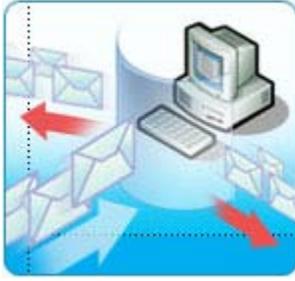


Fighting Unwanted E-Mail (Spam)



If you send or receive E-Mail, you probably get spam. Maybe a *lot* of spam. Ever wonder why you get so much junk E-Mail? It's a lucrative business. It's cheap to send out millions, even billions, of E-Mail messages. Go figure: if even a tiny percentage of a hundred million people buy something in response to an E-Mail message, that's a lot! So what can *you* do about spam? Quite a bit, as it turns out. Let's explore some of the ways you can stop the deluge.

Block Junk E-Mail Before It Reaches You

Many E-Mail programs have built-in filters that can help you separate spam from the E-Mail you really want. For example, MSN Hotmail® can help you stop receiving junk E-Mail (set up the junk mail filter, create a safe list for incoming messages, block E-Mail from a specific sender or domain, and/or keep mailing list messages out of your junk mail folder) or delete junk E-Mail before it arrives. You may also be able to enlist the help of your Internet Service Provider (ISP). For example, MSN 8 uses tools from Brightmail and Microsoft-developed filters that help block spam before it reaches your inbox.

 **Tip:** You might be using MSN 8 with a different ISP. Contact your Internet Service Provider to find out what services are available.

Be Careful About Disclosing Your E-Mail Address

Some spammers get address lists from Web sites where you may have signed up for free offers, ordered something online, or entered a contest. They can also get your address from Internet white pages listings, newsgroups, resumé postings, and chat rooms.

Follow these tips whenever you can:

- **Set up an E-Mail address dedicated solely to Web transactions.** Consider using a free mail service to set up an E-Mail account for your online transactions. This will help you keep your real E-Mail address private.
- **Only share your primary E-Mail address with people you know.** Avoid listing your E-Mail address in large Internet directories. Don't even post it on your own Web site.
- **Disguise (or "munge") your E-Mail address.** Use a munged address whenever you post it to a newsgroup, chat room, or bulletin board. For example, you could give your E-Mail address as "s0me0ne@example.c0m" using "0" (zero) instead of "o." A person can interpret your address, but the automated programs that spammers use cannot.

- **Watch out for checked boxes.** When you buy things online, companies sometimes add a checkbox (pre-checked!) to indicate that it's fine to sell or give your E-Mail address to responsible parties. Click the check box to clear it.



Tip: Adjust your Internet Explorer 6 security settings to help prevent unwanted intrusions when you go on the Web.

Review The Privacy Policies of Web Sites

When you sign up for Web-based services such as online banking, shopping, or newsletters, review the privacy policy closely before you reveal your E-Mail address. The privacy policy will outline the terms and circumstances regarding if—or how—the site will share your information. (If you don't read a statement, you could potentially "agree" to share your personal information without knowing it.)



Tip: If a Web site does not have a privacy statement posted, be cautious and consider contacting the site owners before sharing sensitive information.

If the Web site doesn't explain how it will use your personal information, think twice about sharing it. Also be aware that many companies—even legitimate ones—may share your information in ways that you may not like.

Help! I've Got Spam

Even the most diligent person is likely to have some spam arrive in his/her mailbox from time to time. Don't fret—you can take action to minimize the impact of this unwanted E-Mail. What can you do? First, ignore it. Second, report the people who did it. Read on to learn how you can help you prevent unwanted E-Mail in the future.

Step 1: Ignore unwanted E-Mail

- **Don't reply to E-Mail asking for personal information.** Most legitimate companies will not ask for personal information via E-Mail. If a company you trust (e.g., your credit card company) writes to ask for personal information, call—do not write—and report it. Be sure to use a number you found yourself, either through the yellow pages, a bank statement, a bill, or other source. (Don't use a phone number provided on the E-Mail.) If it's a legitimate request, the phone operator should be able to help you.



Tip: Watch out for spoofed mail. "Spoofing" refers to duplicating a legitimate E-Mail, such as a company's newsletter. These spoofed mails may be used to trick you into downloading a virus or sending personal information, such as a credit card number. When in doubt, contact the company you think sent the E-Mail.

- **Don't buy anything from a spam E-Mail.** Some spammers make their living on people's purchases of their offerings. So resist the temptation to buy their

products if you don't want to take the chance of getting on more junk E-Mail address lists.

- **Never, ever contribute to a charity from spam E-Mail.** Unfortunately, some spammers prey on your good will. If you receive an appeal from a charity, treat it as spam. If it is a charity you would like to support, call them and find out how you can make a contribution. Never send your information via E-Mail, however.
- **Think twice before opening attachments, even if you know the sender.** If you cannot confirm with the sender that a message is valid and that an attachment is safe, delete the message immediately, and run up-to-date antivirus software to check your computer for viruses.
- **Don't forward chain E-Mail messages.** Chain E-Mails may be hoaxes, or even a virus delivery system. Plus you lose control over who sees your E-Mail address. Additionally, there are reports that spammers use chain letters to gather E-Mail addresses.

Step 2: Report junk E-Mail and its senders

Get active. Put junk E-Mail senders on the defensive and report spam:

- **Forward spam to the spammer's Internet Service Provider (ISP).** If you get unwanted mail, the sender's address will show the ISP name after the "at" (@) sign. If it came from MSN.com, forward the entire E-Mail with headers, to abuse@hotmail.com. If the spam originated from another ISP, forward the headers (following the directions above) to the abuse alias at that ISP—for example, try abuse@<ISPname>.com.
- **File a complaint with U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC).** To file your complaint, go to the [https://rn.ftc.gov/pls/dod/wsolcq\\$.startup?Z_ORG_CODE=PU01](https://rn.ftc.gov/pls/dod/wsolcq$.startup?Z_ORG_CODE=PU01) website.
- **Use the Network Abuse Clearinghouse** for help in forwarding your complaints to system administrators who can act on them. Go to <http://www.abuse.net/>.

You can help reduce spam in your life

You may not be able to stop every piece of spam, but by refusing to respond and reporting spam violators to their ISPs, you can help reduce the hit.