

Spam Prevention

What is SpamAssassin?

SpamAssassin is a mail filtering program that can examine mail arriving in your mailbox, and then alter the subject header making it easy for you to delete, or filter out, incoming spam. We have found that SpamAssassin will correctly detect over 80% of the spam coming into our mail servers.

SpamAssassin can be customized for your specific needs. For example, if you are getting legitimate email tagged as spam, you can instruct SpamAssassin to "whitelist" the address the email is coming from, so it will always pass that email through. You can also raise or lower the threshold it uses to determine if the message is spam or not- the lower the threshold, the more likely a message will be tagged as spam. See below for more instructions on how to do this.

How does it work?

SpamAssassin runs as a runs as procmail filter. It examines the content of each new message you receive, looking for certain characteristics that are typical for spam. For example, does the body of the email contains words like "Mortgage", "Viagra" or "Penis Enlargement" ? If so, then it assigns adds a number to a counter. Once the counter reaches a user-defined threshold, SpamAssassin will tag it as spam, and either change the subject header, or simply delete it.

Where does SpamAssassin come from?

SpamAssassin is an "open source" project, developed by several people. The software made available free of charge to anyone. We have installed SpamAssassin on our mail servers, and can set it up for any of our customers, free of charge.

Please see the SpamAssassin home page for more information, including complete documentation.

How do I use SpamAssassin?

Once we have installed SpamAssassin in your mailbox you will notice that most of the spam you are getting has the string "*****SPAM*****" in front of the subject line. You can then create a mail rule, or filter, to automatically delete these messages, or just move them out of your inbox to another folder, for later examination and probable deletion. We actually recommend this latter method, as sometimes SpamAssassin will identify a legitimate email as spam. This can happen with some mailing lists.

Mail rules, or filters, and handled differently with each email client application. For example, if you are using Outlook Express under Windows, you would look in the Tools menu, and then Message Rules->Mail. Click New. The condition you want is "Where the subject line contains specific words". Choose the action you want done (i.e. Delete it). You'll see the phrase "contains specified words" underline below. Click this, and it brings up a window that you can type the word. Enter "*****SPAM*****", then click OK.

If you use Eudora (4.2 or later) on a Mac, choose "Make Filter..." from the Special menu. You want to match incoming mail where the Subject contains "*****SPAM*****", and then either transfer to another mailbox, or just delete it.

If you need help setting up a message rule in your email software, please contact our technical support dept, and we can assist you.

Boxtrapper

BoxTrapper is a feature now available from both the mail area of cpanel and from webmail by individual users.

BoxTrapper, once enabled, sets a responder on the email account that requires confirmation from the sender before you receive their message. This is very useful in eliminating spam, as spammers do not respond. If you enable auto white listing (recommended), once the sender replies as instructed, they are added to a "white list" in order to allow them to send mail without having to confirm again.

Enabling BoxTrapper

1. Login to your Control Panel
2. Enter the Mailsection.
3. Click on the BoxTrapper Spam Trap link.
4. Click the Manage link towards the right hand side of the screen for the email address that you want to enable BoxTrapper for.
5. Click the button to turn on BoxTrapper for the account.
6. As a last step (highly recommended) you will want to turn on Automatic Whitelisting. To do this click the Configure Settings link towards the bottom left of the BoxTrapper Configuration screen and then click the check box for Enable Automatic Whitelisting.