

E-MAIL SPAM FEAR WILL CAUSE MARKETING MELTDOWN

Submitted by: Speed Communications

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Rainier PR publishes 10-point Guide to Spurn Spam

London, UK – 6 December 2002 – UK companies that strip e-mail addresses from their Web sites over fears spammers will harvest the contacts, could be heading for a marketing meltdown.

That's the warning from Rainier PR, an agency that has analysed the number of e-mail details for press, analysts and investors removed from the Web in recent months

"Taking down your e-mail details because of concerns over spam is like leaving your shop shut because you fear a burglary. In marketing terms, companies that do so are facing a communication catastrophe," said Stephen Waddington, managing director, Rainier PR.

"Companies need to wise up and take preventative measures, not bury their heads in the sand. Ultimately this issue requires Government action, but in the interim, companies should adopt intelligent software filters that stop spam from getting through," he said.

Software management tools can reject spam from an e-mail server or from an in-box. Increasingly though, users are opting to remove e-mail addresses from Web sites altogether because it is the most straightforward approach.

A survey by Rainier PR of 100 corporate Web sites during November, and the six previous months, found that nine per cent had removed e-mail contact details from their Web sites during that time.

Rainier PR handles an average of 135 reactive media enquiries a week on behalf of its 22 clients. 42 per cent of these enquiries are directed via the agency's Web site or clients' Web sites, with the balance by phone or face-to-face.

The use of a Web contact form, rather than publishing an email address is another way to counter spam. 12 per cent of FTSE 100 companies take this approach on their Web sites for journalist contact, whilst 20 per cent take this approach for investors.

Spurn Spam Rainier PR has developed a 10-point plan for avoiding e-mail spam:

1. Don't post your e-mail addresses in public on a Web site or in a newsgroup. Most spammers compile lists by using automatic applications that harvest addresses from the Internet
2. If you must post your email address in public alter it, if possible before posting such as `firstname_surnameATrainierpr.co.uk` or `firstname_SENDNOSPAM_surname@rainierpr.co.uk`. Most people will know to remove any annotation whereas computer harvesting software will not
3. Use e-mail aliases on Web sites for press, investor and customer communication such as `press@rainierpr.co.uk` and `investor@rainierpr.co.uk`, and change them as soon as you start to receive spam

4. Use an alternative e-mail address for non-business communication
5. Never respond to spam, even to unsubscribe. Spammers use returns to confirm that an email address is in use
6. Review all user agreements before signing up for Web based services. You may discover that you are signing away the right for your email address to be circulated onwards
7. Consider using contact forms, preferably in Java script, as an alternative to publishing e-mail addresses on your Web site
8. Avoid posting information on how to generate your employees email addresses such as `firstname_surname@rainierpr.co.uk`
9. Introduce unstandardised personal email addresses at your company, `intial_surname@rainierpr.co.uk` and `first_name_surname@rainierpr.co.uk` and `surname_intial@rainierpr.co.uk`
10. When registering your web site, provide general e-mail addresses for domain administration, technical and billing contacts

About Rainier PR

Rainier PR is acclaimed as one of the UK's leading business-to-business technology agencies. It uses senior communications professionals, supported by a strong administrative function, to handle the interface with the client and also work directly with clients' 'audiences', typically the media.

Rainier PR's distinct approach is particularly suited to early stage and fast-growing companies, providing a high level of strategic consultancy and understanding of business drivers and proven PR capabilities.

For further details, check: <http://www.rainierpr.co.uk>