

9. SPAM

a. What is Spam?

Email spam usually pertains to unsolicited commercial messages sent in bulk by people you don't know although there are exceptions to this rule. E-mail that is not requested is SPAM no special criteria needed. Also known as "unsolicited commercial e-mail" (UCE), "unsolicited bulk e-mail" (UBE), "gray mail" and just plain "junk mail," the term is both a noun (the e-mail message) and a verb (to send it). Spam is mostly used to advertise products and sometimes to broadcast some political or social commentary.

b. How we fight it

Spam has become a part of life for anyone who has an email account. Due to the fact that computers are not human detection will never be perfect, but we are taking steps to lessen the amount of spam received.

- **Postmaster** **block**
We honor spam complaints sent from individuals and a few different providers. If we received a complaint of spam from one of these sources we investigate the situation and if the complaint is valid we block the source IP address. Currently the following providers are honored AOL, Juno and UUNet.
- **SpamCop**
This service provides list of IP addresses of known spam sources. They maintain email addresses that are used as spam traps. If these addresses receive a message it is almost guaranteed to be spam as these addresses are not used or public.
- **SpamAssassin**
This system works by "scoring" each e-mail message against a range of tests designed to identify if that message is spam or not. A wide number of tests are provided, including checks to see if the sender and recipient address are valid, if the message dates are valid, if the body contains any of a list of forbidden words, if any of the sending servers are blacklisted, and so on. Each test adds to a message's overall spam score; messages over a certain user-defined threshold are marked as spam.

c. How to reduce

There are multiple options available to help control spam email. We are in the process of developing a more advanced method for spam detection and blocking and we hope to have these systems available as soon as possible.

You can download and install many different spam filters for your home email client. This will discuss the setting up of spam assassin filters and built in spam filters of Outlook Express and Thunderbird.

SpamAssassin filters in Outlook

- Start Outlook
- Click on or select "inbox" in your mail folders (**NOTE:** you may have to turn on folder view if it is not already on to select the Inbox folder.)
- Right click with your mouse on the inbox folder and from the popup menu select "new folder"
- For the name of the folder enter "spam mail" and click ok
- From the outlook menu list click on "tools" and select "rules wizard" or "rules and alerts"
- Click on "new"
- Select "start from a blank rule"
- Highlight "check messages when they arrive"
- Click "next"

- Scroll down and look for the line "with specific words in the message header" and place a check in the box to the left of it.
- In the box below, click on the underlined words "specific words"
- A new option box will open, enter "X-Spam-Status: Yes" (without quotes) and click the "add" button (be sure you leave a blank space between the colon and the word Yes)
- Click "next"
- Look for "move to a folder named" and place a check in the box to its left
- In the space below, click on the underlined word "specified"
- From the folder list, scroll to and select the folder spam mail, the folder you set up in steps 3 and 4.
- Click "next" and "next" again and for the name of the rule enter "spam marking"
- Click "finish" (**NOTE:** Make sure that there is a check in the box to the left of the rule you just created and click ok.)
- This should move much of the spam you receive to the spam mail folder where you can review and delete it.

Thunderbird Spam Assassin Filters

- Start Thunderbird.
- Go to the tools menu and click on "message filters:"
- On the window that pops up, click "new" to create a new message filter for spam.
- Give the filter a name (such as "spam") and click on the down arrow of the drop box that currently says "subject". Find "customize:" at the bottom of the list and click on it.
- In the pop-up window, under "new message header:" type X-Spam-Flag. Click on the "add" button next to it, and it will move it to the box below. Click OK.
- If it doesn't automatically change the first drop-down box to "X-Spam-Flag" that you just added, click on the arrow again and choose it from the list. In the 3rd box, type yes.
- Click the check box next to "move to folder" and select the folder that you want to move spam to. Click "ok"
- Your new filter should show up in the list now, you can close the window and you're done!

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Junk mail controls in Thunderbird

Thunderbird has a very good built in spam filter that is trainable and will catch most spam messages.

- Start Thunderbird.
- Go to tools in the top navigation bar.
- Click on tool you should see an option for junk mail controls, click on this option
- Click the check box which says trust junk mail headers set by: then in the drop down box which is next to it select to use spam assassin.