



10 Tips for Reducing Spam

By Dave Peiser

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About Peiser Solutions

Peiser Solutions works with businesses who want the best technical solutions and computer support. Since we opened our doors in May, 2001, we have grown and served over 75 businesses in San Diego with our blend of technical and business expertise.

Our goal is to help businesses avoid computer headaches, by providing our unique process of evaluation, implementation and support. We provide a wide range of services, follow-thru and maintenance so our clients can focus on their core business and leave the technical issues to us.

We provide our services in three ways:

- One-on-one consulting and training
- On-site system evaluation and problem resolution
- On-going maintenance programs

In addition to our on-site services, we stay in touch with our clients through regular informational newsletters, seminars and membership in local organizations. We are active members of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce, Encinitas Chamber of Commerce, North Coast Business Network and the Independent Computer Consultants Association.

Principal - Dave Peiser

Dave brings with him 18 years of technology and business experience working for large, midsize and small companies. He has extensive experience with the application of technology in serving business needs, while working in technical and management roles.

Prior to starting Peiser Solutions, Dave worked as a project manager for Scripps Health, where he led a Y2K project that included replacing all the PCs in the Scripps Health System (2800 PCs), as well as coordinating with simultaneous upgrades of network and server infrastructure. He also managed a web redesign project for Scripps which culminated in an entirely new, attractive and usable website (www.scripps.org).

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Junk email, also known as Spam, has become a significant nuisance for almost everyone with an email account. And as bad as it's been, it is getting worse: Earthlink reports that over the past 18 months, they have seen a 500% increase in spam emails, to where it's now reported that 45% of all email can be identified as Spam according to anti-spam software vendor Brightmail.

Though laws exist and new ones are being crafted to go after the spammers, don't count on an immediate disappearance of this scourge.

So what can you do, to reduce the number of spam emails that you and your employees have to deal with? Here are 10 tips to help you deal with this issue.

1. Don't put your main email address on a website. In a recent study conducted by The Center for Democracy and Technology, 260 test email addresses were created as bait for spammers, and used in various ways known to attract spam. The study found that posting an email address on a public site attracted the most unwanted e-mail – five times as much as for any other reason.
2. If you need to give customers and associates a way to contact you electronically via the web, do one of the following:
 - Use a form on your website that does not display your email address, but allows a website visitor to still contact you
 - Dedicate one email address for website communications, so that only that address is likely to receive spam. At least you'll keep your main address from being exposed, and incoming mail to your public address can be reviewed separately from your main business email.
3. If you visit newsgroups on the web, or register yourself on websites, don't use your main email address to identify yourself. Use either an alias, or if an email address is required, dedicate one address, just like with your website.
4. If you receive a junk email with instructions to unsubscribe, and don't want to receive anymore, do not follow the instructions for unsubscribing. Many times, this just confirms that you received their email and your email address works (and this leads to more Spam). Also, many times the unsubscribe function doesn't work because the Spam perpetrators already closed down and moved.



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5. If your email program has a preview capability (such as Outlook's preview pane) turn it off. By previewing an email you are actually "opening" it, and this can tip off the sender that your email address works. There is also the possibility of a virus infecting your computer if you preview an email.
6. Configure your email program (such as Outlook) to segregate email that looks like SPAM. Outlook has a built-in junk email filter and rules can be added to look for telltale signs of spam such as email that is not sent To: or CC: your email address.
7. Use an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that blocks unwanted Spam email. [Earthlink](#) has the Spaminator and [Yahoo](#) has Spamguard. MSN / Hotmail and AOL both claim to block over 2 billion spam emails daily. MSN 8 software includes a smart filter that becomes more effective over time as it learns the characteristics of mail that an individual customer regards as spam.
8. Use software that either blocks or segregates email suspected to be spam. Depending on the size of your business, there are various software and service solutions available to reduce spam. For single workstations there are great free solutions such as [SPAMBayes](#)** , which learns over time what type of email you consider Spam. Symantec's [Norton Antispam 2004](#) won [PC Magazine's Editor's Choice](#) this year. It is also available as part of [Norton Internet Security 2004](#). McAfee sells a product called [Spamkiller](#). For large installations there are products such as [Brightmail](#) (which is being used by Cox and MSN) and [Syntegra](#) (used by AT&T Wireless). If you decide to use one of the workstation products, send suspect email to a "Spam" folder that can be reviewed before emails are deleted, just in case there is a "false positive" - an email you actually want that was earmarked as Spam.
9. If you are receiving a huge amount of Spam, you may need to consider changing your email address. In particular, AOL addresses receive a huge amount of Spam because it's easy to guess at variations of common addresses. Acquiring your own domain name, creating a new email address, not publishing it on the web, and not using it for web and product registrations should result in much fewer Spam emails.
10. Take action! Join in the fight to enact appropriate legislation to reduce Spam by joining CAUCE (The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email – www.cauce.org). You can also report spammers at www.spamabuse.org.

For assistance dealing with Spam, Contact Dave Peiser at dave@peisersolutions.com

** To download SpamBayes, go to <http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/spambayes/spambayes-1.0rc1.exe?download>

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