

[Good Morning America](#)

| [World News Tonight](#)

| [20/20](#)

| [Downtown](#)

| [Primetime](#)

| [Nightline](#)

| [This Week](#)

SCI/TECH



- ▶ [HOMEPAGE](#)
- ▶ [NEWS SUMMARY](#)
- ▶ [U.S.](#)
- ▶ [INTERNATIONAL](#)
- ▶ [MONEYSCOPE](#)
- ▶ [WEATHER.com](#)
- ▶ [LOCAL NEWS](#)
- ▶ [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- ▶ [SPORTS](#)
- ▶ [SCI / TECH](#)
- ▶ [POLITICS](#)
- ▶ [HEALTH](#)
- ▶ [LIFESTYLES](#)
- ▶ [TRAVEL](#)
- ▶ [VIDEO & AUDIO](#)
- ▶ [WEBCASTS](#)
- ▶ [COMMUNITY](#)

NEWS PLUS

- [REFERENCE](#)
- [COOL](#)
- [DOWNLOADS](#)
- [SEND THIS PAGE](#)
- [TO A FRIEND](#)
- [EMAIL](#)
- [ABCNEWS.com](#)
- [HELP & TOOLS](#)



GO TO:

[HOMEPAGE](#) » [SCI/TECH](#) » [FEATURE](#)



Stamp-Free Mail Service

Skip the Stamps, But Watch Out for the Ads



May 10 — It costs next to nothing to send e-mail, but not everyone has a computer or Internet access. Everyone has a postal address, but it costs 34 cents — and soon possibly more — to send a letter.

Through an Oregon company, you can now send mail free of charge. (PhotoDisc)

Now, a company hopes to bring the best of both worlds together.

Zairmail, a Portland, Ore.-based company, allows anyone to send up to 10 letters a day anywhere in the United States using a combination of the Internet and the U.S. Postal Service.

By creating a free account with Zairmail, computer users can craft messages at the company's Web site. The "e-mails" are sent electronically to one of Zairmail's printing facilities across the country and prepared for delivery through the regular postal system.

Who pays for the postage? Zairmail's advertising partners, who stuff coupons in the envelope with your letter. The coupons are chosen based on what you've told Zairmail the recipient would be interested in, such as "health/beauty" or "travel."

Pay vs. Free

Several other companies offer services that convert e-mail to the regular postal mail, but often at high costs. NetGram in Encinitas, Calif., for example, charges 59 cents for a single-page letter and 5 cents for each additional page.

Zairmail also has a "pay-per-send" model where users can send their mail sans coupons for about \$1 to 65 cents per letter. But with its launch of free, ad-supported service last October, Zairmail thinks it has found the sweet spot of mail convergence.

"If we can make sending a personal letter as easy as sending an e-mail, that would be a big win," says Wilson Zehr, CEO of Zairmail. "And if we can provide the service for free, that would be a slam dunk."

For nearly a year now, Michael Sonntag in Commerce, Calif., has been sending letters to his grandmother in Saint Louis, Mo., without spending a penny on postage. "The cool thing is that it doesn't cost anything on your end to do it," he said.

Love and a Burrito

Still, there are some minor annoyances.

The Zairmail Web site limits the length of your message to 8,000 characters, or

SEARCH

SIDEBARS



[SAM DONALDSON](#)

Is U.S. Mail Still a Bargain?

roughly 1,800 words. So don't expect to write long family year-end newsletters to Aunt Bessie.

Also, the envelopes from Zairmail tend to look more like business letters or even junk mail. And consider how odd it may be if your sweetheart gets a coupon for a discounted burrito along with your latest love letter.

But, for what the service lacks, users will surely find it convenient. After all, just think of the time and money you'll save from waiting in line at the Post Office for new stamps. ■

ABCNEWS' Rick Romero of KABC-TV in Los Angeles contributed to this story



[PRINT THIS PAGE](#)



[SEND THIS TO A FRIEND](#)

[LINK BACK TO TOP ▲](#)

 abc NEWS.com

[SECTIONS](#)

GO TO:

SEARCH

Copyright © 2001 ABC News Internet Ventures. Click here for [Terms of Use](#) & [Privacy Policy & Internet Safety Information](#) applicable to the site.

ABCNEWS.com family of sites:

[ABC.com](#)

[ESPN.com](#)

[Disney.com](#)

[Family.com](#)

[Mr.Showbiz](#)

[Movies.com](#)