

The Four Letter Word Called "SPAM" That Drives Us All Nuts

There are many four letter words in the English language that we will scold our children for saying but few will drive us to madness as quickly as the four letter word spam. I know that I have had people tell me that the telemarketer that I am rude enough to hang up on is just doing his/her job and trying to make a living but my immediate thought is let him/her call someone else because I am not interested in the least in what he/she has to say. I hate telemarketers and I hate spam. Spam has one thing that telemarketing does not however; it can carry viruses or other nasty things to infect my computer. There is one clue to spam, never, and I repeat, never respond to spam. This only lets the sender know that it is a real email address and then he or she can add you to other unwanted spam lists. Even if they have the opt out button, do not respond. This is more than likely still a trick and a clever way to get you on a growing list of other spammers. There are several purchasable programs to block spam from your computer. Some of them get rid of the spam so it never reaches a nose wherever they may be. Some of the purchasable programs make the spam go straight to the "junk folder." One of the more popular ones is called "SpamNet." You can download it for free but after the free trial period it does cost four dollars per month. All of the information about the spam received is collected and forwarded to the company. This information is then used to improve the program's ability to protect you from spam. If you are someone that does not like to pay for a spam blocker there are things that your ISP furnishes. A major ISP can guard against the same spam as any purchased spam killer can. It can take an ISP a little longer to determine which email is all right to let in and which one to keep out. Certain ISP providers have specific spam killers unique to them such as: EarthLink has SpamBlocker, United Online which is the parent company of Juno, NetZero, and BlueLight uses content filters that scans and recognizes key words in the body as well as the subject line. MSN Premium, MSN Plus, and Hotmail use a Microsoft filtering tool that you train as to what emails to accept. You can have it accept emails based on your address book. SBC Yahoo has an Anti Spam Resource center that personalizes the filter for each individual computer. It also uses a Blackhole List. This detects and stops spam servers and can block any computer on their network that sends out large quantities of emails. There are several typical spam email types. The emails look official and trustworthy. There is the "foreign country" email where they offer to transfer lots of money into your bank account if you pay the taxes or fees to access their money. They ask for your bank account numbers or other information. Another one is "Phishing." This one can be an email or a pop up. It claims that your information needs to be updated. It is never a good idea to just click on a link to a site from an email or pop up. It is best to go there on your own, even if it says that your account will be frozen or discontinued. Another popular one is the "Work at Home" offer. Usually these offers have hidden costs and if you pay them and get started working for them they will usually refuse to pay stating that your work is substandard. The biggest way to ending spam is to ignore them. Also, be careful what web sites you sign up for a free email to be notified of free offers. Always make sure that you read the small print so you know if they are going to respect your privacy.

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