Consumer Perspectives on Spam:
Challenges and Challenges

Marc Rotenberg, EPIC
www.epic.org
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The Importance of Email

• Internet is fundamentally a two-way communications medium (compare with radio and TV) - “Network not broadcast”

• Email is most widely used Internet application (ahead of search engines, reading news, browsing web sites)

• 9 out of 10 Internet users use email

• Basis of other emerging applications - SMS, IM
1. The Scope of the Problem

- “Governments need to work together to develop common approaches to address consumer concerns about unsolicited commercial email” (TACD 2001)

- 65% of all Internet email would now be considered spam (Brightmail, June 2004)

- Largest categories of spam: commercial products, financial services
Spam is on the Rise

Importance of Countering Spam

FTC Spam rcvd / day

Year

2001

2002

2003

Spam is on the Rise
Spam - The Multiple Dimensions

- Identity theft, fraud and deception
- Network security
- Reduced consumer confidence
- Invasion of privacy (children, pornography, etc)
- Unsolicited paper mail may be an environmental problem; unsolicited commercial is a security problem
2. Consumer Responses

- Reduce posting on publicly accessible web sites (*ineffective*)
- Create multiple email addresses (*impractical*)
- Limit disclosure of email addresses (*impossible*)
- Use email filters (*imperfect*)
- Challenge - response techniques (*complex*)
3.1 Consumer Education

- OECD - Spam Workshop (Feb 2004)
- EC - Communication on Spam (Jan 2004)
- DPAs - CNIL, UK Information Commission, US FTC
- NGO activities - AUI, Spamhaus, many others
3.2 National Initiatives


- Internet Society of China, “Anti-Spam Coordination Team (2002)

- Singapore or Information Technology Federation (2004)
3.3 International Cooperation

- “Operation Secure Your Server” (US FTC 2004)
- Econsumer.gov (OECD 2003)
- “Net Abuse Workshop” (APCAUCE 2004)
- AUS, THA Spam Accord (July 2004)
4.1 Government Frustration

- “We see different initiatives going in all different directions and the effectiveness is maybe not there.” (P. Gerard 2004)
- Difficulties of enforcing European anti-spam Directive and absence of international system to track down violators (R. Thomas, 2004)
4.2 “Policy Framework for Effective Spam Legislation” (US NGOs)

- Opt-In (enables trust)
- Users with legal rights
- Baseline legislation (not preemptive)
- Technological approaches
- International cooperation (public education, enforcement, standards)
4.3 Consumer Attitudes Toward Spam

- 95% either hate spam or are annoyed by spam
- 83% believe most spam is fraudulent or deceptive
- 91% are concerned about children’s exposure to spam
- 52% shop less online because of spam
- “Concerns about spam are shared by consumers around the world.”

Source: 2004 TACD Survey
4.3 Practical Effects of Spam

- 66% said that spam cost them or their employer significant time or money
- 52% shop less online because of spam
- Only 17% who used a spam filter said it worked well

Source: 2004 TACD Survey
4.3 Solutions to Spam

• 84% said that all unsolicited commercial email should be banned

• 82% said governments should only allow commercial email to be sent if the consumer has opted-in (TACD proposed “prior, affirmative consent” in 2001)

• 80% said it would be helpful if spam were labeled as advertising

• Source: 2004 TACD Survey
### 4.4 Pew Internet Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email users who have reduced use of email because of spam</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email users who say spam has made them less trusting of email</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email users who said spam made being online unpleasant or annoying</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Next Steps

• June 2004 - US FTC recommends against Do Not Email Registry -- would fail to reduce spam, could increase spam, not easily enforced. Recommended e-mail authentication
4.6 Loss of Sender Privacy

- Proposal for Sender ID -- decrease spoofing and *phishing*

- More intrusive data collection, loss of user privacy depending on scheme adopted

- Right of anonymity = freedom of expression
  - US Constitutional law ("Watchtower Bible" 2002)
5. Conclusion

• Spam remains a critical concern for the future of the Internet

• Consumer education may help consumers identify privacy tools, but education is an incomplete solution

• Some solutions (filters, Sender ID) create new problems

• Consumers continue to face challenges and challenges
EPIC to US Senate (2003)

- "Spam is a complex problem. There is no simple legislative solution. A multi-tiered approach that includes aggressive enforcement, better technology for identifying and filtering spam, and cooperation at the state and international level will be necessary."