

## CAIP's Tip Sheet on Dealing with Unsolicited Bulk Email

1. If you want to avoid junk emails altogether, then the only realistic solution that you have is to not use the Internet – never browse the web, never purchase anything over the Internet, do not subscribe to any mailing lists, never post to Usenet and do not give your email address to anyone.

**Commentary: Some spam is pretty much inevitable. For most users, the goal should be to minimize the amount that you receive.**

2. Using two different email accounts is one way of managing spam. Reserve one email address for your friends and family, another for your business associates and a third when you are browsing or posting to news groups.

**Commentary: This does not mean sign up for three accounts (unless you actually need that many hours of service). Many ISPs already offer multiple mailboxes in some of their service plans. Check to see if your ISP provides these services.**

3. When you are on-line, guard your personal information.

**Commentary: Just because a web site asks for your personal information does not mean that you need to give it to them. Certainly, do not give it to them without checking their privacy policy.**

- 3.1 Reconfigure your browser.

**Commentary: As a default, many browsers are set to reveal certain information about their user. Start your browser, and using the help function look for information under the following headings: Personal Profile, Security and Privacy. The help function should provide you with the information that you need to make appropriate changes. This information may also be available on your Internet Service Provider's web site.**

- 3.2 Change the reply-to setting on your email program when you are posting to news groups.

**Commentary: If you still want people who actually read the postings in the newsgroup to be able to reply to you, then you may want to adopt this common practice:**

- a. **Insert an obvious word into your reply address. For example, if your address is**

“whyme@isp.ca”, your reply address might be “whyme@isNOSPAMp.ca”.

- b. In your signature file, instruct any one who wishes to send email to you to delete, “NOSPAM”, from your return address.

- 3.3 Do not register with a “DO NOT SEND” list.

**Commentary:**These lists rely on the co-operation of spammers, and there really is no incentive for any given spammer to stop sending email to the addresses that these sites supply to them. The incentive is even lower when you consider that these are lists of valid email addresses.

4. Do not send email to a spammer.

- 4.1 Do not email back to the spammer asking them to remove your name.

**Commentary:**It is not uncommon for spammers to include a return email address in their spam for the sake of removing your name from their list. Unfortunately, for those bulk emailers who actually do honor requests to remove names from their lists, most spammers do not honor these requests. Instead, they regard them as proof that the address is active, making it a more desirable target.

- 4.2 Do not reply to spam.

**Commentary:**Most likely, the “reply to” address is invalid. If the address is not invalid, then there is a good chance that it is not the spammer’s address.

- 4.2.1 Do not try to disrupt the spammer’s email by sending large quantities of mail to the reply address or by sending an exceedingly large email.

**Commentary:**If the address is invalid, you have successfully disrupted your own email account as the notice or notices of failed delivery appear. If the address is valid, then you have probably disrupted the email service of an innocent third party. Most likely, you have violated your ISP’s Acceptable Use Policy, and your email account is now in jeopardy. Responses like yours are almost as big a problem as spam.

5. Do contact the spammer's ISP.

**Commentary:** Unless the spammer has set up as their own Internet Service Provider, then they have probably violated the Authorized Use Policy of their Internet Service Provider.

**Most Internet Service Providers will be responsive to your complaints. Spam is a problem for them too. It can slow down or shut down their service. It generates complaints from their peers and from their customers. It may even put their connection to the Internet at risk if their upstream provider made them sign a contract that prohibited spamming.**

6. Do contact your ISP. Find out what they are doing with respect to spam.

**Commentary:** Filtering at the ISP level may cause problems for you or those who wish to contact you for legitimate purposes. It is important to choose an Internet Service Provider whose approach to dealing with spam is consistent with your needs.

7. Do stay informed.

**Commentary:** There are countless web sites devoted to the elimination of spam. To find a wide sampling just use your web browser to search on "spam", "junk email", "unsolicited commercial email" and on "unsolicited bulk email".

**Also, check out your own Internet Service Provider's web site for information on spamming.**

8. If you are sufficiently outraged and have the resources, then taking legal action may be a possibility.

**Commentary:** Realistically, this is not an option for most users, but it probably is worthwhile to check to see if your Internet Service Provider is pursuing legal recourse against any spammers.

## **6.0 Fair Practices Policy Statement - Dispute Resolution**

**CAIP Members will work to resolve any disputes with customers or members of the public in a manner that is fair, timely, effective and affordable.**