

# Use An Outlook Rule To Filter \*Potential Spam\*

By

Christopher A. Leonti

Information Technology Support Specialist  
College of Ag / Montana Ag Experiment Station  
Montana State University-Bozeman  
<http://ag.montana.edu/infotech>

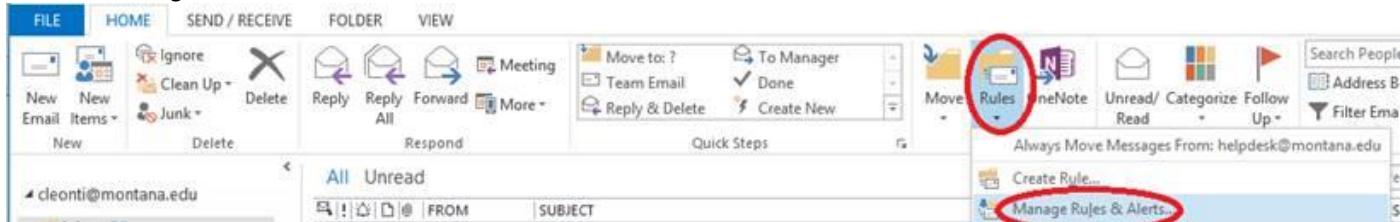
Most of us have seen messages that note **\*Potential Spam\*** at the beginning of the subject line. This is not a note from helpful spammers warning us about their message content, but instead is a notation added by servers managed in ITC. This notation is added when the filtering server is confident a message is true junk mail. While there is a chance of a false positive – a legitimate message being marked **\*Potential Spam\*** – that is not exceptionally common.

You have the ability to increase the accuracy of the filtering server as well. Anytime you get a message that is truly junk or spam without the **\*Potential Spam\*** notation in the subject line forward it to [spam@montana.edu](mailto:spam@montana.edu). Do not forward legitimate but unwanted messages such as marketing messages from legitimate companies or newsletters but instead unsubscribe from them (more info in my article found [here](#)). Messages sent to this address are used to train the filter and increase its accuracy. The more junk mail and spam used to train the filter, the more exacting it gets.

An Outlook rule can be used to automatically move messages with the **\*Potential Spam\*** notation while excluding any MSU addresses in case of a rare false positive. This rule is run on the Exchange server and in many cases filtering occurs even if Outlook is not open and running. This can potentially be helpful when [managing your quota](#) or reducing the amount of mail coming to your tablet or smartphone.

This article was written based on Outlook 2013 though the steps are likely similar for other versions.

1. At the top of the main Outlook window ensure you are on the HOME tab and then click the Rules drop down.
2. Choose *Manage Rules & Alerts* in the new menu.



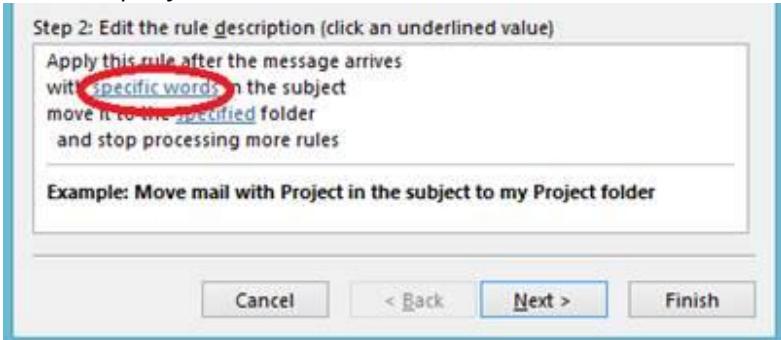
3. Click NEW RULE in the new window.



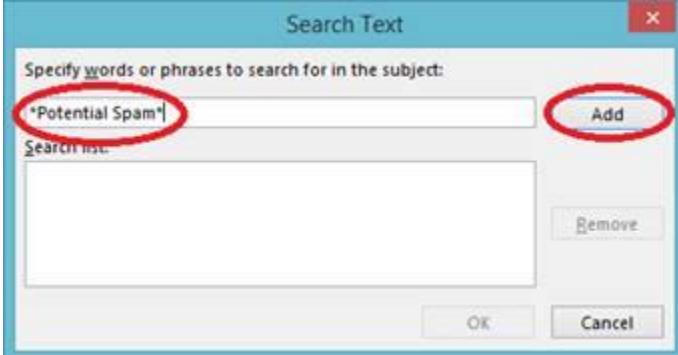
4. Click *Move messages with specific words in the subject to a folder* in the STEP 1 section near the top of the new window.



- Click the *specific words* link in the STEP 2 section near the bottom of the window.

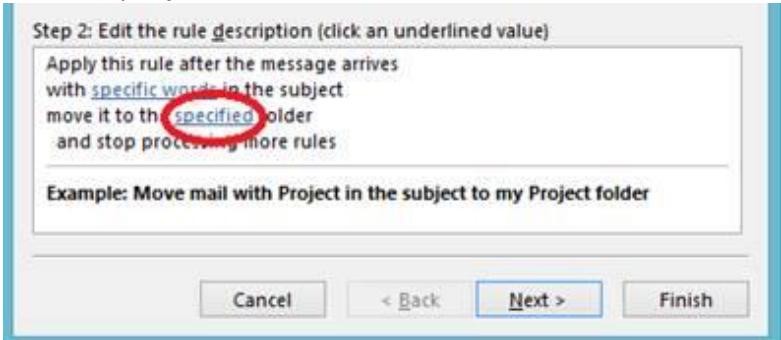


- Type \*Potential Spam\* in the *Specify words or phrases to search for in the subject* field and click the ADD button.



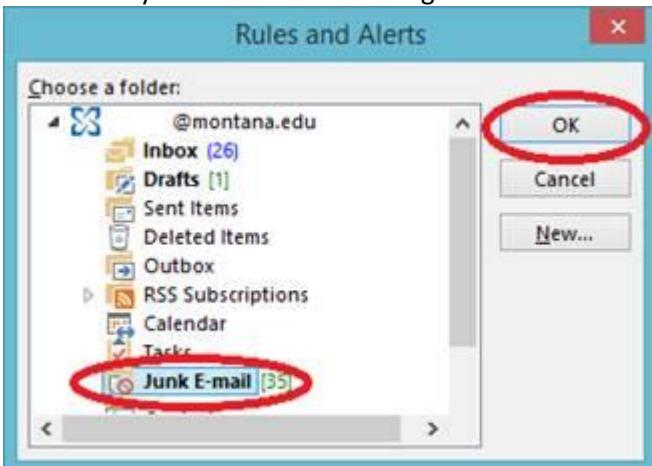
- Click the OK button to close the Search Text window.

- Click the *specified* link in the STEP 2 section near the bottom of the window.



- Select the JUNK E-MAIL folder and then click the OK button.

You can select any folder, including DELETED ITEMS. I chose JUNK E-MAIL as old messages are purged automatically. This allows you to retain the messages for a few weeks, but you won't need to do anything for them to be deleted.

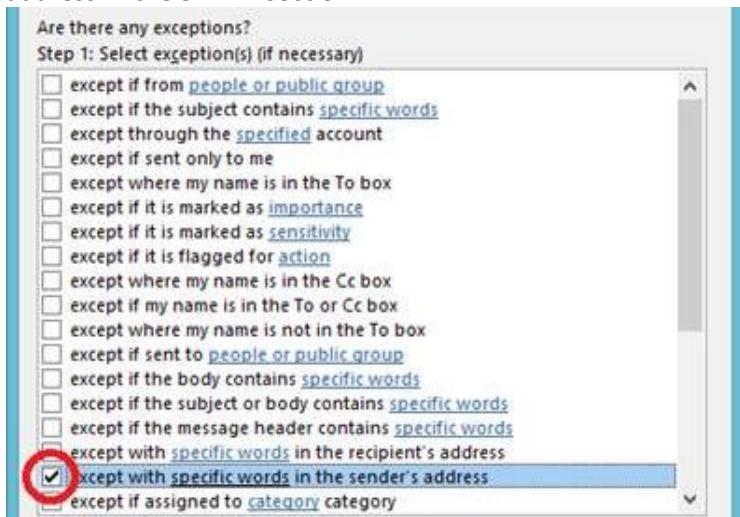


- Click the NEXT button at the bottom of the window.

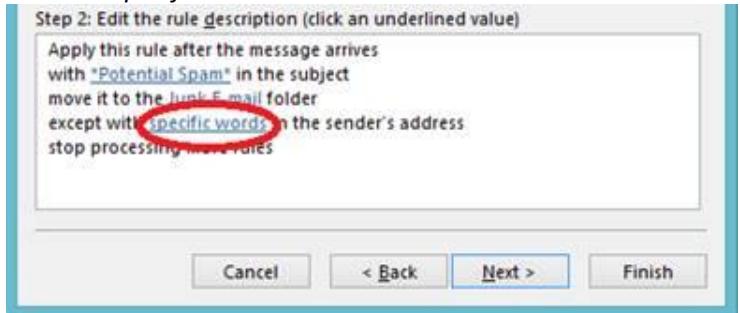
- Click the NEXT button at the Rules Wizard window titled "What conditions do you want to check?"

- Click the NEXT button at the Rules Wizard window titled "What do you want to do with the message?"

13. In the window titled "Are there any exceptions?" place a check in front of except with specific words in the sender's address in the STEP 1 section.



14. Click the *specific words* link in the STEP 2 section near the bottom of the window.

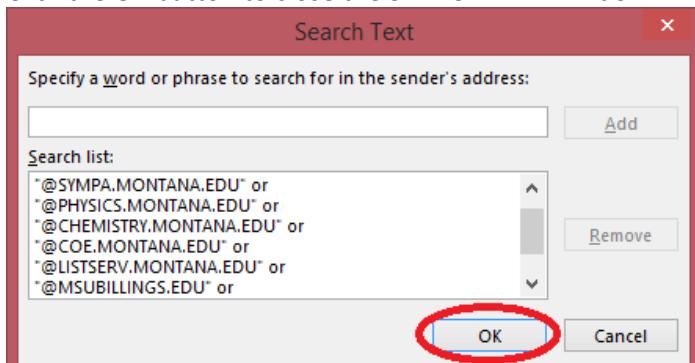


15. To prevent filtering of messages associated with MSU and affiliated organizations, type each of the following domains in the SEARCH TEXT window, clicking the ADD button between each one:

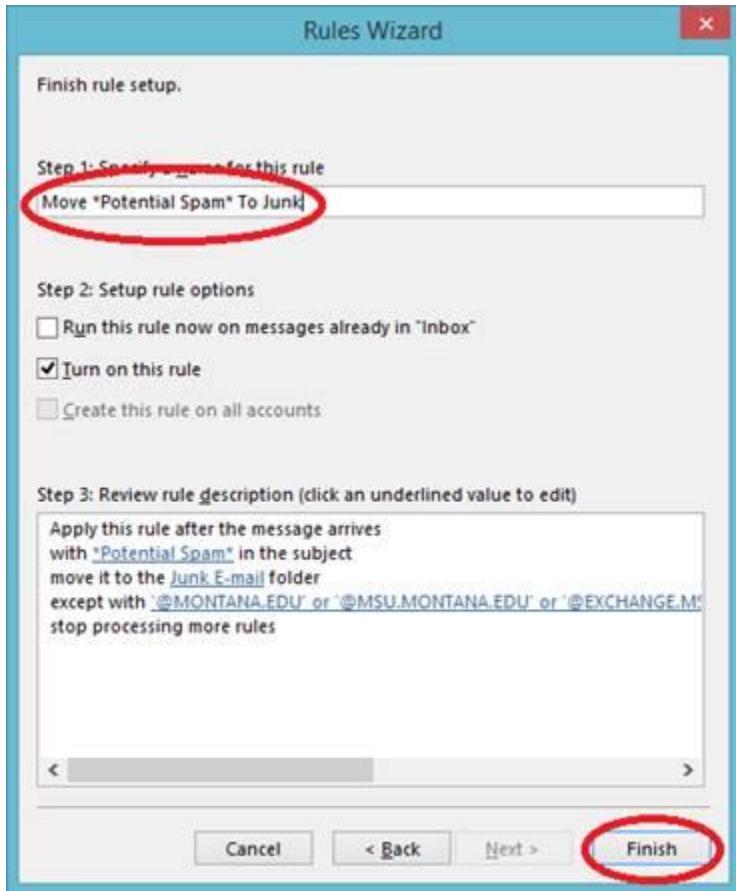
@MONTANA.EDU	@EXCHANGE.MONTANA.EDU	@ME.MONTANA.EDU
@SYMPA.MONTANA.EDU	@MONTANAPBS.ORG	@IE.MONTANA.EDU
@PHYSICS.MONTANA.EDU	@FACILITIES.MONTANA.EDU	@TEST.MONTANA.EDU
@CHEMISTRY.MONTANA.EDU	@EPS.MONTANA.EDU	@MSUGF.EDU
@COE.MONTANA.EDU	@BIOFILM.MONTANA.EDU	@MSUGF2.EDU
@LISTSERV.MONTANA.EDU	@ERC.MONTANA.EDU	@YPRADIO.ORG
@MSUBILLINGS.EDU	@EE.MONTANA.EDU	@COT.MSUBILLINGS.EDU
@MSUN.EDU	@ECE.MONTANA.EDU	@MSUBONLINE.ORG
@GFCMSU.EDU	@CE.MONTANA.EDU	@YELLOWSTONEPUBLICRADIO.ORG

You can add any domain – i.e., @ORGANIZATION.COM – to prevent filtering their email. Domains in this list are ignored by the rule and not filtered. Since you want to filter as much junk mail as possible, I do not recommend adding any extremely common public domains such as @YAHOO.COM, @HOTMAIL.COM and @GMAIL.COM.

16. Click the OK button to close the SEARCH TEXT window.



17. Click the NEXT button.
18. Enter a name for the rule that makes sense to you (i.e., **Move \*Potential Spam\* To Junk**).
19. Click the FINISH button.



20. Click the OK button to close the RULES AND ALERTS window.