SPAM Outbreak  In just a few years, unsolicited commercial e-mail, also known as Spam, has gone from a minor nuisance to a major economic and social issue. According to best estimates (from companies such as Brightmail and MessageLab), it now represents more than half of the world’s e-mail traffic. Processing and managing Spam creates costs that are ultimately for businesses and personal e-mail users. Some are now reducing their use of e-mail as a communications tool, posing a significant impediment to the benefits of legitimate e-commerce. We present a look at some of the latest figures released by Industry Canada.

E-mail Statistics

- Daily e-mails sent: 31 billion
- Daily e-mails sent per e-mail address: 56
- Daily e-mails sent per person: 174
- Daily e-mails sent per corporate user: 34
- Daily e-mails received per person: 10
- E-mail addresses per person: 3.1 average
- Cost to all Internet users: $255 million

Spam Statistics

- E-mail considered Spam: 40% of all e-mail
- Daily Spam e-mails sent: 12.4 billion
- Daily Spam received per person: 6
- Annual Spam received per person: 2200
- Spam cost to all non-corp Internet users: $255 million
- Spam cost to all US Corporations in 2002: $8.9 billion
- States with anti-spam laws: 26
- E-mail address changes due to Spam: 16%
- Estimated Spam increase by 2007: 63%
- Annual Spam in a 1,000 employee company: 2.1 million
- Users who reply to Spam e-mail: 28%
- Users who purchased from Spam e-mail: 8%
- Corporate e-mail that is considered spam: 15-20%
- Wasted corporate time per Spam e-mail: 4-5 seconds
In the US Consumers want government to provide greater protection against spammers. According to the (ePrivacy Group) survey:

- 74% of consumers stated that they want a federal do-not-spam list.
- 79% of consumers stated that they want spam banned or limited by law.
- While opt-out is sometimes touted as an antidote to spam, it is not used by more than 37% of consumers. The three primary reasons are: fears that opt-out will confirm their address to spammers; uncertainty as whether opt-out will work; doubts that opt-out will be honoured. However, there is still hope for opt-out: 47% of the respondents said they would feel more confident about opt-out if it was verified by a trusted third party.
- Most consumers who receive a falsified e-mail message (89%) or an e-mail containing unsolicited adult content (74%) automatically define it as spam.
- Over 31% of consumers consider all unsolicited e-mails that contain any type of advertisement to be spam.

the Spam Business Model

- Spam is profitable: cost to sender is minimal.
- Traditional direct mail requires response rate of 2%; Spam can operate at return rate of 0.025%.
- A huge global web of loosely managed networks and facilities allows this form of e-mail abuse.
- Impunity: enforcement of domestic laws is difficult and requires considerable resources.

the Cost of Spam

- Radicati Group and Message Labs estimate worldwide cost to businesses at $20.5 billion.
- Nortel Networks: despite spam filters, employees receive 5,000 to 15,000 spam messages a day.
- Each spam message costs $1 in lost productivity.
- Loss of public confidence in Internet communications 25% of Internet users have curtailed their use of e-mail because of spam (Pew Foundation, 2003).
- Aggressive filtering has blocked legitimate (permission-based) electronic communications, such as service notices, invoices and newsletters.