

Ethical cloud over bullet proof hosting

There's nothing more annoying than getting spam. Unless you count fussy eaters and flies. There is no point to flies. Their existence baffles me. Spam is meant to serve a purpose, in theory. The effort is generally wasted though, as no one reads it. Everything gets thrown in the recycle bin to be unceremoniously, and permanently deleted. If spam came in paper form, it would be used to line pets' cages. So why then, one wonders, would marketers intentionally sign up to bullet proof servers that allow them to send emails en masse?

Bullet proof servers zero in on the fact that email marketing is an effective, not to mention economical, tool in capturing your share of the business market. They emphasise how easy it is to reach millions of people at the touch of a button, thereby increasing your target audience and making the most of your future prospects.

They even make those who oppose spam sound unreasonable. They paint them as whiners who will go to great lengths to shut down sites, regardless of their aesthetic value, or how much users pay their servers. A prime example of anti-anti-spammer rhetoric comes from mass mail server software: "These Anti Spammers are such experts that they horrify the Web Hosts with their threats and finally forcing your Web Host to shut down your web site or Dedicated Server in no time."

In addition to bulk email services, bullet proof servers allow adult and gambling sites to flourish unchecked. Or rather, when authorities try to check the sites; the bullet proof hosts will merely continue to run the sites, regardless of rules and regulations. A bullet proof server in Russia is doing its best to change the current anti-spam environment by claiming to offer legitimate services to legitimate customers with bulk email needs.

Their success is yet to be determined, but with large corporations, like Microsoft, taking legal action against bulk email servers, and anti-spam organisations making inroads in traditionally spam friendly areas, the prospects for legitimisation don't look promising. The tightening of laws and the rising costs of fighting lawsuits also make it difficult for spammers to stay in business.

While we wait for effective action to be taken against willful spammers, the best way to protecting your email is to ensure that your server offers a comprehensive and up to date anti-spam service. Filters should also be set as rigidly and specifically as possible.

As technology advances, those who operate outside the realms of ethical and moral responsibility, find more sophisticated ways to exploit user systems. It's left to the net defenders to find more innovative and robust methods to stop them. Unfortunately, as in all wars, most casualties occur among the innocent. In this case it's the law-abiding marketers that suffer. And as in all wars, the best we can do is fortify our defences and look forward to brighter days.

Recommended sites:

<http://www.massmailsoftware.com/ezine/past/2003-05-07.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulletproof_hosting

<http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/cc-licenses/2002-November/000027.html>

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/09/24/ms_anti-spam_lawsuit/

About the Author

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