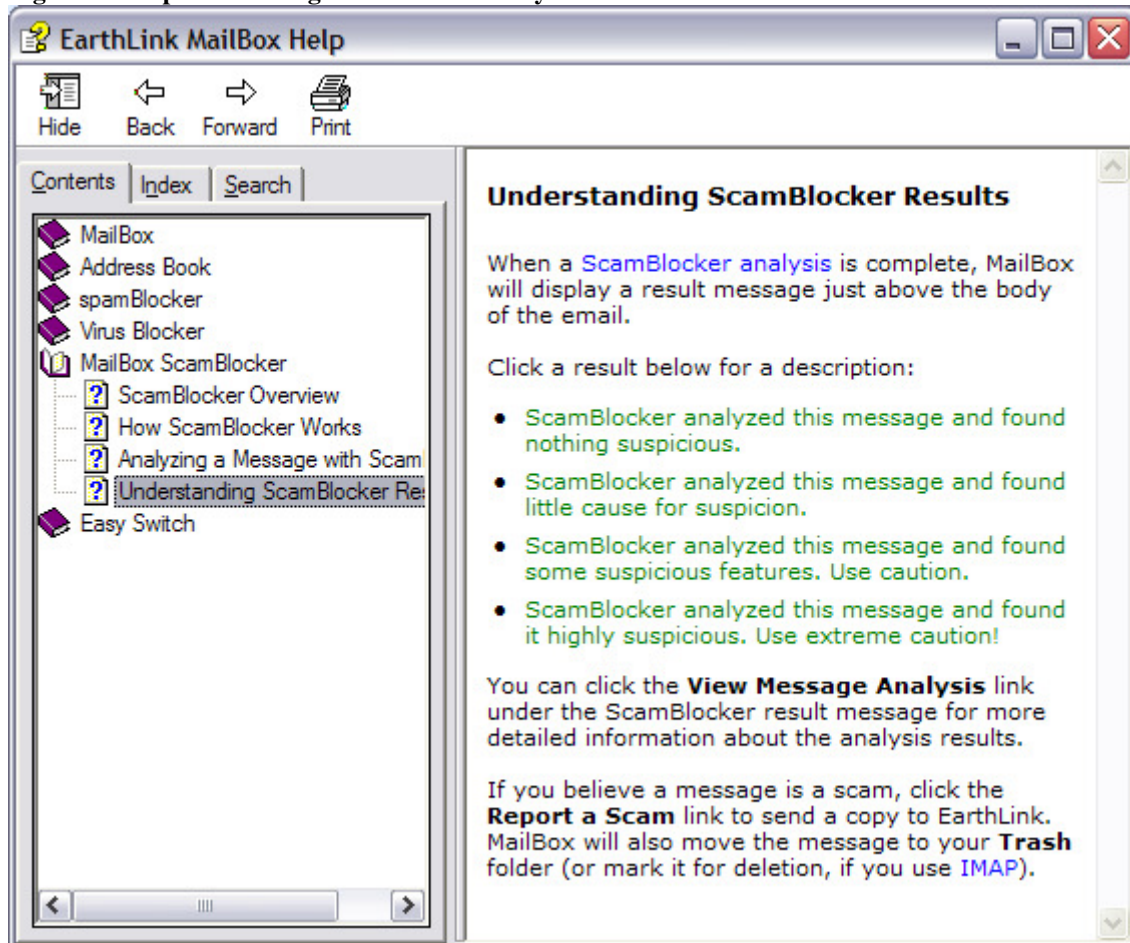


Figure 2- ScamBlocker results topic with descriptions expanded.

Understanding ScamBlocker Results

When a **ScamBlocker analysis** is complete, MailBox will display a result message just above the body of the email.

Click a result below for a description:

- **ScamBlocker analyzed this message and found nothing suspicious.**
The headers and links in the message do not appear to contain any suspicious characteristics. You can be reasonably confident that this message is not a scam.
- **ScamBlocker analyzed this message and found little cause for suspicion.**
The message headers or links contain an irregularity that may indicate fraud, but nothing significant. Although you should use some caution, the message may be harmless.
- **ScamBlocker analyzed this message and found some suspicious features. Use caution.**
The message headers and links contain a significant number of suspicious characteristics. The message is probably a scam. You should be careful when clicking any of the links in the message.
- **ScamBlocker analyzed this message and found it highly suspicious. Use extreme caution!**
The headers and links in the message contain a high number of suspicious characteristics. The message is almost certainly a scam. EarthLink recommends that you not click the links in the message.

You can click the **View Message Analysis** link under the ScamBlocker result message for more detailed information about the analysis results.

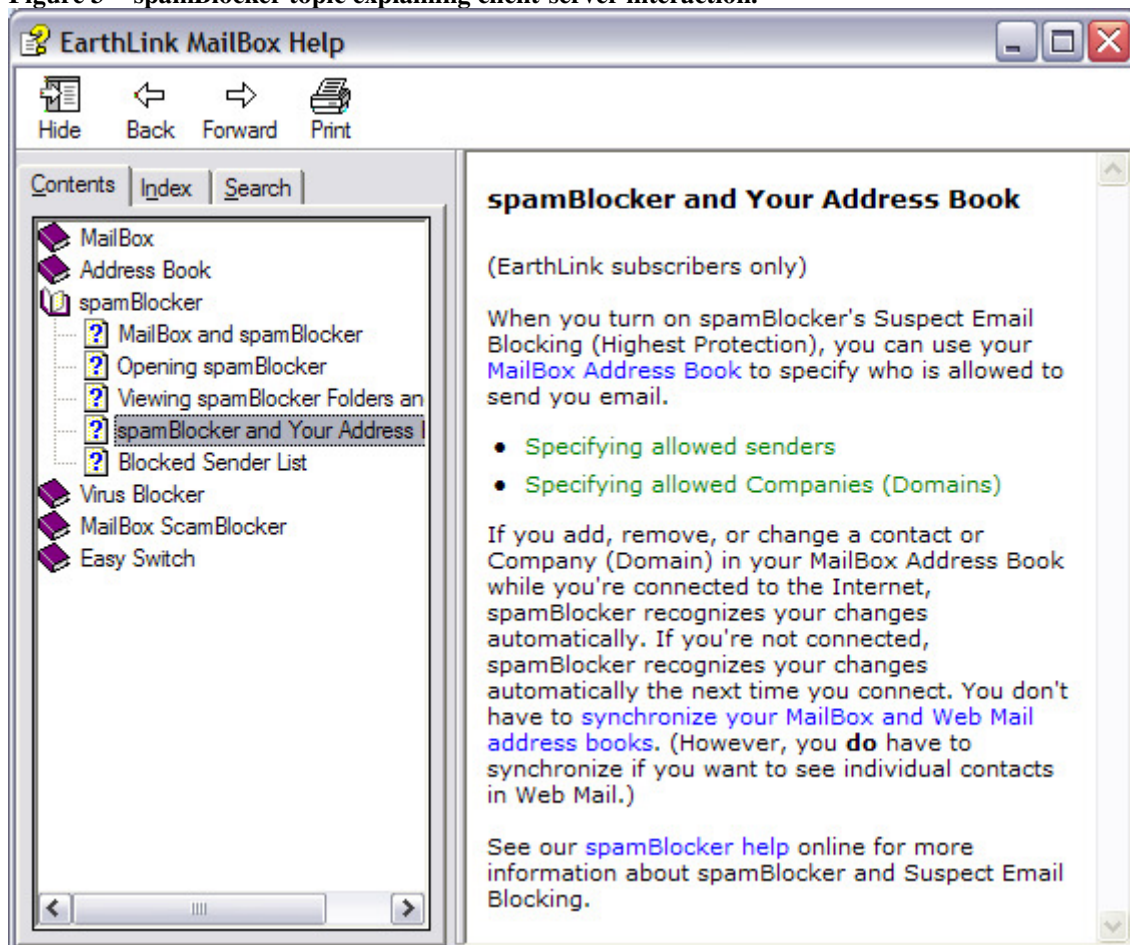
If you believe a message is a scam, click the **Report a Scam** link to send a copy to EarthLink. MailBox will also move the message to your **Trash** folder (or mark it for deletion, if you use **IMAP**).

spamBlocker

Another help section I created from scratch describes the integration of EarthLink's server-based spamBlocker tool into MailBox's user interface (Figure 3). Prior to this feature's introduction, users had to set their anti-spam preferences by going to a Web site. Now, they can do so directly within MailBox.

- **The Challenge:** The notion of controlling a server-based tool using a client interface is bound to cause confusion for some users. One area of potential confusion is related to a technical quirk. Adding email addresses and domains to the MailBox address book automatically whitelists them for the purposes of spamBlocker, without the need to sync with the online address book. But syncing is required before whitelisted addresses actually appear as entries in the user's online address book.
- **My Solution:** In the same topic that explains how to whitelist addresses and domains, I included a paragraph at the end to explain the unintuitive client-server interaction.

Figure 3 - spamBlocker topic explaining client-server interaction.



Virus Blocker

Virus Blocker is a server-based anti-virus tool. MailBox users can access Virus Blocker's online configuration tool through a menu option in the client, as described in Figure 4.

- **The Challenge:** MailBox displays virus status icons next to emails in the message list pane. With eight different statuses, however, users needed a quick reference to be able to decipher each icon's meaning.
- **My Solution:** I wanted users to be able to determine each icon's meaning at a glance. Rather than rely on lengthy explanations of each icon, I constructed a table to present the information as compactly as possible (Figure 5).

Figure 4 - Topic describing how to activate the Virus Blocker feature.

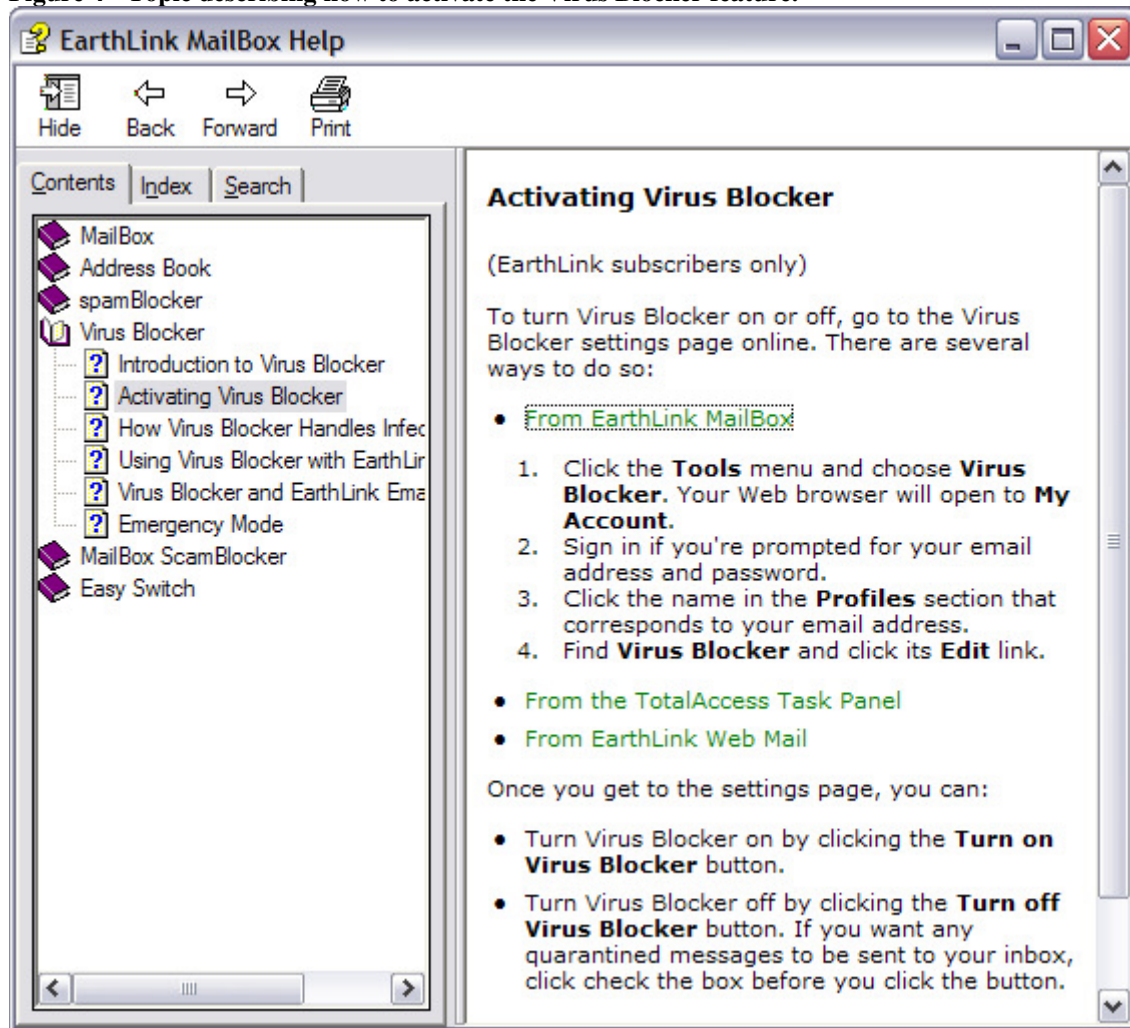


Figure 5 - Topic describing virus status icons.

