



DON'T LET SPAM EMAIL BULLY YOU

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Article 3

HERE'S THE DEAL...

Spam happens. No matter how careful you think you are, it's can creep up on you. It's not just one at a time, or only from just strangers. Email labeled as being from family, friends, co-workers alike can be poisonous to your computer or bothersome to you, and can contain attachments with ads or obscene content. And here's the kicker – your family, friends, co-workers? While the "From" line in the e-mail may claim that the message was from them, they may not have even really sent that message!

A DEFINITION

Spam e-mails can be defined as any e-mail message not requested, with malicious or devious intent and/or content, sent to multiple parties one time or in succession. (AKA PHISH & SPOOF) Clear as mud?

DEALING WITH THAT INBOX FULL OF SPAM

There are a few things you can do to prevent SPAM from bullying you in your own inbox. None of these are fail-safe on their own, but in cooperation, these steps can get you as close as is currently possible to being SPAM-proof.

1. ***Verify Message Authenticity before Opening an E-mail wherever possible.*** Even if my own mother sends me an e-mail, and I am not expecting it, I question the e-mail's authenticity. Of course if you asked a person to send you something, chances are, that they did send it to you. ***How can you verify message authenticity?***
 - You can look at the subject line for specifics that look/sound like something that the person you know would say. You can ask you e-mail counterparts to be specific/unique enough in the subject line that their messages become obviously valid.
 - Any e-mail message that has an attachment that you did not request should be discarded. (If you regularly receive attachments in the course of your daily business, you can come up with ways to identify with your email counterparts the validity of the message via pre-determined file names, Subject Lines, etc.)
 - If you don't know the person? Don't open the e-mail.
 - Any e-mail asking you for personal information or financial information is UNSAFE! If a reputable organization sends you a message asking for information, open a new internet browser window and go to that organization's website and ask THEM if they sent that message to you. Many online businesses now have systems in place to combat SPAM, PHISH, or SPOOF e-mails. Don't go to the company's website from the link inside the e-mail... many times, it's a hoax site just luring you into giving the sender your log-in information with the organization they pretended to be sending the e-mail from in the first place.

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Call 800.805.5324 anytime for a consultation relating to your workstation(s)/network.

2. ***Invest in some Anti-Spam software that will help you combat the daily SPAM entourage.*** Don't just buy any software that you run across. Remember, viruses and spy ware are just as much an issue as SPAM. Be sure to read our "INTERNET: FRIEND OR FOE" Article, and DO NOT install anything from Pop-Up Ads! **What Anti-SPAM software is safe, works well, and is priced reasonably?**
 - At this time, we recommend ***Spam Bully***. Go to www.SpamBully.com. You can try the product on a FREE TRIAL Basis for 14 days. If you like it, pay the \$30 to buy it! Be sure to check for version updates every 6 months.
3. ***Refer to the Tone Dog Article from 1/24/2005 on sending e-mail to multiple recipients with the BCC field if you must send a message to multiple parties.*** Encourage the folks you are e-mailing to do the same. This will prevent your e-mail address from being "broadcast" all over the www for spammers obtain more easily.
4. ***Don't take part in those e-mail forwards that everyone sends around all the time...*** you know the ones! The jokes, cutsie little stories, pictures of fuzzy woodland creatures – whatever! You determine whether they are worth the risk, but generally speaking, they aren't worth it. (But we'll be happy to provide you with Tech Services if you run into trouble as a result of these insidious little e-mail forwards.☺)

CONCLUSION

This article information is NOT all-inclusive. There is, of course, the element of common sense which isn't really documented here. If an e-mail message just doesn't ****seem**** right to you, then question it first – it could save you a big headache and a tech bill later!

If you need assistance with any of the information in this article, please do not hesitate to call us. If you need more information on updates and antivirus software, or if your system/network has already been negatively impacted, we can help you to put the tools into place to safeguard your computer(s) from this point forward. The best friends you can have on the internet are your own good sense, and TONE DOG, INC.

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