

Short Guide to Preventing Unwanted Emails

First some simple definitions:

Spam - Unsolicited email

Spammer - Sender of unsolicited email

Spam is every bit as unwelcome as circulars in your post box or telemarketers who call at meal times. Fortunately there are ways to decrease or eliminate the amount of spam you receive in your daily email.

Why is spam bad?

1. Theft of resources - The amount of time it takes to filter out unwanted email from legitimate email stops you doing other productive things.
2. The receiver pays - You pay for receiving spam, through your online charges and time.
3. You never asked for it - it is an invasion of your privacy.
4. Its garbage.
5. The offerings are most probably fraudulent or illegal.

Tips:

The following are straight forward tips to help you overcome or prevent spam and viruses in your email.

1. Be private. Do not give out your email address in the first place. In many instances if you are required to give your email address in order to receive something off a website, give an email address that you have set up specifically to receive junk.
2. You can also set up a "fake" email address at such places as www.hotmail.com or www.yahoo.com , these email accounts are free.
3. Look for options to opt out of receiving promotional mailings when you have to give your address.
4. Treat every email you preview as being of a suspicious nature, many harmless looking emails with attachments may contain viruses. Many people succumbed to the "I love you" email that contained a virus.
5. When you receive a forwarded email asking for help or money from someone, and in return you will have eternal good luck (or bad luck if you don't forward it). Do not forward it on, it is likely to be a hoax and is a great way for spammers to cultivate email addresses. Many virus warning emails are a hoax as well.
6. When forwarding emails to groups of people, send them via the BCC field, this shields their address from others. Ask others to send emails to you this way too.
7. Use the filters function to filter out unwanted emails that do, or do not meet certain criteria - further info on how to use the filters properly is below.
8. Keep your name off mailing lists, chat rooms and newsgroups by not giving out your correct address in the first place.

9. If your email address is on a website, ask your web designer to transform it in to a picture. Otherwise it is very easy for automated 'robots' to come and cultivate your email address and put it on to a mailing list. But if it is displayed as a picture then it won't be recognizable as an email address to the 'robot'.
10. Many spam messages have instructions at the bottom of the message asking you to reply to the message if you want to be removed from their mailing list. Don't do this, as it will only confirm that your address is valid and active and you will most likely be hit with more spam.
11. Check the email address of the sender - do you recognize it? If not, then don't open it.
12. Watch out for fake headers. These are in the subject line and are commonly - 'Dear Friend.....!' or 'Here's the information you requested.'
13. Never buy anything from a spammer's email, even if it is something you want as it is likely to be fraudulent.
14. Don't reply to contests in your email, offers of free websites or send money to anti-spam organizations as it will most likely be a hoax.
15. Don't submit your address to Opt-out or removal lists as these are a hoax and you will end up getting more spam.
16. It is still advisable to have antivirus software installed on your computer. While you may be able to recognize an email with a strange attachment, a picture or word document may harbor a virus.

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