

Spam FAQs

1. What is spam exactly? And why is there so much of it?

Spam is e-mail that is sent to users without their expressed permission. Spammers see e-mail as a quick and cheap way to promote their goods and services. Currently, the amount of spam an individual receives on a daily basis easily outnumbers legitimate e-mail messages.

E-mail spam is an annoying, long-standing Internet problem. Often, spammers will provide a fake "opt-out" button in the message that is either a "dead" link or a way to confirm with the spammer that the e-mail address is valid for future mailings. By the end of 2006, 71 percent of e-mail messages sent worldwide per day will be spam. This percentage will grow to 79 percent by 2010.¹

2. Why should I care about e-mail spam?

Inbox Pollution

Within a business environment, critical e-mail addresses, e.g. "sales@" or "support@", can fall victim to inbox pollution. Spammers can overload a critical e-mail address with so much spam that the address is essentially rendered unusable.

Internet Fraud

On first glance, many unsolicited commercial offers may seem both legitimate and compelling. Unfortunately, these offers lead to deceptive Web sites, set up to capture credit card information for the purposes of online fraud. According to a study by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), 66 percent of all spam e-mail they collected contained false "From" lines, "Subject" lines, and message text.²

Unsuitable Content

Spam e-mail can disguise itself with harmless subject lines, only to reveal pornographic material within the message body. While preventing children from viewing unsuitable content is important for parents, businesses must also address the legal liabilities associated with pornographic material being sent to an employee's inbox.

3. How do e-mail spammers get my e-mail address?

Every time you send your e-mail address out into the world, you are exposing yourself and your business to the deluge of spam e-mail. To make the problem worse, e-mail lists are also sold and resold within spammer networks, greatly increasing the volume of spam sent to a user's e-mail address.

E-mail Harvesting

Spammers employ simple but effective tactics to harvest e-mail addresses from the Internet. Using free spider software, spammers get access to e-mail addresses without a user's consent.

4. How do I protect myself from e-mail spammers?

You can protect yourself from spammers by subscribing to always active, always updating computer security software like McAfee Internet Security Suite. This kind of protection deters spam and phishing scams so you can e-mail with friends and family safely.