

Issue 1004

Welcome to the latest NorthStar New Media Ltd newsletter, the first of 2011. This year we have already made a number of improvements to site control systems, administration systems and have launched four brand new sites for local businesses.

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Why not take a look at our latest projects;

[Pentland Ferries](#) – A website development aimed at public promotion and information presentation for Pentland Ferries.

[Orkney Fishermen's Society](#) – A website development aimed at public promotion and information presentation, with an administration control system permitting the instant update of site content and management of the registered users' document management system.

[Shearers Orkney](#) – A website development for John G Shearer and Sons aimed at promotion and information presentation of the Car rental, sales, servicing and service station sides of the business.

[European Jet Ski Challenge](#) – A website supporting the European Jet Ski Challenge (in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support and Make a Wish Foundation). The site features links with a donation management system, sponsor advertising, challenge countdown timer, social networking integration and areas of ongoing development and update.

Introduction

In this newsletter we will be discussing and providing some useful information about;

- **Spam** – What is Spam, how does it come about, and what can be done to stop it.
- **Web browsers** – Which one should you be using, and what difference does it make?

In this Newsletter we'll concentrate on letting you know a bit more about what Spam is, where it comes from, what you can do in the short-term, and what we recommend as a long-term treatment.

Spam is a nuisance which is by definition difficult to treat as it is so broad in application. Similarly, the struggle against virus attacks and other security related issues is a matter which needs consideration, especially where your computer forms a vital component of your business, whether for communication, accounts or administration. Your internet browser is the first "front", and it is of critical importance to keep up to date. We will be suggesting ways you can easily improve your security, without needing to learn all over again, as well as ways to build a brand new approach.

Spam

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Introduction

Everyone experiences Spam on some level, whether it be through web systems, email systems, telephone (cold-calling for example) or normal post (junk mail and leaflets which are liberally sprinkled through the day's mail). Email spam can be the most frustrating as it can become a big problem very quickly, and as with all forms of Spam - there is no silver bullet.

For the remainder of this analysis we will be considering only the Email form of Spam.

Where does it come from?

Spammers (those who create Spam) generally tend to use two methods of creating their recipient lists;

- **Email collection**
- **Automated email generation**

It is incredibly difficult to stay off a Spammers' list forever. The likelihood is that through some method (potentially one of the above) they will eventually come across your email address, and once they have it, it becomes practically impossible to either trace the method by which they came across your address, or to get your address removed. It is big business.

What should I do?

The golden rules on fighting Spam are;

- **Do Not reply to Spam.**
- **Do Not choose to opt-out.**
- **Do Not click any links in the email.**
- **Carefully check any forms.**

What can be done?

Anyone who promises to remove all your Spam issues is almost certainly marketing a scam, or will offer a ludicrously expensive service reserved for large companies and industry level communication systems. There is no Silver Bullet for spam, but we can help treat it.

Identification

If your Spam filter is too tight you'll need to spend time going through your filtered messages to make sure nothing genuine is in there, and if it's too loose you'll spend time manually deleting messages. It's a case of finding a suitable balance which improves the situation for you.

Our solution

Our solution is installed and managed on your NorthStar recommended hosting package, so you don't need to install or configure it to start seeing the benefits. All you need to do is check the daily digests to make sure everything is running correctly – the rest is done for you.

How does it work?

Our solution uses a scoring system to rate each email for its Spam likelihood level, and then assigns an appropriate treatment for each email.

So, you have a spam filtering solution installed – is that it? Many Spam filtering solutions need to be continually taught new lessons as spam evolves, much in the same way that methods of fighting crime need to evolve as criminals get smarter. Our solution however is self-learning, and it should be very rare that you need to ask us to make any manual adjustments.

Reviews

Since the early days of NorthStar offering web services, we have used the recommended Spam filtering solution, and while we have tested many other systems, we find this the best solution. It's ease of use means that we spend very little time initially sorting emails through the day, and checking the daily digests become second-nature very quickly.

Simply put, we would only recommend solutions which we know through long experience provide good value for money. This is no exception.

Microsoft has previously suggested that over 97% of the email sent in the world is Spam, and with our recommended solution you can help prevent it from becoming a major problem for your business.

How do I get it?

Drop us an email at info@northstar-newmedia.co.uk, letting us know your email address, the type and volume of Spam you're getting on a daily basis, and we'll get back to you with some further details on a solution which should help you.

Browsers

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If you are running a good anti-virus package on your computer you may not be as protected as you thought – you should also consider your browser carefully when accessing the internet.

The Browsers

There are many browsers available, but we will be concentrating on Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome in this document since they are the most significant according to market share.

Microsoft Internet Explorer

Microsoft's default browser has long been the bane of the web developer and IT support person's life, but recent upgraded versions are turning one of the worst performing internet browsers into something more respectable. However, you absolutely need to be using the **latest version**. Old versions of Internet Explorer are known to have significant security risks associated with them.

Mozilla Firefox

Mozilla Firefox is one of the better all-round browsers. We use Firefox as one of our main browsers at NorthStar and it is one of the favourites among those "in the know". It has always surpassed Microsoft's security level, and continues to be a browser which is compliant with all web standards and embraces all new technology.

Google Chrome

Google Chrome is a relative newcomer, packing great performance and security protection. Google do a lot of things right, and Chrome is fast becoming one of the leaders of the browser market. This tends to be the chosen browser for designers and is set to take the lead from Mozilla Firefox in the industry market share statistics.

Which one should I have?

Our recommendation is to get the latest Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome browser. NorthStar New Media developed websites are designed to function correctly on all up to date web browsers, and are tested at launch to ensure this.