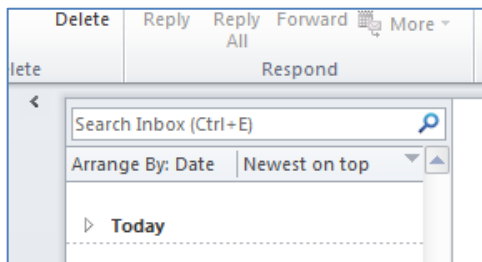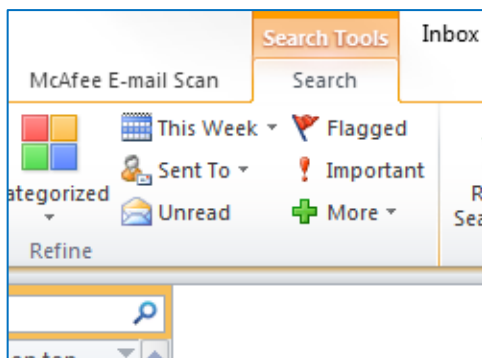# 10+ Outlook Tips for Incredibly Busy People

Please also see the associated 10+ IT Tips for Incredibly Busy People Google+ Community

1. Using the Search Tool tab

By clicking into the search bar the Search Tools tab then appears (see below)

Within Outlook many of us frequently use the search bar to find emails in different locations, such as in our inbox or sent items.

However it's very easy to miss the Search Tools tab that also automatically appears.

This Search Tools tab provides a lot more options allowing you to refine your search criteria, helping you to find exactly what you need quickly and easily.

1. Click into the search bar or use Ctrl + E.
2. The Search Tools tab automatically appears at the top as a new orange shaded tab.
3. On this tab use the options in the ribbon to alter the scope of the search, or refine by sender, subject, time period, unread, important and lots more.
4. Recent Searches allows you to re-perform recent searches.

2. Using Folders
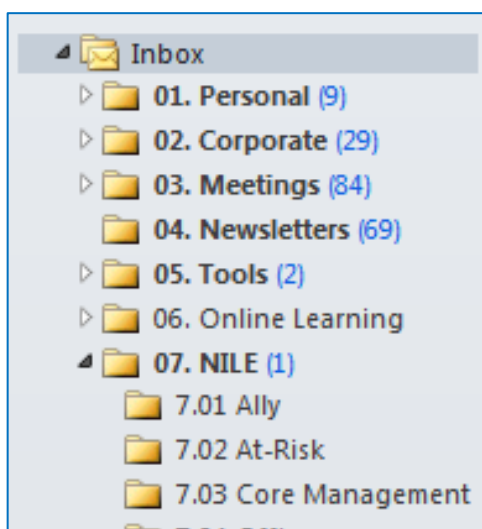
*Numbering folders and subfolders makes them easier to navigate*

Right clicking on your inbox allows you to create folders. Right clicking on any folder below your inbox allows you to rename, delete and so on.

Drag emails from your inbox directly to these folders **OR** hold down 'Ctrl + drag' to copy across emails - where it will file a copy in the folder and leave a copy in your inbox.

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3. Altering Outlook's view
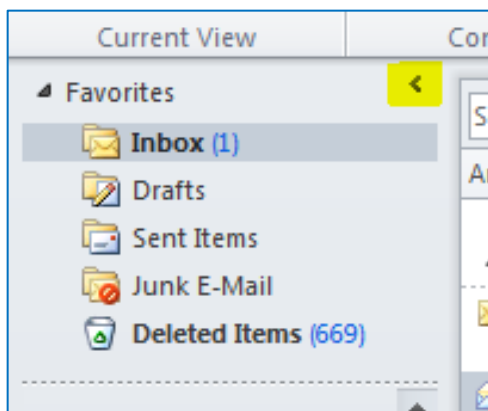
Outlook lets you alter the size of panes in several different ways
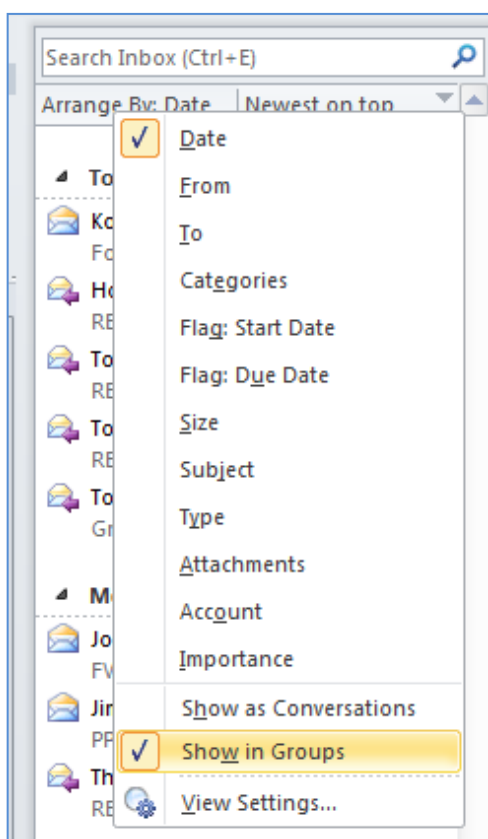
Right click on the column header within your inbox to alter the way emails are sorted or even grouped

The whole look and feel of outlook can be altered in various different ways.

Panes

Panes are the overall sections you see when looking at Outlook. The layout of these can be altered either by:

- Clicking the small arrow to minimise that section (click on the arrow again to bring that section back).
- Hovering over the edge of each pane and dragging the edge to make bigger or smaller.
- Switching whole panes off, minimising them or altering the location by using the options within the View tab >> Layout group.

Columns

Alter which columns are displayed in your inbox and how the emails are ordered or grouped.

- Right click on the Arrange By: text at the top of your inbox. Alter how the emails are sorted such as by who they're from.
- Tick or untick the 'Show in Groups' option at the bottom to either see the emails grouped or as one long list.
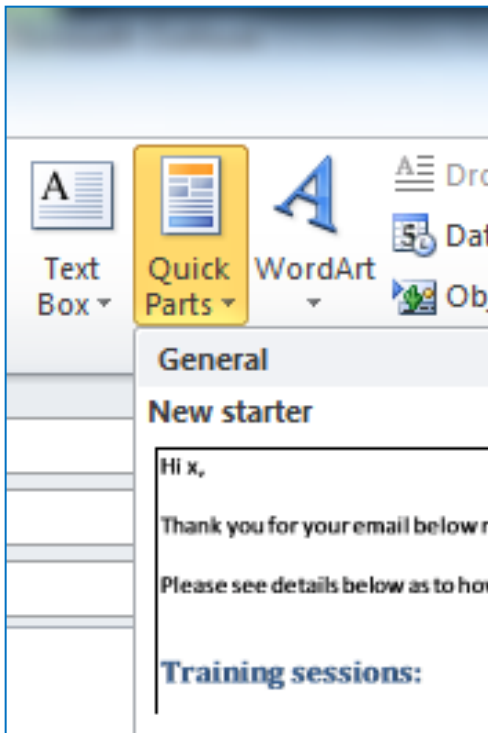
View settings

The View tab alters each part of Outlook and just for that part too – for instance the View tab for Mail just alters the way mail is viewed, whereas the View tab for Contacts is just for contacts.

View settings can further fine tune the way that part of Outlook is displayed. It's well worth taking a bit of time to understand what View Settings can do for each part.

4. Insert regularly used content using Quick Parts

Within emails Quick parts can save you lots of time by storing regularly used content to then insert when you need to

If you find you often write exactly the same content into emails, then copy and save the content to Quick Parts so that it can be reused quickly and easily in the future.

To save content to Quick parts:

1. In a new email write the content you wish to save.
2. Highlight all of the content.
3. Still within your new email go to the Insert tab >> Text group >> Quick Parts drop down >> 'Save Selection to Quick Parts Gallery…'
4. Type in a Name for the new building block.

To reuse Quick Parts:

1. Open a new email and click into the body of the email where you wish to insert content.
2. Go to the Insert tab >> Text group >> Quick Parts drop down, where all previously saved quick parts are then displayed.
3. Click the item you wish to insert.
4. Hint: you can save hyperlinks, images, tables and more in this way to reinsert in the future.

5. Using Outlook rules to organise your Inbox
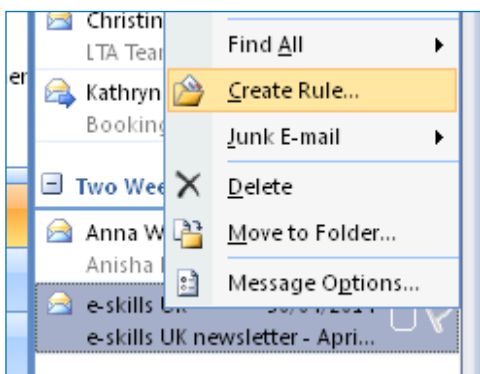
Free up time spent organising your inbox by getting Outlook to file automatically newsletters or other emails.

- To create a rule: Right click on any email in your inbox (such as a newsletter) and select Rules >> Create Rule… then follow the Create Rule wizard.
- There is a limit to how many rules you can create - around 100 usually.

6. Attaching Outlook items to emails and calendar entries
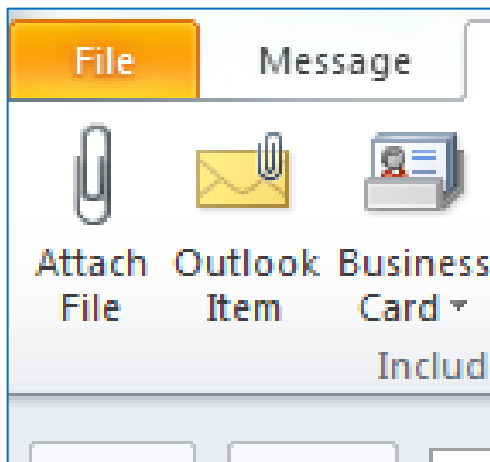
Rather than copying whole lines of text from one email and pasting them into another (or even into a calendar appointment), instead copy and paste that Outlook item as an attachment.

This is especially useful to attach emails to calendar entries, so when it comes to that date you've got easily to hand the email referring to the content of that meeting (hint: make the appointment private if you wish to hide that email from others viewing your calendar though!).

Either:

- Select the email within your inbox (or whatever folder it's within) and press Ctrl + C to copy it to clipboard. Then go to the new email or calendar entry, click into the body of it, then press Ctrl + V to paste it as an attachment.
- OR, within the email or calendar appointment, go to the Insert tab >> Include group >> Outlook Item >> then browse Outlook to find the item you want to attach.

Tip: Also copy and paste (or drag and drop) files into emails from Windows Explorer (opened via Windows key + E).
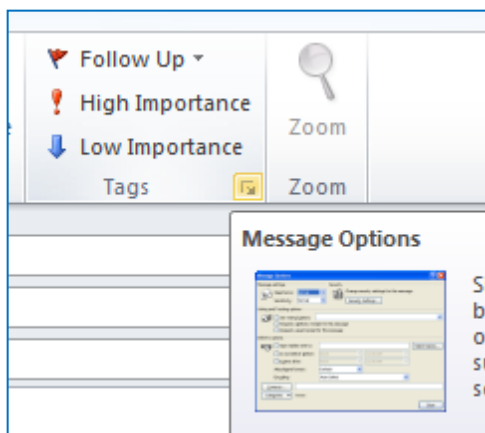
7. Recalling emails sent by mistake
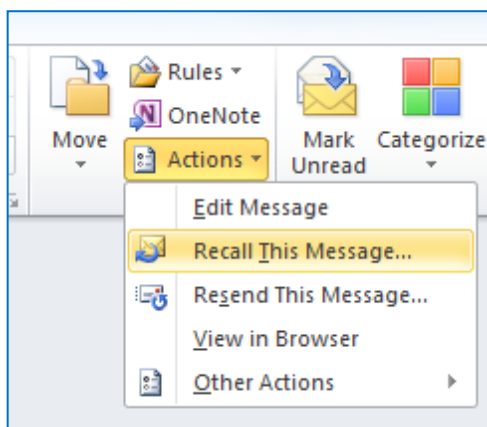
Be quick! Email delivered to internal colleagues is completed in a matter of seconds. External users can take slightly longer.

Go to Sent items >> click into the email sent by mistake >> Move group >> Actions drop down >> Recall This Message…

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8. Altering the Properties of Emails

The Properties box has some useful features to know about and use.

Within the email you're about to send, go to the Tags group >> and click on the little arrow in the bottom right (the dialogue box launcher).

Alter the email's Importance and Sensitivity, Set up Voting buttons, Request delivery receipts, Have replies sent to another email address, Do not deliver before dates, an Expiry date, and more.

9. Using Notes to store useful titbits of information
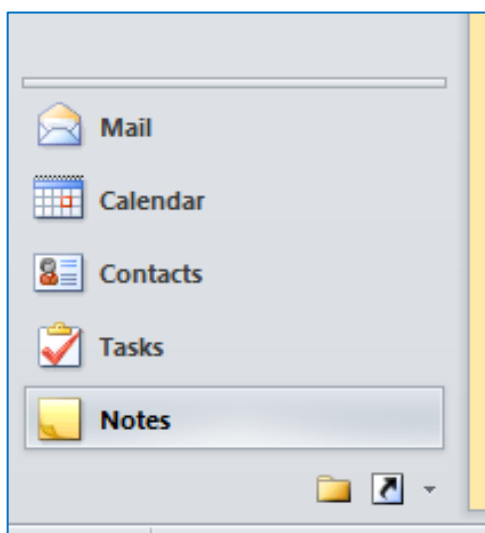
Access notes using the Navigation Pane in the bottom left. Drag the bar above to show more or fewer icons.

Notes in Outlook are a really useful but often overlooked tool.

Use them to store useful titbits of information, such as printer codes, cost centres, even login details - though never type out entire password as they're not stored securely. Use them to jot down notes during telephone calls and then copy and paste the note into an email for example.

Access Notes in the bottom left of Outlook within the Navigation Pane OR simply drag the bar above the Navigation Pane upwards to show more icons below.

New Note lets you add notes on 'post it notes'. These can be dragged around the screen. Clicking X in the top right of the note closes and automatically saves the note.

By going to Notes >> View >> Layout group >> Reading Pane (and selecting show below or to the right) makes existing notes easier to read quickly.

10. Tasks and the To-Do Bar
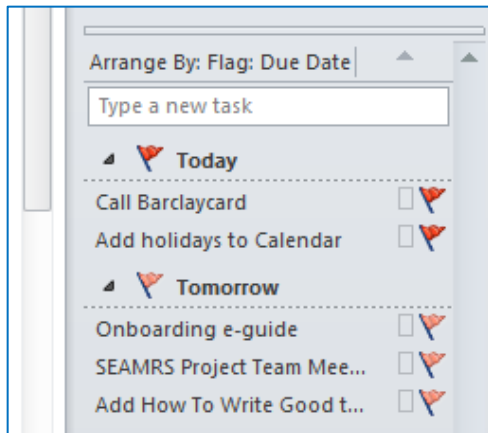
If your To-Do bar is not showing in the bottom right when you first open Outlook, switch it on by going to View >> Layout group >> To-Do Bar drop down >> and select Normal.

Tasks are a great feature in Outlook. They help organise work and remind of important things to do. If you don't currently use them then definitely take time to explore how beneficial they can be.

If your To-Do bar is not showing in the bottom right when you first open Outlook, switch it on by going to View >> Layout group >> To-Do Bar drop down >> and select Normal.

To create a task related to an email, drag that email into the To-Do bar from your inbox (or any other folder). To alter the date the task should be completed by, or even to clear the flag, either:

- Right click on the red flag.
- OR within your inbox, right-click on the blank flag next to the email.

Tasks that are not completed by their due date turn red to highlight they're overdue.

Once the task associated with that email is complete, set the red flag to a Tick. Do this by:

- right-clicking on the flag and selecting 'Mark as complete'.
- OR within the To-do bar **left click once** on the red flag (the task then will no longer appear in the To-Do list - to see it again see the Task Pane details below).

11. Tasks and the Task Pane
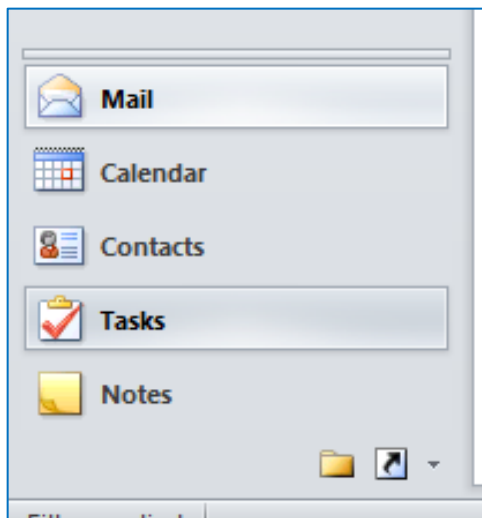
Access Tasks using the Navigation Pane in the bottom left. Drag the bar above to show more or fewer icons.
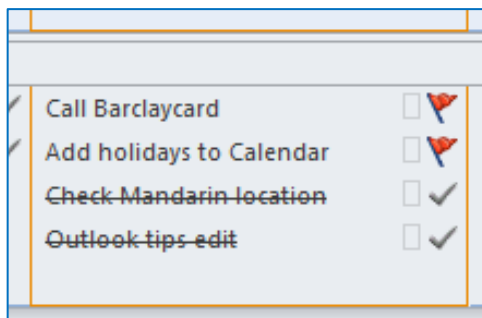
The Daily Task List displayed below your calendar shows tasks due that day

The Tasks Pane lets you manage tasks to a greater depth.

For example, see all previously completed tasks by going to Tasks >> Home >> Current View group >> and then alter the view between Active and Completed Tasks.

Add bespoke tasks using the New Task button. For example 'Remember to buy birthday flowers on the way home'.
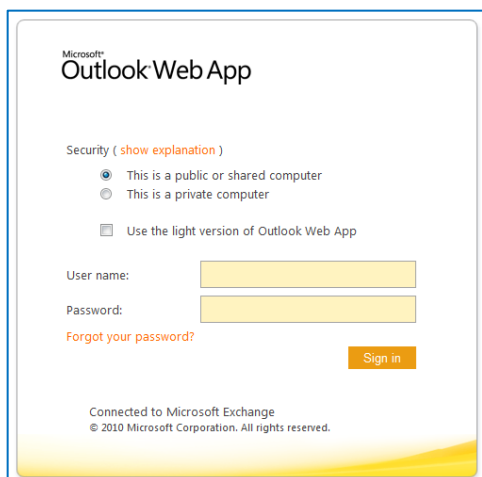
Under My Tasks on the right, the difference between To-Do list and Tasks is that the To-Do list is everything, whilst Tasks are just the bespoke tasks you have created (and not emails you have flagged).

Within the Tasks pane, click into Tasks to alter their status (In progress, Waiting on someone else, etc), or priority (High, etc), % complete, or even if you want to assign the task to another colleague! Here you can also set reminders for tasks – for instance if you want a desktop alert for a task to appear at a certain time.

Tasks and your calendar

Within your calendar, if the Daily Task List is displayed, you can edit existing tasks or add new tasks related to that date; tick to show them as complete and more.

12. Accessing emails away from the University

Access your University inbox on any computer.

The Outlook Web App allows the use of your University email at any computer.
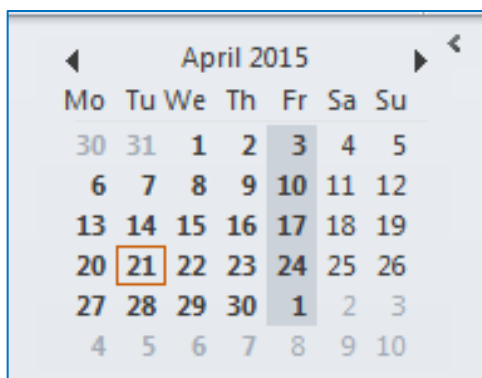
https://webmail.northampton.ac.uk/owa/ is the address to remember.

Note that it is secure and so starts with http**s**://

Remember the /owa at the end!

13. View days from across different weeks side by side in your calendar

Here, all Friday's in April have been selected so would show alongside each other in the main view

Within your calendar, you can view days from across several weeks side by side. This can help with comparing availability across days and so on.

First go to your calendar >> Hold down Ctrl + click on several days in the Navigation Pane's mini calendar to show those selected days alongside each other in the main view.

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14. Alter the look and feel of your calendar
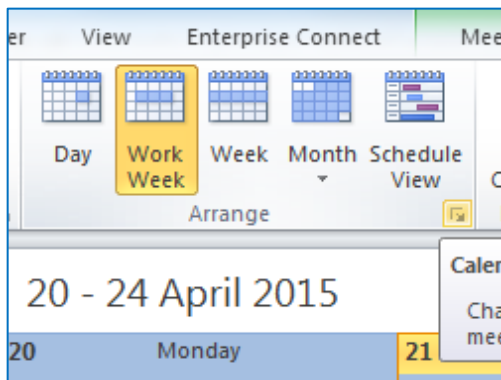
*Use Outlook options to fine tune Outlook to your tastes*

There are several different ways to alter the look and feel of your calendar; for instance open your Calendar and use the options within Home >> the Arrange group to change the view to 'Work Week' or 'Month'.

Outlook Options

Additionally click on the little arrow in the bottom right of the Arrange group (the dialogue box launcher) to open Outlook Options. Here alter the Work hours, the Work week, Add holidays to your Calendar and more.

15. Group calendars together
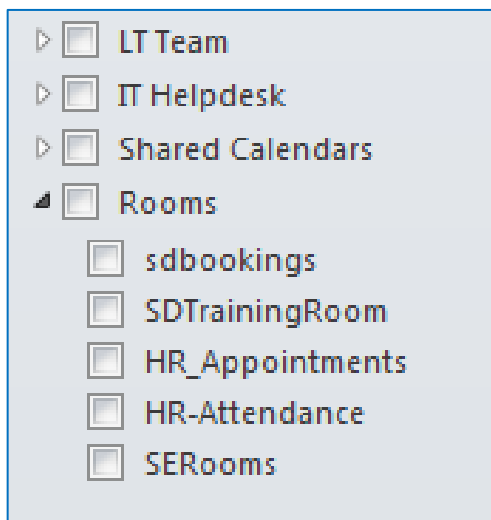
Use Calendar Groups to group together similar calendars, such as all members of the same team - great for if you're a new team member and want to remember names

You can open other colleagues' calendars by going to your calendar >> Home >> Manage Calendars group >> Open Calendar and searching using 'From Address Book'. Any calendar you open will appear on the left hand side.

Group calendars together by first of all creating groups (right click anywhere in the grey in the navigation pane and select New Calendar Group) and then dragging the names of staff already listed on the left into these groups OR use Home >> Manage Calendars group >> Calendar Groups.

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16. Adding Contacts

*Use Outlook options to fine tune Outlook to your tastes*

Build up your list of contacts rather than searching for telephone numbers within people's email signatures!

Within an email, hover over the sender's name (or recipient's name) and their Contact Card pops up.

Use the furthest most right icon within this Contact Card, and the drop down that appears below it, to add to Outlook Contacts OR right click on the user's name and then select Add to Outlook contacts.

Suggested Contacts - Within your Contacts be aware of Suggested Contacts within the Navigation pane on the left. Listed here are addresses that you've sent email to but who are not already in your address book. If you feel they're worth saving into your Contacts, drag them across into Contacts, complete the missing contact details and then save.

17. Altering your University / auto signature
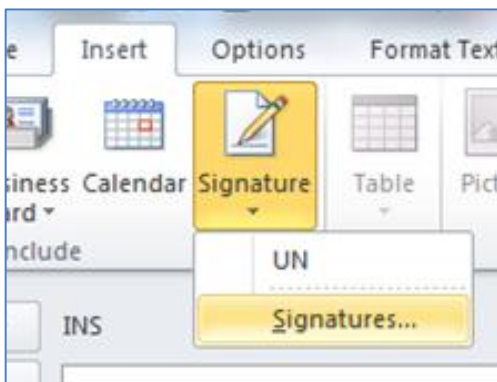
The Insert tab in a new, forwarded or replied to email is probably the easiest way to get to your signatures and alter them.

If you don't already have a signature set up, by far the easiest way to set one up is to copy someone else's and then change it to include your details.

1. Ask a colleague to forward you an email so you can copy their signature. After you receive it, forward it yourself, BUT before clicking send, do the steps below:
2. Highlight their signature and copy it (Ctrl + C).
3. Still within the same forwarded email, go to the Insert tab >> Signature >> Signatures..
4. In the Signatures and Stationery dialogue box, select New and give it a name (like 'UN' etc)
5. Within the edit signature section, paste the copied information, and repurpose it to include your info.
6. On the right, choose where the signature is to be used i.e. new messages only? Or for replies/forwards as well?
7. Finally click Save >> OK.