ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

mailcow

The Insider's Guide

Dockerized open-source mail server with a web admin UI



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among email apps, read from mailcow's own pages.

Made by The Infrastructure Company GmbH · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.4
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from mailcow's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on mailcow's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.4

GPA, above 54 of the 122 other email apps we grade

mailcow: dockerized is an open-source email and groupware suite that runs as a set of Docker containers on your own server. It bundles Postfix, Dovecot, Rspamd, ClamAV and the SOGo webmailer behind a web admin interface for domains, mailboxes and spam settings. Paid support and a managed hosted version are sold separately by Servercow.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about mailcow**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **You run it yourself, so DNS, TLS, backups and updates are on you, and support is community best-effort.**
>
> From our report card of mailcow

1 **Best for a mail server in Docker**

mailcow is a free, Dockerized mail server with a web admin panel and SOGo webmail.

2 **It is free**

mailcow has no paid plan at all. The software is free to run on your own server, with best-effort community support.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Complete mail stack in containers**

Postfix, Dovecot, Rspamd spam filtering, optional ClamAV scanning, an Unbound resolver and automatic Let's Encrypt certificates.

5 **Web admin interface**

Create domains and mailboxes, manage aliases, DKIM and ARC keys, allow and block lists, quarantine and per-user spam scores.

6 **SOGo webmail and sync**

SOGo provides the webmailer plus CalDAV and CardDAV, with ActiveSync device support.

7 **A 2.4 GPA, above 54 of 122**

That is against the other email apps we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

mailcow is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

mailcow at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY The Infrastructure Company GmbH	CATEGORY Email Apps
OUR GRADE 2.4 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for a mail server in Docker

mailcow is a free, Dockerized mail server with a web admin panel and SOGo webmail. You run it yourself, so DNS, TLS, backups and updates are on you,

and support is community best-effort.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	mailcow	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	Free software, but you rent and run the server, so it's a C by our rule.
Free plan and trial	B	The software is free with nothing held back. Paid support is a separate subscription from Servercow.
Features	B	A full mail stack with web admin, SOGo webmail, groups, shared resources, two-factor sign-in and mailbox migration. The listing shows no gap in the job.
Ease of use	D	You run Docker, DNS records, TLS and backups of the volumes yourself.
Platforms and integrations	B	A web admin and webmail, with Outlook, Thunderbird, Keycloak, Nextcloud and Roundcube connections. No apps of its own.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.4**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who mailcow is for

- ✓ Fits if you want to run your own mail for a domain or two and know Docker
- ✓ Works for admins who want webmail and calendars from one install

Who it is not for

- ✕ Skip it if you don't want to look after a server
- ✕ Skip it if you want guaranteed help, as support is community best-effort
- ✕ Watch out: the key pair for stored mail sits in a Docker volume you must back up
- ✕ Watch out: managed mailcow comes from Servercow, whose prices we did not read

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Admins who want a ready-made self-hosted mail server for a few domains
- ✓ Small organizations replacing hosted mail with their own server
- ✓ People comfortable maintaining Docker, DNS records and updates

Worth knowing

- ⓘ You run the server yourself: DNS records, TLS, backups of the Docker volumes and updates are yours to manage.
- ⓘ Official support is community-driven and best-effort; paid support is a separate subscription sold by Servercow.
- ⓘ Stored mail is compressed and encrypted, and the key pair sits in a Docker volume that must be backed up.
- ⓘ A managed mailcow is sold by Servercow, whose pages are in German and whose prices were not read here.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

mailcow is free to use.

> "
>
> **Free software, but you rent and run the server, so it's a C by our rule.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

MAILCOW: DOCKERIZED

$0

Free open-source software you host yourself; community support is voluntary and carries no guarantee.

The free plan

The software is free to run on your own server, with best-effort community support.

Read from docs.mailcow.email on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Dockerized open-source mail server with a web admin UI. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, calendar, email client.

> **A full mail stack with web admin, SOGo webmail, groups, shared resources, two-factor sign-in and mailbox migration.**
>
> From our grade for features

Complete mail stack in containers

Postfix, Dovecot, Rspamd spam filtering, optional ClamAV scanning, an Unbound resolver and automatic Let's Encrypt certificates.

Web admin interface

Create domains and mailboxes, manage aliases, DKIM and ARC keys, allow and block lists, quarantine and per-user spam scores.

SOGo webmail and sync

SOGo provides the webmailer plus CalDAV and CardDAV, with ActiveSync device support.

Groups and shared resources

Groups with distribution lists, send-as permissions, shared mailboxes and shared calendars.

Sign-in and two-factor options

Login through Keycloak, LDAP or Active Directory, or OIDC, plus TOTP, Yubikey OTP and WebAuthn.

Mailbox migration

Built-in imapsync jobs pull or migrate mail from remote mailboxes, including Microsoft 365 and Google over OAuth2.

Where it runs

- Web

What it works with

- SOGo
- Keycloak
- Nextcloud
- Roundcube
- Microsoft Outlook
- Thunderbird

mailcow is made by The Infrastructure Company GmbH.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

54/122

Other email apps it is graded above

mailcow's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 54 of the 122 other email apps we grade, and level with 19.

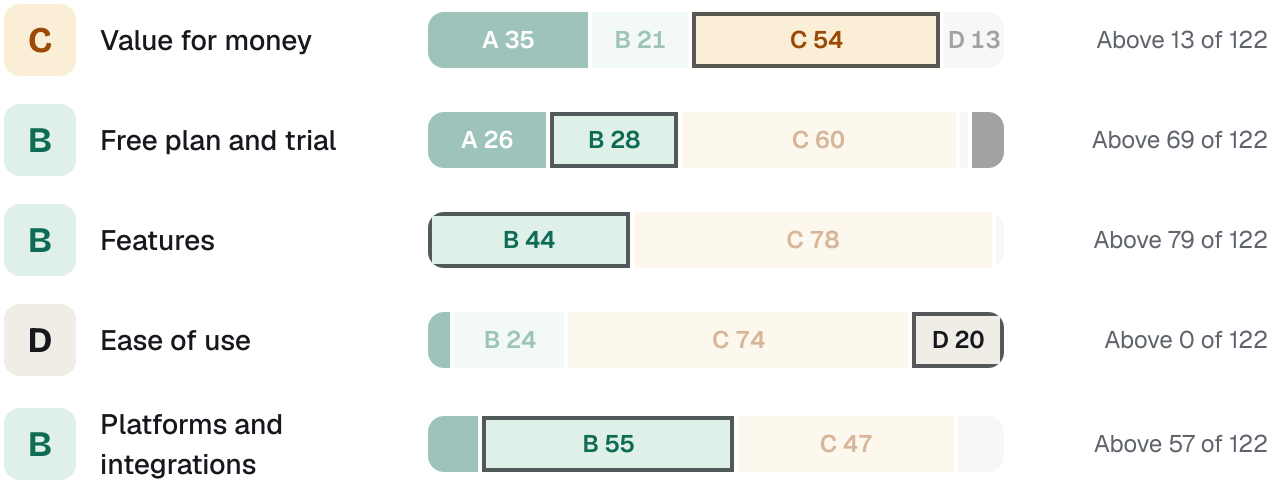
It stands best on features (B, above 79 of 122) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

mailcow has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.3 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

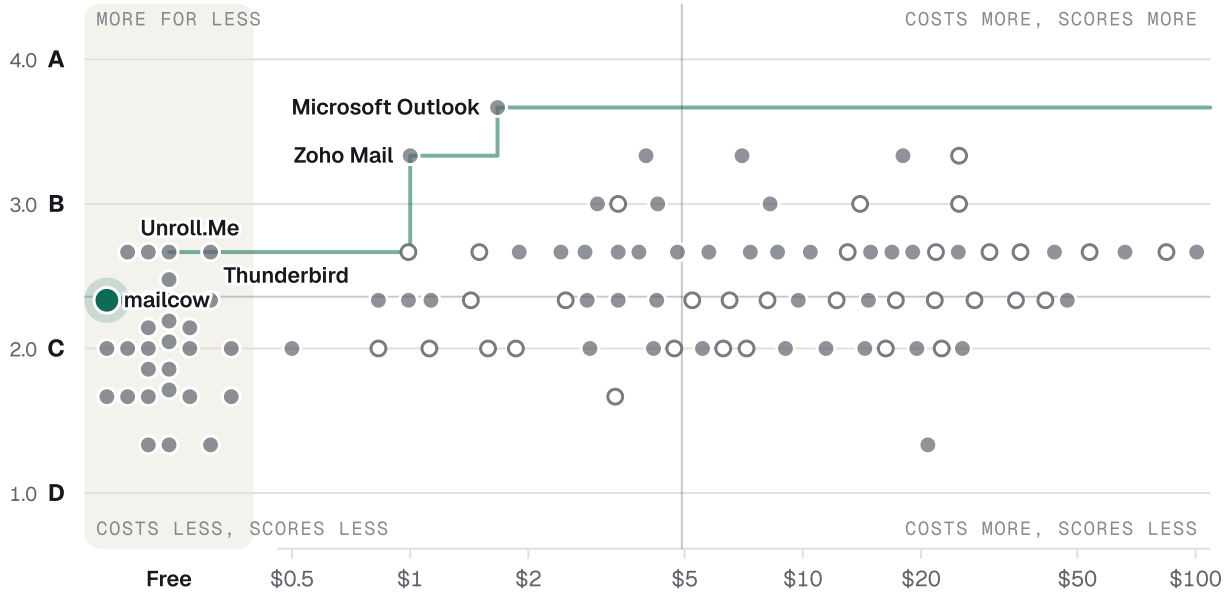
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 123 email apps we grade, cut by the letter each got. mailcow's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 107 email apps. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. mailcow is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double) ⍰

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

mailcow is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

What you could make

- Calendar: an app builder makes this well.

What you could not

- ✕ An email client: sending, receiving, threading and searching years of mail.
- ✕ It plugs into other products, SOGo, Keycloak and Nextcloud among them.

- What a company asks for before it lets staff use something: roles and permissions.
- Sharing with other people, which means accounts and invitations.
- The depth: we grade its features B, which means it covers the whole job.

What this rests on. mailcow's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



Mailu, Mail-in-a-Box, docker-mailserver, iRedMail and Modoboa

The 5 tools mailcow is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

M

2.0 GPA

Mailu

Free

Free Docker-based mail server with webmail and admin UI.

- mailcow also covers calendar.
- Mailu also covers dMARC.

mailcow and Mailu compared in full

2.0 GPA

Mail-in-a-Box

Free

Free script that turns a cloud server into your own mail server.

mailcow and Mail-in-a-Box compared in full



1.8
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docker-mailserver

Free

Self-hosted mail server packaged as a Docker container.

- Only mailcow lists a web app.
- Only docker-mailserver lists a Linux app.
- mailcow also covers calendar and email client.

mailcow and docker-mailserver compared in full

I

1.8
GPA

iRedMail

Free plan · from $499/yr

Open-source mail server installer for Linux and BSD.

- Only mailcow lists a web app.
- Only iRedMail lists a Linux app.

mailcow and iRedMail compared in full

M

2.2
GPA

Modoboa

Free

Open-source mail server with a web admin panel and webmail.

mailcow and Modoboa compared in full

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is mailcow free?

Yes. mailcow is free to use. The software is free to run on your own server, with best-effort community support.

How much does mailcow cost?

mailcow lists one plan. mailcow: dockerized: $0. Prices were read from docs.mailcow.email on Nov 13, 2026.

What platforms does mailcow work on?

mailcow is available on Web.

Does mailcow have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. mailcow is listed for Web.

Does mailcow have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. mailcow is listed for Web.

Is mailcow open source?

Yes. mailcow is open source, according to its own site. It can also be run on a server of your own.

What does mailcow integrate with?

mailcow's listing names SOGo, Keycloak, Nextcloud, Roundcube, Microsoft Outlook and Thunderbird.

Who makes mailcow?

mailcow is made by The Infrastructure Company GmbH.

What are the alternatives to mailcow?

The closest alternatives to mailcow in our directory are Mailu, Mail-in-a-Box, docker-mailserver, iRedMail and Modoboa.

How does mailcow compare with other email apps?

mailcow's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 54 of the 122 other email apps we grade, and level with 19.

Is mailcow good value for money?

ToolGPA grades mailcow C for value for money. mailcow has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of mailcow?

mailcow is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from mailcow's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from the mailcow project's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by The Infrastructure Company GmbH. Prices change, so check mailcow.email before you buy.

docs.mailcow.email/

servercow.de/mailcow/?lang=en

mailcow.email/

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at toolgpa.com.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

mailcow, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/mailcow

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

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See our other guides

The best-graded email apps after mailcow, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Email Apps Insider's Guide

Every one of the 126 email apps we grade, compared

Microsoft Outlook Insider's Guide

Microsoft's email and calendar app for desktop, mobile and web

3.6 GPA

AOL Mail Insider's Guide

Free webmail with news and weather in a companion mobile app

3.2 GPA

BlueMail Insider's Guide

Cross-platform email client with a unified inbox and built-in AI

3.2 GPA

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Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what mailcow's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. mailcow is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by The Infrastructure Company GmbH. Prices and plans change: check mailcow.email before you buy.