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# How to Get Rid of Email SPAM

by Dark Sith

Junk email, better known as spam, is the number one annoyance you may get through your email account. Oftentimes, even if your email provider has anti-spam measures in place, a lot of it still makes it into your mailbox. You end up spending minutes everyday just figuring out which among the messages you received are real and which of them deserve junking.

There is no single way to stop spam, nor is any email account bullet-proof from it. Spammers will always be there, and it'll just be a matter of time before a new email account gets bombarded with it. The most effective way to get rid of spam is to make spammers' tasks in obtaining your email address difficult. Here is how to effectively get rid of spam, or at least reduce the chances of getting it.

Do you ever wonder how spam gets into your mailbox? Well, a lot of spammers use "bruteforce" or send a huge volume of their spam to random email addresses. Most of these spammers send mail using lists of accounts gathered from the Internet. The majority of the spam you get come from the websites where you use your email address as your means of identity. These may include sites or services that you've previously visited or signed up for. You may also have posted your email address on blogs and forums.

#### Make it Difficult

To make your email address hard to find, you must avoid posting your email on free-to-access websites. If you really need to post your address though, disguise it. For example, if your email is "johnsmith@smith.com", write it out as "john smith [at] smith [dot] com". A person who reads this disguised version will still be able to understand it, but automatic programs that spammers use to harvest emails will not be able to detect it.

#### Dupe it

Most services on the Internet, especially free ones, require that you provide an email address as a means of identification or contact line to inform you about certain matters. You can't tell if that website sells their email list to spammers or not, despite claims of having secure "privacy policies" and the sort, so it is better to use a "disposable" email address.

It is common to have more than one email address today, so simply make an extra one and use it when signing up for services. Avoid using your work or personal email address. Create a new email account using free email providers like Gmail, Yahoo!, or Hotmail. When have a separate account, if ever it gets bombarded with spam, it is a different account, and you won't get annoyed deleting it from your main email. When you feel you don't need it anymore, you can either leave it alone or deactivate it. You don't even need to bother checking this email account for new messages, since you only provide the address to websites and forums as a log-in, and not to your friends or work contacts.

#### Mind the Fine Print and Check Boxes

To further minimize spam in your email, make sure to read the fine print. Oftentimes, you unknowingly consent to spam being sent to you because you didn't read the policy of the services you sign up for. You will know when there is a possibility you will be receiving spam if you read something about third-parties being provided with your personal information (such as email address) to offer you promos or newsletters. If you do read anything of this nature, think twice. You can either continue and sign up for the service or search the net for a different site that provides the same service. (If you do sign up, you may want to use your disposable address.)

Often, you do not need to find a different site just to avoid spam. You can usually opt out of those "promos" or "free offers" by unchecking those check boxes that are checked by default. These check boxes are usually small or hidden. In the end, read through the policy, no matter how long and technical it may seem, and be careful of those check boxes - don't just check anything or everything.

## The Spam Trap

No matter how careful you are, and how sophisticated anti-spam measures are, spam may somehow still find its way into your email. The best thing is to select all of those junk messages and dump them directly into your trash folder. As a general rule, never open or even REPLY to spam messages. Doing that may scream to the spammer that your email account is real, therefore triggering more spam to be sent to you. It is better to be safe - if you don't know the sender, then it probably is spam.

## Signs that an Email is Indeed Spam

You do not have to open a message to determine if it is spam. Usually, you can easily tell it is just by looking at the subject of the message. Here are some of common signs that you should look out for:

- \* The word "Free" is there.
- \* It says you've won something (money, gadgets, etc.), even if you don't remember signing up for a promo.
- \* It contains something to do with sex, prescription drugs, or jewelry.
- \* Bad grammar or spelling.
- \* Weird characters or letters.
- \* Job offers.
- \* Discount or wholesale items being sold.

## The Dangers of Spam

You may think that spam is but a simple marketing attempt to sell you something, but spam can actually be dangerous. A seemingly harmless message may contain malware: either a virus, a trojan, or spyware that can put you and your data at risk.

Most modern viruses spread through email through an attachment. Once activated, it can steal sensitive information from your computer and use your computer to spread more viruses. Spyware can track your activities online, like the websites you visit, the bank accounts you access, and a lot more.

A newer threat that is also used in spam is phishing. Phishing is a method where a spammer designs a message to appear as a authentic-looking one, pretending to be from a bank, an online shopping site, or money transfer services. It aims to steal log-on information and other personal details by exploiting the computer system, usually through XSS or cross-site scripting to make it look authentic.

Spam today is not only an annoyance, but it also carries potentially harmful elements. Common sense and the use of anti-spam measures will not only lessen the junk in your mailbox, but also protect your privacy on the Internet.

About the Author:

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