Why are emails going to SPAM/JUNK

Jeff Clark - 2022-08-05 - Email and Collaboration

Why are my emails going to spam?

According to Statista, more than half of all emails are spam.

Needless to say, email spam is a big problem on the Internet, which is why email services have gotten more aggressive with combating spam.

Most of the emails that get filtered to spam really are just spam. People would be annoyed if they had to manually filter through all of these emails, so Internet service providers (ISPs) and email services (like Gmail) set up filters to automatically block spam emails before they appear in the inbox.

However, if you make some common mistakes, your legitimate emails could also get swept up in these efforts to combat spam.

1. Your Recipients Marked Your Emails as Spam

   The first and most obvious reason for your emails ending up in spam is because your recipients put them there.

   Even if your content is strong and the recipient expressly gave you permission to contact them, they may still decide to mark your email as spam as a way to clean up a cluttered inbox.

   Unfortunately, if enough of your messages get flagged by users, it can cause spam filters to flag your address and start sending your mail to spam automatically.

   This means your messages may end up looking like spam, even to users who haven't explicitly flagged you in the past. This is especially likely in Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, and other services with heavily AI-driven algorithms.

   Once the email ships, there's not much you can do to prevent someone from marking your emails as spam.

2. Your Subject Lines Are Misleading or Contain Spam Triggers

3. Your Content Triggers Spam Filters

   Spam filters check for certain words (or combinations of words). If an email gets enough hits or contains those words in addition to some of the other items on this list, it can end up in spam folders. Spam trigger keywords can include:

   - "Lowest price"
   - "Additional income"
   - "Easy money"
   - "No cost"
   - Multiple exclamation points or dollar signs in a row
   - Words with unnecessary spaces or punctuation
   - Words that are in ALL CAPS
   - "Free"

   In general, these are words that are either heavily sales-oriented or clearly designed to get around spam filters (such as the extra spaces). While using a handful of these isn't necessarily a death sentence for your messages, using too many of them can be.

4. You're Sending Too Many Attachments

5. The email sender IP Address Is or Has Been Used for Spam in the past and is now flagged as SPAM

6. Your “From” Information Is Inaccurate

   It’s also against the CAN-SPAM ACT to mislead anyone with your “from,” “to,” “reply-to,” and routing information. So if the email is coming with your name via another source, it may be flagged. ie/ John Doe (aamc@aamc.org) could get flagged.

7. You’re Using Spam Trigger Words

   Some spam filters are triggered by specific words in the subject line or the body of the email. Some spam trigger words are:

   - Amazing
   - Cancel at any time
   - Check or money order
   - Click here
   - Congratulations
   - Dear friend
   - For only ($)
   - Free or toll-free
   - Great offer
   - Guarantee
   - Increase sales
   - Order now
   - Promise you
   - Risk-free
   - Special promotion
   - This is not spam
   - Winner

8. Your contains HTML

   Emails containing HTML (links, multiple images, click here, etc) are more subject to being flagged as SPAM.

9. An account at FAU has been hacked

   If an account at FAU has been hacked and starts sending SPAM, email providers will flag the @fau.edu accounts sending SPAM. This increases the likelihood that legit emails will be flagged and sent to SPAM, especially if the email contains multiple recipients.

If legit emails are being sent to your JUNK/SPAM folder in Outlook,, here are a few tips to ensure future deliverability from senders that are currently flagged incorrectly.

- Click “not spam” on an email in the junk folder from a trusted source or move it to the inbox.
- Add the sender’s email address to your contacts. Emails from that sender should not be marked as spam in the future.
- Add trusted senders to the “Safe senders and domains” list to prevent Outlook from ever sending emails from them to your spam filter.