International Post Corporation

Deutsche Post, GMX and WEB.DE launch postal mail notification service

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Imagine finding out which letters will be arriving later in the day: A new postal mail notification service in Germany will do just that, with the help of the country's two most widely used e-mail providers, GMX and WEB.DE, and Deutsche Post. Registered users can take advantage of the convenient new heads-up service and receive e-mail notification of the physical letters and correspondence en route to their mailboxes. Attached to the notification e-mail is a photo of the envelope. As a result, individuals who use the online e-mail service or WEB.DE and GMX smartphone apps can stay informed at all times of the postal mail they are about to receive. The service is free of charge and can be activated starting on July 27, 2020, by all 34 million GMX and WEB.DE users via the settings section of their individual e-mail accounts. This means that once launched, the notification service will be available to every second German internet user.

"By introducing this new, globally unique notification service, we are making it possible for our customers to receive their postal mail even more conveniently and flexibly," said Tobias Meyer, Deutsche Post DHL Group Board Member for Post & Parcel Germany. "Registered GMX and WEB.DE users will now have the option of finding out about the postal mail they are about to receive - whenever and wherever they want - and digitally archiving their offline correspondence. They will also gain more transparency about the delivery quality provided by Deutsche Post."

Jan Oetjen, Managing Director of the e-mail providers GMX and WEB.DE, added: "Our postal mail notification service will integrate e-mail and postal correspondence into one inbox. This is a ground-breaking step, particularly when you consider just how rapidly the digitalization of communications is expanding. The e-mail inbox has already become the main hub for online communication between companies and customers. Order and delivery confirmations, invoices and contract documents are already being sent here along with private correspondence. In the future, users will be able to clearly organize and archive all relevant information from companies as well as government agencies in one place."

Simple, two-step registration process

Use of the postal mail notification service will require the express permission of users, a process that can be completed in two easy steps in the settings section of GMX and WEB.DE e-mail accounts. After logging in, users must first click the menu point "Postal mail notification" and then enter their postal address. Deutsche Post will then send a letter containing a confirmation code to this address for verification purposes. In the second step, users can confirm their address and complete the registration process by scanning the QR code in the letter or manually entering a 12-digit confirmation code. The new service is part of the smart mailbox offered by WEB.DE and GMX, and offers a number of automated functions. The next phase of the process will also introduce an appointment reminder function as well as sorting, archiving and response functionalities, while making it easier to quickly locate important e-mails and letters.

Secure data transfer and processing

The photos of postal mail will be taken as part of an automated process at Deutsche Post's state-of-the-art sorting centers, in full compliance with German data privacy and security standards. The process of photographing the envelopes will cause no delays as the letters will remain in the sorting system before being delivered, as usual, to the recipient's residential address. The photos of the envelopes will be erased from Deutsche Post's systems after they are sent to the recipient.

All postal mail notifications will be electronically signed by Deutsche Post. WEB.DE and GMX will then check the signature to ensure that the e-mails were in fact sent by Deutsche Post. Users will be able to clearly identify the postal mail notifications with the help of the superimposed WEB.DE or GMX e-mail seal as well as the Deutsche Post brand logo.

The electronic transmission of data between Deutsche Post and the e-mail inboxes of GMX and WEB.DE users will be protected by end-to-end transport encryption. All data will be collected and processed in secure IT systems and German computing centers. To further enhance security, GMX and WEB.DE users can add two-factor authentication to their account free of charge. The entire data-processing chain will meet the requirements of the European General Data Protection Regulation.

Digital copy of postal mail contents to start in 2021

Next year, GMX and WEB.DE users will have the option of receiving digital copies of the contents of their postal mail by secure e-mail. Users will then be able to read incoming letters on their PCs or smartphones before the physical versions are delivered to their home mailboxes. This service will require the participation of the respective sender of the

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mail and the explicit consent of the user. Following the market launch of this service, the partners will offer an option for secure end-to-end encryption of digital delivery. Users will then be able to add an additional security level to the digital copy of their correspondence by means of the internationally recognized and proven encryption standard PGP. PGP is already optionally available free of charge and can be easily integrated into all WEB.DE and GMX inboxes.

Source: Deutsche Post DHL

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