

SPAMMED IF YOU DON'T!

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer's bill SB1231 to initiate a national No-Spam Registry has been read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, but appears to have only one co-sponsor and has seen little action since June 6, according to the U.S. Senate website, as compared to federal "opt-out" resolutions such as Rep. Richard Burr's bill HR2214 with 33 co-sponsors and activity in the House as recent as July 8.

More locally, in January, Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers requested a bill (SB121) pushing an Oregon do-not-e-mail registry, but according to Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee Bill Taylor, who represents Senate Bill 910, another "opt-out" approach that moved smoothly through the Senate, concerning the existence of other current Oregon legislation regarding unso-

SPREADING SPAM

A SPAMMER HARVESTS VALID E-MAIL ADDRESSES USING A "DICTIONARY ATTACK."

1. Software systematically guesses e-mail addresses and opens a connection to an unsecured "open proxy server."

drphil1@oprah.com
drphil2@oprah.com
drphil3@oprah.com
drphil4@oprah.com
drphil5@oprah.com
drphil6@oprah.com



4. Software sorts the responses and adds the valid addresses to the spammer's mailing list.

drphil2@oprah.co

2. The open proxy server, which disguises the spammer's identity, relays requests for verification of each of the addresses.

drphil1@oprah.com
drphil2@oprah.com
drphil3@oprah.com
drphil4@oprah.com
drphil5@oprah.com
drphil6@oprah.com



3. The open proxy server routes responses to the verification requests back to the spammer.

drphil1@oprah.com
drphil2@oprah.com
drphil3@oprah.com
drphil4@oprah.com
drphil5@oprah.com
drphil6@oprah.com



Do's and Don'ts

DO: Use "plus addressing" (offered at EFN) if you care about who's giving out your e-mail address. Here's how it works: Get an account, with an e-mail of, for example, nospam@efn.org. What's different with plus addressing is that nospam1, nospam2, nospam3 and so on will also be sent to you, only they'll each come into individually labeled folders. Next, when you sign up for a Victoria's Secret card and they ask for your e-mail, you give them one of those plus addresses, such as nospam14. If you ever get a spam e-mail sent to the nospam14 folder, you know which organization sold or shared your e-mail, and therefore where not to buy your panties.

DON'T: Register software or other products, or buy products that require you to enter your e-mail, without reading the fine print. Many of these companies put you on mailing lists, which theoretically could circulate forever. Send your e-mail address into the world at your own spam peril.

DO: Check the address of incoming e-mail. Some e-mail from sites that look *just* like Ebay or Penpal may ask you to re-enter your account or credit card information because they misplaced it. You might notice that the return address isn't www.penpal.com, but instead it's something nearly identical, like **www.penpal.com**. A general ground-rule is that once you've entered personal information, a company is *never* supposed to ask you for it again.

licit e-mail, "if there is (any other bill than SB910), it's not active."

While a do-not-e-mail registry sounds attractive, anti-spam experts fear it could be a disaster. First, one reason that do-not-call registries seem to work is that most solicitation calls are made from inside the country. Abusers are and will be easier to track and prosecute. Some say that the great majority of spam is already shuttled off-shore before it comes back in, through unsecured, trail-obscuring proxies. Secondly, a do-not-e-mail registry would consist of a list of e-mails.

A big, fat, juicy, long list.

As to the opinion of whether a spammer would use the list, well, the answer is yes, but perhaps not for the reason you think. "They're never going to follow the rules," said VanDevender. "There are spammers out there who have several millions of dollars

DON'T: Reply to spam e-mails. If you do, some spammers will know they have a "live" one, and keep spamming, sell or share your e-mail address.

DO: Use spam filters built into your mail program. Outlook Express, for example, has filters to keep out all e-mails containing certain words. If you get a lot of spam, go to the "Tools" menu, pull down to "Junk Mail Filter" and raise the "sensitivity" of your filter. If you're afraid certain messages won't get through, add desired incoming addresses to your address book, and they'll make it to your inbox. Outlook Express also provides you with a box to enter domain names, such as "Excite," or "Hotmail," so that all e-mails originating from those domains are allowed passage (Pull down the "Tools" menu and select "Rules.")

DON'T: Publish your e-mail on the web as a hot link. Each time you do gives web-crawling programs that much more of a chance to find your address.

DO: Use this great timesaver: When you come to work in the morning, or whenever you've got a loaded inbox, select or highlight ALL the e-mails in your inbox. Then, instead of going through and eliminating spam one at a time, use the "Apple" key (on PCs it's the "control" key) and the mouse to de-select just the legitimate e-mails. When you've selected all the good e-mails, hit "delete" and the spam will disappear all at once. At work this cut my daily spam time down from a half-hour to about five minutes.

DO: Read our bizarre spam terminology.



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