



Software

Encryption? This time it'll be usable, Thunderbird promises

A generation that tried the PGP plugin weeps

By [Richard Chirgwin](#) 4 Jan 2019 at 10:30

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Those who remember trying to configure the Thunderbird of old to work with PGP – an effort akin to learning how to run an Enigma machine while blindfolded – will be watching with interest: the project's coders promise that 2019 will be the year of easy encryption.

When the Mozilla Foundation decided to turn the email client loose in [May 2017](#), its future looked doubtful, but it's still here and, according to this post by community manager Ryan Sipes, donations are flowing freely enough for Thunderbird to expand its development team.

The current eight personnel are to be expanded to 14, and one of the roles to be resourced is an engineer who will focus on security and privacy.

"The UX/UI around encryption and settings will get an overhaul in the coming year," Sipes wrote.

While he couldn't guarantee that effort making it into the next release, "It is our hope to make encrypting Email and ensuring your private communication easier in upcoming releases."

Thunderbird's look – the subject of a design consultation [last year](#) – will be supported by a dedicated UX staffer.

Sipes last year kicked off an effort to improve onboarding documentation, and he also wrote that the project's new staff are tackling "technical debt" and "a fair bit of plumbing" to improve the emailer's performance.

Other work areas include better Gmail support, and a "native"(-esque) user experience the project hopes to bring about via better integrations with desktops. ®

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