Spam Email

If you're like most people, you've already encountered problems with Spam email. Spam email is the common term for the Internet version of junk mail. A Spam email is an unsolicited mailing, usually sent to many different people. Spam email comes in many different forms. The most common form is unsolicited (and sometimes offensive) advertising, but spam email also includes chain letters ("pass this email on or you will be jinxed"), hoaxes ("Bill Gates will give you $500 dollars if you forward this email"), scams ("free gutter installation"), and even forwarded jokes. While Spam seems harmless enough, there are actually several reasons why you should be concerned about it.

The first reason is that Spam email costs money. The recipient of the advertising is forced to pay the cost of the message. You pay for email for various reasons, but not to receive unsolicited advertising.   Spam email also wastes valuable time, because you have to spend extra time to download the unwanted messages, and then wade through the junk email in order to get to the email you actually want. Have you ever kept track of how much time you spend wading through Spam email? The final reason to be concerned about Spam email is that, if it continues to grow, the costs will continue to rise. ISPs and other businesses spend incredible amounts of money fighting Spam email. If the costs continue to increase, it will most certainly be transferred to the consumer.

So what can you do to help eliminate Spam email? Here are a few tips that you and your family can follow:

- **Don't Give Your Email Address to Websites**. There are many legitimate reasons for giving out your email address, but be aware that many websites use this information to send out advertising. Many websites actually sell your email address to professional spammers.
- **Never Respond to Spam Email**. For a Spammer, one "hit" among thousands of mailings is enough to justify the practice.
- **Never Respond to a "Remove" Reply**. This is just a trick to get you to react to the email -- it alerts the sender that a human is at your address, which greatly increases its value. If you reply, your address is placed on more lists and you receive more Spam email.
- **Never Use Sites that Promise to Remove your Name from Spam Email Lists**. These sites are of two kinds: (1) sincere, and (2) Spam address collectors. The first kind of site is ignored (or exploited) by the Spammers, and they often own the second.
- **Don't Spam**. Sometimes, the best thing you can do to fight Spam email is to make sure you don't do it yourself. Before forwarding on a joke, ask yourself if it is the right thing to do. We all appreciate a good joke, but receiving twenty a week from the same person can get old pretty quickly.
- **Buy a Spam-Blocking Tool**. Recently, several different software packages have surfaced that claim to eliminate Spam email from your inbox. You might try one of these packages, although many of them accidentally get rid of authentic emails from your friends and family.

Unfortunately, Spam email will be around for some time. However, if you and your family follow the tips listed above, you may be able to minimize the number of Spam emails in your inbox.