



How You Can Help Reduce Spam in Your Inbox

You have three powerful tools at hand to help stem the tide of spam.

1: Use technology to help block spam

The junk mail filters of your Internet Service Provider (ISP) and your e-mail program are your first line of defense against spam. For example, MSN Hotmail uses patented Microsoft SmartScreen™ Technology to keep more than 3.2 billion (yes — *billion*) messages from reaching its customers' e-mail boxes every day.

- > Microsoft Outlook, MSN Hotmail, and Entourage (for the Mac) have strong natural defenses against junk e-mail. They also let you turn up the dial to further curb spam (including keeping spam filters in Outlook current). Find out how at safety.msn.com/articles/msmailprotect.armx.

- > If your e-mail program still lets through too much spam, check into one of the many anti-spam software packages on the market.

2: Be careful about sharing your e-mail address

- > **Only share your primary e-mail address with people you know.** Avoid listing your e-mail address in large Internet directories and job-posting sites — even your own Web site (unless you disguise it as described below).
- > **Set up an e-mail address dedicated solely to Web transactions** to help keep your primary e-mail address private.
- > **Create an e-mail name that's tough to crack.** Try a combination of letters, numbers, and other characters — Don2Funk9@example.com or J0e_Y0ng@example.com (substituting zero for the letter "O"). Research shows that people with such names get less spam.
- > **Disguise your e-mail address** when you post it to a newsgroup, chat room, or other public Web page — for example, SairajUdin AT example DOT com. This way, a person can interpret your address, but the automated programs that spammers use often cannot.

3: Improve your computer's security

You can greatly reduce your risk from hackers, viruses, and worms by using a firewall; installing antivirus software, and updating it routinely; and keeping your Windows and Office software up to date. Protect your PC following Microsoft's step-by-step instructions at safety.msn.com/protectpc.armx.

What to Do If You Get Spam

Despite your best efforts, you've probably received e-mail you didn't ask for — and don't want. Here's what you can do.

1: Ignore junk e-mail messages

- > **DELETE junk e-mail without opening it.** Sometimes even opening spam can alert the spammers.
- > **DON'T REPLY to spam.** Don't even click "Remove me from your list" unless you're certain that the message comes from a legitimate source.
- > **DON'T give sensitive personal information in an e-mail.** Most legitimate companies will not ask for personal information by e-mail. If a company you trust, such as your credit card company or bank, appears to ask for personal information, it could be a scam.
- > **THINK TWICE before you open attachments or click links in e-mail messages** even if you know the sender. If you cannot confirm with the sender that an attachment or link is safe, delete the message.

Watch out for identity-theft scams!

Thieves use a method known as "phishing" to send spam that meticulously imitates those of such reputable companies as Citibank, eBay, or Microsoft. The forged message capitalizes on your trust of the respected brand by enticing you to click a link that could download a virus or trick you into divulging confidential information such as account and Social Security numbers. Read more about phishing and how to protect yourself at safety.msn.com/phishing.

- > **DON'T BUY anything or give to any charity promoted through spam.** Some spammers make their living on people's purchases of their offerings, and build their lists, too. If you receive an e-mail request from a charity you'd like to support, call them to find out how to contribute.
- > **DON'T FORWARD chain e-mail messages.** You may be furthering a hoax or aiding in the delivery of a virus, and you lose control over who sees your e-mail address. Plus, there are reports that spammers start chain letters expressly to gather addresses. Hoaxbusters (hoaxbusters.ciac.org) stands ready to help you separate fact from fiction.

2: Report abusive and fraudulent e-mail

If you receive threatening e-mail messages or have been the target of a scam such as phishing, report it. If nothing else, you may save someone else from becoming a victim.

- > **REPORT abusive, harassing, or threatening e-mail messages** to your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Find out how to do this for Microsoft products and services at safety.msn.com/articles/junkmail.armx.
- > **FORWARD phishing scams and other fraudulent e-mail** to the company that has been misrepresented. The company may have a special e-mail address to report such abuse — for example, abuse@msn.com to report abuse of MSN. Find out how at safety.msn.com/articles/junkmail.armx.
- > **FILE A COMPLAINT** with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Go to www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm, and click **File a Complaint**.

Tip If you're using MSN Hotmail, you can report junk e-mail before you even open it using the **Junk** button.

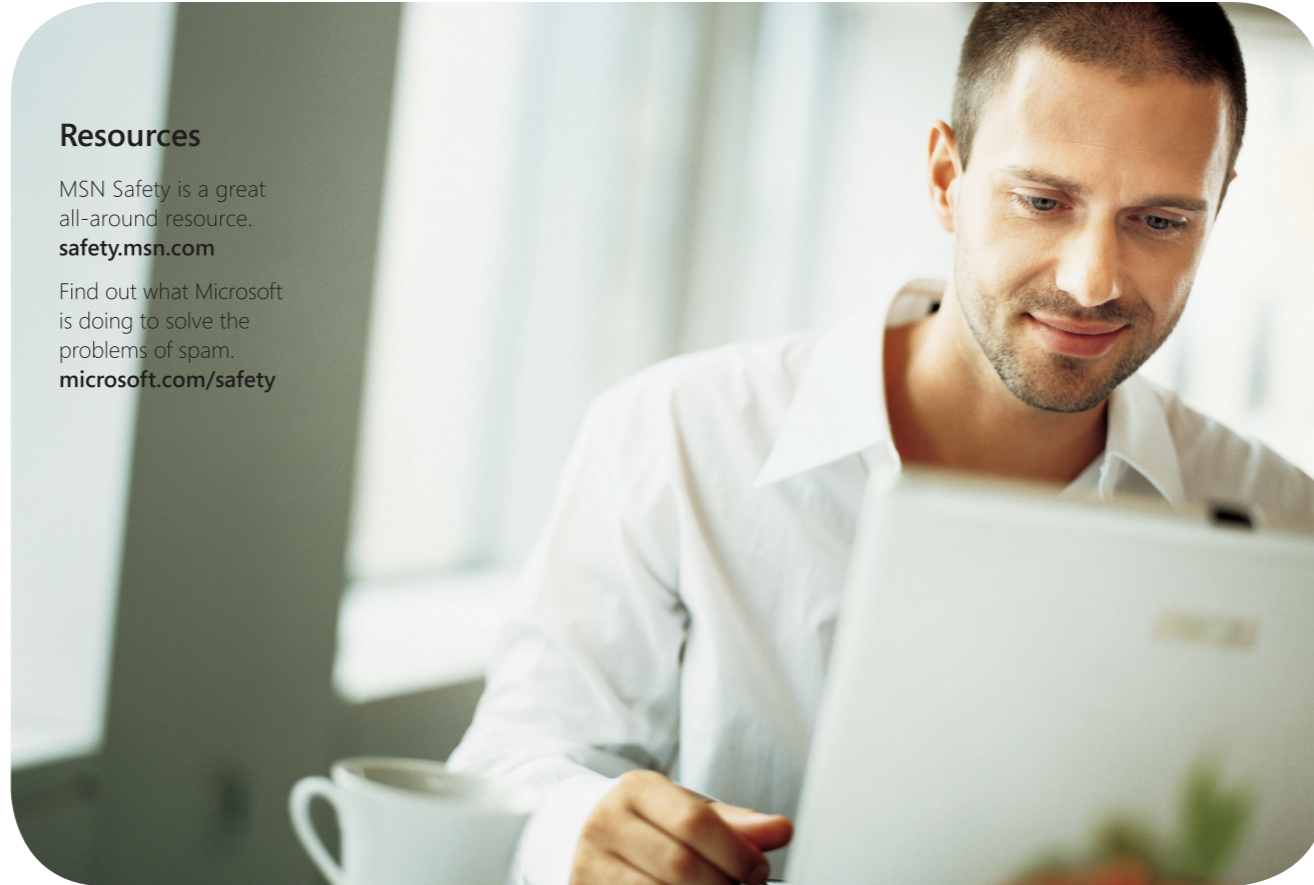
How do spammers get e-mail addresses?

They buy, swap, or steal lists of valid addresses (and the addresses of people who've responded to spam command a premium). They also build their own lists with dictionary attacks using special software. These programs rapidly generate millions of random e-mail addresses — someone@example.com, someone2@example.com, s_one@example.com — and e-mail them to computers, such as those at MSN Hotmail. The e-mail that gets through indicates a valid address.

Some spammers gather (or harvest) addresses from Web sites where people sign up for free offers, order something, or enter contests. Harvesters may also use Web bots, programs that will search for e-mail addresses on Internet white pages, job postings, newsgroups, chat rooms — even personal Web pages.

What's so bad about spam.

Spam is certainly annoying and disruptive, even disturbing. But spam can also potentially be dangerous to your computer, to your bank account, and to your privacy. Spammers can overwhelm you with offers to buy things (real or fake), or trick you into simply giving your money away. They may pretend to be a company you trust (like your bank) to entice you to reveal sensitive personal information. Click a spammer's link and you may risk downloading a virus or software that could be used to track your Web activity. Even that e-greeting card from someone you know could be suspect.



Resources

MSN Safety is a great all-around resource.

safety.msn.com

Find out what Microsoft is doing to solve the problems of spam.

microsoft.com/safety

Why and How You Get Spam

If you send or receive e-mail, you probably get junk e-mail, also known as **spam**. Maybe a lot of spam.

Ever wonder why you get so much spam?

It's a lucrative business. It costs spammers next to nothing to send out millions, even billions, of e-mail messages. And consider this: If even a tiny percentage of a hundred million people buy something in response to a junk e-mail message, that's a lot! (According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, an independent research organization, five percent of U.S. e-mail users — that's six million people — said they had ordered a product or service as a result of unsolicited e-mail.)

What You Can Do About Junk E-Mail: Phishing

- Why and how you get "spam"
- How you can reduce spam in your inbox
- What to do if you get spam

Safety Connection: Help protect your family, your information, your way of life. Brought to you by MSN.

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So what can you do about junk e-mail?bbbbbb
Quite a bit, as it turns out •••