



# ANSWER QUEST TIP SHEET

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BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## S P A M ... UGH... WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

**Unless you are like the food type, the email type is not good for anything other than clogging up your Inbox.**

According to the Washington Post, "Roughly 40% of all e-mail traffic in the US is spam, up from 8% in late 2001 and nearly doubling in the past 6 month" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17754-2003Mar12.html>).

In the last newsletter, I briefly explained how to use Outlook Rules to filter unwanted emails from your Inbox. I've talked to people who receive 200-300 of unsolicited emails a day. Wow, glad that isn't me! But what DID happen was in February when we had the big snow storm (here in Maryland) and I didn't have access to my email for a few days ... I had close to 150 emails in as little as 48 hours. I'd had enough.

I started asking other people what they were using to filter all those unwanted (and sometimes nasty) emails. There are some free ones out there and some that are very expensive. I opted for a nice little program that cost only \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95 but they are running a special right now – if you decide you like it, use code SEP434EXT for the \$10 discount).

It's called **S P A M Inspector**. Giant Software ([www.giantcompany.com](http://www.giantcompany.com)) is the company that makes it. It works with Outlook 2000/2002, Outlook Express 5/6 as well as AOL 7/8.

(No, I'm not getting paid to write about them. I truly like the program and wanted to share what I had found with everyone.)

**Why did I pick this software?** My first reason is that it uses two features to help block unwanted emails: it pulls information from a list of known email abusers and it has a learning system to allow you to indicate new email abusers as you find them.

My second reason is that even though I was only using the trial version, every email I sent to their technical support was answered promptly and thoroughly! It's so refreshing to see that. :)

And of course, it works!

When you install the software, it adds a new toolbar (I only tested on Outlook, so it may appear different with AOL email). There are some options you need to set.

On the tool bar, click on Options

- under the Learning Tab, you want to enable "I Would Like to Enable Learning"
- if you normally would not receive emails with foreign characters in them, you can enable "Block All Messages Using a Foreign Character Set" under the Character Sets tab

The Learning system allows you to tell the software that an email "Is S P A M!" or "Not S P A M!" from the toolbar. This information is used by the software to learn your friends and enemies and also is sent back so that it can be added to their list of known abusers. One or two "Is S P A M!"s isn't going to add someone to the big list automatically.

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I asked. They said it takes thousands of reports but if every one reports the abusers, they will get added to the list. One thing it does do is let the software know that you consider the sender of the email an email abuser.

Also on the tool bar, there are two buttons "Manage Your Friends List" and "Manage Your Enemies List"

- when you installed the program, it asked to set up your "friends" list from your email address book
- you can set more friends by clicking the "Manager Your Friends List" button on the new toolbar.

There are some other features that are very useful. Let me explain something first. When you receive an unwanted email and it has a way to be taken off their list, if you click that -- guess what you are doing? You have just told them that you indeed exist!!! That you aren't just an incorrect address!!! And with that information, you are added to MORE mailing lists!

If your email address really didn't exist (maybe you changed from a dial-up internet provider to cable modem - so your dial-up email account is not longer working), they would get an email sent back to them that says something about the user not existing. That's called a "bounced back" email. Meaning it bounced back to the sender indicating that their email did not reach the person it was addressed to. Just like the Postal Service! If you move and don't leave a forwarding address, they send the mail back to the person it came from.

So the other two features that made me purchase this program are: **Bounce** and **Report**.

**Bounce** feature - gives you the ability to "pretend" you don't exist. What this does is send a message back to the reply to email and pretends that your email doesn't exist. The only problem (not the software's but just in general) is that some abusers use fake reply-to emails so when you try to bounce the message, it comes back to you bounced.

**Report** feature - gives you the ability to report the abuser. What this feature does is sends a message to the internet service provider, an abuse reporting organization, and if there are other service providers involved, to them. For instance, you receive an email from X and he is using his home pc to send the email which uses Y to connect to the internet. It would report the abuse to X (his email provider) and to Y (his internet service provider) and to the abuse reporting organization.

There is only one option I do not have turned on -- adding a signature to your emails with the name of the software. My reason for this is: a lot of filtering software that is located on email servers look for the word S P A M. Did you notice I keep putting spaces between it? If I didn't, a lot of you would not receive this email message because it would be automatically deleted or filtered.

**I give this software two thumbs up!!! I love this software it has saved my sanity.**

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