

# The Technology Insider Newsletter, Coupons, & Specials 216-571-2115 Happy Holidays!

Ever wonder why you get spammed? Read on...

In This Issue

SPAM



Featured Article



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Newsletter 5 has arrived! Instead of 2 different topics, this time we included one and would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy Holiday season! Merry Christmas and happy New Year!

*PLEASE CALL US FOR QUESTIONS!*

→ **SPAM: meat-like substance or menace to society?**

If you're a member of the current millennia, you've probably heard the word. For those of us that use email (which is also most of us these days), the experience is all too familiar and annoying. In this edition of The Technology Insider, we'll talk about what SPAM is, where it comes from, and hopefully the reader can gain some insight into how to avoid it.

If you've ever gotten emails pushing the sale of prescription drugs or pornography, prompting you to refinance your mortgage, or expounding the

wonders of the latest get rich quick work from home business, you've most likely been spammed. Sparing the tedium of a formal definition, SPAM emails often have no "opt out" links (such as this email has). The ones that do are phony, and you will most likely continue to receive emails or receive even more as clicking the link verifies that the email address in question (yours) is real and is being used. These types of emails are not permission based and usually appear out of nowhere. Legitimate emails from businesses usually have useful information and/or coupons/specials, and are sent out on a regular basis, but not so often as to become annoying. One can easily opt out without worry of repeated offense.

Now for the good stuff: how the heck do they get your email address?

There are actually a few ways this is done. One popular method is by way of the spider, also called spam bots or robots. These are just programs that "crawl" the Web looking for email addresses posted on websites, such as [email@myaddress.com](mailto:email@myaddress.com). Think twice before you post your email address on blogs, personal sites, online directories, and other websites where it can be easily picked up.

Ever sign up for an online subscription or buy something online? How about those enticing freebies such as eBooks and webinars? Most of the time you will have to enter an email address to do so. Some sites allow you to check out without registering, while others that make you register keep your email address to themselves and do not share it. Other guys aren't so nice. Some will sell lists of email addresses to spammers to make extra money. Create a "throw away" email account on Hotmail, Yahoo, or Gmail and use that for online purchases and subscriptions. And as boring as it may be, consider checking their privacy policy.

Special programs can be used to automatically create millions of possible email addresses. Many use names of popular internet service providers

(ISPs) and well known companies (i.e. [you@isp.com](mailto:you@isp.com) or [you@largefirm.com](mailto:you@largefirm.com)) to create them.

Why many spammers don't get caught or shut down.

We've already discussed malware. Some malicious programs are designed to silently take over an ordinary computer or server and turn it into a spam bot which can send out thousands upon thousands of emails in a relatively short time. This makes catching the culprit harder, because your machine takes the blame, not the spammer's. If your computer seems to be running slow for all the sudden or for no apparent reason, you could be a spammer and not even know it! Keep your security software up to date. Install operating system and productivity software patches and updates. If you suspect you have an infection we can help.

Spammers often spoof their IP addresses and/or strip their emails' headers of sender info. They can also make the email look legit to avoid detection by spam filters. Some use funny characters or misspelled words.

All the info on spam could fill volumes, but the basic prevention techniques offered here will be a big help if used with regularity. And yes, sometimes you can judge a book by its cover: many websites that deal in pornography, get rich quick gurus, and gambling have questionable ethics to begin with; why would they have any qualms about spamming people to make an extra buck?