



Australian Government

NetAlert Limited

netalert.net.au



Internet Safety Information Sheet

1800 880 176

Spam

“Spam” is the “Email” equivalent of junk mail or nuisance phone calls.

“Spam” can simply be defined as all unsolicited electronic mail sent out in bulk to individuals/organisations who have not already consented to receive it. It comes under a number of classifications:

- “Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE)” which usually advertises a product or service;
- “Unsolicited Bulk Email (UBE)” which is used for things like lobbying;
- Chain letters and pyramid schemes;
- Messages sent to a recipient who had agreed to receive mail but has subsequently opted-out;
- Any email without an “Opt-out” facility;
- Where an “Opt-out” facility is provided but it is deliberately misleading or difficult to activate; and
- Any “Email” which does not have a valid address in the Reply To line.

An “Email Message” is not considered to be “Spam” if:

- You have, at any time, requested information from the sender and have not subsequently opted out of further communication; or
- You are already a customer or member of an organisation which contacts you by “Email” – providing the organisation gives you the opportunity to cancel any further email communication.

How can I tell whether or not an Email Message that I receive is Spam?

The clues are often in the “Email Subject Line”. Watch out for strange symbols like ‘\$’ or ‘#’, words like ‘free’, promises of money, investment opportunities, love, friendship or good health. More creative spammers will make out they know you e.g. “Hi There”, or make out you have been specially selected in some way.

Beware of messages that come from businesses or addresses you don’t recognize. Many of these addresses are bogus and are used for a specific campaign and then discarded. Look out for messages where the sender isn’t clearly identified as well.

What does Opt-in and Opt-out mean?

All responsible email marketers will ask up front whether or not you want to hear from them by email. The usual place to do this is on their website but many use offline opportunities like application and memberships forms or surveys.

Giving your permission to an organisation to be contacted via “Email” is called “Opt-in”. The current worldwide trend is towards “Double Opt-in”. This essentially asks for permission and then goes back to the person for verification of this request. “Opt-out” is the opposite of “Opt-in” and is the term used for removing your “Email Address” off a list. Any “Bulk Email” that is sent should have an “Opt-out” link attached. The terms “Opt-in” and “Opt-out” are also referred to as “Subscribe” and “Unsubscribe”.



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How did I get on the Spammers list?

“Spammers” often buy “Email Lists” from people who have harvested addresses from “Web Sites” or “News Groups”. Before you send “Email” to a “Web Site”, check for the site’s “Privacy Policy”.

Look out for “Web Sites” offering prizes in return for you filling in surveys or forms or providing personal information. It may simply be a technique used in an effort to secure your “Email Address” for use by “Online Marketers”. If you are not careful, you could receive large quantities of “Spam” in your “Email Inbox”.

How do I get off the Spammers list?

Firstly, do not reply to “Spam”, as it shows your “Email Address” is active and therefore a target for further “Spam”. Unfortunately, once your “Email Address” is on a “Spam List”, it is often impossible to remove it.

Australian Spam Law and Lodging Complaints

There is legislation in Australia to prevent the transmission of spam:

- www2.dcita.gov.au/ie/trust/improving/spam_home

If you believe you have received an “Email”, which is spam, you can report it to the ACA (Australian Communications Authority):

- www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/spam/reportingcomplaintsenquiries.htm

More information on Spam

More information on spam can be found at the following Australian Government and Industry websites:

Australian Government Sites

- **AGIMO:** www.agimo.gov.au
- **DCITA:** www.dcita.gov.au
- **ABA:** www.aba.gov.au/internet/faqs/spam.htm
- **ACA:** www.aca.gov.au
- **Privacy Commissioner:** www.privacy.gov.au/internet/internet_privacy

Industry Sites

- **Internet Industry Association:** www.iaa.net.au
- **Coalition Against Unsolicited Bulk Email, Australia:** www.caube.org.au