



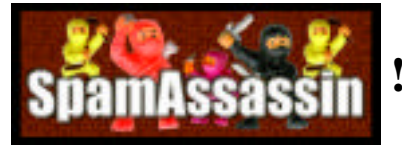
UNIVERSITY OF

Rhode Island Office of Information Services

November 22, 2002

What OIS is Doing to Deal With the SPAM Problem :

Meet



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As we discussed in our previous mailing, we've been testing SPAM filtering software which scans e-mail for potential SPAM messages and tags suspect mail. The tag alerts you to the possibility that you are being spammed, and gives you the option of reading that mail, deleting it, or routing it to a separate "spam e-mail" box for later consideration. The software we've chosen to install is an open-source product called SpamAssassin.

SpamAssassin is a mail filter which scans e-mail using a wide variety of criteria to detect SPAM. This makes it harder for spammers to identify any one method that they can learn to circumvent. In our testing, it differentiated successfully between SPAM and non-SPAM in 95% to 99% of cases, depending on the type of mail.

E-mail content is weighted by keywords, and scanned using various identification tactics such as:

Header Analysis

Spammers use a number of tricks to mask their identities and fool you into thinking that you've received valid mail or that you've subscribed at some point.

Text Analysis

SPAM e-mails often have a characteristic style and disclaimers.

Blacklists

SpamAssassin supports many useful blacklists such as mail-abuse.org and ordb.org.

SpamAssassin offers weighting, easy-to-extend rules, and user-visible text that is usually stored in text files to make it easy for the user or system administrator to edit, modify, or add new rules.

IMPLEMENTATION

E-mail addresses ending in:
@uriacc.uri.edu
@uri.edu
@postoffice.uri.edu
@etal.uri.edu

Beginning on Monday, December 9, the character string [UBE?] will appear at the beginning of any e-mail message that SpamAssassin tags as possible SPAM.

UBE stands for Unsolicited Bulk E-mail, which currently constitutes 30% of all electronic mail received at URI.

Suggestion:

The best way to determine if SpamAssassin's filtering is meeting your personal needs is to just observe your e-mail for a while and see what's happening.

If you determine that you require more extensive filtering, you can then set your own e-mail software filter to do the rest.

Note WebMail Users:

As the next phase, we are working out a process that will automatically deposit [UBE?] tagged e-mail into a separate mailbox for you. Stay tuned!

If you need help creating a SPAM filter for your e-mail, go to: www.uri.edu/ois/whatsnew/filter.pdf

If you'd like more information on SpamAssassin, please go to: www.spamassassin.org