

Spam, egg, spam, spam, bacon and spam

E-mail is a wonderful thing but this year I have more junk (spam) e-mail than I have legitimate e-mail. It's ridiculous!

Spam e-mail is unsolicited, usually commercial e-mail sent to you by someone you don't know. The term originated from the Monty Python skit where the word "spam" is used more and more frequently in each successive dish, similar to the way spam e-mail builds up in your mailbox day after day. Many people are having the same problem. Recently one of the employees here at Software Emporium signed up a new e-mail address and within two hours he had received three spam e-mail messages!

There is little we can do to slow down the flood of spam but I do have a few tips for you:

The most effective thing you can do to prevent spam is not divulge your e-mail address to third parties or to any website.

Never reply to any spam e-mail, *especially* if it is an offer to remove you from their spam mailing list. Never respond to any e-mail that asks you for personal information like a phone number or postal address. Never send money to anyone for any reason whatsoever no matter how seemingly profitable or apparently worthwhile.

Never give your address to a web site unless they have a good privacy policy stating it will be kept secure, and you absolutely trust them. This includes offers to join notification mailing lists, send online greeting cards, or e-mail an interesting web page to a friend - methods which are all used to harvest addresses for spammers.

I personally use the "block senders" list in my e-mail application (usually Outlook Express) for eliminating the spam e-mails. Simply highlight the offending email by clicking on it once, then click the menu MESSAGE then choose BLOCK SENDER. That's it - you will never see another e-mail from the same person. If you need to remove someone from your "blocked sender list", it can be found under TOOLS, then MESSAGE RULES, then BLOCKED SENDERS LIST.

For those using "full size" Outlook, you will use the ORGANIZE feature to Create a Rule to Move messages from the person's email address to the Deleted items folder. Try it, it's easy.

Good luck with your spam and junk e-mail filtering. Personally it seems like I've spent more time creating rules and blocking senders than I've spent reading e-mails. Sigh!

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