



Got Spam? Here's How to Stop It

Head off junk e-mail before it reaches your in-box with these tips and tools.

Steve Bass

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Is spam clogging your in-box, eating up your time, and causing your Delete key to wear out? I thought so. Seriously, you can cut spam off at the pass--or at least before it lands in your in-box. In this--and a few subsequent columns--I'll supply you with a few tricks, tools, and filters, things that can give spam the boot.

I recently wrote an article and a *Home Office* column that both dealt with e-mail and spam. So before you do anything more, read "[Home Office: The E-Mail Rules--Manage the Medium](#)," and then dig into "[Tame Your In-Box](#)."

You'll get a foundation for much of what I'll talk about in this column.

Filters? No Thanks

No matter what e-mail program you're using, there are a few utilities you might consider using to eradicate spam.

At a user group meeting recently, I saw [Mailbox Filter](#), a brand new--and really cool--product that removes spam before it even gets *near* your PC. That's because e-mail is filtered through Mailbox Filter's server first. I just started playing with it and so far, so good. The product costs \$44.95 and there's a 15-day trial.

Lots of readers told me about NovaSoft's Spam Killer, a \$30 tool that sits in your PC system tray, running in the background to filter Spam. Grab a [trial version](#).

Here's the Outlook

If you're using Outlook, you can create filters (Inbox Rules in Microsoft-speak) so that certain actions automatically happen when you get a new message. For instance, mail you've identified as spam goes to the trash, or something from your spouse goes in the "Yes-Dear" folder.

The easiest way to create a Rule in Outlook is with the Rules Wizard. The wizard is built in to Outlook 98 and Outlook 2000, but Outlook 97 users will have to [download](#) the Rules Wizard.

I have a tutorial below that shows how to create Outlook spam rules. They're not terribly sophisticated--they really don't need to be--and they'll give you an idea how to create more of your own. The Rules Wizard will prompt you to create a folder to house possible spam.

Before you start, here's an overview of the process. We're going to create a filter in Outlook that detects spam headed for your in-box and moves it to a folder called "possiblespam."

Filters are simply a collection of rules. Here's a look at [my Outlook filter](#).

For more on filters and rules, jump over to one of my favorite sites--[Internet Tips and Secrets](#)--and scan through their Rules screen captures.

Now it's time to make some rules. From Outlook's *Tool* menu, select the *Rules Wizard, New*. Choose *Check messages when they arrive*, and then *Next*. Scroll to *with specific words in the subject or body* and click its box to put a check mark in it.

Click the blue, underlined *specific words* in the 'Rule description' and enter the following lines of text into the 'Add new:' box. (Click the *Add* button after each line and repeat the process until each line is entered.)

ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS

Find Information About Anyone

We GUARANTEE response

U.S. Bankruptcy Court

BUILD A BUSINESS

Hidden Secrets About Your Neighbors

bad credit

INTERNET SPY

Millions Grew Younger 10 to 20 Years

When you've entered all the phrases, click *OK*, choose *Next*, and then check *move it to the specified folder*. In the 'Rule description,' click the blue, underlined *specified*, highlight your spam folder (or create a new folder), and click *OK*, then *Finish*. When you have the time, cull through new and existing spam, adding more phrases to the filter.

Ruling Help

Having trouble with Outlook's rules? You can get help from two sites. The best is the [Outlook Rules Wizard FAQ](#).

The other is Microsoft's "[OL98: Outlook Rules Wizard Troubleshooting](#)."

You might be using Outlook 97 (don't feel alone--lots of people haven't upgraded). If that's the case, try Microsoft's Knowledge Base article, a walk-through for creating a rule: "[OL97: Creating a From Rule for an Internet Mail Address](#)."

Here's another document that can help you create a rule to move messages to a specific folder based on one criteria or another. Check out "[OL97: Cannot Create a Conditional Rule with the Rules Wizard](#)."

Microsoft's article on filtering junk e-mail in Outlook 98 is worth a look: "[OL98: How to Filter Junk and Adult Content E-Mail](#)."

Outlook Add-On Helpers

No time for hassling with filters? Here are some tools that do the work for you.

Start with Andersson Digital Design's "Junk URL" add-in. It's designed to augment Outlook's existing Rules functionality to deal with junk (and adult content) e-mails. [Grab a copy](#).

If you're using Outlook 98, try the \$29 [FlameThrower](#) (don't you *love* the name?), an Outlook add-on that identifies and dumps spam into a special FlameThrower folder. Note: FlameThrower may not work with

Outlook 2000 or Windows 2000.

Just for Outlook Express or Netscape Users

If you're using Netscape or Outlook Express, we have something for you. Gregg Keizer's "[Organize Mail As It Arrives](#)" will give you the heads up on using Netscape's filtering feature.

Then jump to "[Get Organized](#)" to learn how to use Outlook Express 5's Rules command to sort incoming e-mail.

Dig this: You've heard sonic booms, right? Curious what one looks like? Hold onto your scroll bars, Sparky, 'cause [this picture](#) will astonish you. (And don't you dare forward this without coercing your buddy to subscribe to my newsletter.)

And Now (drum roll) Help for Eudora

I use Eudora, and if that's your e-mail program, you're in luck. I have some neat filters you can just add to your filter file, and you'll see immediate results. Take a gander at what part of [my Eudora filters](#) look like.

Eudora's filters are stored as plain text files, making them easy to modify. But there are a couple of steps--essential ones--you need to do before starting.

First, in Eudora, click *Mailbox*, then *New*, and create a new mailbox named *possiblespam*. Now close Eudora, and from Windows Explorer, make a copy of your Eudora filters.pce file. Name the copy *filters.saf*, or something you'll recognize. Make sure you save this--and every file I talk about below--in the same folder as Eudora.

If a filters.pce file *does not* exist on your system, go [here](#). In the window that just opened, click *Edit*, *Select All*, then *Edit*, *Copy*. Open a new document in Notepad, click *Edit*, *Paste*, and name the new file "*filters.pce*"--and *make sure* you use the quotes. Without quotes, the file will be saved with a .txt extension, something Eudora won't recognize. OK, you're done.

On the other hand, if you already have a filters.pce file, things change slightly. You'll also go [here](#). In the window that opened, click *Edit*, *Select All*, and then *Edit*, *Copy*. Open filters.pce, located in your Eudora folder, scroll to the bottom of the file past the existing filters, and select *Edit*, *Paste* (or press *Ctrl-V*). Now save the file in your Eudora folder as "*filters.pce*" (again making sure to use the quotes).

If you have any problems with Eudora, give me a call at home. (You have the number, right?) Alternatively, you might want to subscribe to the [Eudora list](#) (you'll see me there). There are plenty of Eudora users supporting each other and sharing tips.

Now take a minute (especially if you have a deadline) and forward this column to a cohort. Then [sign up](#) to get your own copy of my newsletter (and have your cohort do it too).

BTW, if you're a recent reader, you might be wondering where to find the last batch of [Home Office columns](#).