

Spam

Spam is the sending of unsolicited commercial electronic messages, which includes e-mail, instant messaging and SMS. Fax and voice telemarketing are not forms of spam.

Spam has recently become a major problem on the global e-mail network accounting for more than 50% of all e-mail traffic on the Internet.

There is a significant impact on businesses with concerns being:

- Financial
- Time wasted by employees deleting spam
- IT resources employed trying to block it and the threat of viruses
- The content is often offensive or fraudulent
- The manner in which e-mail addresses have been collected

Spam Legislation

To help curb this rising and annoying and costly trend the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) has introduced new legislation "***The Spam Act 2003***" which commenced on the 10th April 2004.

The new legislation prohibits:

- Unsolicited commercial electronic messages with an Australian link
- Supply or use of address-harvesting software
- Harvested e-mail list for the purposes of sending spam

The Act also requires that all commercial electronic messages include accurate sender information and a functional unsubscribe facility.

As most spam comes from overseas, the Australian Government has called for international cooperation and is currently working with other countries to develop a multilateral approach to spam.

If you are a business sending commercial e-mails, SMS or instant messaging you must ensure:

- You have consent from the recipients
- Accurate sender information is included
- E-mail's you send have a functional unsubscribe facility

Reducing Spam Being Received

The following are some ways of reducing the amount of spam you receive:

- Be careful when giving out your e-mail address. Consider using a separate e-mail address when signing up for newsgroups, chatrooms, websites etc. Reserve your main e-mail address for personal messages.
- Check whether you are giving permission to use your details for other purposes (the Federal Privacy Commissioner provides advice on protecting your privacy – www.privacy.com.au)
- Use a filter service The Internet Industry Association has a list of providers – www.security.iaa.net.au)
- Improve your computer's security. Install a firewall – download security patches. Your computer may be used by spammers to send out spam without you knowing, if it is infiltrated by a virus.
- Don't reply to emails from unknown sources – don't click their unsubscribe facility – Often spammers just wish to confirm that your email address is a real address. Once you subscribe, you will receive much more emails from that spammer and from others to whom they will sell your email address.
- Be aware that the content of much spam is fraudulent. For more details of how to recognise scams, visit Scamwatch www.scamwatch.gov.au.

“Report spam from Australian sources to your Internet Services Provider”

For more information on spam and to view ***“The Spam Act 2003”*** please view check out

the following website:- http://www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/spam/index.htm * source – *Australian Communications Authority website*

For more information refer to other Fast Facts in this series or contact the Territory Business Centre on the numbers below or visit the TBC website.

Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development

Development House Tel: +61 8 89821700

76 The Esplanade, Darwin Fax: +61 8 89821725

NT 0800 AUSTRALIA Toll Free: 1800 193 111 (within Australia)

GPO Box 3200, DARWIN NT 0801 Email: info.dberd@nt.gov.au

The material contained in this publication is intended for use as a guide and for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for independent professional advice. The Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development of the Northern Territory Government accepts no responsibility or liability for the correctness, accuracy and completeness of any of the material contained in this publication and recommends that users of this publication exercise their own skill, care and judgement in the application of the information contained in the publication.