

Avoid Spam

The Truth About Spam

Spam is any piece of unwanted or unsolicited email that is sent out to thousands of email recipients at one time. Spam will attempt to convince you to buy a product or participate in a scheme to steal information or money from online sources. Spam can be broken into several basic categories:

- **Financial scams-** are get-rich-quick schemes and lotteries. These scams use elaborate and confusing descriptions to mislead you into investing in a financial scheme. A well known scam is the “Nigerian Fraud Scam” where someone tells you that their uncle, who is the rightful, but currently deposed, ruler of a country, can restore democracy, but only with your monetary support.
- **Phishing schemes-** are attempts to impersonate a legitimate company with the goal of convincing you to give up your security credentials or release personal data.
- **Financial offers-** are usually, but not always, legitimate advertisements for mortgages, debt consolidation, credit cards or other financial programs.
- **Stock offers-** emails will offer “insider” knowledge to artificially raise the value of low performing stocks.



- **Consumer product offers-** these advertisements range from fairly benign ads for health aides and designer knockoff hand bags, to more offensive adult content add that offer online dating services and access to adult sites.

Spam Can Hurt Your Company

According to the “spam-o-meter” (<http://www.junk-o-meter.com/stats/24hours.php>) almost 90% of all email being sent is spam. Dealing with spam will cost your company money:

- When you sort through spam you waste time that could be used to run your business. But, if you ignore the accumulating spam, it will take up storage space on your servers forcing you to spend money to add more storage to your IT network.
- The more spam you get, the harder your email and security systems must work to defend your IT network. Also consider that most malware is delivered through spam—many malware applications will infect your computer and turn it into a “spam server” which can be very expensive to fix.

Say “No” to Spam

Ultimately, spam will affect your company’s bottom line. However, there a few easy steps to help you avoid spam:



- **Never** click on a link or reply to a spam message. This includes clicking the "unsubscribe" link
- **Always** look at the subject line of your email. If it looks like spam, delete it
- **Disguise** your email address on your web page so web crawlers can't identify it. Consider substituting an image for the "@" symbol in your email address.
- **Don't** use your email addresses when you register for services or content on the internet. Instead, use a free email address from Yahoo or Hotmail.
- **Before** you give out your email to a service provider, make sure the site won't sell your address.
- **Use** a spam filter. All Covered recommends business class filters from Postini or Barracuda. For more information about how to protect your business's productivity and bottom line from spam, please contact All Covered.

Chances are that you will, no matter how careful you are, end up with the occasional piece of spam. To learn more about how to protect your IT systems contact All Covered.