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Spam Blocked, Not Just Scored

On October 8, 2004, CNS began rejecting any e-mail that has a very high probability of being "spam." This has reduced the amount of blatant spam e-mail sent to GatorLink (userid@ufl.edu) and NERSP (userid@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu, userid@cns.ufl.edu) addresses, and mail processed through CNS' LISTSERV system (lists.ufl.edu).

Following the successful implementation of the SpamAssassin-based e-mail scoring system, CNS now uses the "spam scores" to reject likely spam at the server. Rejected messages are being "returned to sender," so that, in the unlikely event that a rejected message is legitimate communication, the sender can make other arrangements to contact the addressee.

This change will alleviate the problem of large Internet service providers (ISPs) rejecting legitimate mail from UF due to reports of junk e-mail being sent "from UF." These junk e-mails do not, for the most part, *originate* from UF; they are most frequently the result of junk e-mail sent to GatorLink userIDs which are forwarded to external accounts. Since their "last stop" before arriving at their destination is at UF, UF gets the blame for "sending spam."

In addition to resolving our problems with other e-mail systems, all GatorLink users will benefit from having less junk e-mail to process and the university will benefit by having fewer resources expended on transporting and storing nuisance messages.

Only You Can Prevent Spam

This change does not eliminate the benefit users see from having their own junk-mail filters in place. The criteria for rejection at the server will be very conservative, rejecting only the most flagrant cases (SpamAssassin score of 10 or higher).

Most users who have set up junk-mail filtering on their own systems use a much lower threshold (4 to 6 "stars"). These users will continue to see their filters screening out unwanted junk messages; just fewer than before, because the worst cases will have already been rejected at the server.

More Information

For more information about junk e-mail filtering, see http://www.cns.ufl.edu/spam.

Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

UF Information Technology

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