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Frying Spam Tips on Reducing Your Junk Email

Spam: Everyone gets it, but nobody wants it.

From phony charity pleas to dubious product claims, spammers will try anything to get a response from you. According to Symantec's latest [State of Spam](#) report, spam now accounts for 72% of all email messages. That's a lot of Viagra and fake Rolexes being peddled. It's also a huge annoyance.

Spammers constantly change tactics, so it's very difficult to eliminate 100% of your junk email, but there are ways to severely reduce it—if you follow some of these helpful tips.

Don't respond

No matter how strong the urge, don't fire off an angry response to the spammers. You'll only be letting them know that they have a live address, ensuring you'll receive more spam. Even if spammers can't con you into giving them money directly, they can still earn some cash by selling lists of live email addresses to others. If your address is on such a list, the amount of spam you receive will snowball. So what can you do?

Report the spam to the authorities. In the U.S., you can forward spam email to spam@uce.gov. You can also report it to your Internet Service Provider and the sender's ISP, if you know it. Next, block the sender's domain. Blocking individual addresses is often ineffective since spammers only use them once. Hit them where it hurts.

Block images

Even if you don't click any links, an image opening in your email can alert spammers to a live address, too. Oftentimes, this image could be one that's incredibly tiny, only one pixel wide. Automatically blocking all images in your email application helps reduce spam. You can always choose to view images in individual emails, should you receive one that isn't spam and you want to see the embedded images.

Safeguard your email address

Commenting on blogs and Twitter can be fun. But be wary of how much personal information you reveal. Nearly everyone knows not to reveal his or her home address (and if not, you've just been forewarned), but listing your email address in a comment isn't a good idea, either—nor is it necessary.

Many blogs allow other members to send a PM (private message), should you allow this option, by simply clicking on your online handle or avatar. This makes listing your full email address out in the open redundant. And if you absolutely must include it for some reason, write it out creatively (for example, MyEmail "at" email.com). This thwarts spammer software crawling the Web looking for anything with an "@" sign.

Protect yourself with antispam software

All of the tips we've covered so far may help curb spam, but what can you do if you never give out your address and still receive spam? It happens. Arming yourself with antispam software can help—just make sure it uses the latest information against spam. Otherwise, it won't be very effective.

Reconsider your email address

Finally, here's one last tip many don't consider: Dumping your current, spam-ridden address for a clean start. Despite enacted laws, sending spam is so simple and inexpensive that spammers choose to ignore them and play a "numbers game." Many have software that can guess your email address and blast out spam your way. Simple email addresses like "JoeS@AOL.com" only makes it easy for them.

If you've tried everything else, but you're still being overwhelmed with spam, you may want to consider a new, more complex address. Think of it as changing your phone number. Inform your friends and family, and ask them to keep your new address to themselves: No sending animated gift cards and no forwarding chain letters, please. It may be hard to say goodbye to your familiar address, but better that than facing a mountain of junk email every day.

Before you consider dumping your current email address, try [Norton Internet Security](#). It uses the same technology that large businesses use to block spam, and it updates automatically with the newest antispam data. Just install the software and it will start to work right away.

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