

Spam: those emails your company can do without

David Kelleher

Unsolicited email, or spam as it is more commonly referred to, is a problem for companies because of its ability to change regularly, inundate mailboxes with useless emails, affect employee productivity and pose a security risk.

Over the past two years, companies have seen an huge increase in spam volumes and types and this, in the main, is a reflection of the success registered by spammers to gain access to end-users' mailboxes and, more importantly, their ability to bypass the various methods used to detect these types of email.

In a cat-and-mouse game with anti-spam product developers, spammers are constantly changing tactics to outdo spam filters while playing on the inquisitive and gullible nature of email users.

Why spam? Spammers are not interested in sending out millions of emails just for the fun of it; they are using spam to gain information, to send out fake but highly convincing emails encouraging people to purchase products and spend money. They are using spam to get people to click on website links that take the user to a website that automatically downloads malicious material to take over that person's computer.

However, the major concern for companies is the loss of productivity and money due to spam. With estimates suggesting that up to 90% email received by companies is spam, this means that employees must dedicate part of their work time to dealing with useless emails, which results in a decrease in productivity (and an increase in their frustration levels!).

Loss of productivity is the main cost of spam, because so much useless email is received every day. There is also the cost of bandwidth taken by spam, as well as other storage and network infrastructure costs. Furthermore, with the influx of spam and its deletion, an important message could accidentally be trashed along with the unsolicited mail in the rush to clear one's inbox of junk mail.

Can spam be stopped? It is impossible to eradicate spam due to its ever-changing nature but there are ways to effectively reduce spam. Here are three simple steps:

- Employees should delete any emails that looks unfamiliar or suspicious and ignore emails asking for personal details;
- Employees should not be allowed to install unauthorized software and denied access peer-to-peer sites;
- Companies should install a product that is capable of identifying as many forms of spam as possible yet without deleting email that is important.

Spam is a problem for every company – small or large – but something can be done.

GFI MailEssentials tackles spam effectively

GFI MailEssentials has won over 70 awards and is used by 80,000 business customers worldwide to effectively deal with spam. This [anti spam filter](#) has been independently verified to stop more than 98% of spam and possibly the lowest number of false positives when compared to other products. For more information, visit <http://www.gfi.com/mes/>.

“Users immediately noticed a decrease of spam mail in their mailbox especially alias addresses and reception mailboxes. Everyone was singing praises about the new software. They thought that having 100+ spam emails was the norm and spending 20 minutes in the morning clearing

was just another task to complete. GFI MailEssentials solved that immediately” - David Taing, IT Administrator at Osmoflo, in Australia.

David Kelleher is Communications and Research Analyst at GFI Software. www.gfi.com.