Microsoft®

Outlook 2003:
Dealing with Junk E-mail

Student Edition

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
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Lesson 1-1: Dealing with Junk E-Mail

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Isn’t it nice when you open your Inbox and are pleasantly surprised to find important e-mail messages like these waiting for you? Probably not. Unsolicited junk mail, known as SPAM, is easily the most annoying aspect of e-mail, and it’s increasing at an alarming rate. In 2001, SPAM accounted for 8% of all e-mail messages. By the end of 2003, it was more than 50%!

Previous versions of Outlook included a junk e-mail filter that was almost worthless in the fight against SPAM. Microsoft has fixed this problem in 2003 with a dramatically improved junk e-mail filter. Outside tests have shown that Outlook catches more than 95% of all SPAM at its High setting. Sometimes, a legitimate message can be classified as SPAM, but don’t worry, you can view all of the messages that Outlook tags as SPAM. By default, Outlook will move suspected SPAM messages to a special Junk E-mail folder.

Here’s how to use Outlook’s junk e-mail features…

1. **Select Tools → Options from the menu.**
   The Options dialog box appears.

2. **Click the Preferences tab, if necessary, and click the Junk E-mail button.**
   The Junk E-mail Options dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 1-1. Now, all that you have to do is select the level of junk e-mail protection that you want. There are several choices. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages:
Dealing with Junk E-mail

1. **No Automatic Filtering:** Turns off Outlook junk e-mail filters, although e-mail from your blocked senders list is still blocked.

2. **Low:** Obvious junk e-mail messages are caught, but a lot of SPAM will still find its way into your Inbox at this level. This is the default setting.

3. **High:** Most (around 95%) SPAM is blocked, but so are some legitimate messages. You will definitely want to monitor the Junk E-mail folder carefully if you choose this setting.

4. **Safe Lists only:** This is the highest level of security—only people and domains that are in your Safe Senders List or Safe Recipients List will be able to send you e-mail messages. Don’t select this option unless you really have a compelling reason to do so. Companies merge, people move, and e-mail addresses change. You will stop receiving e-mail from these people when that happens if you use this setting.

3. **Select the level of Junk E-mail protection that you want.**
   
   You can also specify that Outlook automatically and permanently deletes suspected junk e-mail messages instead of moving them to the Junk E-mail folder. Most of the time this is not a good idea—especially if you select the High setting—because some legitimate messages will inevitably be automatically deleted.

4. **Although it is NOT RECOMMENDED, you can check the Permanently delete suspected Junk E-mail instead of moving it to the Junk E-mail folder option.**

5. **Click OK, OK to close all open dialog boxes.**

   Your Junk E-mail settings are now saved.

That’s it! Outlook will start protecting your Inbox from SPAM, according to your settings. If you choose one of the more aggressive SPAM protection settings, you will probably want to do some fine-tuning to correct any false positives (legitimate e-mails that are flagged as SPAM) and to block junk e-mail senders who still make it through the filters.

Outlook 2003’s new junk e-mail filters are a great tool in the fight against SPAM, but the best way to avoid SPAM is not getting on SPAM mailing lists in the first place. The following table lists several tips for avoiding SPAM altogether…

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**Table 1-1: Tips for Avoiding Spam**

1. **Use a Disposable E-mail Address**
   
   Using your real, primary e-mail address anywhere on the Web—an forums, guest books, or simply for your contact information on a Web page is a surefire way to get added to a spam list. Try using a disposable e-mail address. Set up a free e-mail account with Hotmail, or any other provider, and use that account to post to the Web and make online purchases. Only give out your real e-mail address to the people you want to have it. That way, you can change your disposable e-mail account when your Inbox is full of SPAM. If you’re a domain owner, you can easily change e-mail addresses whenever you want. Another solution is www.emailias.com. This is a disposable e-mail service that forwards e-mail from a disposable account to your real e-mail account.

2. **Watch those Checkboxes!**

   When you sign up for something on the Web, there is often a innocent-looking checkbox at the end of the form that says, “YES, contact me about products I might be interested in.” Translation: “YES, please send me lots and lots of delicious SPAM!”

3. **Use AntiSpam Software**

   Office 2003’s SPAM filters are good, but there are third-party commercial products available that are even more effective at fighting SPAM. McAfee SpamKiller, Norton AntiSpam, and SpamNet (our favorite) are just a few programs that you can use to reduce the amount of SPAM that you get.
Lesson 1-2: Adding Names to the Blocked and Safe Senders Lists

Outlook 2003’s Junk E-mail filters aren’t 100% effective in stopping SPAM. They require some fine-tuning in order to correct any false positives (legitimate e-mails that are flagged as SPAM) and to block junk e-mail senders who still make it through the filters. You can tweak Outlook’s Junk E-mail filters by managing three different lists:

Safe Senders includes e-mail addresses that you always want Outlook to recognize as legitimate e-mail messages. This list can include individual e-mail addresses (peskysalesman@junkmail.com) or entire domains (@junkmail.com).

Safe Recipients works almost the same as the Safe Senders list. Add names to this list that you want to receive e-mail messages from but that are not addressed specifically to you. For example, if you wanted to receive CustomGuide’s monthly newsletter, CustomNews, you would might add subscribe@customnews.com. This way, you will receive the newsletter regardless of who sends it.

Blocked Senders are the bad guys: people and domains that you want Outlook to identify as SPAM, no matter how legitimate the message. This is very useful for dealing with pesky newsletters and marketers who don’t respond to your unsubscribe requests.

Figure 1-2
You can add a known junk e-mail sender to your Blocked Senders list by right-clicking any e-mail from the sender and selecting Junk E-mail → Add Sender to Blocked Senders List from the shortcut menu.

Figure 1-3
The Safe Senders tab of the Junk E-mail Options dialog box.
Let’s take a closer look at how to use these three lists…

1. **Click the Mail button in the Navigation Pane to display the Inbox List.**
   When a junk e-mail message evades Outlook’s junk e-mail filters, you can add the sender of an unsolicited e-mail message to Outlook’s Blocked Senders list. Doing this will prevent you from getting any more junk mail from the sender.
   Here’s how to add an e-mail address to your Blocked Senders list:

2. **Find and right-click any message from the sender you want to block and select Junk E-mail → Add to Sender to Blocked Senders list from the shortcut menu.**
   Outlook adds the sender to your Junk E-mail list. Outlook will automatically delete any future messages from this sender, provided you have your junk e-mail filters turned on. The procedures for adding senders to the Safe Senders and Safe Recipients lists are almost the same. Right-click a message from the sender that you want to add, select Junk-Email from the shortcut menu, and select the list to which you want to add the sender.
   You can easily view and edit these lists at any time. Here’s how:

3. **Select Tools → Options from the menu bar.**
   The Options dialog box appears.

4. **Click the Preferences tab, if necessary, and click the Junk E-mail button.**
   The Junk E-mail Options dialog box appears.

5. **Click the Safe Senders tab.**
   The Safe Senders list appears, as shown in Figure 1-3. Here, you can add, edit, or delete the e-mail addresses or domains that you always want Outlook to recognize as legitimate e-mail messages.
   Take a look at both the Safe Recipients and the Blocked Senders lists. Note that they look and work almost exactly the same as the Safe Senders tab.

6. **Click OK, OK to close all open dialog boxes.**
   As time passes, and you add more names to your Blocked Senders list, you’ll find that Outlook’s anti-SPAM features become more and more effective at eliminating junk e-mail.

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**Quick Reference**

To Add a Sender to the Safe Senders List:
- Right-click any message from the sender and select Junk E-mail → Add Sender to Safe Senders list from the shortcut menu.

To Add a Recipient to the Safe Recipients List:
- Right-click any message from the recipient and select Junk E-mail → Add Recipient to Safe Recipients list from the shortcut menu.

To Add a Sender to the Blocked Senders List:
- Right-click any message from the sender and select Junk E-mail → Add Sender to Blocked Senders list from the shortcut menu.

To View/Edit any Sender List:
1. Select Tools → Options from the menu bar.
2. Click the Preferences tab, if necessary, and click the Junk E-mail button.
3. Click the tab for the desired senders list and make the desired changes.