

FUNDAMENTALS OF OUTLOOK DATA FILES

Guide

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PREFACE

Microsoft Outlook is one of the widely used email clients used in organizations of all sizes, from large enterprises to small and mid-sized businesses. Aside from business messaging, the application also performs calendaring, task management, contacts management, and other crucial functions to facilitate workplace collaboration.

Outlook stores the user's mailbox data such as emails, attachments, calendar schedules, contacts, tasks, notes, folders, etc., in an Outlook data file. This file, stored or cached on the user's system, allows local access to email data without Internet connectivity, unlike the typical web-based email services such as Gmail. The Outlook data file can store several GBs of business-critical data, particularly for the tenured employees or users who exchange a significant number of emails. Therefore, a strong grasp of Outlook data file concepts is crucial for email administrators and Outlook users to manage their email database files, troubleshoot issues such as corruption, and protect the mailbox data from loss.

This Guide provides an in-depth understanding of Outlook data files, covering a wide range of aspects, like what are Outlook data files, their types, existence scenarios, etc. It also covers various Outlook data file management scenarios such as creating Outlook mail backup, importing emails, reducing data file size, consolidating mails from multiple sources, etc. We wrap this Guide with a section focused on Outlook data file corruption and methods to fix the corruption issues. The information presented in this guide applies to Outlook 2019, 2016, 2013, 2010, and 2007 on Windows operating system.

WHAT IS AN OUTLOOK DATA FILE?

An Outlook data file is a file for storing a local copy of Outlook emails, attachments, contacts, calendar, notes, tasks, folders, etc., on the user's computer. It is created automatically after adding an email account to Outlook. You add an email account to Outlook by navigating to File > Add Account and then entering the email address. Further, on-screen instructions help you follow the steps to configure the email account, resulting in Outlook data file creation.



Image 1: Outlook Account Information screen with Add Account button

TYPES OF OUTLOOK DATA FILE

There are two types of Outlook data files, namely -

PERSONAL STORAGE TABLE (PST) FILE

PST or .pst file format is an open proprietary file format for storing a local copy of mail items such as emails, calendar, etc. The PST file is associated with email databases of Microsoft email tools such as Outlook, Exchange Server, and Windows Messaging. The Personal Storage Table file format is particularly associated with Outlook email accounts configured using Post Office Protocol (POP), also known as POP3. POP is a method wherein the email service downloads the new messages from the mail server to the user's computer. Further, it stores the Sent messages on the local computer and not on the mail server.

Notably, Outlook 2013 and earlier versions of Outlook configured with IMAP also use a PST file. We mention this among the "existence scenarios" covered later in this Guide.

Advantages of PST file

a) High portability: PST is a highly portable file format for storing and transferring data between different computers, email clients, and mail services, etc. The email data stored in a PST file is readily importable in Office 365, Exchange Server, Microsoft 365, etc.

b) Email backup utility: PST files provide a convenient and reliable way to create local backups of Outlook message folders, including emails, contacts, and calendar, in a restorable form. In tandem with automatic email archival facility in Outlook configured with Exchange Server (using IMAP or MAPI), PST files provide the local backup utility.

Disadvantages of PST file

a) Performance and corruption issues: PST files can become slow and corrupt due to abrupt termination of Outlook client, large-sized PST file (> 20 GB), PST file stored and accessed on a network, Outlook add-ins, etc. As per Microsoft KB 297019, "the use of a .pst file over a network connection may result in a corrupted .pst file if the connection degrades or fails." These issues impact Outlook performance and might result in mailbox data loss due to PST file corruption.

b) Restricted access: PST files store, archive, or back up the mailbox data on a local drive, which is inaccessible through any other device or app on a network. Unless Outlook is configured with Exchange Server through IMAP or MAPI, wherein an archived backup copy is available on the server, there is no way to access the user's mailbox data apart from the PST file stored on the local computer. Of course, the PST file being portable can be copied and moved to another system, but nonetheless it remains in local control and can also hamper access if is password protected.

c) Data retention policy concerns: Mailbox data stored in PST files can pose challenges to the organization's data retention policy. For example, it is not possible to manage the PST file data using retention tags. Further, keeping track of the mailbox data "actually" backed up on PST files is challenging in the absence of a well-defined process and documentation.

This limitation can result in e-discovery challenges as Exchange eDiscovery tools do not discover the data stored in a PST. Even after performing an expensive e-discovery on PST files, there is no way to guarantee data integrity to support the litigation needs.

OFFLINE STORAGE TABLE (OST) FILE

OST or .ost file format is a type of Outlook data file that stores a synchronized copy of the user's mailbox data on the local computer. The OST file allows users to access their mailbox data, compose messages, add contacts, create meetings, etc., even when the mail server connectivity is disrupted. It automatically synchronizes these offline changes once the Internet connection is restored.

OST file is created for Outlook accounts configured with Microsoft 365, Exchange Server, or Outlook.com using Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP) or Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI).

Advantages of OST file

Offline email access: OST file is a synchronized local copy of the user's mailbox data on server. The file allows offline access to emails, attachments, contacts, tasks, calendar, etc. without needing access to the mail server. The user can perform actions like draft new emails, read past emails, add or update contacts, create meetings, etc. with help of the OST file.

Disadvantages of OST file

Mailbox inaccessibility: The OST file needs the associated Exchange Server account to allow access to the mailbox data via Outlook. Unlike the PST, you cannot open and export an OST file data directly using Outlook client if the user account is deleted from Exchange Server. This situation poses a technical challenge if you need to <u>extract the mailbox data from inaccessible OST</u> <u>files</u>, for example, when the mailbox is purged from Exchange Server and there is no backup.

COMPARISON OF OST FILE AND PST FILE

The following table summarizes a comparison of OST file and PST file based on specific parameters:

Parameter	OST File	PST File
Purpose	Provides offline access to emails and other mailbox data.	Used for creating local backup, transferring mailbox data, consolidating emails from supported services, etc.
Email protocol	IMAP	POP
Portability	Low portability. The file strictly associates with the Exchange account & client machine. Moving an OST file to another disk or folder location requires a specific procedure.	High portability. Can be directly copied and moved to another folder or disk.
Security	Enabled using encryption or password protection.	Enabled using encryption or password protection.
Accessibility	Requires Exchange-associated account to allow mailbox data access.	Allows direct mailbox data access through Outlook client.
Manageability	Automatically synchronizes the data with mail server.	PST file is managed offline by an individual user or administrator.

EXISTENCE SCENARIOS FOR OST & PST FILES

Your system (local computer) may contain a PST file, an OST file, or both file types based on how your email account is configured. The following scenarios help you determine the type of Out-look data files existing on your system:

SCENARIO 1: MICROSOFT EMAIL CLIENTS CONFIGURED USING POP3 > PST FILE

Microsoft Outlook, Exchange Server, or Windows Messaging mail clients configured using POP create a PST file, storing the user's mailbox data on the local system. In POP mail accounts, the incoming messages are downloaded from the server and stored in the PST file.

SCENARIO 2: EMAIL ACCOUNT CONFIGURED USING IMAP \rightarrow OST FILE

Microsoft mail accounts, including Outlook.com, Exchange Server, and Microsoft 365 email accounts, configured using IMAP, store a synchronized copy of the user's mailbox data as an OST file on the local computer.

SCENARIO 3: OUTLOOK MAPI CLIENT WITH EXCHANGE SERVER \rightarrow OST FILE

Outlook MAPI client (Outlook 2013 and Outlook 2016) configured with Exchange Server mail account results in OST file creation. For this, you need to <u>enable Cached Exchange Mode in Outlook</u> if it is not turned ON by default.

SCENARIO 4: OUTLOOK 2013 OR EARLIER VERSION WITH IMAP → PST FILE

In Outlook 2013 or older versions, email accounts configured with IMAP used .pst files to store the mailbox data. It means, Outlook 2013 and older accounts, irrespective of POP or IMAP configuration, store the users' mailbox data in a PST file.

SCENARIO 5: CREATING LOCAL BACKUP IN SCENARIO 2 OR 3 \rightarrow PST & OST FILE

Suppose you create a local backup of Outlook MAPI client configured with Exchange Server or another Microsoft mail service (like Outlook.com or Microsoft 365) configured with IMAP. In that case, both OST and PST files will exist on the local system. The PST file is created when you <u>exported the Outlook mailbox data to create a local backup</u>.

OUTLOOK DATA FILE LOCATION

Outlook saves the data files at specific locations based on the Outlook version installed on the system. Also, the type of Outlook data file, i.e., OST or PST, on the computer depends upon the mail account configuration outlined in the previous section. The following are the default locations of Outlook data files:

Outlook 2007 and 2010

C:\db1>eseutil /mh db1.edb

Outlook 2013, 2016, and 2019

C:\users\<username>\Documents\Outlook Files

HOW TO LOCATE OUTLOOK DATA FILES?

Aside from manually navigating to an Outlook data file location, you can directly locate and open the data file location using the following steps:

- 1. Launch Outlook and click the File tab
- 2. Click Account Settings



Image 2: Outlook Account Setting screen

3. Click the **Data Files** tab, click a data file, and then click **Open File Location.**

Account	t Settings						×
Data C	Files Jutlook Data F	Files					
E-mail	Data Files	RSS Feeds	SharePoint Lists	Internet Calendars	Published Calendars	Address Books	
<u>ы</u> Ас	id 😭 <u>S</u> ett	ings 🛇	Set as <u>D</u> efault 💙	(Re <u>m</u> ove 🛅 <u>O</u> per	File Location		
© pr	avin.mehta@s	stella C:\U	Jsers\pravin.mehta	ı\AppData\Local\Micr	osoft\Outlook\pravin.n	nehta@stella	
Select a display down	a data file in t / the folder th Outlook.	he list, then at contains t	click Settings for i the data file. To me	nore details or click C ove or copy these file	Open File Location to s, you must first shut	<u>T</u> ell Me More.	

Image 3: Screen to select an Outlook data file and open its location

WORKING WITH OUTLOOK DATA FILES

This section explores the scenarios where you need to work with Outlook data files to accomplish tasks such as taking a local backup of emails, importing messages from PST file, reducing the PST file size, splitting PST files, consolidating data from multiple PST files, etc.

SCENARIO 1: NEED TO CREATE A LOCAL BACKUP OF OUTLOOK EMAILS

Using Exchange (i.e., Outlook MAPI) or IMAP account automatically archives the emails and other mailbox data on the server. However, Outlook also allows exporting the message folder to a .pst file using the Import/Export feature. You can export message folders, contacts, calendar, tasks, etc. and create a local backup in the PST file as follows:



1. Launch Outlook and click File > Open & Export > Import/Export



2. Select the 'Export to a file' option and click Next.



Image 5: Email import/export options in Outlook

3. Select the 'Outlook Data File (.pst)' option and click Next.

Export to a File		
	Create a file of type: Comma Separated Values Outlook Data File (.pst)	
	< Back Next >	Cancel

Image 6: File format options to export Outlook messages

4. Select the folders you need to back up and click **Next**. You can also use **Filter** to specify the emails by sender, recipient, specific text match, etc., and back up those messages.

Export Outlook Data File			×
	Select the folder to export from: ©stellarinfo.com Inbox (5) Drafts [3] Sent Items Deleted Items (7) Af B2B B2C Calendar CFO Include subfolders	Filter	•
	< Back Next >	Cancel	

Image 7: Screen to select Outlook folders for backup

5. **Browse** the location to save the PST file and click **Finish**.



Image 8: Screen to browse the PST file location for backup

6. At this stage, you get an option to add a password to the PST file to restrict access. You can add the password or leave the field blank. Click **OK** to start exporting the selected Outlook messages and other mail items in a PST file.

SCENARIO 2: NEED TO IMPORT EMAILS FROM AN OUTLOOK PST

This scenario comes up frequently when you are moving Outlook items between different computers or email accounts. For example, you may be changing your personal computer and need to migrate your locally stored email data to the new system. Or, you may need to import your Gmail data in Outlook, which was previously exported to a PST file.

The Outlook data file import method described here assumes that you already exported the messages and other mail items described in Scenario 1. You can import emails, contacts, and calendar from the PST file as follows:

- Navigate to **Outlook Import/Export** screen as described in Step 1 of the local backup scenario [See Image 4]
- 2. Select the 'Import from another program or file' option and click Next.

Import and Export Wizard	
	<u>Choose an action to perform:</u> Export RSS Feeds to an OPML file Export to a file Import a VCARD file (.vcf) Import an iCalendar (.ics) or vCalendar file (.vcs) Import from another program or file Import RSS Feeds from an OPML file Import RSS Feeds from the Common Feed List Description Import data from other files, such as Outlook class files (.PST) and test files
	< <u>Back</u> <u>Next</u> > Cancel

Image 9: File import options in Outlook.

- 3. Select the 'Outlook Data File (.pst)' option and click Next. [See Image 6]
- 4. Browse the PST file you need to import. You can select a suitable option to manage the import of duplicate items and then click **Next**.

Import Outlook Data File		×
	Eile to import Browse Documents\Outlook Files\backup.pst Browse Options Replace duplicates with items imported Allow duplicates to be created Do not import duplicates 	
	< <u>B</u> ack <u>N</u> ext > Cancel	

Image 10: Screen to browse the PST file for importing

5. Choose the 'Import items into the current folder' option to save the items in the current folder. Alternatively, you can select the 'Import items into the same folder in:' option to import the mail items in your Microsoft 365 mailbox.

Import Outlook Data File		×
	Select the folder to import from:	
	Include subfolders	Filter
	Import items into the current fold	er
	\bigcirc Import items into the same folder	in:
1.000000		\sim
	< Back Finish	Cancel

Image 11: Options to import Outlook items in the current folder or Microsoft 365

6. Click **Finish** to start importing the emails, contacts, and calendar from the PST file.

SCENARIO 3: NEED TO REDUCE THE OUTLOOK DATA FILE SIZE

This scenario involves actions such as compacting and cleaning up the Outlook data file (PST or OST) to reduce its size. Following are the methods to reduce Outlook data file size:

Method 1: Use Outlook Mailbox Cleanup tool

The Mailbox Cleanup tool is a utility to manage the mailbox size. It allows you to find mail items by size and timeline, empty the deleted items folder, or archive specific items. Following are the steps to use the tool:

1. Launch Outlook. Click File and then click Cleanup Tools



Image 12: Outlook Mailbox Cleanup Tool

 Click the Mailbox Cleanup option. The utility screen will open with options to view mailbox size, find mail items, view deleted items size, etc. You can identify specific mail items using the Find option and perform mailbox cleanup through deletion, archiving, etc.

Mailbox	Cleanup	×
Š	You can use this tool to manage the size of your mailbox. You can find types of items to delete or move, empty the de items folder, or you can have Outlook transfer items to an file. View <u>M</u> ailbox Size	eleted archive
-	 ○ Find items <u>o</u>lder than 90	d
0	Emptying the deleted items folder permanently deletes those items.	ipty
	Delete all alternate versions of items in your mailbox. View <u>C</u> onflicts Size	lete
	Cl	ose

Image 13: Outlook Mailbox Cleanup Tool Interface

Method 2: Use Outlook Conversation Clean Up feature

Outlook Conversation Clean Up feature moves the unwanted messages to the Deleted Items folder. It evaluates an email conversation, i.e., the emails from the starting message to all responses having the same subject line, and deletes the redundant messages accordingly. This is how you use the Conversation Clean Up feature:

1. Launch Outlook and click Clean Up option in the Home tab.



Image 14: Outlook Clean Up Conversation options

- 2. Choose one of these options:
 - Clean Up Conversation cleans redundant messages in a specific email conversation.
 - Clean Up Folder ¬– evaluates and deletes unwanted messages from a folder
 - Clean Up Folder & Subfolders checks the selected folder & underlying subfolders & deletes the redundant messages.

Method 3: Compact the Outlook data file

Compaction is the process of optimizing the usage of white space or unused space in the Outlook data file (PST or OST). You can compact the data files using Outlook built-in utility or third-party software as follows:

a) Use Outlook built-in compaction function

Following are the steps:

- Launch Outlook. Click File > Account Settings to navigate to the Account Settings window.
 [See Image 2]
- 2. Click Data Files tab, select the data file, and then click Settings.

Account Settings	×
Data Files Outlook Data Files	
E-mail Data Files RSS Feeds SharePoint Lists Internet Calendars Published Calendars Address Books	
Name Location	٦
@stella C:\Users\ \AppData\Loca\\Microsoft\Outlook\pravin.mehta@stella	
Select a data file in the list then slick Settings for more details or slick Open Sile Lesstion to	
display the folder that contains the data file. To move or copy these files, you must first shut down Outlook.	
Close	

Image 15: Screen to access Outlook data file settings

3. Click the Advanced tab and then click Outlook Data File Settings.

Microsoft Exchange	Х			
Genera Advanced Security				
Mailboxes				
Open these additional mailboxes:				
Add				
Remove	11			
Cached Exchange Mode Settings				
Use Cached Exchange Mode				
Download shared folders				
Download Public Folder Favorites				
Outlook Data File Settings				
Mailbox Mode				
Outlook is running in Unicode mode against Microsof Exchange.	t			
OK Cancel Appl	у			

Image 16: Screen to access Outlook data file advanced settings

4. Click **Compact Now**. Outlook will start compacting the selected PST or OST file.

Microsoft	Exchange				\times
General	Advanced	Security			
Mailbo	xes				
Open t	hese additio	nal mailbox	es:		
				A <u>d</u> d	
Outlook	Data File Set	tings			×
File: 📐	1	@stellarinf	o.com.ost	Browse	
Compact Now Reduces the size of your Outlook data file (.ost)					
			ОК	Cancel	
0	utlook Data	File Setting	i		
Mailbo	x Mode				
Outlook is running in Unicode mode against Microsoft Exchange.					
		ОК	Cancel	<u>A</u> pply	r

Image 17: Screen to access the compaction feature in Outlook

b) Use third-party software for compacting PST files

Aside from using the Outlook built-in feature, you can try a software utility like Stellar Compactor for Outlook for compressing the PST file size. The utility is a part of Stellar Toolkit for Outlook, a software package comprising different tools for managing Outlook data files.



Image 18: Stellar Toolkit for Outlook Launcher

Following are the steps for using the software:

- 1. Launch Stellar Toolkit for Outlook and click Compact Outlook PST. [See Image 18]
- 2. On Stellar Compactor for Outlook **Home** tab, click **Add PST** or **Drag & Drop**.



Image 19: Stellar Compactor for Outlook Home screen

3. Browse and select the PST file. Click **Open**.



Image 20: Open a PST file in Stellar Compactor for Outlook

- 4. Specify the Destination to save the compacted PST file. Select one of the options to compact the file:
 - Compress all the attachments
 - Extract the attachments in a folder with interlinking
 - Extract and compress the attachments with interlinking
 - Remove the attachments

Click **Compact** to start compacting the PST file.

Stellar Compare	ctor for Outlook	- 8 ×
HOME LOGS ACTIVATION SUPPORT HELP HOME Add Find Compact Stop HOME HOME		▲ STYLE ▼
Compact PST File Select Outlook Data File (PST): C: Users'pravin.mehta\Desktop\backup.pst Select Destination Path: C: Users'pravin.mehta\Desktop\ Destination	Compact Options Compress all attachments in new PST file] Extract and save attachments to a folder (No interlinking is lost) Extract, compress and save attachments to a folder (No interlinking is lost) Remove all attachments in new PST file Advance Compact Options Remove unused space Empty 'Deleted Items' folder Empty 'Junk Email' folder	
	Compact	

Image 21: Options to compact the PST file

SCENARIO 4: NEED TO SPLIT A LARGE PST FILE

Sometimes you may prefer splitting a PST file instead of compacting or cleaning it. For example, you may want to maintain (i.e., save, archive, backup) the mailbox data of a user in a single PST file. This PST will continue growing in size as more data gets stored in it. Splitting such a large-sized PST file (nearing the 50 GB size limit) can improve its manageability without deleting the messages, emptying the deleted items folder, or optimizing the white spaces.

There is no native feature or utility available in Outlook to split PST files. However, you can still split a PST file using third-party software such as Stellar Splitter for Outlook. The tool can split PST files based on date, size, email ID, and folders.

Steps to split PST files

- 1. Launch Stellar Splitter for Outlook.
- 2. On the **Home** tab, click **Add PST** or **Drag & Drop**.

Stellar Splitter for Outlook	_ & ×
Home Logs Activation Support Help	▲ Style ▼
Home Add PST Batch File Batch File Stop Home	
Select PST Files to Split	
Drag & Drop to add PST	

Image 22: Stellar Splitter for Outlook Home screen

3. Browse and select the PST file. Click **Open**.

	Stellar Splitter for Outlook	- 8 ×
Home Logs Activation Support Help Home Add Find Select Create Split Stop PST Batch file Batch File		▲ Style +
Home	👯 Open	×
Select PST Files to Split:	← → < ↑ → This PC > Desktop < ♂ Search Desktop	<u>م</u>
	Organize - New folder	0
	Documents 🖈 ^ Name	Date r
	Pictures Customer Engac Guide Images Screenshots OneDrive This PC 30 Objects Desktop File game: backup PST File (*PST) Open Cance	3/23/2

Image 23: Open a PST file in Stellar Splitter for Outlook

4. Specify the **Destination** to save the split PST files. Choose the **Splitting Option** to split the PST by date, size, email ID, and specify the range for splitting. For example, date range, PST file size, etc. Click **Split**.

The software will split the PST based on the specified criteria and save the files at the destination location.

Image 24: Options to split the PST file

SCENARIO 5: NEED TO CONSOLIDATE MAILS FROM MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS

There are situations when you may want to consolidate (or merge) the emails, contacts, calendar, etc., from multiple email accounts in a single email data file. You can consolidate emails by extracting the mailbox data associated with multiple accounts in separate PST files and then combine those in a single PST file.

For example, you can extract Gmail data such as messages, attachments, contacts, etc., in a PST file by configuring Gmail with Outlook and then exporting the data in .pst file format. Likewise, you can export the Outlook account data in a PST file and then import both PST files in the same folder to consolidate the mail items in a single Outlook data file. The following steps provide instructions to consolidate the mailbox data from multiple accounts in a single PST file.

a) Use Outlook for combining or merging mails in a PST file

In this method, we consolidate Gmail mailbox items with existing emails in an Outlook account.

Step 1: Configure Gmail with Outlook

1. Launch Outlook and Click File > Add Account.

Info	Account Information						
Open & Export	@stellarinfo.com						
Save As	Microsoft Exchange						
Save Attachments	Add Account						
Print	Account Settings Change settings for this account or set up more connections.						
Office Account	Settings Access this account on the web. https://stellarmail.stellarinfo.com/owa/						
Options							
Exit							

Image 25: Add new account in Outlook

2. Enter user name, Gmail ID & password, and click Next. Gmail account will be configured with Outlook client and Gmail mailbox data will start syncing with Outlook. You will be able to view and access Gmail items through Outlook.

Add Account Auto Account Setu Outlook can autor	p matically configure many email accounts.
• E-mail Account	
Your Name:	Ellen Adams
E-mail Address:	ellen.adams@gmail.com Example: ellen@contoso.com
Password: Retype Password:	Type the password your Internet service provider has given you.
	ddillogal court buss
⊖ manual setup of a	< Back Next > Canc

Image 26: Add Gmail account to Outlook

Step 2: Export Gmail data to PST

Follow the instructions outlined in <u>Scenario 1</u> for backing up Outlook mailbox data by exporting it in PST file. In bullet point 4 of the instructions in Scenario 1, select the entire Gmail profile data and export the mailbox data to a PST file.

Step 3: Import the Gmail data from the PST

Follow the instructions outlined in <u>Scenario 2</u> and import the PST file containing Gmail mailbox data. Choose the 'Import items into the current folder' option to save the items in the current folder. After importing the PST file, you will see the complete data combined (i.e., merged) within the default Outlook profile.

b) Use third-party software to merge or join PST files

You can merge or join multiple PST files using a software utility such as <u>Stellar Merge Mailbox for</u> <u>Outlook</u>. The software can "merge" PST files, including emails, contacts, notes, calendars, tasks, etc., in a single PST. It can also join PST files, adding each PST as a separate folder structure in the output file. Following are the steps to merge or join PST files using the software:

Step 1: Configure Gmail with Outlook

- 1. Launch Stellar Merge Mailbox for Outlook.
- 2. On the Home tab, click Add PST or Drag & Drop.

3. Browse and select the PST files. Click **Open** and then click **Next**.

(73)	Stellar Merge Mailbox for Outlook	- 8 ×
HOME LOGS ACTIVATION SUPPORT HELP		▲ STYLE ▼
Home Add Find Merge Stop Home Home Home Home Home Home Home Home	der Remove Duplicate Sender Name Attachment Files Subject Recipient Name Date and Time of Sending Sender Email Internet Header Default Duplicate Criteria Advanced Duplicate Criteria	
Drag & Drop PST Files	🖬 Open 🛛 🗙	
File Name	 	
	File name: "backup 2" "backup" V PST File (*.PST) V Open Cancel	Next

Image 28: Open PST files in Stellar Merge Mailbox for Outlook

- 4. Choose the option to merge or join the PST files. You can merge or join the files to a new or existing PST file, Office 365, Exchange Server, or Outlook profile.
- 5. Select the items listed in the left pane for inclusion in the merged or joined PST file.
- 6. Next, browse and select the destination for saving the merged mailbox data and click **Merge**.

			Stellar Merge Mailbox for Out	look		- 8
HOME LOGS ACTIVATION SUP	PORT HELP					▲ STYL
Home Add Find Merge Stop	cclude Deleted Folder cclude Junk Folder	Remove Duplicate Text Subject Sender Email	Sender Name Attai	hment Files and Time of Sending		
Home	Exclude Items	Default Duplicate Criteria	Advanced Duplic	te Criteria		
Items Selected to Merge		Preview Mailbox C	ontents		Saving Options	
🖃 🔽 Root Item	From	То	Subject Date		V Merge PST	
					Merge to new PST File Merge to Office 365 Merge to existing PST File Merge to Exchange Server Merge to Outlook Profile	
→ G ⇒ Sent Items → G © Ci Users pravin.mehta ipesktop ip → G © Deleted Items → G ⊇ Zoho Notifications(6198) → G > Dotbox → G > Outbox → G > Outbox → G > Sent Items					Join PST (Add each PST file as separate folder structure) Join to new PST File	
					Select destination to save PST : C:\Users\pravin.mehta\Desktop B	rowse
< >						
					Merge	

Image 29: Options to merge PST files

The tool will start processing the PST files and save the output PST to the specified location.

SCENARIO 6: NEED TO EXTRACT DATA FROM INACCESSIBLE OST FILE

As understood earlier, the OST file stores a synchronized copy of the mailbox data on Exchange Server to allow offline access. OST files are only accessible through the users' associated accounts on Exchange Server. If the user account is deleted from Exchange Server, the OST file turns inaccessible. If a mailbox is purged from Exchange and there is no backup, the only way to get back the data is through the inaccessible OST file.

In this scenario, you need to find a way to extract the mailbox data from the OST file. You can use <u>Stellar Converter for OST</u> to convert inaccessible OST files and extract the mailbox data in PST files. Please read this <u>software KB</u> for detailed instructions on how to extract OST file data using the software.

OUTLOOK DATA FILE CORRUPTION: ERRORS & TROUBLESHOOTING

A PST file can affect Outlook's normal functioning and result in Outlook crash, freezing, inability to start, slow down, etc. These issues primarily emerge from underlying corruption, i.e., data structure integrity problems, in the PST file (or OST file) triggering the following error messages:

Error Code	Error Message
0x80040116	Outlook.pst cannot be accessed
0x80040119	An unknown error has occurred
0x80040600	An unknown error has occurred
0x80070002	An unknown error has occurred
Not available	Errors have been detected in the file C:\Users <name>\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\user@org.com.ost</name>
Not available	Cannot start Microsoft Outlook
Not available	Cyclic redundancy check error

Please see this <u>comprehensive list of Outlook errors</u>. A majority of these error messages indicate PST file corruption and can result in the loss of critical emails and other mailbox data. So, it is imperative to be aware of the methods to fix PST file corruption we cover in the following section.

METHODS TO REPAIR PST FILE CORRUPTION

There are essentially two methods to troubleshoot and resolve corruption issues in the PST file (or OST file), as applicable based on your Outlook version and email account configuration. These methods are based on using the <u>Inbox Repair tool</u> (Scanpst.exe), an in-built utility available with Outlook, or Stellar Repair for Outlook — a third-party PST & OST file repair software.

Method 1: Use the Inbox Repair tool to fix PST or OST file corruption

Before running the Inbox Repair tool or Scanpst.exe, you would need to locate it on the computer system. Following are the Scanpst.exe file locations based on the Outlook version installed on your system.

Outlook version	Scanpst.exe file location
Outlook 2016 Outlook 2019	C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft Office\Office19\ C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office19\ C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft Office\Office16\ C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office16\
Outlook 2013	C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft Office\Office15\ C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office15\ C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\root\office15\
Outlook 2010	C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office14\ C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft Office\Office14\ C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office14\
Outlook 2007	32-bit Windows: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office12\ 64-bit Windows: C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft Office\Office12\

Once you know the Inbox Repair tool (Scanpst.exe file) location, follow these steps:

1. Press Ctrl + R and enter the path to navigate to the Scanpst.exe file location.

Image 30: Location of Scanpst.exe file

2. Double click SCANPST and browse the Outlook data file you need to scan. Close Outlook and all mail-enabled applications. Next, click Start to start scanning the selected PST or OST file.

Image 31: Scanpst.exe tool screen to browse the PST file

The tool interface shows the scan results. It creates a backup of the PST file before repairing.

2. Click Repair to start repairing the Outlook data file.

Image 32: Scanpst.exe - repair the PST file

4. After the repair process is complete, create a new PST file in your Outlook profile by navigating

to New Items > More Items > Outlook Data File.

Import the mailbox items from the repaired PST file in the newly created PST file. <u>Refer to</u>
 <u>Scenario 2</u> for instructions.

How does Inbox Repair tool work?

Scanpst.exe or Inbox Repair tool rectifies the errors at the data structure level. It diagnoses the Outlook data file, including the folders, messages, etc., and checks the tables & blocks for anomalies or integrity problems.

Caution: 🛕

Scanpst.exe removes any information block it finds unreadable or corrupt. <u>Microsoft documentation for</u> the Inbox Repair tool notes that the utility may require multiple passes to repair the PST file. Also, the tool cannot repair every problem and does not recover permanently deleted or corrupted items.

Method 2: Use PST file repair software to fix corruption issues

Another method to repair corrupted PST and OST files is based on <u>Stellar Repair for Outlook</u>, a software designed to address severe corruption levels and recover all mailbox items, including deleted emails.

			Stellar Repair f	or Outlook		- 8 ×
File Home View Tools C	Calendar Actival	tion Help	Buy Now			▲ Language * Style *
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Mail						
	<u><u><u> </u></u></u>	0 9	From Select PST File for Repair Browse or Find Outlook PST F	To File & then Click Repair Brow Find	subject	Date
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Image 33: Stellar Repair for Outlook – Home screen

Please refer to the <u>user manual</u> for the steps.

CLOSING NOTES

In this Guide, we shared Outlook data files' fundamentals, their purpose, existence scenarios, and comparison. We outlined the real-world scenarios entailing OST and PST file management and explained how to fix PST file corruption using the Inbox Repair tool and third-party PST file repair software. Most of the knowledge focused on hands-on methods to provide a practical perspective of Outlook data file management.

REFERENCES

<u>Create email backup</u> <u>Import emails in Outlook</u> <u>Outlook Conversation Clean Up feature</u> <u>How to use Inbox Repair tool</u>

Stellar Toolkit for Outlook

DOWNLOAD FROM: https://www.stellarinfo.com/email-tools/outlook-toolkit.php

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