

The Lighter Side of Spam

By Tim Ward

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Every morning when sit down at the ole computer and go to check my email I know two things will happen. (1) I won't have received any new sign-ups in any of the hundreds of affiliate programs that 'guaranteed' me a massive downline and (2) I will have at least 30 emails that are unsolicited or SPAM.

As an experienced 'Internetter' (definition: One who spends way too much time on the internet) I know that the lack of sign-ups may change. One morning I may awaken to 30 new affiliates in each of my programs. Or at least that's what my guru friends keep telling me... The SPAM however, 'ain't goin' nowhere.' It's just become a fact of internet life. 'He Who Hath Email, Will Get SPAM.'

I personally use the Delete-It-And-Forget-About-It Method to deal with SPAM. This time tested method has three basic steps:

1. Select the 'suspected' spam email

(Note: I use the term suspected because according the Internet Law Code Title 12 Chapter 15 Subtitle 3 'All spam is innocent until proven guilty by a jury of it's peers, or until it emails a virus to your whole address book.)'

2. Hit the 'Delete' button

3. Move on to the next email

This highly complicated method for dealing with SPAM is not, I have found, for everyone. There are some people who feel that this method lets spammers off too easily.

These are people who feel very strongly about SPAM. They don't just dislike SPAM, they DESPISE it. I'm talking about the kind of people who, judging by their actions, must be allergic to SPAM.

These kind of people prefer the I'm-Going-To-Get-You-If-It's-The-Last-Thing-I-Do-Online

Method. This method involves any or all of the following steps:

1. Quitting your day job so you can have more time to write nasty replies to all the emails that you get that you don't remember requesting.
2. Doing an exhaustive 30 hour online search for a suspected spammers IP address so you can report them to their ISP. And their hosting services. And their mother.
4. Attempting to get in touch with Tom Ridge, newly appointed Director of Homeland Security, because you think spamming is a form of terrorism.
5. Showing up at suspected spammers front door at 3 AM wielding an AK-47 assault rifle and wearing only WWJD bandana and a mousepad, and shouting, "If I want Spam I'll buy a can" between gunshots.

However you deal with SPAM is of course your business. I, by nature, am a passive person (by passive I mean lazy) so SPAM doesn't usually annoy me to the point where I feel the need to take action. I will admit that occasionally though SPAM does get me a little angry. Like when I open my inbox and see that of the 25 unread emails I have, 20 have subject lines like:

- * Let Me Show You How To Make An Extra \$5000 An Hour Selling Squid!
- * Hot Blonde Men Want You!
- * Congratulations You've Won An All Expense Paid Trip To Uzbekistan
- * Do You Know What You're Children Are Doing Online?

(A quick note to all spammers: If you are going to illegally fill my inbox with SPAM at least be kind enough to send me something that might interest me. SPAM about children does not interest me in the slightest bit seeing as I have none. And if I did have kids I wouldn't care what they did online as long as they stayed quiet and left me alone. Thanks.

- * Become A Catholic Priest In Two Short Weeks
- * Here Is The Information You Requested On Llama Breeding

These are just a sample of some of the subject lines that I have seen in my inbox. I assume they were SPAM since I don't remember every requesting any information about any of those subjects. Although the one about selling squid did seem interesting. Which brings me to a question.

If you know that an email is SPAM but the subject line is just sooo darn catchy, is it wrong to open the email? Do I become an accessory to spamming? Am I aiding and

abetting known spammers? I sure hope not because truthfully every now and then I open an email that I know is SPAM just to see what it's about. It's just that some of those spammers have gotten so good with their subject lines that I just can't help myself. For instance I'm GOING to open emails with subject lines like:

- * Free Fried Chicken For Life
- * Fast Hemorrhoid Relief
- * Drink ALL You Want And Never Get Drunk
- * Drew Barrymore and Tara Banks Want To Meet You

(Another quick note to spammers: If you were the online law breaker who sent me the unsolicited email about Drew and Tara could you please send it to me again. I think I accidentally deleted it.

Thanks. P.S. If you have anything about Angelina Jolie send that too.)

- * Even Faster Hemorrhoid Relief
- * Stop Premature Balding
- * Legally Get Back All The Money You've Ever Blown On Women

There are some of you who probably think it's deplorable that I admit to reading emails that I know are SPAM.

You probably think that people like me are the reason spammers keep spamming. You probably think I'm just as bad as the spammers. You're probably trying to figure out who my ISP is at this very moment so you can report me. All I can say in my defense is: I'm only human. And I only do it on weekends.

In conclusion, even though I've poked fun at anti-spammers in this article, I do feel that spamming is wrong and illegal. My purpose in writing this article was just to bring a little humor to the otherwise ever-so-serious SPAM table. Whether you're an avid anti-spammer and a card-carrying member of the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email or a lazy Delete-It-And-Forget-About-It slacker like me, you'll probably agree that spammers need to be stopped. Anyone caught spamming should be punished. And I know the ideal punishment. They should be forced to clean my house and keep my llamas fed while I'm on my 2 month vacation in Uzbekistan with Drew Barrymore, eating fried chicken-hemorrhoid free.

The Internet is far too serious these days. You need a break from all the gurus and money-making schemes and paid email ads. You also need a new car, a babysitter for Wednesday night, and a good plumber. Unfortunately, I can only help you with the Internet stuff. Visit me at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/onlinejester>
to join my mailing list so you can receive more entertaining articles that poke fun at all
things Internet.

Tim Ward, the self-proclaimed Online Jester, writes a monthly column that takes a warped look at the World Wide Web. This column is published in his ezine, The Online Jester's Ezine. To find out more visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/onlinejester/>

E-mail SPAM: What's The Big Deal?

By Dean Phillips

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It absolutely amazes me how many people over-react to receiving e-mail SPAM.

What is this obsession...this preoccupation with SPAM?

Where are our priorities?

When it comes to SPAM, many of us are ready to support the severest anti-SPAM legislation. Yes, we want to lock up all the spammers and throw away the key! Haven't we learned by now that inviting the government to get involved with anything is a recipe for disaster?

I personally receive a couple hundred e-mails every single day. Approximately half of that is SPAM. Want to know how I deal with the problem? I hit the "delete" button and just like that, no more SPAM!

And since I have high-speed cable access, it literally only takes me a few minutes to make a hundred uninvited SPAM guests disappear. No problem!

I don't let SPAM annoy me or upset me. And I certainly don't let it ruin my day.

When you let SPAM annoy or upset you, all you're doing is letting the spammers win. However, when you use the delete button, you win! You've got the power to delete. Why not use it?

What's so hard about doing that? It's certainly a lot easier on your emotional well-being than getting upset over the situation.

Simply view SPAM as one of those minor annoyances of every day life--like reality television shows, and learn to treat it as such!

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