

Advice For Email Users On How To Avoid And Deal With Unsolicited Email And Viruses



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Where available it is advisable to use a managed email filtering and security solution such as MessageLabs. MessageLabs blocks 100% of virus emails and over 95% of SPAM emails at the Internet level, meaning they never even enter your systems and you don't need to worry about users being caught out. For more details about MessageLabs please call us on 01553 636869.

System 3 Business Solutions Ltd advises users to adhere to the following "best practices" to avoid the ever-increasing threat and annoyance from virus-infected and junk email:

- As a general rule do not open email attachments that you are unsure about. If you are not expecting the file to be sent to you, check with the sender or delete it (even if it seems to be from Microsoft or other reputable source). Most viruses work by fooling the unsuspecting user into opening an attached file. This also applies to files downloaded from the Internet – always run them through your anti-virus software before running them.
- Always use an anti-virus software solution on your each desktop computer as well as the network server, but most importantly make sure it is regularly updated. New viruses appear all the time and your anti-virus software will only be effective if it up-to-date and know about the latest viruses.
- If you use an always-on Internet connection or share Internet access across your company network, use a Firewall to block malicious access to your systems and to filter potentially harmful programs from entering.
- Make sure that your Operating System and any software that accesses the Internet is up-to-date with any patches having been applied. The manufacturers' web site will usually offer these free of charge, downloadable from their official web site.
- Use 'strong' passwords to access your system that cannot be easily guessed or cracked. A mixture of at least 6 letters and numbers is advisable.
- Reveal your e-mail address only on a need-to-know basis. Where an email address is displayed on your web site, use a tool such as JavaScript to split your email address so that it cannot be 'grabbed' by email address leeching software.
- Configure your email server to block or remove emails that contains file attachments that are commonly used to spread viruses, such as .vbs, .bat, .exe, .pif and .scr files. Never open a file with one of these extensions without first checking exactly what that file contains.
- Only visit reputable web sites and if possible use filtering software to block access to sites that may contain harmful or offensive content.
- Remember to back up all important information to a removable media regularly.

If you feel you have a problem with computer viruses, or malicious code, call us on 01553 636869. We have software that can check. We can then advise on what steps to take to remove the threat and make sure it doesn't happen again.





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Information on Unsolicited Emails (SPAM)

Junk or spam e-mail is unsolicited bulk e-mail (UBE) sent to your address often multiple times. Spam e-mail is usually received without choice or subscription to any service. Spam e-mail is annoying as it clogs up systems, and is often offensive, with pornographic or other excessive content. Other spam favourites include chain letters threatening bad luck in finance or love, money making schemes, invasive advertising of a product or service, and many others.

The MessageLabs solution, as mentioned, is effective at blocking more than 95% of SPAM before it even reaches your systems. It also incorporates porn and offensive content blocking giving you piece of mind that users can neither send or receive potentially damaging emails.

If you do not use a managed solution such as MessageLabs, it is advisable to follow these tips.

How can I prevent spam e-mails?

- Don't give your e-mail address out unnecessarily.
- Consider using a generic e-mail address instead of a personal one; i.e. don't use your name.
- If you use Newsgroups consider putting NO_SPAM or REMOVE_THIS or similar in your e-mail address to confuse bulk mail senders but which can be removed by legitimate individuals wishing to e-mail you.

What should I do if I have received spam emails?

- Delete the e-mails straight away without opening them.
- Do not reply to the e-mails. However annoying receiving offensive or numerous e-mails it is advisable not to reply to the sender in a similar vein. And ignore links to remove your email address from their database – all this usually does is confirm to the sender that your address is valid!
- If the e-mail contains links to extreme pornography sites consider reporting it to the Internet Watch Foundation (<http://www.iwf.org.uk>) or your local police.
- Delete any e-mails from a source you don't recognise.
- If you open e-mails from a source you don't recognise be wary of opening any attachments. Delete the e-mail and empty your deleted items folder or recycle bin. Do not forward it on to friends as this may spread any virus present.

If you have any queries or would like advice on email setup, configuration and anti-virus/anti-spam, please don't hesitate to contact us on 01553 636444.

