

Clear COMmuniCaTions

From those friendly people at **DOT-COMmuniCaTions**



Clear COMmuniCaTions is a regular column offering IT advice & support. If you have an IT-related problem that would also benefit others, please send an email to the address shown below, & we'll do our best to answer your questions.

Q. I want to start sending out regular newsletters and information emails to people on my Outlook contact list, however, someone has said that if I did that I would be spamming them. Surely sending just information to people and organisations, can't be classed as 'spam'?

A. Under European laws if the person or organisation you are sending to hasn't agreed to specifically receive 'marketing' or 'information' emails from you and you continue to send then they would be classed as 'spam'.

'Spam' is classed as any unsolicited and unwanted non-personal email, and the junk email problem has grown dramatically over the last few years and it is estimated that 10% of all emails sent from the UK are spam.

Under the EU's E-Commerce Directive, which came into effect last August, all such unsolicited emails must now clearly and unambiguously identify the email's content and who sent it. This information should either be in the subject field or clearly shown in the body of the message.

In addition, the Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications (October 2009) states that all marketing emails (which clearly includes newsletters or similar including forwarded information) to individuals requires an 'opt-in' procedure, where if the receiver doesn't agree to receive the emails the sender does not include them in any future mail-outs.

It is possible to use a less demanding 'opt-out' procedure, where if the potential recipient doesn't tick a box then the organisation can send them information. However this can only be used if the information has been collected in the context of the recipient having been a customer or recipient of a service from that specific organisation. They must have been informed that their details would be used for this purpose and they can request the removal of their details from the mailing list easily and free of charge. The directive also makes it illegal to not provide an address and means to opt-out of any further correspondence.

Even if you are only regularly forwarding information from another organisation, you would legally be classed as the sender and all unsolicited email laws could still apply.

For further information - <http://www.out-law.com/page-5657>

Q. I read in a forum that someone picked up a virus from accidentally visiting a "Fat-Finger" website. However, when I asked no-one was able to tell me what a "Fat-Finger" site is. Can you help?

A. I have never actually heard the term "Fat-Finger" website used before, but I think I can make a reasonable guess.

I think it's likely a reference to a mistyped web address that resulted in a visit to an infected website.

Porn and malware authors often distribute their infected files using websites with similar domain names to popular commercial sites. For example, they may buy a domain named "amazom.com" or "wwwamazon.com" and set up their infected software for download.

They hope that visitors might accidentally press the "M" key instead of the "N" (which is next to it on the keyboard) or forget to type in the full stop between the www and the site name when intending to visit www.amazon.com and end up accidentally visiting their sites and download their infected programs instead.

Free OCR (Optical Character Recognition)

Accessing the text from a printed document means either retyping the text or using an OCR program to extract the words from the scanned text. Most such programs are fairly expensive but FreeOCR is a free web-based version. To use, visit the site, browse to your document scan or image on your computer and click send file. Note the file size is limited to 2mb and once converted you can highlight and copy the plain text into your document and tidy it up.

To try it: <http://www.free-ocr.com>

Free Software for Charities

AIMS is a contact management database designed by LASA (London Advice Services Alliance) that can be used to help you deliver an even better service, giving you the information you need to be more effective and efficient.

The software is easy to use, and can be customised by you to meet your requirements. Best of all, the entry level package is completely FREE of charge, is fully operational and contains everything needed to start capturing details of your clients, the work you do and the outcomes you achieve. Download it from <http://tinyurl.com/n4gego>

For a summary of the main features and benefits of AIMS, and the services the AIMS team can offer, download the AIMS Flier here: <http://tinyurl.com/kwyg33> (187Kb, PDF Doc).

DOT-COMmuniCaTions' is Calderdale's **ONLY** dedicated not-for-profit provider of computer support services & solutions to local community, voluntary & faith sector organisations & not-for-profit social enterprises.

For more information & a free consultation,
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