

spam will not be automatically filtered out of your mail. You will need to set up a separate filter on your non-NYU account to handle the spam.

What can I do to avoid all this spam in the first place?

We recommend that everyone visit the following web page for more information on protecting your email address from spam: <http://www.cdt.org/speech/spam/030319spamreport.shtml>. We also recommend that you install an anti-virus software program (such as Symantec AntiVirus, available for download on the NYU-NET CD and through the Files tab of NYUHome), set it to run regular scans of your computer, and keep the virus definitions up to date. Some computer viruses, which can be avoided using this software, generate a large number of spam email messages.

If you maintain one or more web pages on NYU Web, you can also help avoid spam by preventing the harvesting of your or your organization's email address. To do so, we recommend that you implement one of the two solutions described at <http://www.nyu.edu/its/faq/email/> to replace the "mailto" links on your web pages.

Additional Information

For instructions on how to configure other email clients (Eudora, Outlook, Outlook Express, Macintosh Mail, Netscape Messenger, and PINE) to use the NYUHome spam filtering tool, visit <http://home.nyu.edu/help/mail/spamfilter.nyu>. If you have questions about configuring your email client to filter your messages, please contact the ITS Client Services Center at 1-212-998-3333 or its.clientservices@nyu.edu, open from 8:00 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday, and from noon to midnight, Saturday and Sunday.

Helpful Links

- NYUHome Spam Filter Help: <http://home.nyu.edu/help/mail/spamfilter.nyu>
- ITS Spam FAQs: <http://www.nyu.edu/its/faq/email/>
- ITS Computer & Network Security: <http://www.nyu.edu/its/security/>
- "Take Back Your Inbox! How to Customize Your E-mail Filters," *Connect*, http://www.nyu.edu/its/pubs/connect/fall03/deleon_filters.html
- SpamCop (a service that will help you report spammers): <http://www.spamcop.net>



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TAKE BACK YOUR INBOX

NYU Security Awareness Month 2006



How to Avoid Junk Email

Junk email, or "spam" as it is commonly known, is the unsolicited commercial email that floods most people's inboxes. In response to these annoying messages, recent versions of many email programs offer a function that performs automatic spam filtering, saving you time and grief. For example, NYUHome's webmail client now has an automatic junk mail filtering feature that can remove more than 90% of unwanted email from your inbox. This flyer answers some commonly asked questions about spam and provides detailed instructions on how to configure your NYUHome spam filter. It also provides links to help resources and other useful information, including instructions on how to configure non-NYU email clients (such as Eudora, Outlook, or Macintosh Mail) to filter your messages.

About the NYUHome Spam Filter

NYUHome's anti-spam tool was implemented in response to frequent requests for a way to "stop the incoming SPAM!" For some people within NYU, and for many in the outside world, unsolicited and unwanted email had come to represent 50% or more of the mail in their inboxes. And some of these messages are more than simply annoying; they might be considered offensive.

While it may be easy for a person to tell the difference between unwanted spam and desired correspondence, it is not so easy for a computer program to make this distinction and automatically reject the junk mail. For example, a regular shopper at amazon.com or another e-commerce site might wish to receive email messages from that service while, to a filtering program, they might look very much like spam. With this in mind, the new NYUHome anti-spam feature allows each individual to select options which best suit his or her email preferences.

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NYUHome's anti-spam software scans email coming from outside the University for attributes characteristic of spam. When it finds these attributes, the software uses a system of "X's" to score each message (the more "X's", the more likely it is to be spam) and adds this rating to the header of each message before sending it on to its destination. Once messages are given a spam rating, it's possible for the recipient's email software (whether NYUHome or another email software package) to take action based upon the score, with the type of action customized for each individual.

As of February 7, 2006, mail that has a spam rating exceeding 80% is now automatically discarded. This mail was monitored for several months and we discovered no false positives at this level. This mail constitutes approximately 35% of the daily mail volume and consumes resources that could be used for legitimate mail delivery.

How to Set Up the NYUHome Spam Filter

You can enable or adjust spam filtering for your NYUHome email through your mail preferences. To do so:

1. Log into NYUHome (<http://home.nyu.edu>) using your NetID and password.
2. Click the **Preferences** link in the upper right corner of your NYUHome screen.
3. Under **Intercop**, find **Spam filtering level**: and click **EDIT**.
4. Click to select your preferred filter level:
 - **None**: No filtering of spam is done.
 - **Light**: The default setting. Only mail that is very likely to be spam is filtered. Some spam will still arrive in your inbox. There will be few false positives.*
 - **Medium**: More spam filtered than the Light setting; more false positives.
 - **Strict**: Eliminates virtually all spam. Most likely to produce false positives.
5. Click **Save**.

Once mail designated (according to your filtering level) as spam is received, NYUHome will deliver those messages into the Spam folder that was automatically created by the filter. Any messages within this folder that are older than 30 days will be automatically deleted. We recommend that you check your Spam folder periodically, as some desired messages may end up in this folder.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I send spam directly to the trash without looking at it?

No. If you have spam filtering activated in your email account, you should be sure to look through the messages your mail program designates as spam on a regular basis. Spam filtering tools use varying techniques for defining what does and does not seem like spam, but none of them are perfect. Some legitimate messages ("false positives")

* A "false positive" is desired mail that is inadvertently filtered into your Spam folder because it contains elements that are characteristic of spam.

will end up in your spam folder if they exhibit characteristics of spam, for example, lots of capital letters, many exclamation points, or phrases such as "click here".

I've set up my spam filtering preferences, but I'm still receiving spam! What can I do?

Spammers are notorious for changing locations, subject lines, and email addresses, which makes blocking or filtering difficult. Once you put a block in place, they just change the element that you're blocking. They also ignore all your attempts to unsubscribe from lists that they have added you to (such efforts on your part often makes matters worse; see below).

If you have set up a spam filter and you are still receiving an unacceptable amount of spam in your inbox, you may want to change your spam filtering preference to a higher level. For example, if you've selected NYUHome's "Medium" filtering level, try changing your preference to "Strict". Experiment with different levels until you find the one that suits you best.

Should I use the unsubscribe link in spam messages?

NO! Using one of these "unsubscribe" or "please remove me from your mailing list" links merely confirms to the spammers that your email address is active, and that the mail they send is being read by a live human being. Clicking one of these links will cause you to get even more junk email!

I'm POPping my NYU email using a non-NYU mail program. Why don't I see my Spam folder?*

Using the POP email protocol to access your NYU email with a non-NYU mail program only downloads the contents of your inbox to your local computer, not entire folders. If you are POPping your mail, you should NOT set up your spam filtering through the NYUHome Preferences. Instead, you must manually set up a filter within your mail program (see the next page for a link to instructions) and create a local spam folder so that the messages considered to be spam can be placed there as they are filtered.

I'm IMAPping my NYU mail using a non-NYU mail program, but I don't see the Spam folder listed. What should I do?*

It's possible that your IMAP client doesn't "see" the Spam folder (as it was created dynamically by the mail server). You may need to manually subscribe to the Spam folder. The process of subscribing to folders will be different in each IMAP client. Also, depending on the client, you may need to log out and log back in again. For help, contact the ITS Client Services Center (see p.4).

I'm forwarding my NYU email to another email account. Will spam still be filtered out?

No. If you have configured NYUHome to forward your email to another account,

* For an explanation of POP and IMAP, please visit <http://home.nyu.edu/help/mail/mailprograms.nyu>.