

How To Deal With Spam

Spam refers to unwanted email. It can clutter your inbox and take up precious storage space on your mail server. If you aren't careful, you can waste a large part of your day and much of your website's resources sorting through useless emails.

There are many steps you can take to avoid being the target of spammers, and lots you can do to filter Spam before it even arrives to your inbox.

How To Avoid Being The Target Of Spammers:

Be cautious about where you enter your email address.

Spammers can get your email address in a variety of ways. Some websites publish email addresses or even sell them to spammers, while others may have a vulnerability that hackers can exploit to obtain email addresses.

By signing some terms of service agreements you may be allowing websites to share your email. Even though it takes time, make sure that you read any terms of service or privacy policies before entering personal information.

Spammers can harvest your email by scanning websites for email addresses that may have been posted in the comments or forums.

If you publish your email on a comment, social media, or even on your own public website, you may become the target of spammers. You can make your email address unscannable by writing it without symbols in fields that will be published. Instead of typing "contact@example.com" try typing "contact [at] example [dot] com."

Be wary of chain emails and scams.

Chain emails used to be a prominent way of obtaining email addresses. A chain email includes a message that is intended to be forwarded to as many people as possible—things like "You will find true love if you send this email to 30 people, otherwise you will be alone your whole life." The email addresses would then be harvested for scams. Though this method is less common today, you should still avoid forwarding emails if you are unsure of the original sender.

Try to choose an email address that does not include common phrases.

By combining common names or objects with numbers, spammers can effectively guess an email address and target it. If you have an email address that includes common words, phrases or names, be careful to check the sender of any email you open.

Do not use your email as a user name.

Though websites may not publish your email address, they may publish your username. It's always a smart idea to pick a username that is different than your email.

How to deal with spam if it arrives:

Use an email client with automatic spam filtering.

Most email clients have some form of spam filter to deal with the onslaught of unwanted emails coming to your inbox. Gmail and outlook filters spam messages, and you may not even know it unless you check your spam folder regularly. This is handy, but don't let it create a false sense of security. Spam can still make it through your filter.

Report spam when you find it.

When you find spam in your inbox, don't just delete it. Mark it as spam so your email provider can filter future messages from that sender or even blacklist them from sending emails.

You can also report spam to the authorities by forwarding the mail to spam@uce.gov. This is the email for the Federal Trade Commission, and they investigate improper use of electronic communication. The more mail they get from a user, the more likely they are to investigate potential email abusers.

Use third party programs to filter spam.

You can also use third-party programs to filter spam before it even hits your inbox. [Apache Spam Assassin](#) is a free program that can be installed on a mail server and configured to filter spam before it's even visible to the user.