

Techniques of the email marketeers

Presented to: Junk mail fatigue - finding a cure

8th October 1998

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What is this talk about ?

- How much Unsolicited Bulk Email is there ?
- Who is sending this UBE ?
- What are they advertising ?
- Who is it being sent to ?
- Where do lists come from ?
- How are they hiding their tracks ?
- How do they get you to read it ?
- What is the legislators impact ?
- What other trends can be seen ?

How much UBE is there ?

- No-one knows ! AOL claim 30% of their traffic is UCE
- Personal experiences differ considerably
- People forget mailing lists when doing calculations

Demon's measurements:

- 50% of all mail is mailing list mail
- Other multiply delivered mail is 5-10% of total

There is no reliable data, only personal experiences, so I give mine! It accords with most reports I have seen.

100 messages a month to <**richard@turnpike.com**> this year, but just 14 in the week to last Monday.

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Who is sending UBE ?

- **Americans**
>95% : using hotmail, yahoo, iname rather than an ISP
- **Virgin Net**
7 cases in 6 months - worst UK provider by far (but only 1% of my problem)
- **Everybody else...**
UBE comes from everywhere, though usually in (broken) English
- **...even Demon's customers**
15 events in the last month (from 250,000 users) - one sent to me!

What are they advertising ?

- Cancer cures
- Stock tips
- LOAN\$\$\$
- Dental plans
- Toner cartridges
- Dating services
- Sex sites
- Search engine secrets
- Make money by working at home !
- Bulk email software and lists of addresses (10% !)

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Who are they sending it to ?

- Me ! <richard@turnpike.com> 14 last week
other addresses 6 last week
- Abuse desk
<abuse@demon.net> 100 emails in September
- Robots
<faq_request@turnpike.com> 25% of 1998 activity
- Invented names
<merchantlike@highwayman.com> 20 a week
- Dead names
<richard@locomotive.com> 22 last week
last used in July '96

Where do lists come from ?

- Usenet
- Archives
- FAQs and other articles
- Web sites
- Mailing lists
- Magazine subscriptions & trade shows
- Imagination
- **OTHER LISTS!**

How are they hiding their tracks ?

- Forging SMTP envelopes
declaring incorrect domain in protocol - affects bounces & filters
MAIL FROM:<dan@aol.com> (actually Sprynet)
- Forging From lines
declaring incorrect name in message - affects replies
From: <friend@public.com>
- Forging Received lines
hiding the source from all but the cognoscenti
Received from: fake.isp.com
- Relaying
not all servers record the IP address

but main reason for relaying is the **AMPLIFIER**

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How do they get you to read it ?

- **Misleading subjects**
“Hi!”, “Call me when you get this”, “re your site”
- **Misleading sources**
lisa@yahoo.com, freetraining@ibm.net
- **Good copywriting**
“Hi, ever thought about bulk E-mailing”
“I spoke to you in the chatroom...”
- **Wild claims**
“Free video offer”, “Everyone gets approval”, “Double your income”
- **Interesting layout**
Use of HTML, links to websites

What is the legislators impact ?

- Claims of HR3888 adherence
- ADV in subject lines
- More “remove addresses”
- Statements about free speech
- BUT no change in volume, and no major companies

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What other trends can be seen ?

- Mutation
Dave Rhodes has passed into history
- This is a one-time mailing, don't bother to remove
People learning that unsolicited email is unwelcome
- Use of addresses of convenience
hotmail addresses make your ISP a third party
- Use of packages to send the mail
Long "To:" lists now a rarity
- Use of mainstream mailing list software (QMAIL)
- Major players putting toes into the water
amazon.com thinks a customer relationship is enough

Summary

- How much UBE is there ? 1200+ per annum **each**
- Who is sending this UBE ? **Americans**
- What are they advertising ? **Garbage**
- Who is it being sent to ? **Anyone they can**
- Where do lists come from ? **Other lists**
- How are they hiding their tracks ? **Forgery**
- How are they getting you to read it ? **Lying**
- What is the legislators impact ? **Negligible**
- What other trends can be seen ? **Mutation**

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