

Difference Between IMAP and POP3

IMAP and POP3 are both related to the emails received on the server. These protocols retrieve messages from the mail server to the receiver's system. Both protocols are attributed to spam and virus filters.

Key Differences Between IMAP and POP3

IMAP	POP3
This more advanced protocol allows you to see all the folders on the mail server.	This protocol only allows downloading messages from your Inbox to your local computer.
This server listens on port 143, and the IMAP with SSL secure(IMAPDS) server listens on port 993.	This POP server listens on port 110, and the POP with SSL secure(POP3DS) server listens on port 995.
In this server, messages can be accessed across several devices	In this server, the mail can only be accessed from a single device at one time.
In this server, the mailing content can be read partially before downloading.	For reading the mail POP3 has to be downloaded on the local device.
In IMAP the user can maintain the emails on the mail server.	In POP3 the user can not maintain mails directly in the mailbox of the mail server.
The user can generate, delete or rename an email over the mail server.	The user can not generate, delete or rename email over the mail server.
The changes made over the server or system are made on the other side too and it is Bi-directional	The changes made on a system do not affect the content that is present on the server and it is unidirectional.
Email sync allows a user.	Email sync is not allowed for a user.
The IMAP server is slower as compared to POP3.	The POP3 server is fast.
Before downloading a user can search the content of mail for a specific string.	Without downloading a mail user can not search the content to the local system.
Multiple unnecessary copies of the message are stored at the mail server, in the case of lost messages on a local server, the mail can still be retrieved	In this server there are two modes: keep mode and delete mode. The mail remains to save in the mailbox after retrieval in keep mode and the mail is deleted from the mailbox after retrieval in delete mode.
The Message header can be viewed prior to downloading.	All the messages are downloaded at once.

IMAP and POP3

IMAP protocol is considered better than the POP3 protocol for multi-device operations. The changes made on the web interface or on email by IMAP, the software stays in sync with the server, whereas in POP3, changes in the mail can be done using local email software.

What is IMAP?

The term IMAP stands for Internet Access Message Protocol. It is an email protocol that manages and retrieves email messages from the receiving server. Since internet access message protocol(IMAP) is used in message retrieval, it is not possible to use the IMAP protocol to send an email. Instead, IMAP is used for receiving messages from a mail server via a TCP/IP connection.

Originally it was developed in 1986, and its fourth revision occurred in the early 1990s. One can interchangeably use IMAP with IMAP4- with the latter not very common.

What is POP3?

POP3 stands for Post Office Protocol Version 3, an application layer protocol that email clients use to retrieve email from the mail servers over TCP/IP network. Earlier Post Office Protocol was designed to transfer the messages from the server to the local disk, but now version 3 has the option of leaving the same copy on the server.

POP3 is an easy protocol to implement but this limits its usage. Example: POP3 supports only one mail server for an individual mailbox. This has now been made outmoded by modern protocols like IMAP.