design moves

Daniel Jackson · Autodesk, Boston · March 17-18, 2025

a mechanical analogy

unify-specialize: tradeoff simplicity/specificity

set of wrenches

unify

adjustable wrench

macro lens

specialize

general-purpose lens

tighten-loosen: tradeoff automation/flexibility

light pull / door lock

tighten

loosen

airplane toilet lock

dimmers with separate controls

rotary dimmer switch

unify-specialize: bad moves

unify-specialize: tradeoff simplicity/specificity

set of wrenches

unify

adjustable wrench

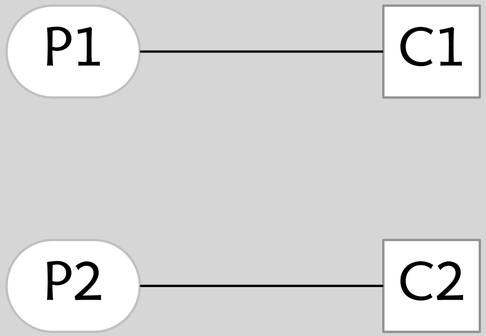
macro lens

specialize

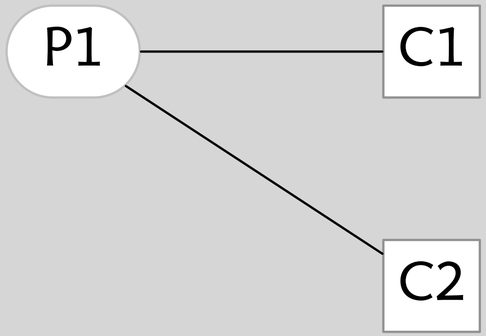
general-purpose lens

the specificity rule

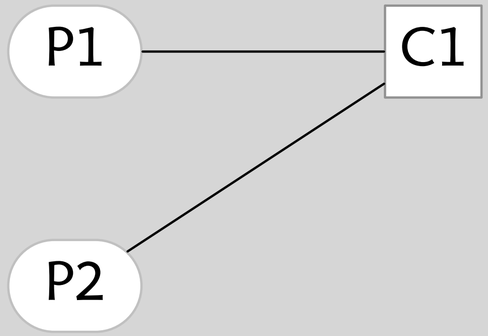
specificity
purposes:concepts are 1:1



redundancy
>1 concept per purpose



overloading
>1 purpose per concept

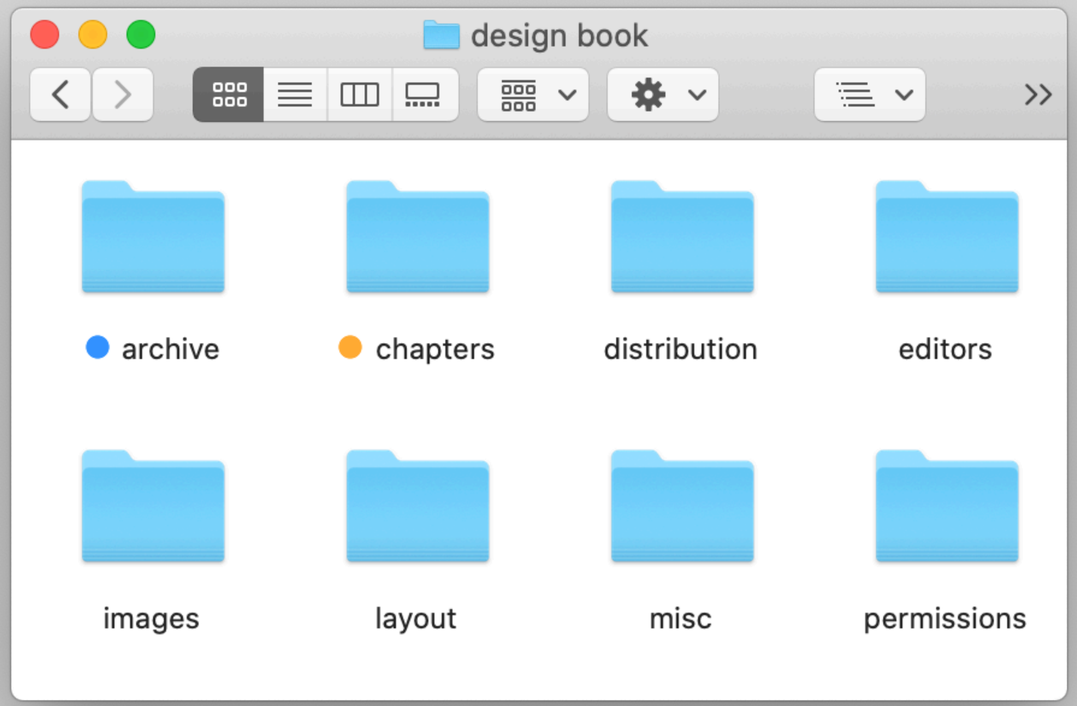


redundancy in Gmail

concept Label

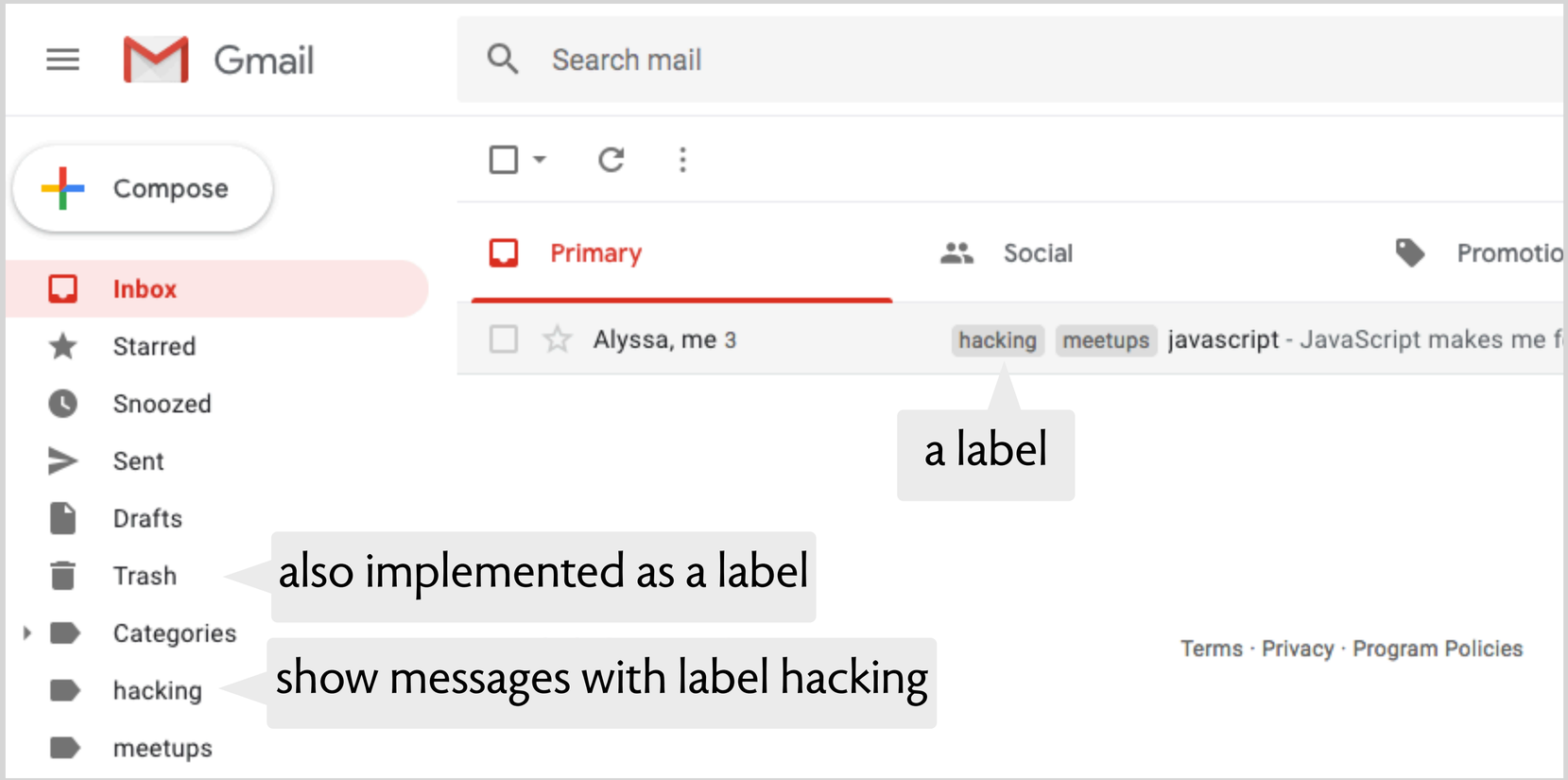
purpose organize items

principle if label is added to an item and not removed, then filtering on that label will display that item

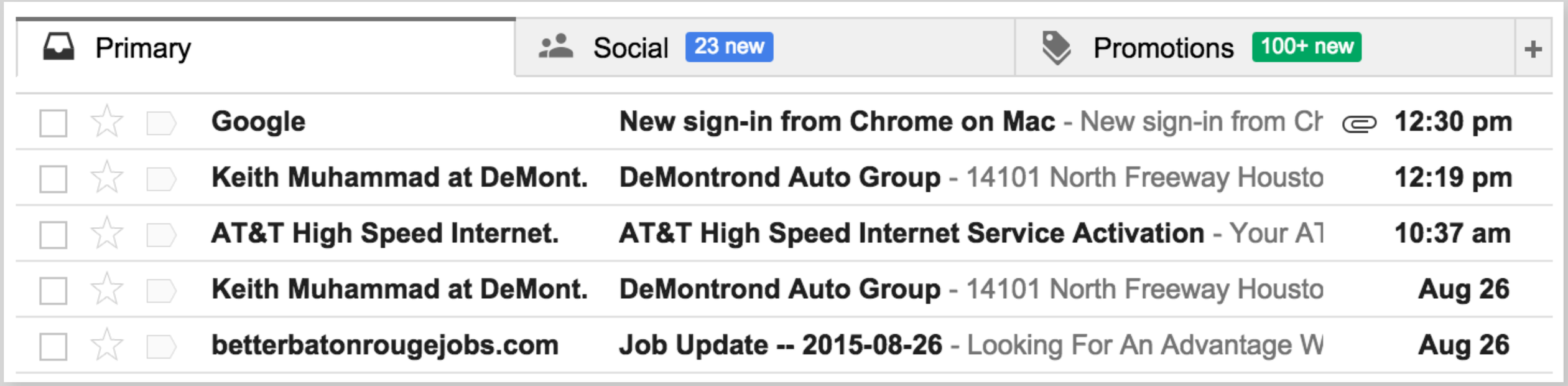


labels shown as colored dots in macOS finder

labels in Gmail



Gmail's categories



category tab settings

Categories:
Learn more

- [x] **Primary**
- [x] **Social**
- [x] **Promotions**
- [ ] **Updates**
- [ ] **Forums**

Starred messages

- [x] **Include starred in Primary**

Choose which message categories to show as inbox tabs. Other messages will appear in the Primary tab.

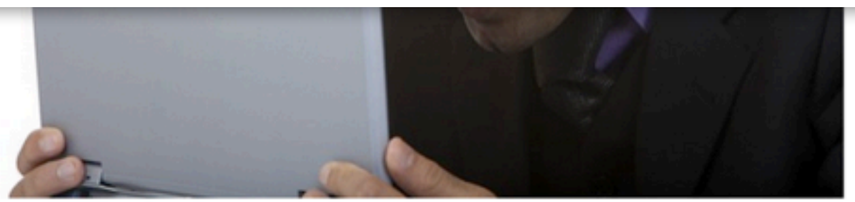
some reactions when categories came out

Google gets it terribly, terribly wrong with Gmail tabs and makes me angry

By Mark Wilson | Published 2 years ago | Follow

71 Comments | Like 55 | Share 11 | +1 37 | Tweet 30

see that tabs were now available to me. Excitement was short-lived, however; it quickly became apparent that this new feature is a disaster.



Home › Quick Tech Tip: Disabling Gmail's Category Tabs

Quick Tech Tip: Disabling Gmail's Category Tabs

Mon, 07/29/2013 - 12:17 | Chuck Gray

in LibraryPoint Blog Tech Tutorials Teen Blog Tech Answers Science and Technology Self-Help and Instructional

Are you a Gmail user? Did you wake up a week or two ago to find that your new messages were now being automatically organized by Gmail into tabs of different, pre-determined categories? And, did you think, like me, that they were really ugly, stupid, and unnecessary? Here's a quick tip on how to rid yourself of them!

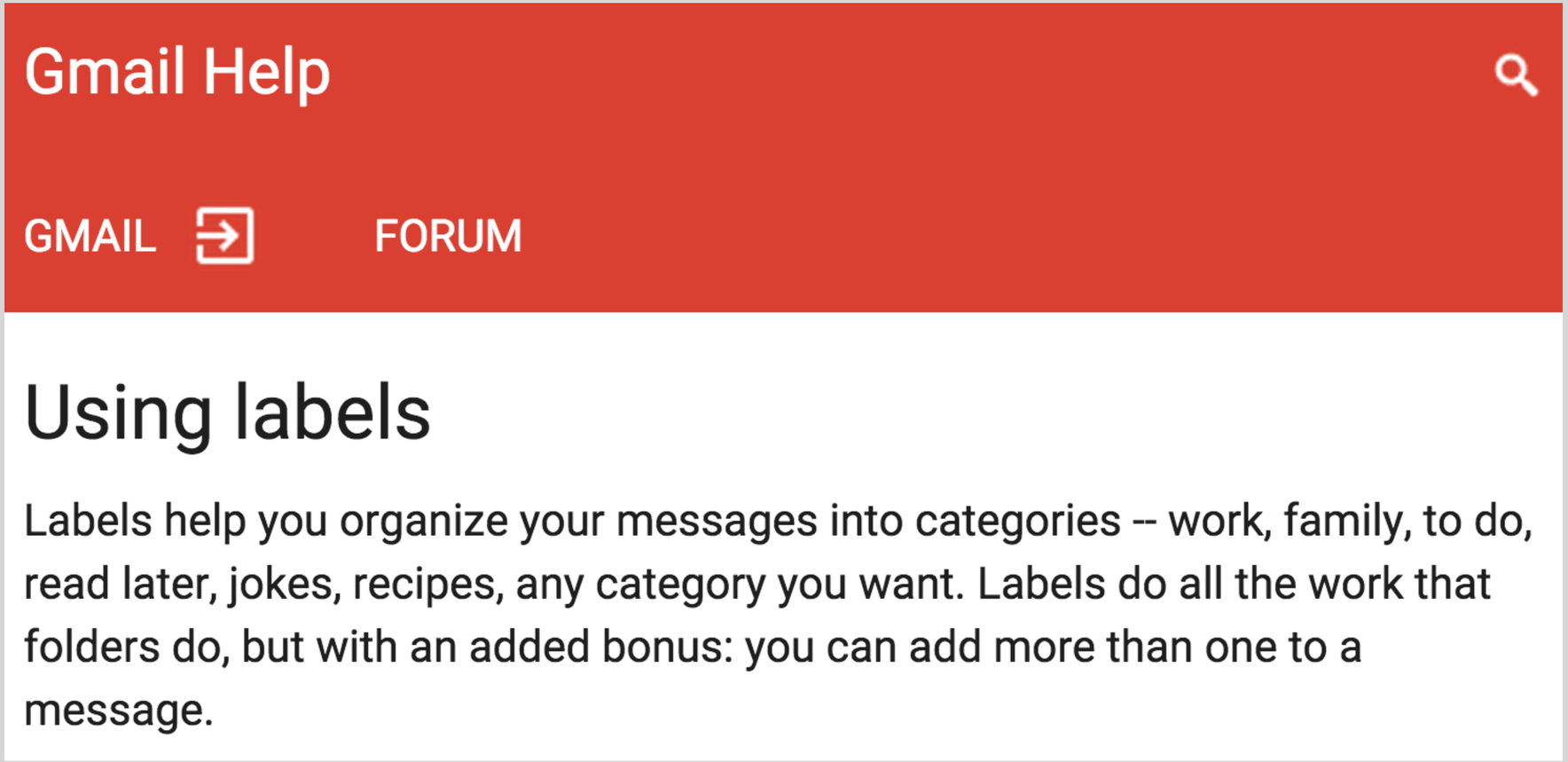
a more reasonable critique

Why the Tabs Are So Confusing

The tabs do give you a convenient way to automatically sort your inbox according to Gmail's preset categories and get notifications at a glance for when new emails come in. However, the tabbed view introduces a new, not-so-clear element in Gmail called "categories."

The problem is, you already have labels that *also* match these categories. Gmail, for example, adds Social Updates, Promotions, and Forums as SmartLabels in the left menu. The "Notifications" SmartLabel corresponds to the Updates tab (I wonder why they didn't just call the tab Notifications), but **SmartLabels are not the same as Categories**. Gmail's pre-designed SmartLabel filters makes it seem like that, but they're really two different things.

how google explains labels



	Label concept	Category concept
purpose	organize messages	organize messages
principle	user (or system) adds label to message; filter on label shows message	user (or system) adds category to message; then filter on category shows message
can associate with tabs?	no	yes
user can create new ones?	yes	no
apply outside inbox too?	yes	no

fundamental commonality, needless differences

one concept would suffice

overloading in Fuji cameras

a lovely camera fuji x100

complex menu system: image quality setting

aspect ratio

image size setting

non-standard ratio + raw?

problem #1: no non-standard ratio unless also save JPG!

raw image showing non-destructive aspect ratio crop

problem #2: very few ratio options

change.org

Petition details Comments Updates

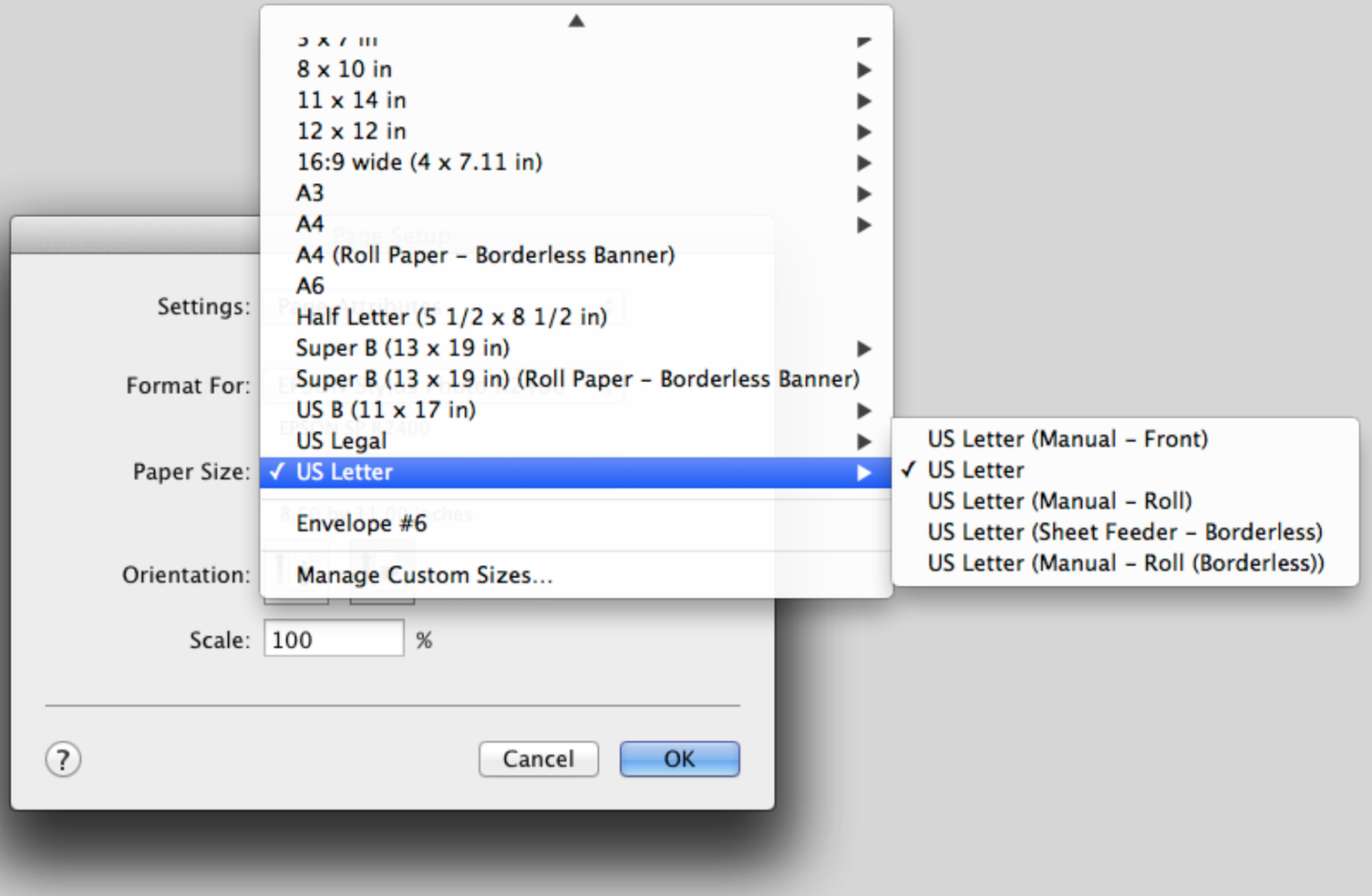
Fuji, give us 4:3, 5:4, and 6:7 aspect ratios on X-series cameras

636 have signed. Let's get to 1,000!

At 1,000 signatures, this petition is more likely to be **featured in recommendations!**

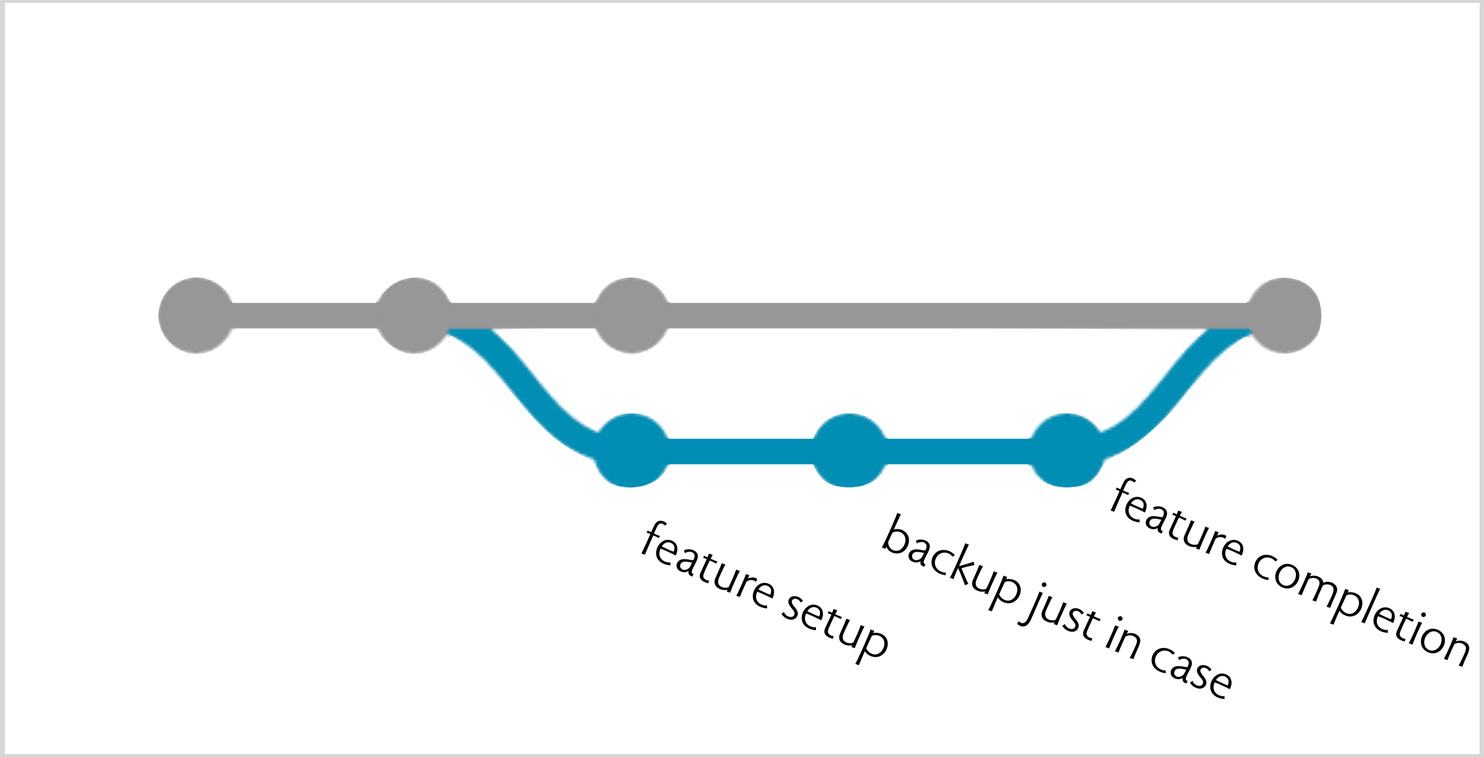
other overloading examples

overloading epson driver

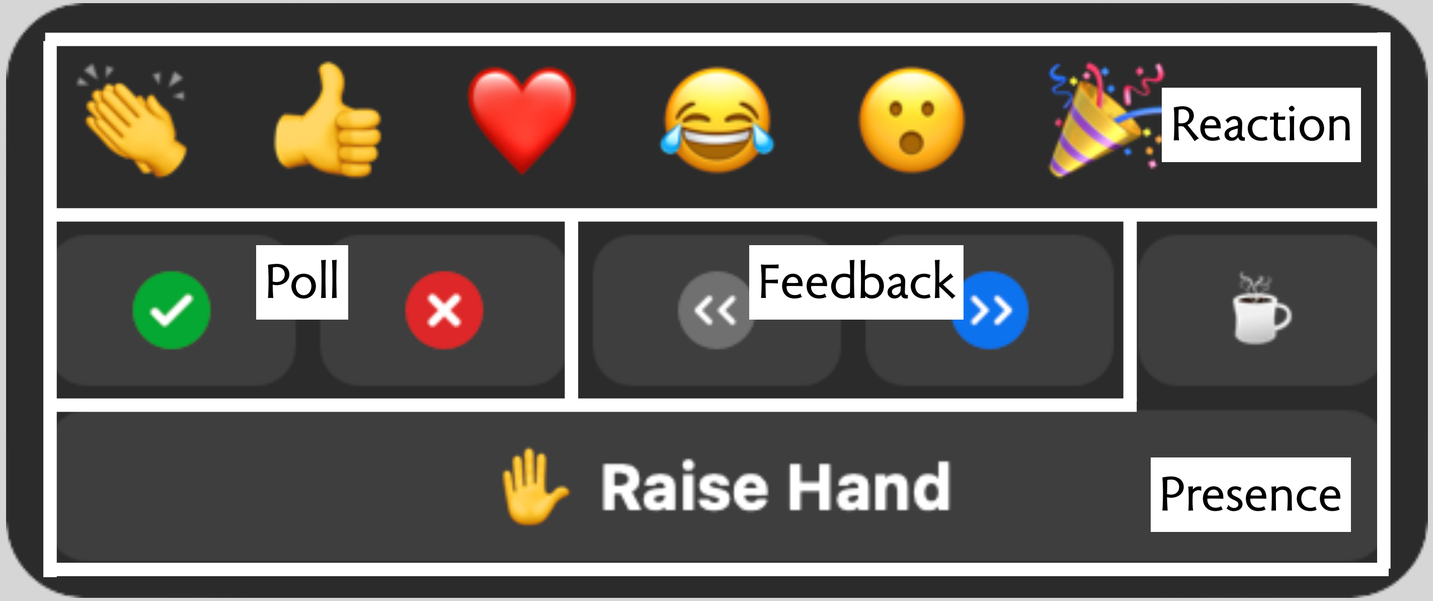


result: can't create custom size for front loading
also, page size presets in Lightroom hold feed setting

overloading commit concept



overloading zoom reaction



tighten/loosen: bad moves

tighten-loosen design moves: tradeoff automation/flexibility

light pull / door lock

tighten

airplane toilet lock

dimmers with separate controls

loosen

rotary dimmer switch

surprising syncs in calendar apps

AS

Arvind Satyanarayan November 15, 2018 at 2:04 PM

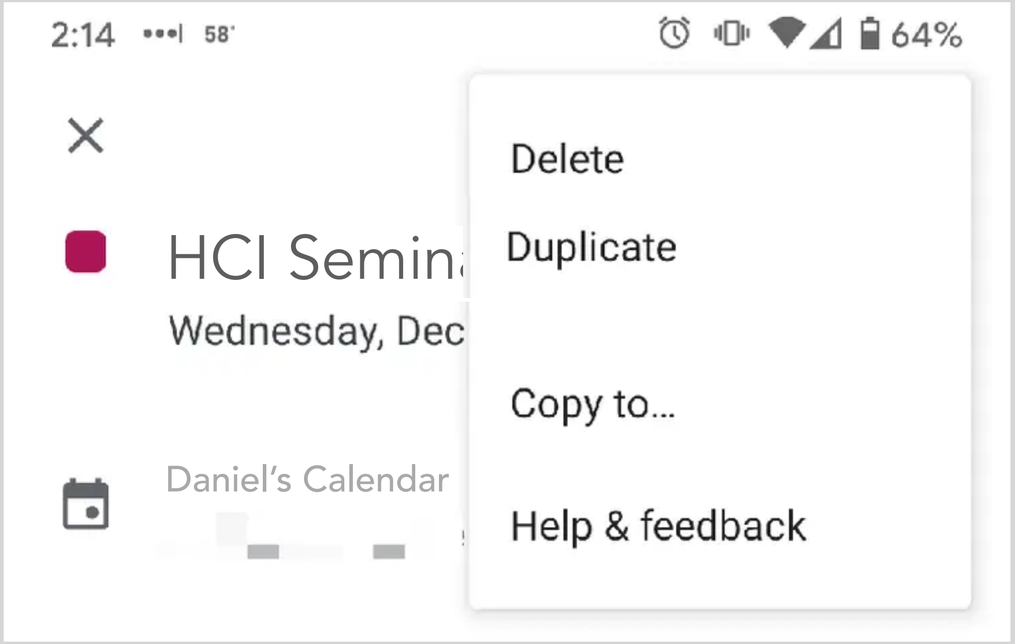
Re: TALK: Monday 11-19-2018 Kanit (Ham) Wongsuphasawat: No...

Details

Cc: seminars@csail.mit.edu, HCI-Seminar@lists.csail.mit.edu

This message is from a mailing list. Unsubscribe

Despite some erroneous messages sent to this list accidentally, Kanit's talk is happening! Please join us on Monday.



seminar announced as **email** to listserv with attached calendar event

↓

event **installed** automatically in user's calendar

↓

user **deletes** event from calendar

↓

cancellation email automatically sent to other invitees

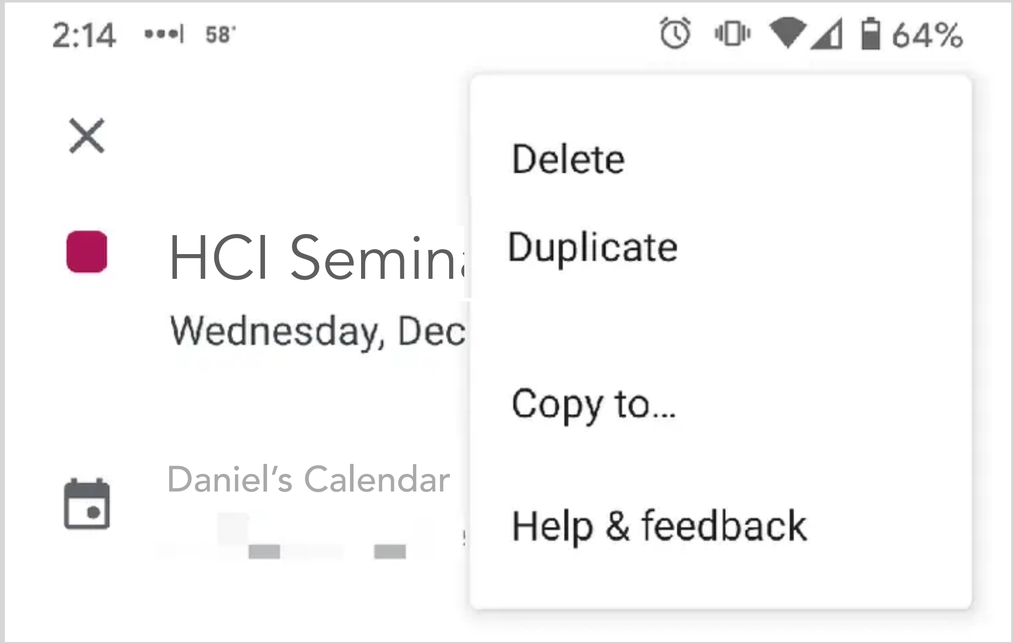
Canceling and deleting events in the Google Calendar mobile app is similar to on a desktop.

1. First, open Google Calendar.
2. Tap on the event you wish to cancel.
3. Press on the three dots in the top right corner of the event window.
4. Select Delete.
5. Tap Delete event. Google Calendar will send a cancellation email to the guests.

Mar 22, 2021

https://wpamelia.com › Blog

How to Cancel an Event in Google Calendar - Amelia booking ...



concept Calendar

purpose record upcoming engagements

actions

create an event

delete an event

...

concept Invitation

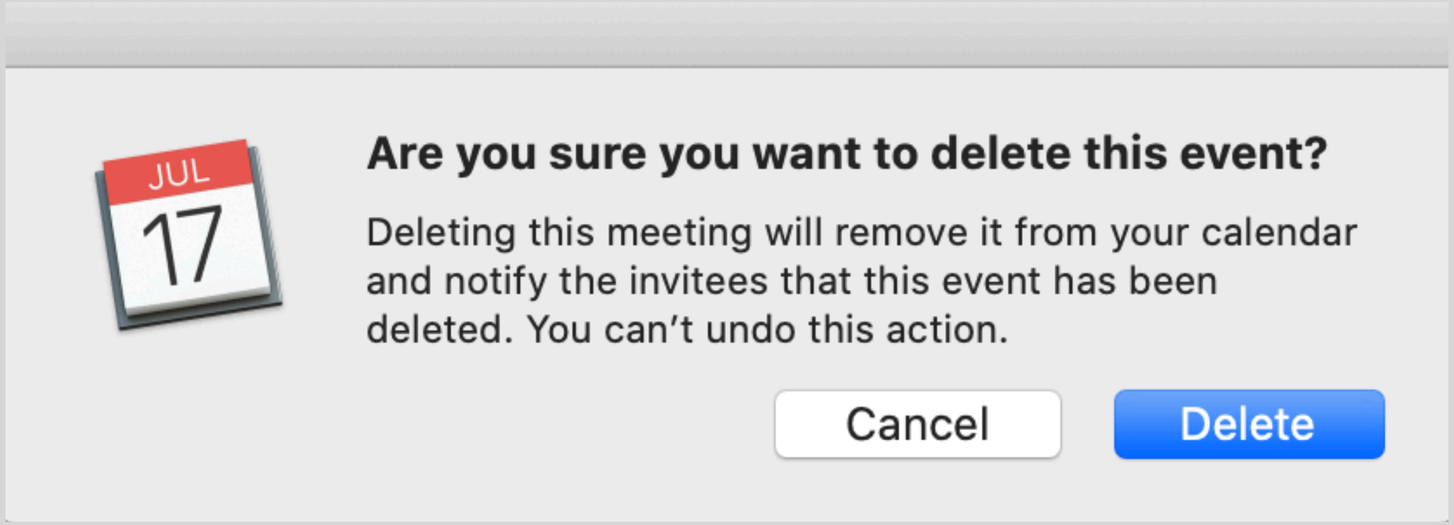
purpose coordinate event participants

actions

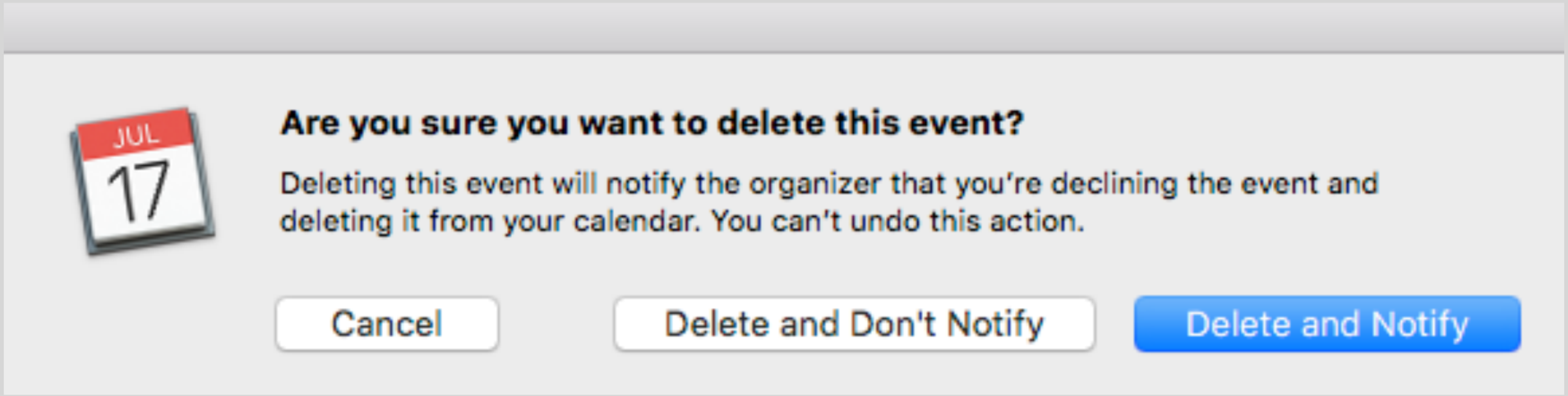
accept invitation

decline invitation

...



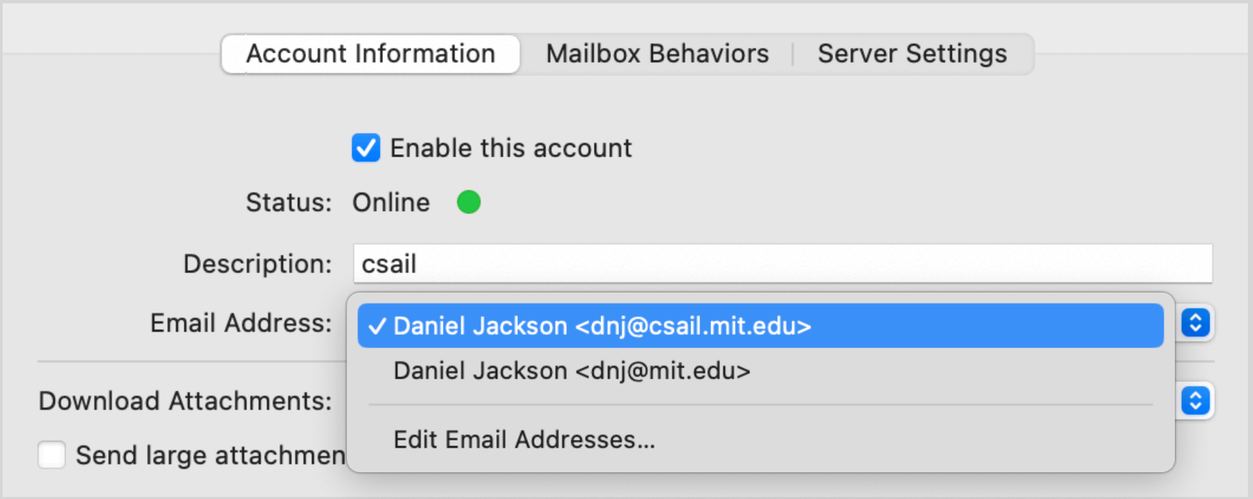
a long time problem in iCal too
how to delete spam calendar events?



resolution to design problem
make sync optional

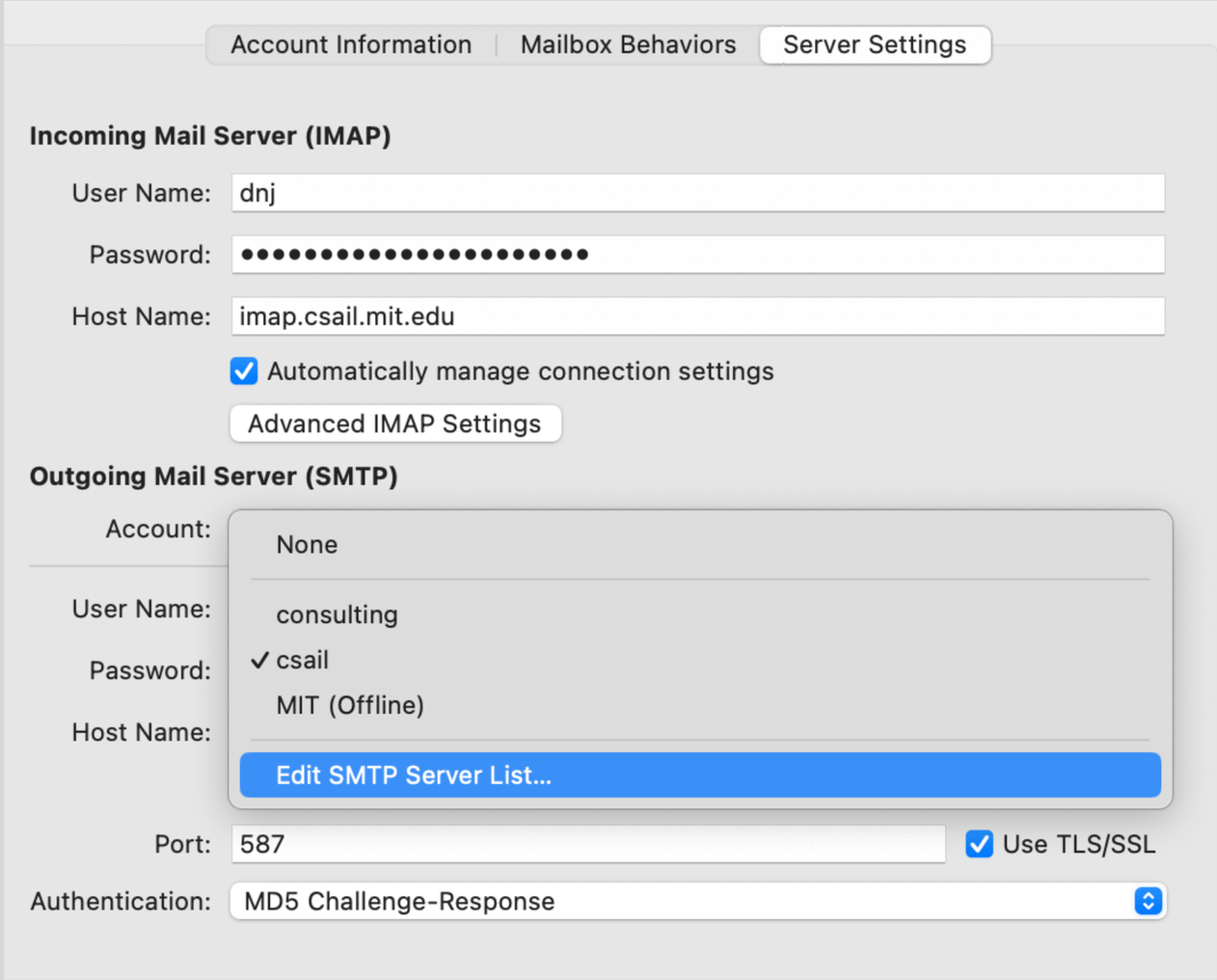
from address in Apple Mail

from address and outgoing server changed independently



a reasonable sync?
match email from
based on recipient

a missing sync
no change to outgoing
when from changes



examples of good moves

Schindler's PORT elevator

Schindler's PORT elevator

A boost to traffic performance

Schindler PORT groups passengers by destination to provide the shortest possible trip for every rider, avoiding chaotic elevator runs and random, multiple stops.

User-friendly operation

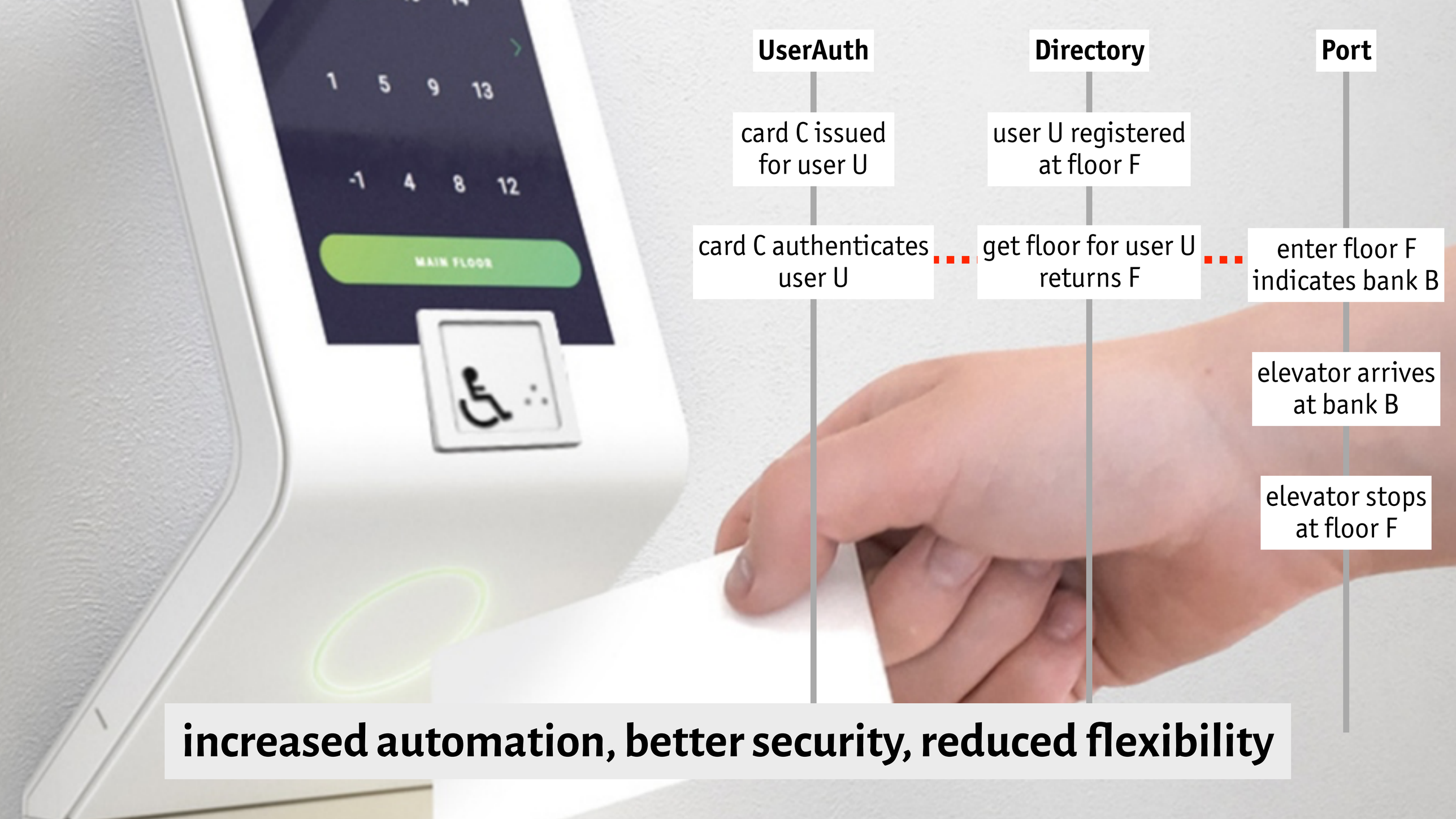
With Schindler PORT's universal card reader, a rider simply swipes a personal access card at the Schindler PORT terminal for an elevator car to be immediately assigned with an approved destination.

Excellent personalized service

Schindler PORT can customize your journey, whether it be a special VIP trip, a streamlining patient transport or allowing for more approach time, longer door opening time or additional space for passengers with special needs.

Enhanced building security

Floor access is defined by the building management through access cards or smartphones. Schindler PORT can also be integrated with turnstiles to further enhance building security.

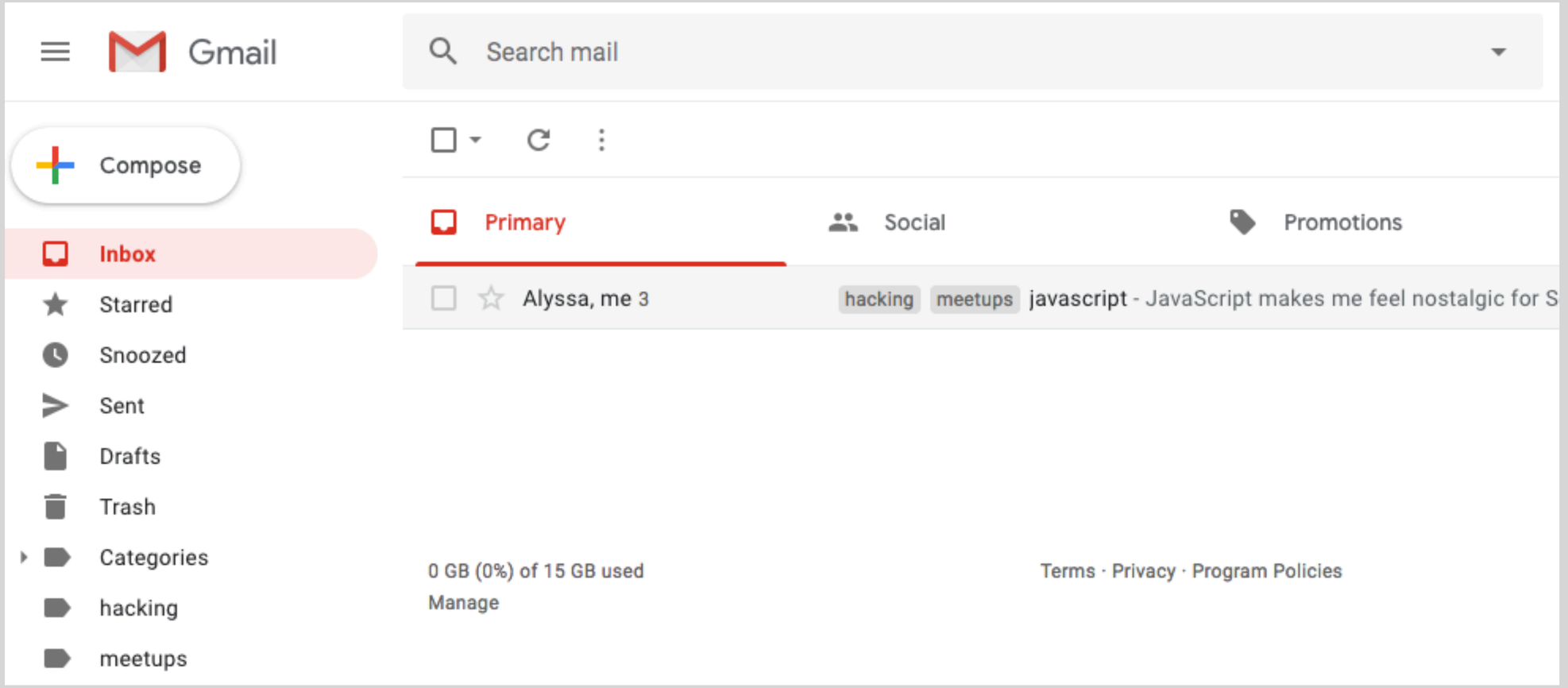


increased automation, better security, reduced flexibility

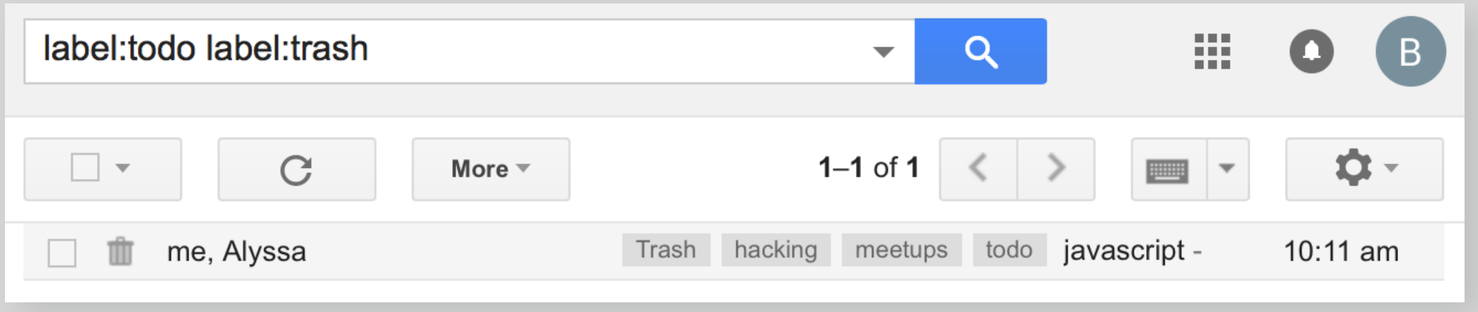
Gmail's email labels

the role of labels in Gmail

just a label lookup



use sent, trash in filters



what other benefits does this design bring?

what's the sync?

concept Trash

purpose allow undeletion

principle if an object is deleted, and the trash is not emptied, it can be restored; if an object is deleted and the trash is emptied, the object is gone but its space is regained

actions
delete (o: Object)
restore (o: Object)
empty ()

concept Labeling

purpose organize items

principle if label is added to an item, then filtering on that label will display that item

actions
add (l: Label, i: Item)
remove (l: Label, i: Item)
filter (ls: set Label): set Item

syncs include rules like these and their converse

when Trash.delete(i) **then** Labeling.add (‘*trashed*’, i)
when Trash.restore(i) **then** Labeling.remove (‘*trashed*’, i)

Moira's mailing lists

a Moira mailing list

WebMoira List Manager : Daniel Jackson

Help | My Lists | Undo Log (2)

List Name: concept-design
Description: concept design
Attributes: active, moira mailing list
Permissions: private, visible
Last Modified: by dnj with moiraws on 25-nov-2024 19:54:56

Edit

Members

Add Member: Add

Leave List: Remove Me

MIT Users

Daniel Jackson (dnj) remove

Email Addresses

daniel@dnj.photo remove

Administrator

what if we want >1 owner?

Owner: **Daniel Jackson (dnj)**

Change Owner: Change

solution: make the owner a ... mailing list!

WebMoira List Manager : Daniel Jackson

Help | My Lists | Undo Log (1)

List Name: concept-design
Description: concept design
Attributes: active, moira mailing list
Permissions: private, visible
Last Modified: by dnj with moiraws on 25-nov-2024 20:00:17

Edit

what other benefits does this design bring?

Members

Add Member: Add

Leave List: Remove Me

MIT Users

Daniel Jackson (dnj) remove

Email Addresses

daniel@dnj.photo remove

Administrators

Owner: dnj-admin (List)

Change Owner: Change

Add Administrator: Add

Leave Owner List: Remove Me

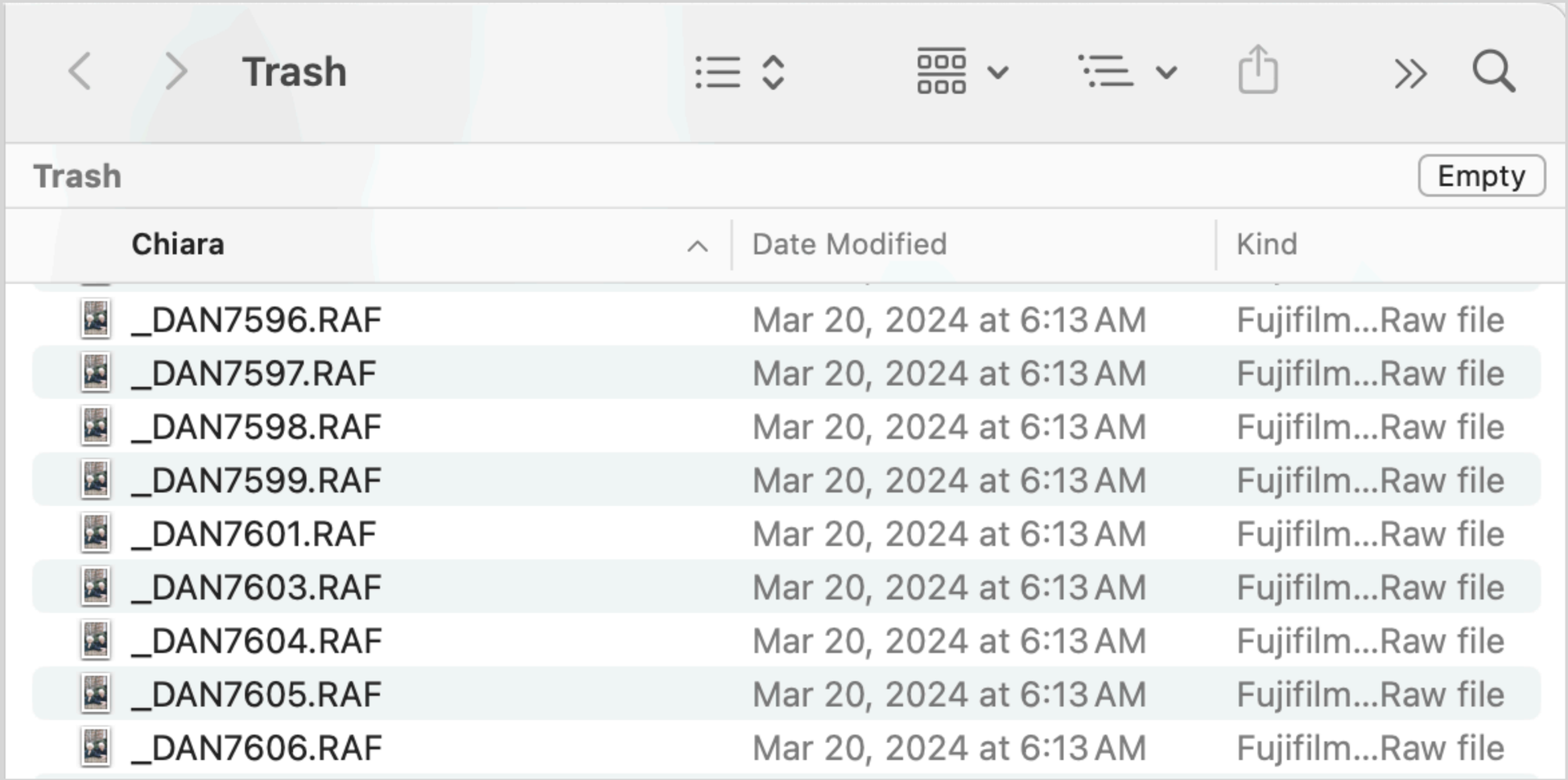
MIT Users

Daniel Jackson (dnj) remove

remove

macOS's trash

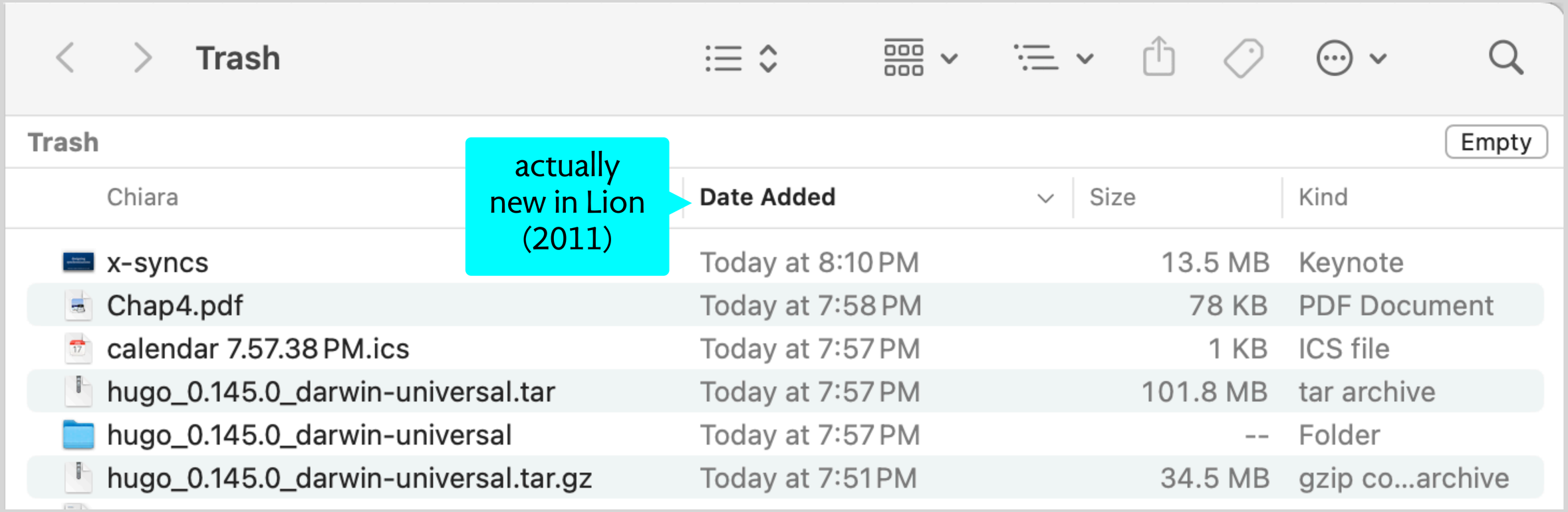
macOS trash is a folder



synchronizes Folder and Trash concepts

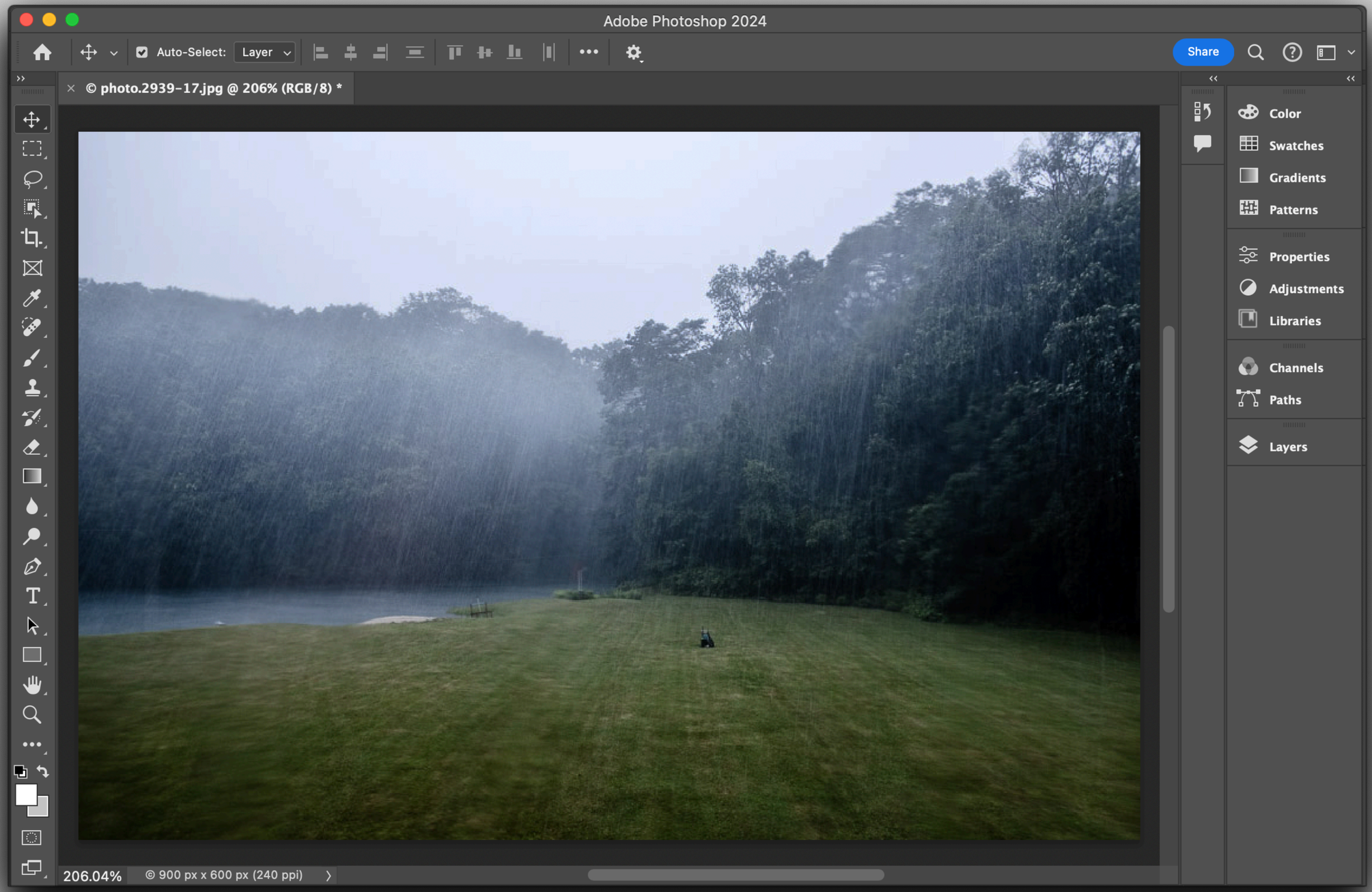
what benefits does this bring?

how to sort by deletion date?



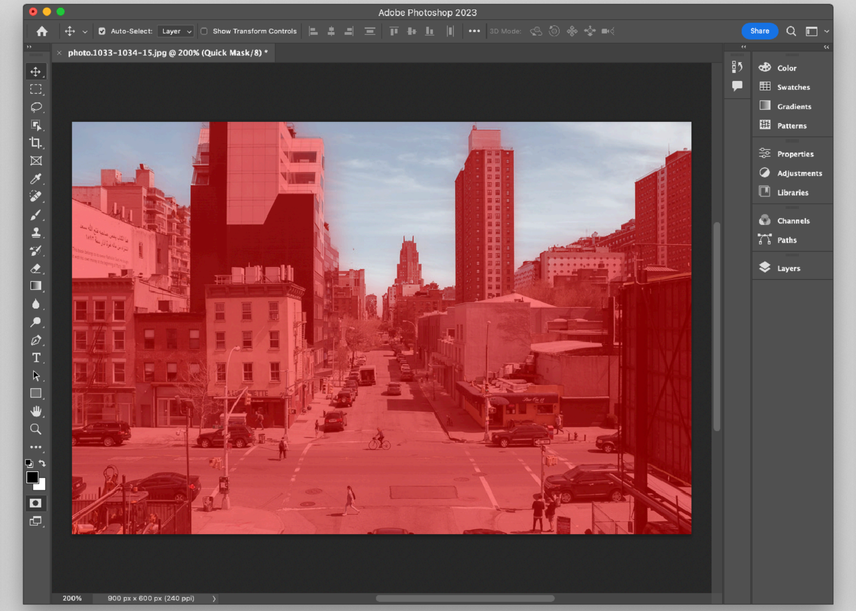
Photoshop's selections

how to darken the sky

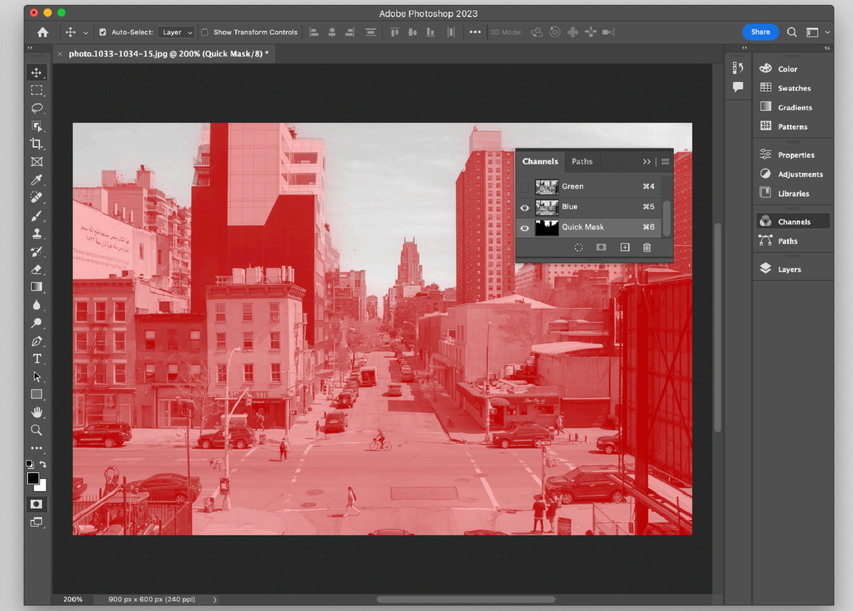


the mother of all synergies

selection (shown as “marching ants”)



edit selection as **mask**

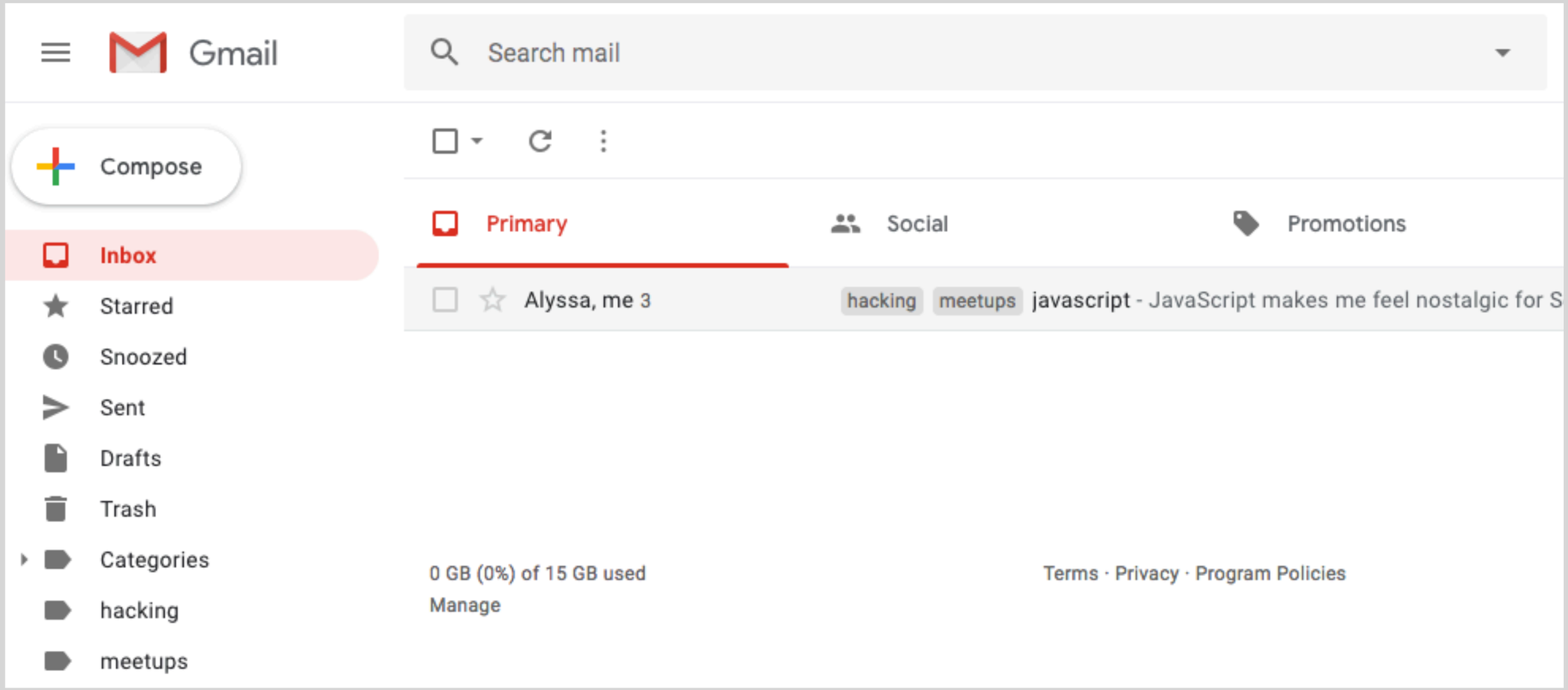


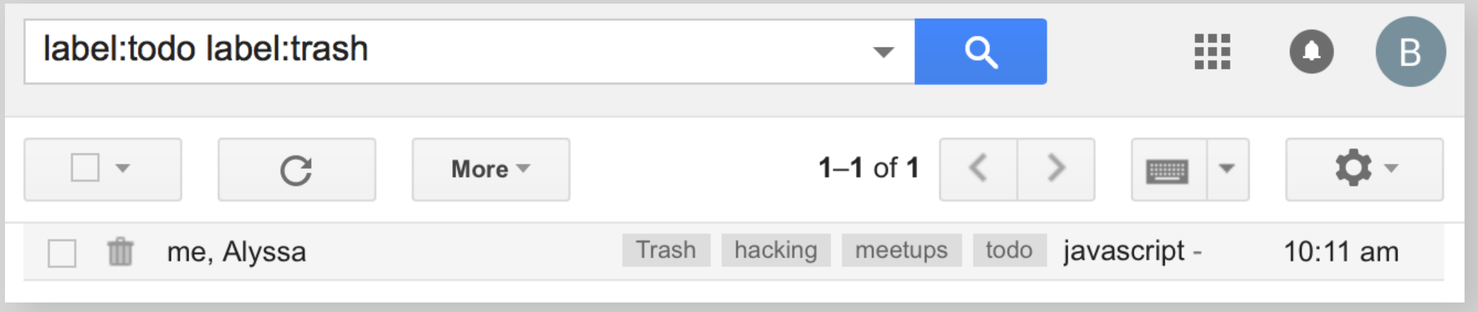
toggle mask as **channel**

selection = mask = channel = grey scale image

your turn:
no free lunch

Gmail complications

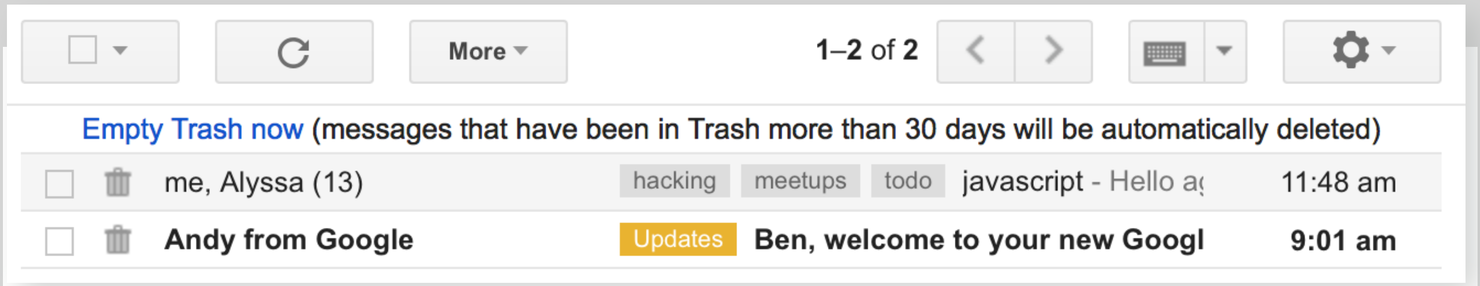




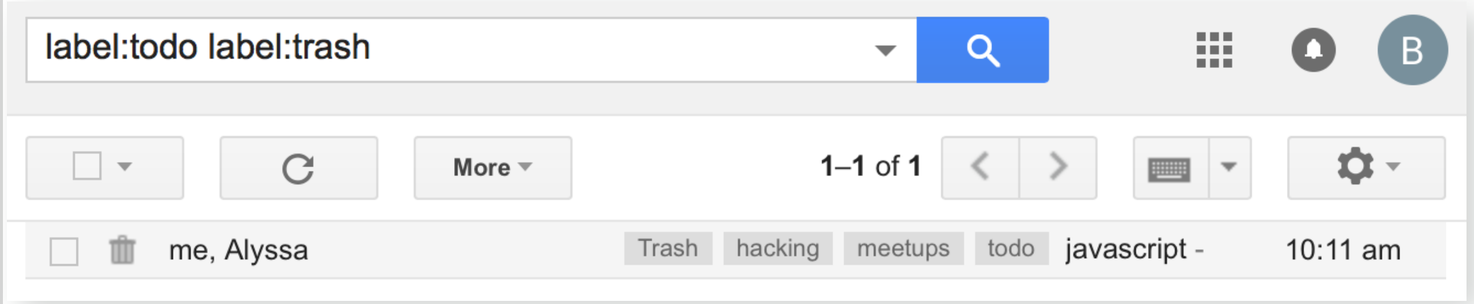
what new problems might this design result in?

a tricky aspect of this synchronization...

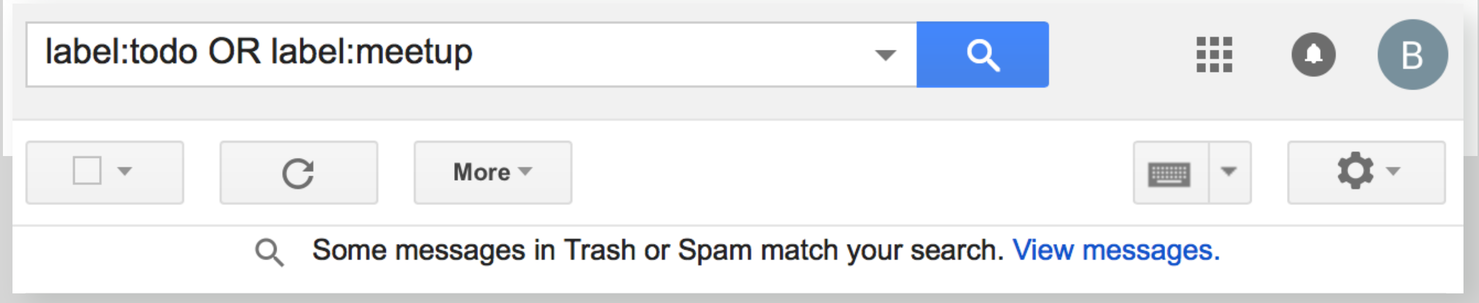
click on trash



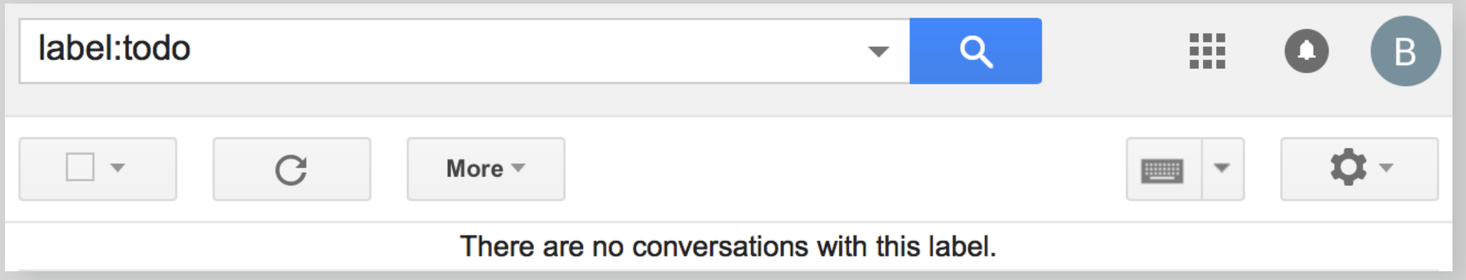
filter on todo and trash



filter on something else



filter on todo label



moira mailing lists as access control lists

WebMoira List Manager : Daniel Jackson

Help | My Lists | Undo Log (1)

List Name: concept-design
Description: concept design
Attributes: active, moira mailing list
Permissions: private, visible
Last Modified: by dnj with moiraws on 25-nov-2024 20:00:17

Edit

what new problems might this design result in?

Members

Add Member: Add

Leave List: Remove Me

MIT Users

Daniel Jackson (dnj) remove

Email Addresses

daniel@dnj.photo remove

Administrators

Owner: dnj-admin (List)

Change Owner: Change

Add Administrator: Add

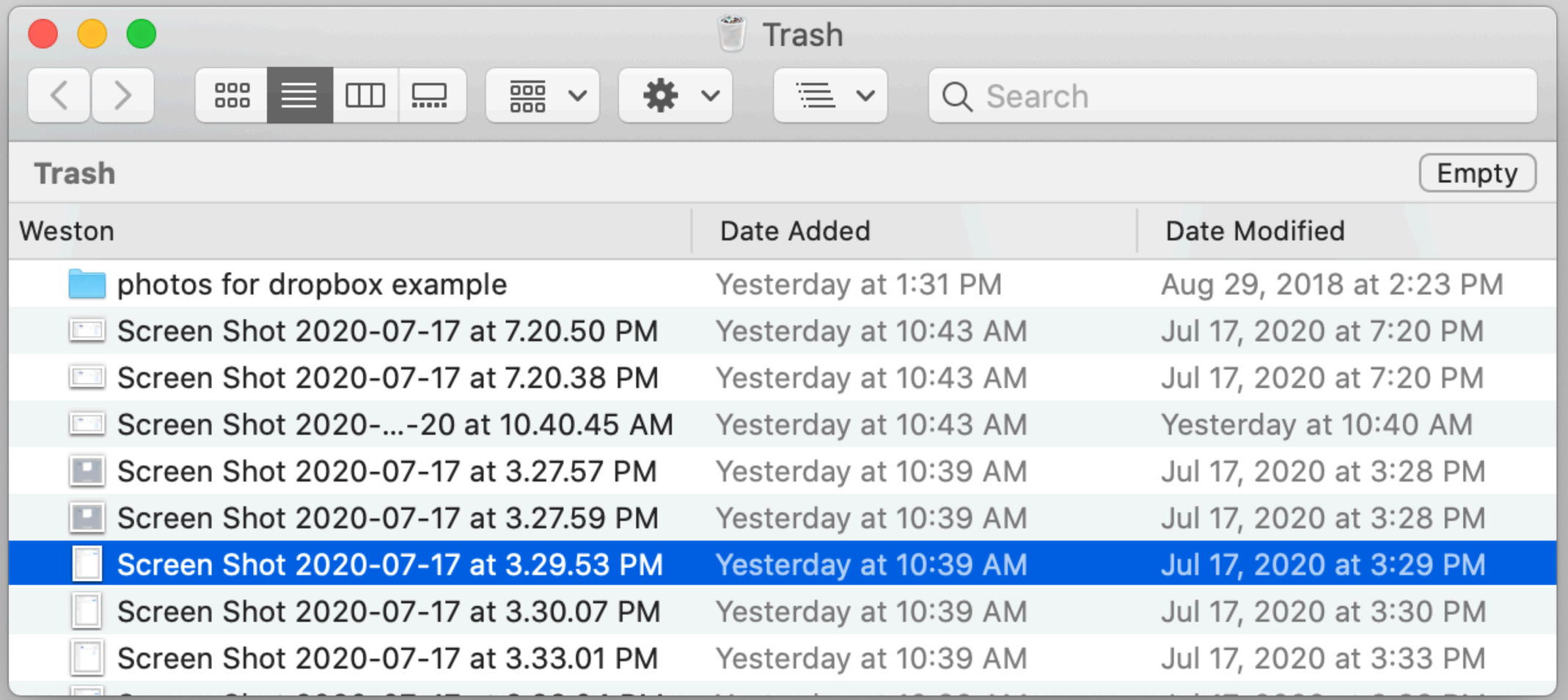
Leave Owner List: Remove Me

MIT Users

Daniel Jackson (dnj) remove

remove

making the trash a folder



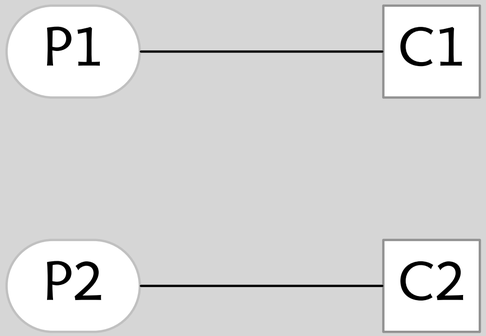
what new problems might this design result in?

hint: macOS has just one trash

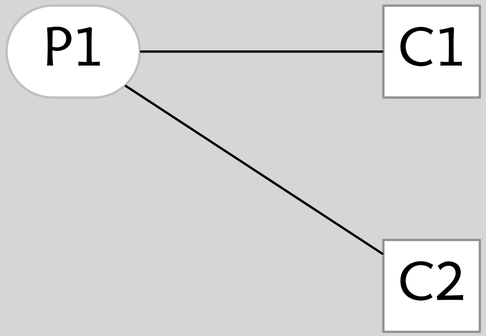
takeaways

unify-specialize: picking concepts that match purposes

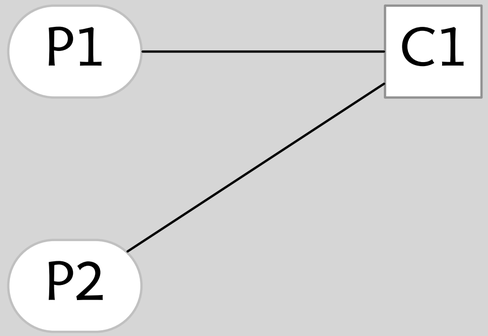
specificity
purposes:concepts are 1:1



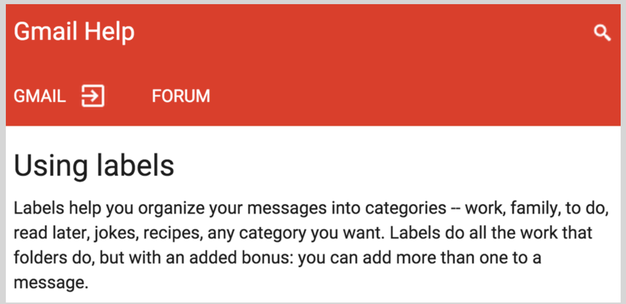
redundancy
>1 concept per purpose



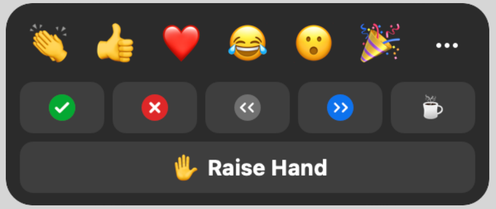
overloading
>1 purpose per concept



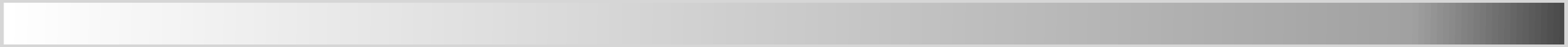
example
Category vs Label in Gmail



example
Reaction in Zoom



loosen-tighten: picking syncs that balance automation/flexibility



too loose
laborious

just right
can create synergy too

too tight
inflexible

what's next?

what's next?

exploring Autodesk concepts
in product-focused triad teams
first casting your product in concept terms
then working on Site, an integration concept