



Hate spam? Three ways to avoid it

By Annik Stahl

No one likes opening up their e-mail account to find a bunch of junk. Yes, the delete button is a handy tool but I don't know about you, after a half hour of going through a big pile of unnecessary e-mail, my deleting finger goes numb and my mood turns sour.

You can avoid getting this stuff in the first place, if you just take a few steps and be proactive.

Separate your e-mail accounts

Create a separate Web e-mail address—separate from your personal e-mail address—that you can give when registering for free software or online deals, or even when ordering from a company online. Any free web e-mail account will work, and I like to use my [Hotmail](#) account because it has some pretty powerful organizational features to help *avoid* getting spam altogether.

I like to give my primary address to friends and family, and then use a separate one when I'm ordering yet another pair of strappy sandals or that face cream promising to wipe away those fine lines and bad memories.

Back away from the Reply All button

You know when you get e-mail that you *know* is junk and the sender tells you to reply with REMOVE in the subject or body of the message to take yourself off their odious list?

DON'T DO IT!

When you reply to what is already known junk, you let spammers know that yes, your e-mail address is up, running, and being used right now. It's like waving a white flag that says, "I read unsolicited e-mail. I may even reply! Please send more!"

The best way to "opt out" of a spammer's mailing list is to **pretend you never received the e-mail message**. Put your hands over your ears and sing, "La-la-la-la...I can't HEAR you!" (No one likes to be ignored and they probably won't bother you again.)

Make the Junk Mail Filter work for you

The Junk E-Mail filter in Outlook is your best friend, and really, your best tool for controlling the flow of whatever you deem "junk" to your Inbox. It really is like having a personal security officer, and the settings you choose are ones you can continue to update, refresh, and hone as often as you want.

- If you just don't want e-mail from anyone writing from a specific domain, you can block messages coming in from the entire domain. You can do this with international domains as well. If, down the road, you strike up an ongoing correspondence with someone from that domain you blocked previously, you can unblock that specific e-mail address.
- You can quickly add a sender to your blocked senders list, right after the message comes in—a few clicks just one time is all it takes.

Read more about the [Junk E-Mail Filter in Outlook 2010](#), and be sure to download and install the latest Junk Email Filter update package here for [Outlook 2010](#) and for [Outlook 2007](#).

I'm sure you have your own ways of avoiding spam; care to share below?

— *Annik*