

## Spammers: What are they doing now?

In my original article on spam, available online at [www.aff.cornell.edu/as/it/spam.html](http://www.aff.cornell.edu/as/it/spam.html), I discussed methods for avoiding spam and for dealing with it once the spammers have your email address. This time, I will cover some of the methods spammers are using to avoid your filters and to seduce you into opening their messages.

Remember; never respond to spam and don't click on the remove link. The best method of dealing with spam is still just filtering it out and deleting it.

To avoid the email address based filters you have added to your email program, some spammers are forging the "From" address to make their spam appear to come from legitimate email addresses. It's now possible, and I have seen it happen, for you to receive spam that is apparently from yourself. Your email address could also be used to send spam to other people who have no idea that you are not a spammer yourself. Although embarrassing to you, the practice of forged mail headers is not legislated against by either the Federal government or New York State.

Also, spammers are getting smarter about tricking you into reading their messages. Subject lines that appear to be legitimate and desired email are being used. You need to be careful creating filters since this makes it more likely to lose legitimate email when filtering by subject. Here are some samples from my own spam mailbox:

Confirmation #87717  
Delivery of Merchandise  
For Your Eyes Only  
Info  
Membership Confirmation  
Order Confirmation  
Problem Solved...  
Shipment status for Autumn  
Re: your Questions  
Payment Past Due  
Read your website info  
Sorry, i need help...  
RE: Your Student Loans

Even spam that still come in with recognizable subject lines may find a way to get around your email filters. Spammers have started adding random number and letter combinations to the subject line. There are enough spaces between the actual subject and the junk that all you may see when you create a filter is the actual subject. Unless you remove the random letters and numbers from the end of the subject, your filter will be good for only that one single piece of spam.

One final tip; some states do have spam laws that require specific words or acronyms to be in the subject of spam sent to recipients in their state. Create a subject filter with "ADV:" or "ADV:ADLT" to take advantage of that.

For yet more information on spam:

<http://www.aff.cornell.edu/as/it/spam.html>

<http://www.arachnoid.com/lutusp/antispam.html>

<http://law.spamcon.org/us-laws/index.shtml>

<http://www.stopspam.org/email/headers/headers.html>

<http://spam.abuse.net/scams/>

<http://www.claws-and-paws.com/spam-1/>