

## Simple steps to combat spam

Implementing a best practice policy regarding email account usage can be an effective tool for minimising the amount of spam that end users receive. While having such a policy should not be considered a complete solution, it can serve as a significant line of defence against unwanted email.

The best way to have an immediate impact on the amount of spam your company is receiving is to run a consolidated email filtering solution at your email gateway. This will not only protect your business from spam, but also the threats posed by email-borne viruses and worms. Our email security solutions check all email traffic passing through your email server, providing an extra layer of protection against mass-mailing worms and viruses at the gateway.

To help combat spam, email users should follow these recommendations:

- **Never make a purchase from an unsolicited email**  
If spamming weren't economically viable, it would be obsolete. Not only can an email user fall prey to a potentially fraudulent sales scheme, but his or her email address can also be added to the numerous email lists that are sold within the spamming community, further compounding the number of junk emails received.
- **If you do not know the sender of an unsolicited email message, delete it**  
While most spam is usually just annoying text, a spam email message could actually contain a virus and/or other exploit that could damage the computers of all who open it.
- **Never respond to any spam messages or click on any links in the message**  
Replying to any spam message, even to "unsubscribe" or be "removed" from the email list only confirms to the spammer that you are a valid recipient and a perfect target for future spamming.
- **Avoid using the preview functionality of your email client software**  
Many spammers use advertising techniques that can track when a message is viewed, even if you don't click on the message or reply. Using the preview functionality essentially opens an email and tells spammers you are a valid recipient, which can result in even more spam.
- **When sending email messages to a large number of recipients, use the blind copy (BCC) field to conceal their email addresses**  
Sending email where all recipient addresses are "exposed" in the "To" field makes it vulnerable to harvesting by a spammer's traps.
- **Think carefully before you provide your email address on websites, newsgroup lists or other online public forum**  
Many spammers utilise "web bots" that automatically surf the internet to harvest email addresses from public information and forums.
- **Never give your primary email address to anyone or any site you don't trust**  
Share it only with your close friends and business colleagues.
- **Have and use one or two secondary email addresses**  
If you need to fill out web registration forms, or surveys at sites from which you don't want to receive further information, consider using secondary addresses to protect primary email accounts from spam abuse. Also, always look for a box that solicits future information/offers, and be sure to select or deselect as appropriate.

Conscientious end users who follow these suggestions will ultimately play a significant role in reducing the amount of spam that enters their organisation's communications system, especially when automated spam-filtering supplements their efforts.