

I refer to the proposed legislative framework for the control of e-mail spam.

I strongly opposed to the opt-out ruling, as it now legitimizes the use of spam, and Singaporeans will now have to face more of it. I'm sure you have received a lot of criticism about this issue alone either by the mass-media, or from this email address, so I'm not going to harp on this issue.

I believe in paying for spamming, as we consumers have to pay for our time and money, spammers should be paying too.

I check my mail by mobile means, and in Singapore, that means via GPRS, with either a PDA or a mobile phone. We already have to pay the telco companies an extortionate amount of money per KB of download, and for every email header, we are using 1 to 2KBs, having an opt out rule will now cause spams originating from Singapore to my phone/PDA, making me pay extra for more unwanted mails. Most spammers do not have to pay bandwidth fee even, by utilizing open relays, without the provider's permission.

I proposed a middleman route for junk mail, one that spammers will have to pay for the service, and one who have the means to keep track on who opted out of the emails. This middleman would be one company, that is monitored and regulated by the government, on its activities.

Companies who needs to send out commercial emails, can go through them, paying the necessary fees for distribution of junk messages (and possibly, paying the consumers of the unsolicited email). Consumers can now have their email addresses secret, and we have the power to opt-out fully. It feels a lot safer to have one address (or website) to opt-out on, than to have thousands of addresses, that you don't know that are legitimate in doing opt-outs (other than using it as a means to verify emails). I have been hurt by opt-outs as they have an effect of increasing the amount of spam I get from all other companies with various other opt-out addresses/methods.

So far, the need spammers to pay, are effective in curbing other ways of sending unsolicited messages to users, like SMS, and junk mail that we get at home. Unfortunately, getting junk mails are now more common, as it's cheaper to distribute, as businesses are using cheaper materials, and hiring cheaper labours. But by having businesses pay for spam, one would be able to get "quality" spams, as its no longer something one can switch on a computer, run spam software, and forget about consequences.

Someone must pay, and for now, it's the consumers, not businesses. I don't see why I have to pay for an advertisement, and have business get away with it. On other media outlets, TV, newspapers, magazines, businesses have to pay to be aired, or published. This should be the case for commercial emails too.

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Regards:

Mohd Wari bin Wahab