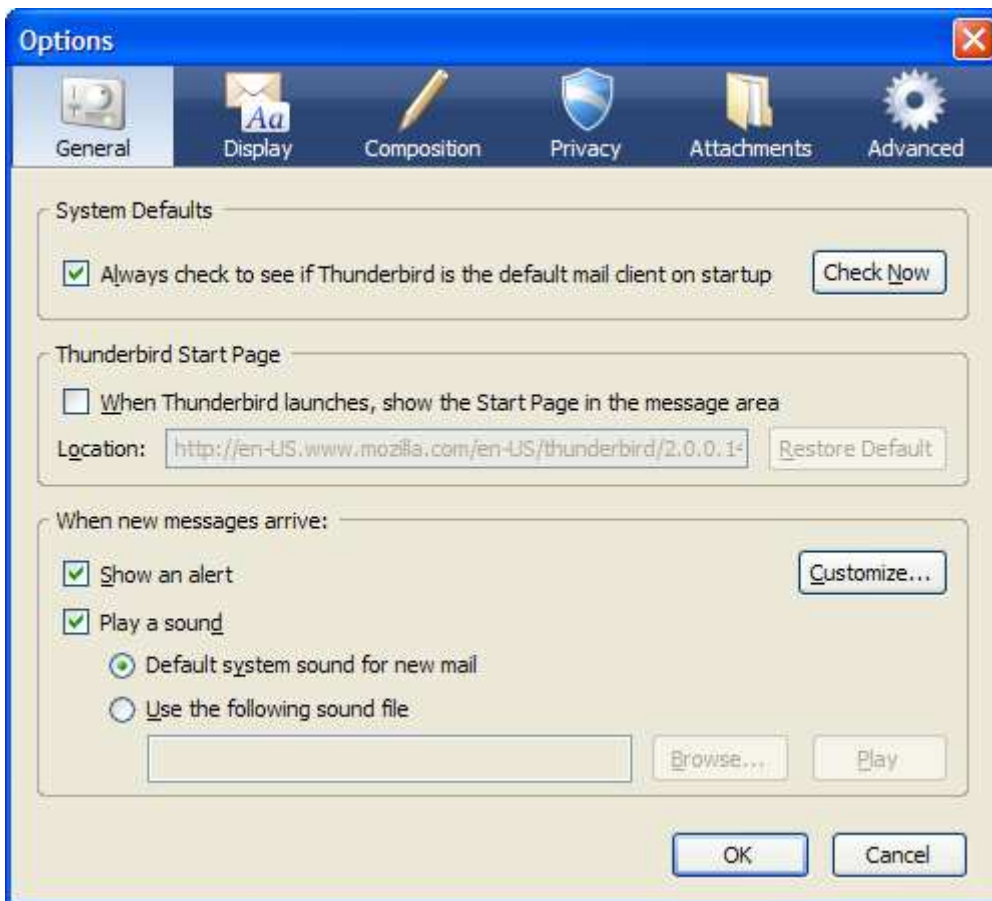


## Tech Tip #2 – Thunderbird E-mail

So, you're happily working in Banner or on a Word document or PowerPoint presentation when suddenly you hear a sound and a small window pops up in the lower right corner of your screen telling you you've just received one or more e-mail messages. If you're like me, the You've-Got-Mail Pavlovian response kicks in and, distracted from your work, you check your e-mail, only to find out someone from Nigeria wants your help with some financial transaction.

It's nice of Thunderbird to tell you when mail arrives but it can be a distraction. You're going to check your mail anyway so here's an option to instruct Thunderbird to keep quiet.

Click on "Tools" along Thunderbird's top menu bar, then click on "Options..." and, if necessary, click on the "General" tab so that you see the window below.



Here's a pop quiz from the last tech tip. Just by looking at this image, if I were to press the "Enter" key with this screen open, what action would occur?

1. The System Defaults "Always check to see..." box will be cleared
- OR
2. The values currently entered would be accepted and the screen would close

The answer follows so read on when you're ready.

The correct answer is #2. You noticed the blue around the "OK" button, didn't you? That was too easy. :-)

Now back to task.

You have the choice of turning off the alert message and/or the sound notification by clearing the check boxes under "When new messages arrive:". After making your changes, simply press "Enter". In this case, even though you used your mouse to clear those boxes, the "Enter" button remains the active keystroke. Again, the blue border is your clue.

Now you could have made the changes without ever touching your mouse. Notice that each menu bar option in Thunderbird, and virtually all other programs, has one letter that is underlined. This offers you a keyboard shortcut. Hold down the "Alt" key and press the corresponding letter (not case sensitive) on your keyboard and it's just as if you had clicked on it with your mouse. Then, with the dropdown list open, release the "Alt" key and press the underlined letter of the option you want, in our example, "o" for "Options...". With an open menu list, you don't need to press the "Alt" key because Windows knows you're about to make a choice. In fact, pressing the "Alt" key closes the menu list and highlights the "File" menu option instead.

When the "Options" screen opens, if the "General" tab is not active, simply press the left or right cursor arrow until it is. Lo and behold, we have more underlined letters in this window.

You know what to do now. To toggle the "Show an alert" box between checked and unchecked, simply hold down the "Alt" key and press "s". To change "Play a sound", it's "Alt" and "d".

Again, the "Enter" key has remained active so just press it when you're done.

Why try to avoid your mouse whenever possible? While the mouse is a great tool for interacting with your computer, and indispensable for programs such as CAD, it's not at all good for your body. Reaching for your mouse puts not only your wrist in motion but also your elbow, shoulder, neck and back muscles. All those motions add up over time and can cause muscle and tendon issues. Anything that keeps your arms in a more neutral position reduces the impact of repetitive motions.

From <http://www.stat.rice.edu/~cscott/rsi.html###technique>

Using a mouse can be even more harmful than typing. Here are three reasons why this is so:

- All the work is done by one finger. Double clicking and dragging can be especially straining.
- Modern windows-based machines rely heavily on the use of a mouse.
- Users often do not position the mouse properly. Instead, they stretch for the mouse, which can lead to increased strain, a drooping shoulder, and pain extending up into the shoulder and neck.

Another solution is to use key commands to operate in a windows environment, rather than the mouse. Once you learn the commands, this method is often faster than mousing.