

Spam - Sharing The Singapore Experience

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1 / Spam Situation in Singapore

Spam Situation in Singapore

The Facts: IDA Survey on Unsolicited E-mails (2003)

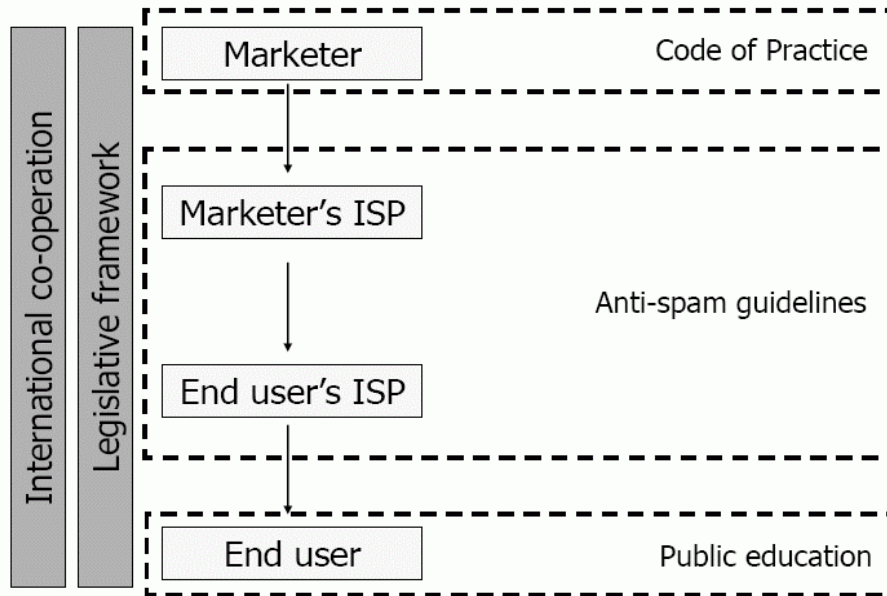
- IDA commissioned a survey on unsolicited e-mails in Oct 2003 involving 1,005 e-mail users from 1,549 households
- Almost all e-mail users have received spam (94%) with spam accounted for almost 1 out of every 3 e-mails received
- Productivity loss due to handling spam by e-mail users in Singapore is estimated at S\$23 million per year
- Time spent on handling spam accounts for 17% of all time spent on e-mails (6.6 mins per day for each spam recipient)
- On average, spam from overseas-based companies formed about 77% of the total spam received



Spam Situation in Singapore

- **25 May 2004 – Multi-pronged Spam Control Approach announced**
 - Legislation
 - Industry Self-Regulation
 - Public Education
 - International Co-operation

Multi-pronged approach



Spam Situation in Singapore

- **Public Consultation on the Legislative Framework for Spam Control**
 - Ended on 26 July 2004
 - 60 responses from the public
 - Respondents include ISPs, consumer protection groups, individuals, academics...etc
 - Almost all in favour of legislation to control spam
 - A variety of views on the details
 - e.g. Bulk vs non-Bulk, amount of damages, guidelines for 'legitimate spam'...etc (details in a later slide)

2 / Elements of Spam Control Legislation

Balance is the Key Element

- **Main Purpose of Legislation is to curb indiscriminate form of email spam**
 - E.g. spammers who sent out millions of emails harvested from the Internet
- **A balance approach is needed to take into consideration both the interests of consumers and email marketers**
 - **Businesses should not be deprived of using emails to reach out to their customers**
 - **Consumers should be able to choose between receiving or not receiving spam**
- **Email users should understand that legislation is not the 'silver bullet' to end all spam**
 - **Normal precautionary measures used in the handling of emails and spam control technology should also be adopted**

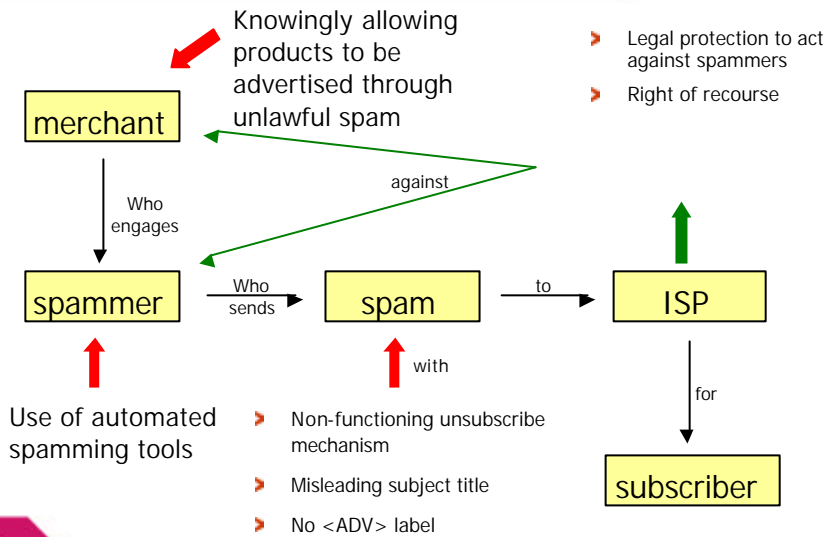
Hybrid Approach

- **Opt-In for**
 - Sending of emails using dictionary attacks or use of email address harvesting software
- **Opt-Out for**
 - Sending of other unsolicited commercial emails that comply with a set of stated rules including
 - ADV label
 - Unsubscribe facility
 - Correct subject title
 - ...others

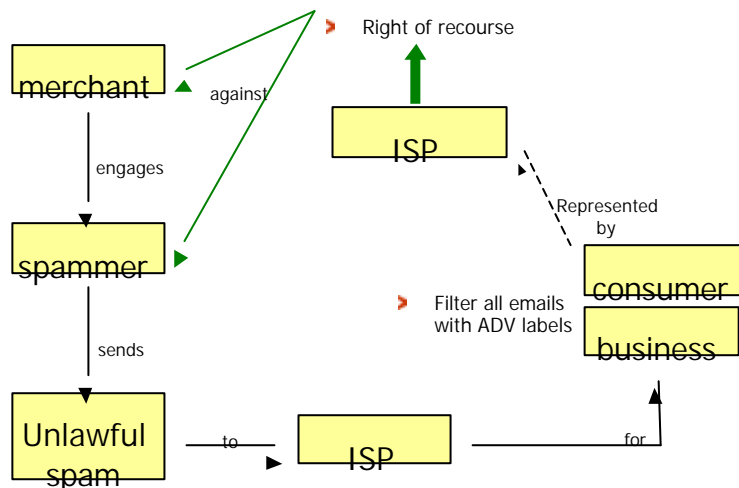
Something For Everyone

- **For consumers and businesses**
 - Increases transparency & accountability of e-mail marketing on what is permitted / not permitted
 - Empowers consumers & businesses who receive spam to decide how to deal with unsolicited commercial e-mail
- **For ISPs**
 - Gives ISPs (and indirectly, their subscribers) a right of legal recourse against spammers who spam indiscriminately
- **For marketers**
 - Will not stifle legitimate online marketing and e-commerce
 - Creates a level playing field for legitimate marketers

... by increasing transparency, accountability & ...



... empowering the user



Tricky Issues Include

- Bulk versus non-Bulk
 - Should bulk requirement be imposed? If not, would personal unsolicited commercial emails e.g. emails among friends be affected? If so, what should be the bulk requirement?
- Statutory Damages?
 - Should a pre-established range of damages be imposed as proving of damages for spam related incidents is difficult?
- Guidelines?
 - What kind of guidelines to impose on legitimate email marketers so that they can still communicate with their customers?
- Exceptions?
 - Should there be any exceptions, perhaps for the Government?

3 / Industry Self-Regulation

Industry Self-Regulation

➤ Efforts by ISPs

Major Internet Service Providers (ISPs), under the facilitation of IDA, have come together to set up anti-spam guidelines. These guidelines serve as guiding principles to be adopted jointly by the ISPs to help reduce e-mail spam for their subscribers.

➤ Efforts by DMAS (Direct Marketing Association of Singapore)

The DMAS has launched an E-mail Marketing Code of Practice for its members. It will also be setting up a Consumer Communications Preference Programme to be launched before the end of this year that will allow e-mail users to register their preference not to receive unsolicited commercial e-mail.

4 / Public Education

Public Education

- 42% of e-mail users in Singapore are unaware of how they can protect their e-mails against spam
- National Anti-Spam Website (www.antispam.org.sg)
- IDA Anti-spam Awareness Drive
- SiTF Anti-spam Initiative
- Public Education Efforts by CASE and SBF

5 / International Cooperation

What Could We All Do?

- Spammers would relocate to territories without spam control regime
 - Crucial for countries to implement regime, either in the form of legislation or industry self-regulation
- Spam is a relatively 'new' issue for legislative control
 - Legal framework needs time to evolve, cases have to be tested in court to highlight any inadequacies in the legislation
- Sharing of information & approaches
 - Information sharing among countries to shorten the learning curve in implementing spam control regime

Conclusion and Summary

- No silver bullet for spam
- Multi-prong approach is needed
 - Legislation
 - Public education
 - Industry-self regulation
 - International cooperation