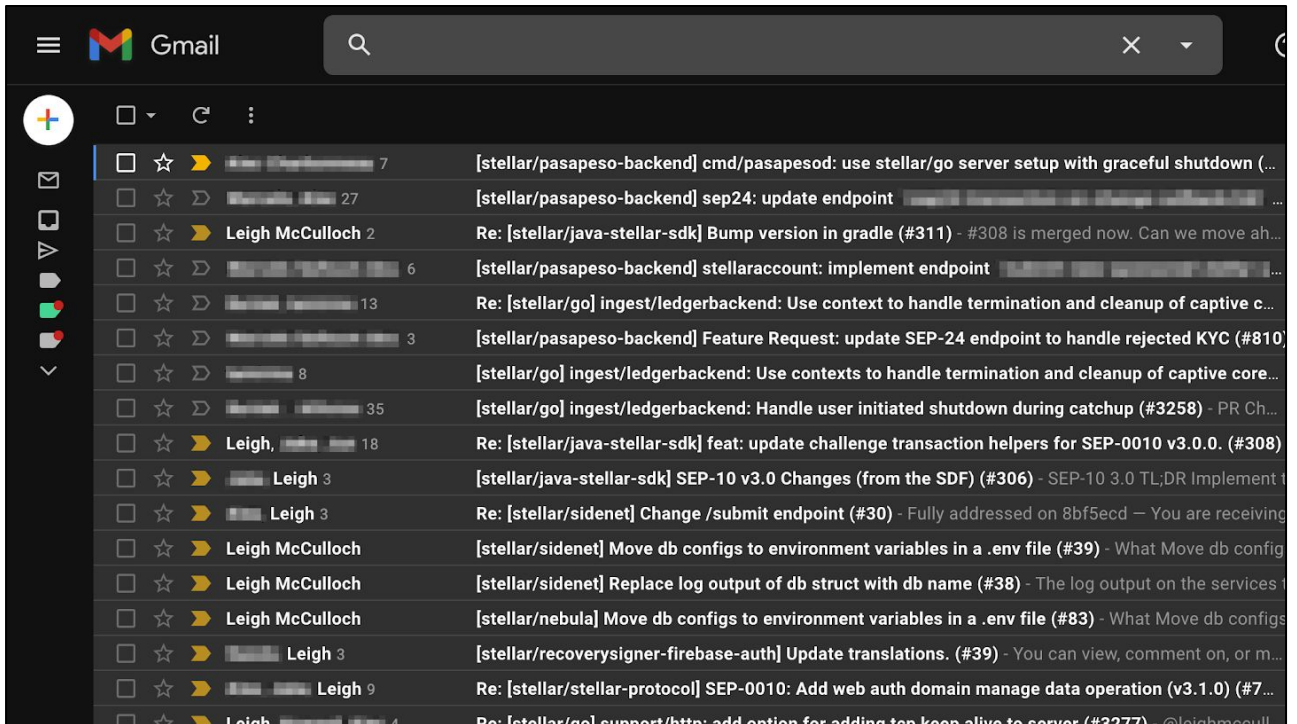# Filtering GitHub Notifications in Gmail

I'm going to do a brief talk about GitHub notifications and how to use Gmail filters to stay sane.

Everything I'm going to show you is things I do. It might work for you too, or something like this might work for you, or it might not.

At one point or another all our inboxes end up looking like this, or worse.
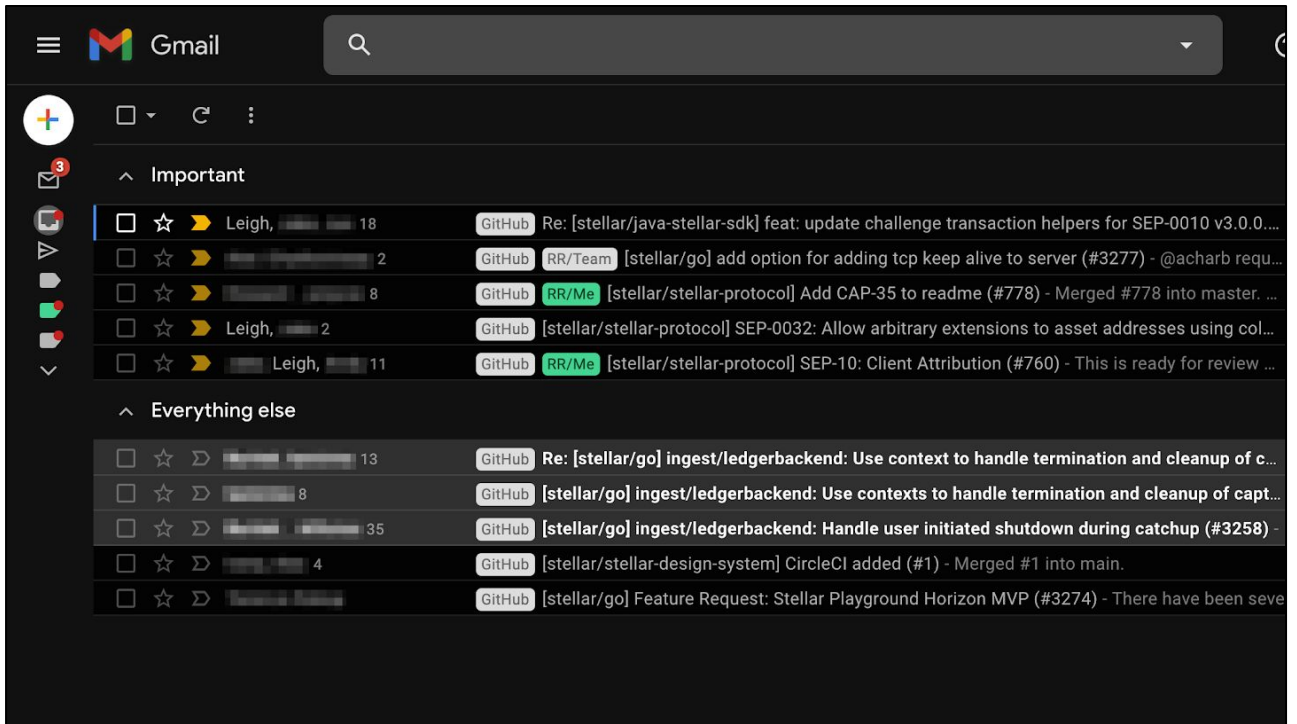
A lot of unread email.

A lot of notifications.

Not really clear at a glance what we need to look at first, or what is most important.

Some notifications are relating to projects we are intimately involved in.

Some notifications are relating to projects that we care about, are important, and maybe we want to stay in touch with, but we aren't actively involved and we don't want to look at every issue or PR.

TRANSITION: What we're going to look at is how to turn an inbox that looks like a pool of random incoming email with no organization...

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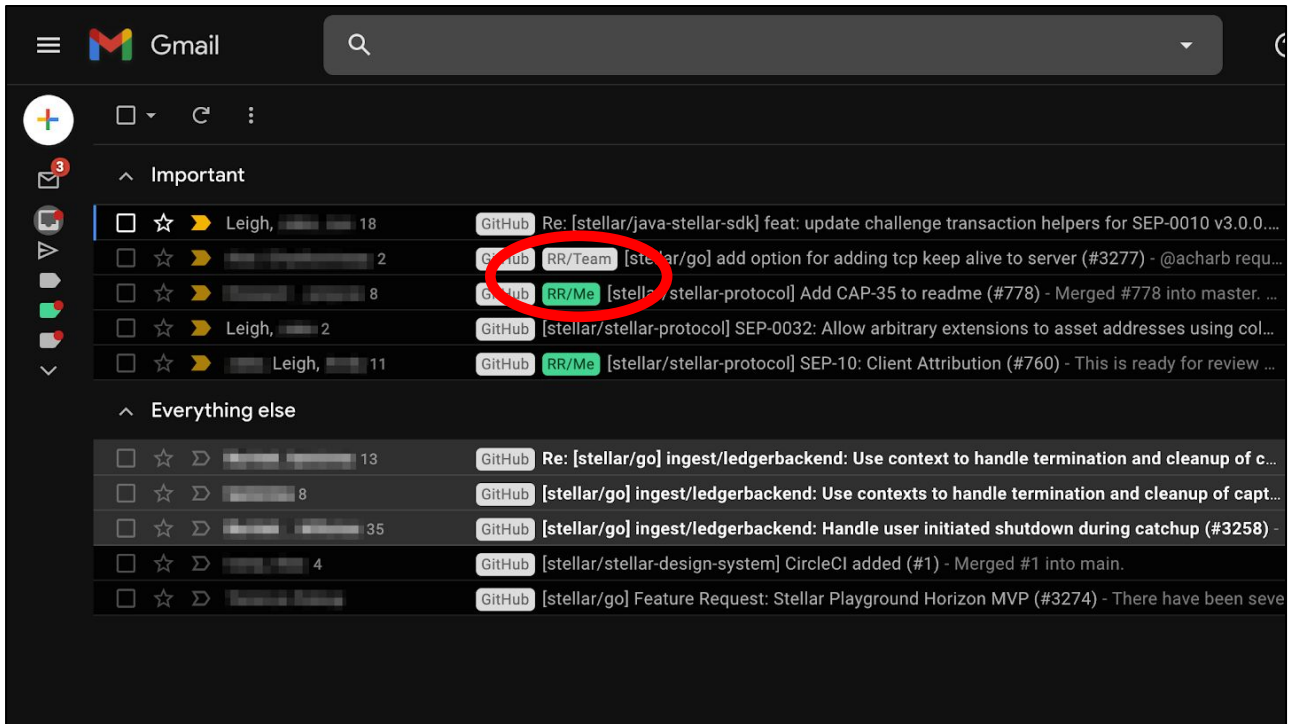
...into a view that organizes notifications so it is clear which notifications we need to look at today, or soon.

And which notifications we might come to later, or ignore if we're short on time.
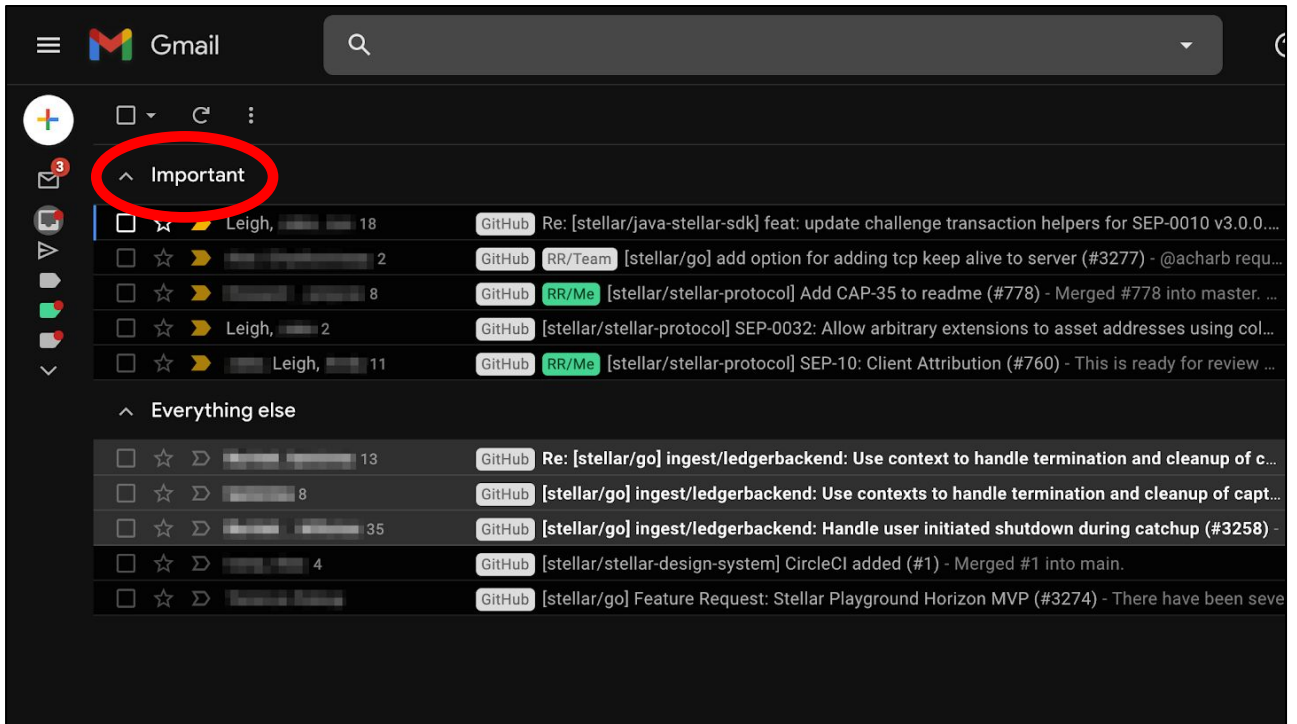
The first thing we can see is we're making use of Gmail's Priority Inbox feature.

Email is being categorised into email that is important, and email that isn't.

Some notifications are being labeled with some specific labels:

RR = Review Requested

Team = PRs where a team I am in has been requested to review.

Me = PRs where I personally have been requested to review.

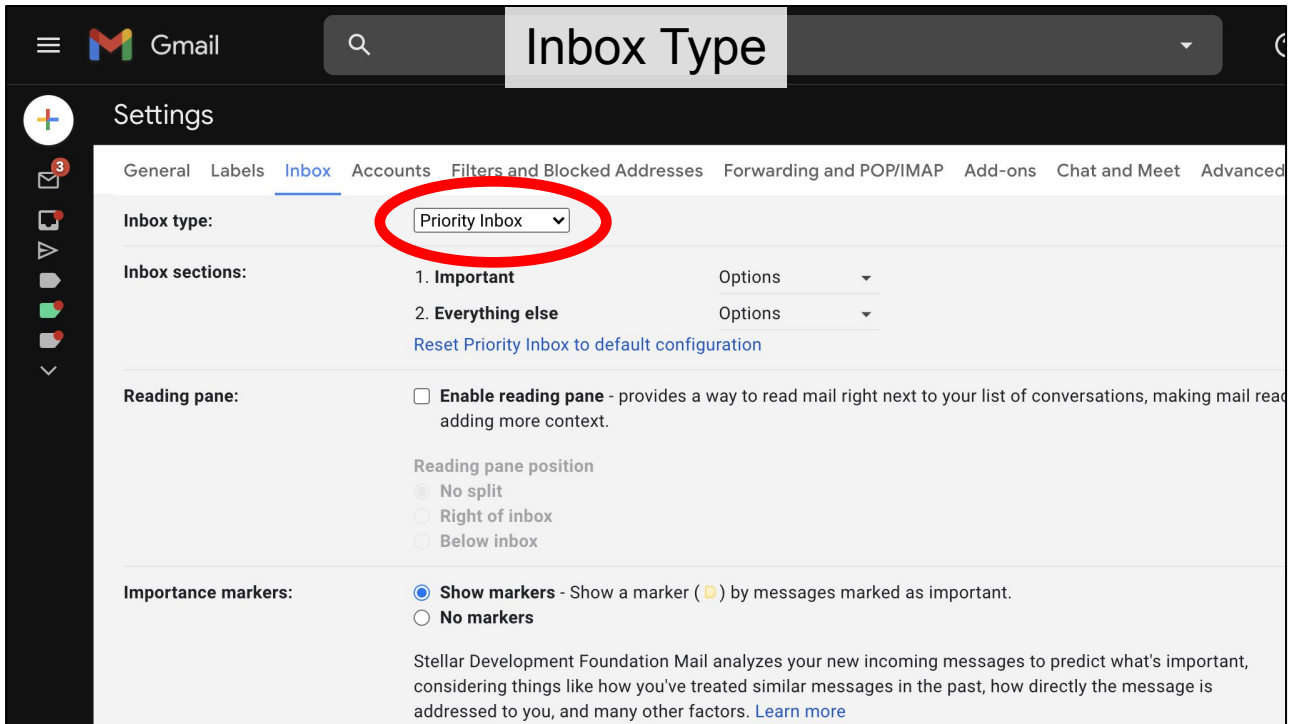**TRANSITION:** Let's look at how to set this up...

Inbox Type

Labels

Filters

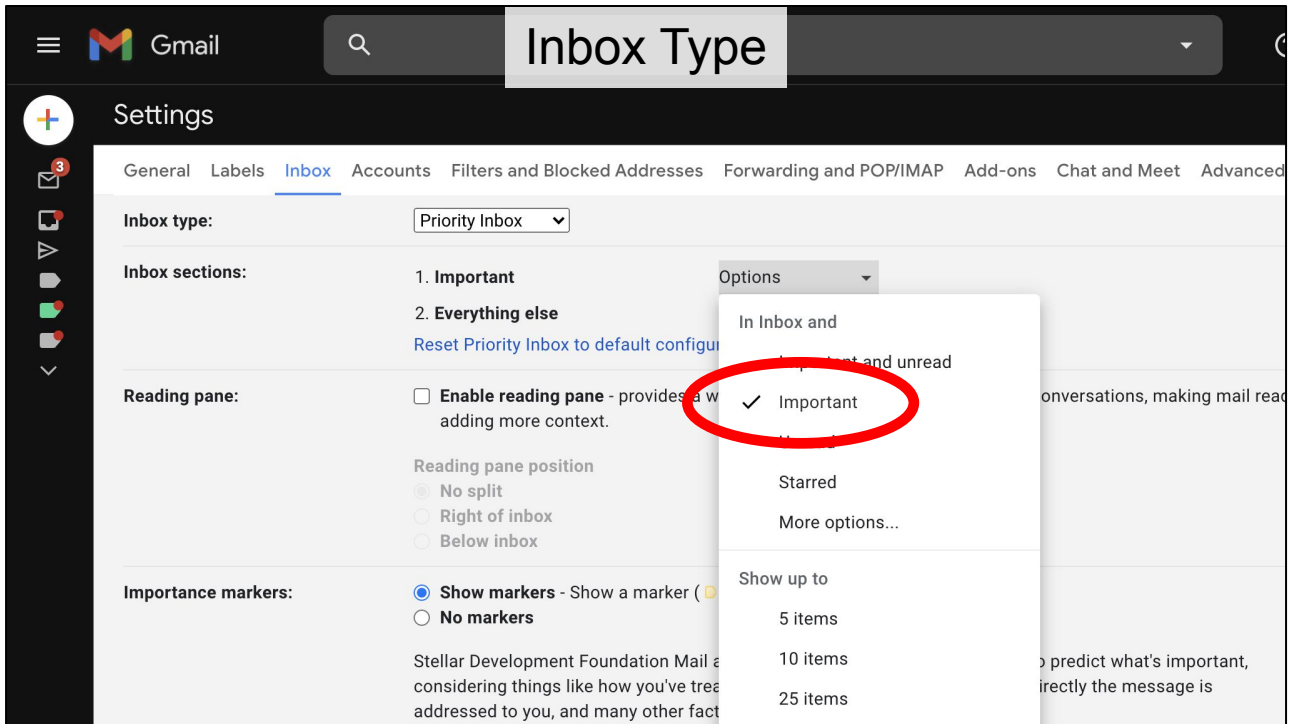**TRANSITION:** Let's look at how to set this up…

There are three things we need:
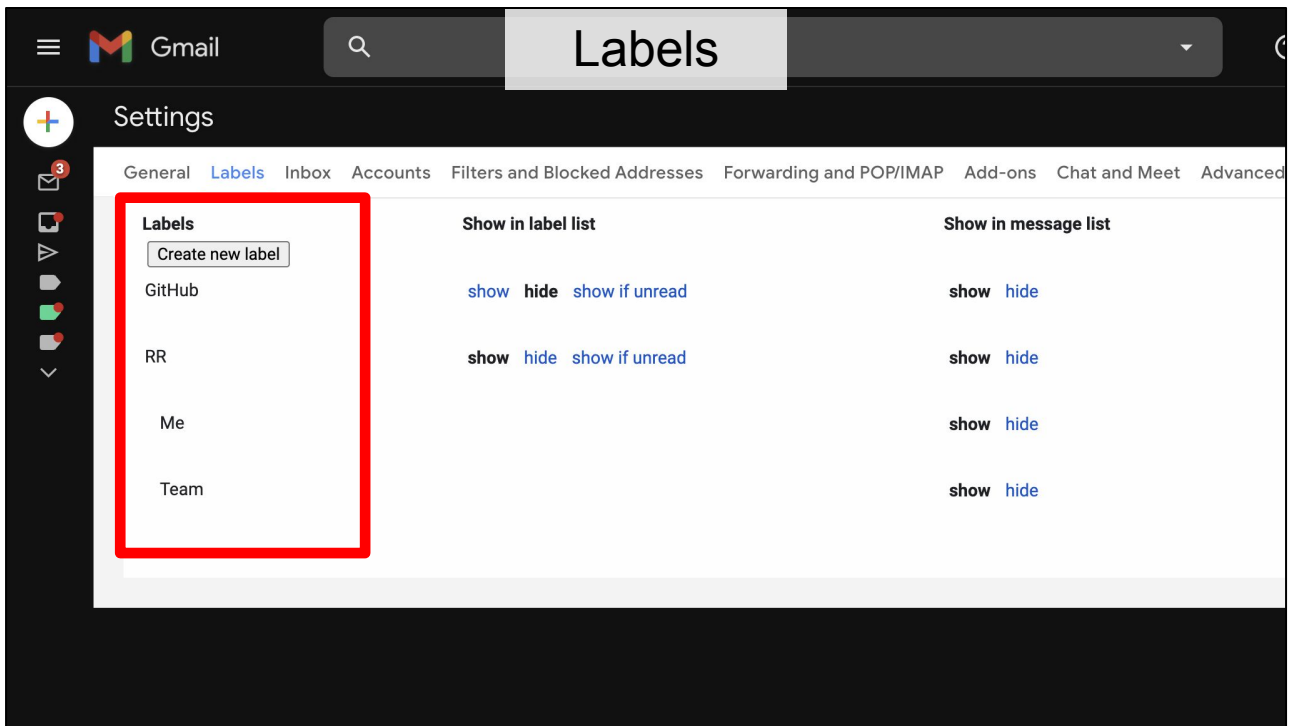- Inbox Type
- Labels
- Filters

Inbox type is easy. There's a good chance you're already using it.

In your settings on the Inbox tab, choose Priority Inbox.

Next we need to make that Important emails appear in a section.

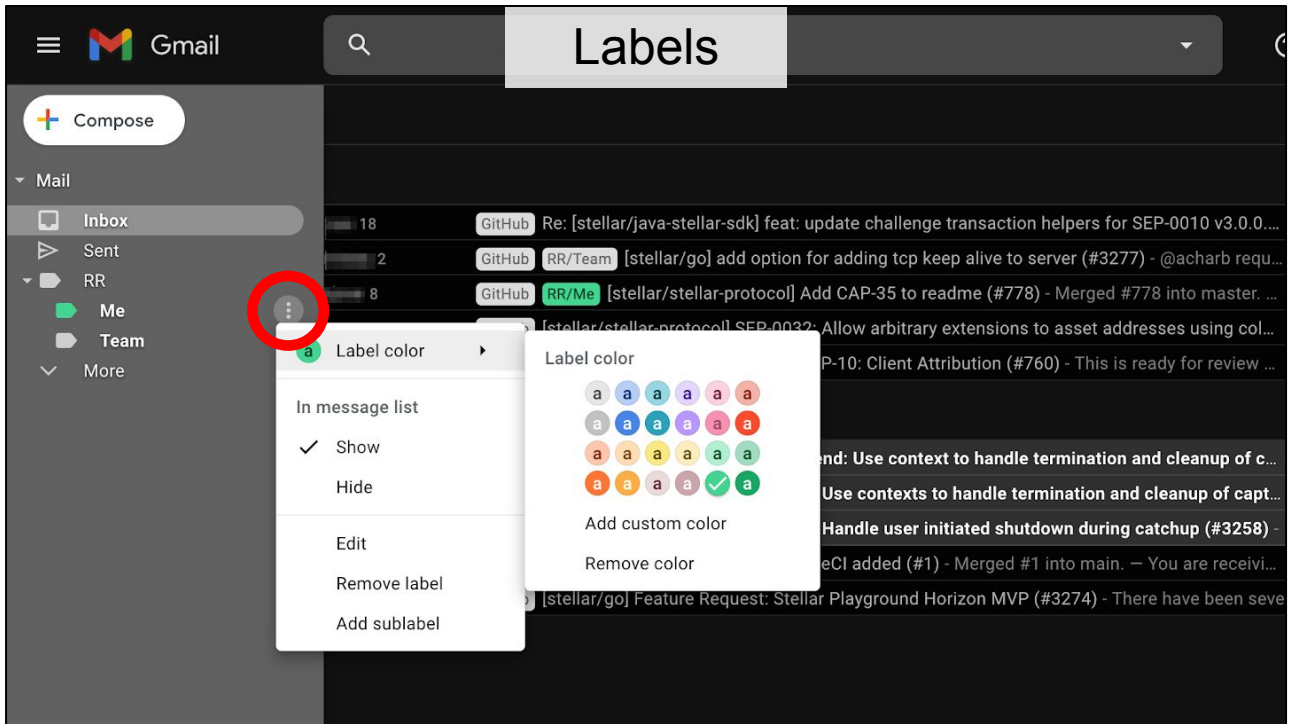**TRANSITION:** Now to set-up labels...

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We only need a few labels.

One for all GitHub notifications so that we can filter out GitHub notifications when we want to only look at other email.

And a label for reviews requested for ourselves personally, and for team reviews. I like to make them sub-labels, but you don't have to do that.

You can also give your labels colors to highlight labels that might signal higher priority than other high priority notifications.

Colors configuration is accessible in the main view, by hovering the mouse over the label in the sidebar.

TRANSITION: Finally, let's setup the filters...

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This takes a little more effort.

When GitHub sends you a notification in the carbon-copy (CC) field of the email will be an email address that tells you why you're receiving the notification.

You can see here on the third filter that it is marking as important any notification that's being sent because:
- We authored the issue/PR, or are assigned to it.
- We were mentioned.
- A team we were in was mentioned.
- Or it's a security alert.

General   Labels   Inbox   Accounts   Filters and Blocked Addresses   Forwarding and POP/IMAP   Add-ons   Chat and Meet   Advanced

☐ Matches: **from:(notifications@github.com)**
Do this: Apply label "GitHub"   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **cc:your_activity@noreply.github.com**
Do this: Skip Inbox, Mark as read, Mark it as important   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **(cc:author@noreply.github.com OR cc:manual@noreply.github.com OR cc:mention@noreply.github.com OR cc:team_mention@noreply.github.com OR cc:assign@noreply.github.com OR cc:state_change@noreply.github.com OR cc:security_alert@noreply.github.com)**
Do this: Mark it as important   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **cc:subscribed@noreply.github.com**
Do this: Never mark it as important   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **cc:push@noreply.github.com**
Do this: Skip Inbox, Never mark it as important   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **cc:review_requested@noreply.github.com "requested your review on"**
Do this: Apply label "RR/Me", Mark it as important   edit   delet

☐ Matches: **cc:review_requested@noreply.github.com "requested review from"**
Do this: Apply label "RR/Team", Mark it as important   edit   delet

Create a new filter   Import filters

The fourth filter never marks as important a notification that we're receiving only because we're subscribed to a repo. If I'm subscribed but not otherwise involved in an issue I don't need to prioritize it.

Filters

Matches: **from:(notifications@github.com)**
Do this: Apply label "GitHub"   edit   delet

Matches: **cc:your_activity@noreply.github.com**
Do this: Skip Inbox, Mark as read, Mark it as important   edit   delet

Matches: **(cc:author@noreply.github.com OR cc:manual@noreply.github.com OR cc:mention@noreply.github.com OR cc:team_mention@noreply.github.com OR cc:assign@noreply.github.com OR cc:state_change@noreply.github.com OR cc:security_alert@noreply.github.com)**
Do this: Mark it as important   edit   delet

Matches: **cc:subscribed@noreply.github.com**
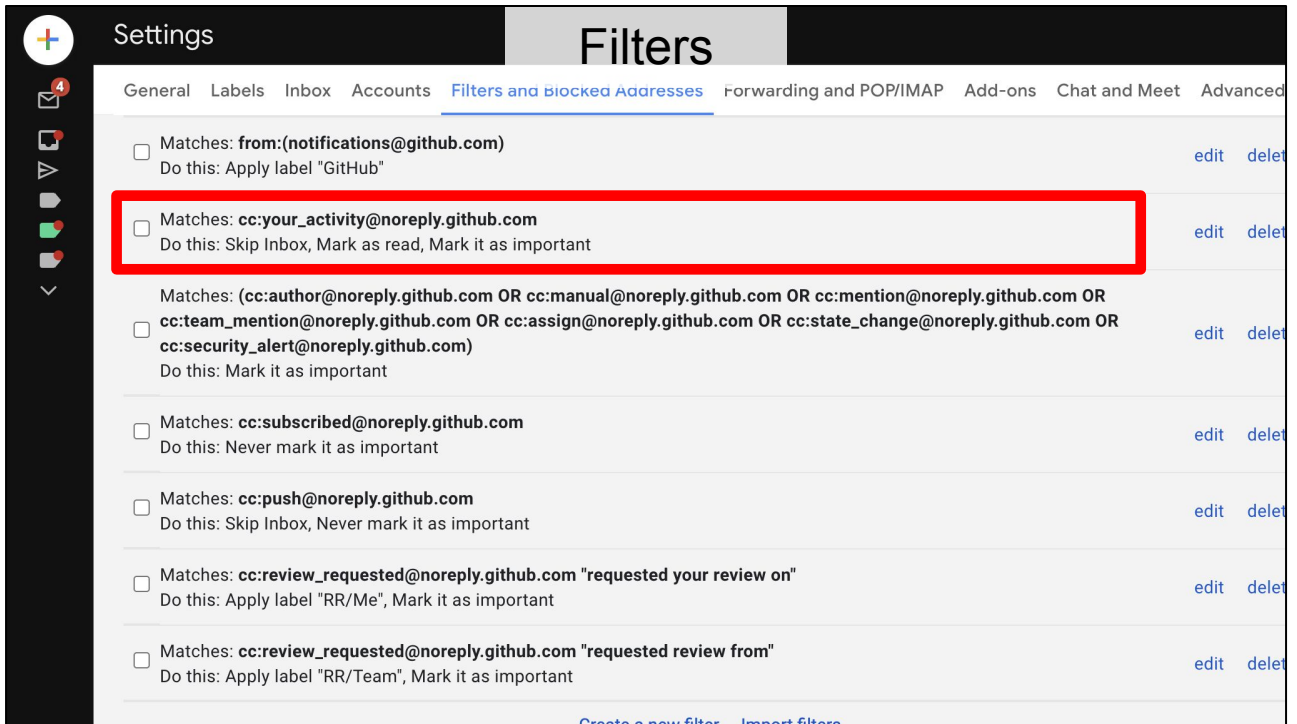Do this: Never mark it as important   edit   delet

Matches: **cc:push@noreply.github.com**
Do this: Skip Inbox, Never mark it as important   edit   delet

Matches: **cc:review_requested@noreply.github.com "requested your review on"**
Do this: Apply label "RR/Me", Mark it as important   edit   delet

Matches: **cc:review_requested@noreply.github.com "requested review from"**
Do this: Apply label "RR/Team", Mark it as important   edit   delet

Create a new filter   Import filters

The fifth filter causes push commits to PRs to skip the inbox, but it doesn't mark them as read. If someone is pushing commits to a PR I'm reviewing I don't need to look at each commit. I wait till the author leaves a comment and that comment will then surface the email thread, and because the pushes were not read, Gmail will automatically open the conversation with the pushes and comment unfurled so I can see everything that happened since I last looked.

The final two filters label PRs where a review has been requested. Here we have to also filter on the contents of the email to know if its a personal review or team review.

TRANSITION: I skipped over one filter...

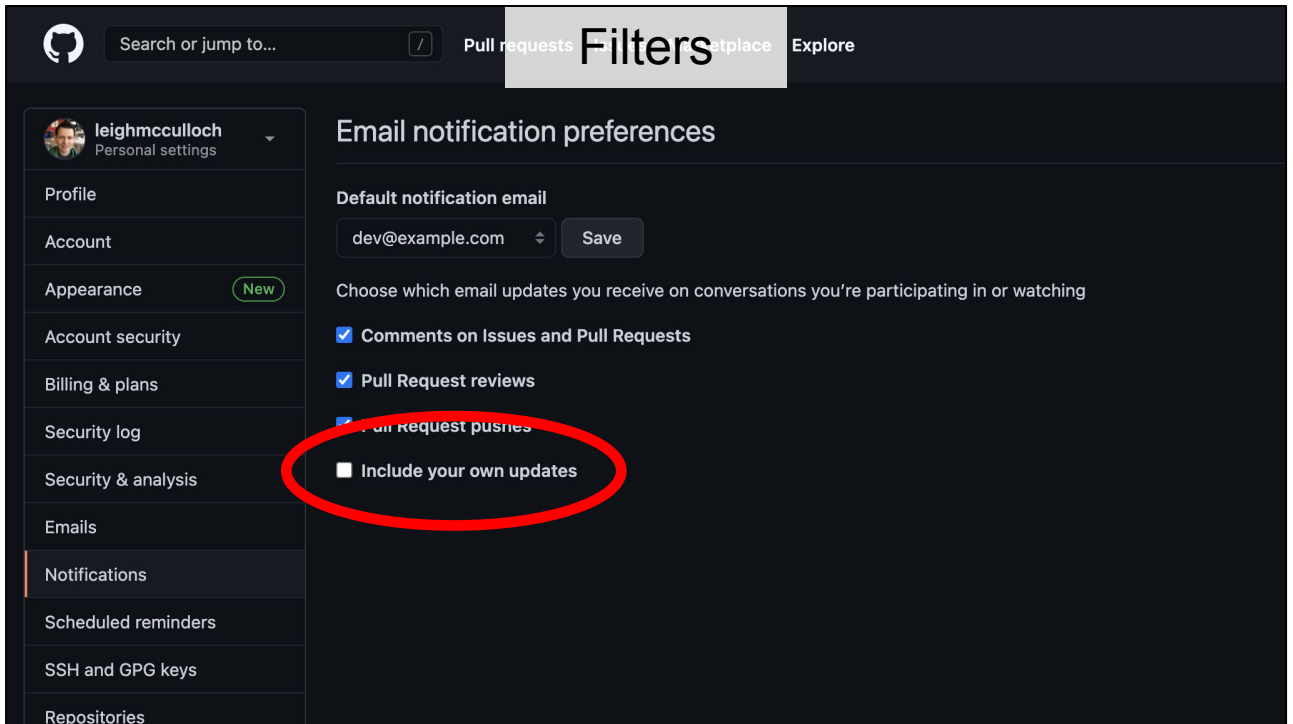**TRANSITION:** I skipped over one filter...

Which is the filter on your activity.

GitHub has an optional filter where it will send you notifications for everything you do on GitHub.

If you leave a comment, open an issue or PR, etc, you'll get a notification.

If you turn this on it means Gmail conversations will hold a complete view of not only what other people have done but yourself as well, and I find particularly helpful for seeing in Gmail what my participation has been on an issue.

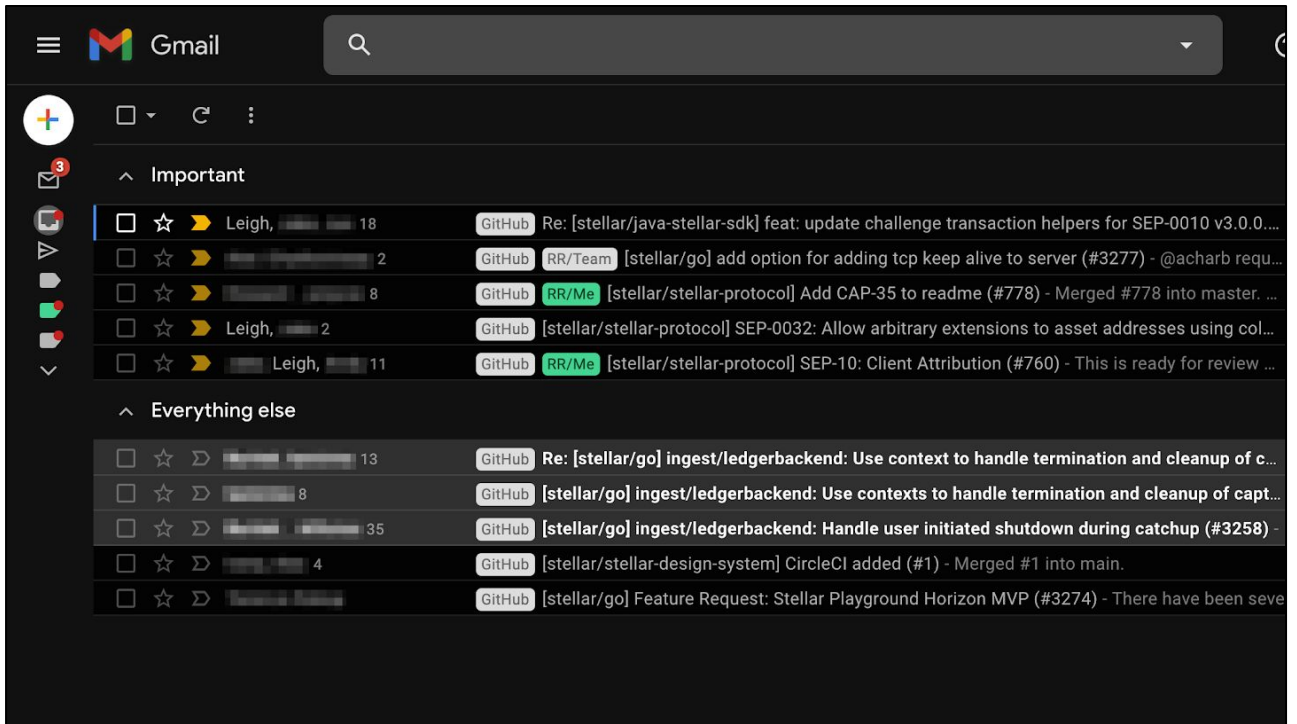**TRANSITION:** If you want to use this you need to...turn on the feature in GitHub.

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TRANSITION: In your notifications settings under the email notification preferences, check the box...to include your own updates.

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With those settings and config you should end up with an inbox that prioritizes issues you're already engaged with, or that you've been asked to be involved with.

You can customize this a lot, you might want to make all issues for a specific repo important, or all issues opened by people on your team.

I'd love to hear if anyone is doing anything similar.

More Info

leighmcculloch.com/posts/filtering-github-notifications-in-gmail

I wrote a brief tutorial about this a little while ago, if you want to copy and past the filters, they're listed there.