

News Article

Sudden Spam Drops Leaves Experts Baffled

By John E Dunn , Techworld



Spam volume appears to have dropped to averages last seen in 2008 after an expected surge in bogus email over the Christmas period failed to materialize.

Estimating real spam volumes is notoriously difficult due to the tendency of spam to naturally ebb and flow over time and to the fact that no agency has a single view on the phenomenon. However, figures revealed in recent weeks by a number of

companies that have compiled stats make curious reading: Every vendor's figures show a fall of some sort.

In 2010, according to Cisco's IronPort SenderBase, spam volume peaked in late summer before dropping by around a third month-on-month between September and December. The total volume in November and in December was noticeably lower than it had been for any other month during 2010.

Over at Commtouch, after a year-high spike in September, spam volume fell by around 30 percent between September and December 2010, mirroring a fall in the number of zombie PCs detected by the company during the same period.

Illustration: Stuart BradfordThe spam volume index that UK-U.S. outfit M86 Security measures using honeypot domains fell by as much as half during December when compared to the numbers for the spring and summer.

None of the vendors' numbers showed the expected surge in spam over the Christmas period, traditionally a time when spammers boost their output.

As yet, no security company has come up with a reason for the fall, which is larger than the fall registered in late 2009, but still modest compared to the historic plunge that happened in late 2008 after rogue ISP McColo was shut down.

Given that no large ISPs or botnets have been shut down in the corresponding period, it could simply be a seasonal lull. It could also mark a change in tactics by spammers towards using channels other than conventional e-mail, such as social media, to reach computer users. According to a report by Websense in November, noted a marked rise in spam on Facebook and Twitter with as much as 10 percent of status updates on the former containing spam.

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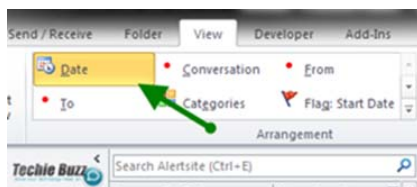


Tips for the Office

Outlook 2010: Customizing views in Outlook 2010

Outlook 2010 has several options with regards to viewing your email and allows users to view messages in the form of conversations and also provides with many other options to the users. The new views may look overwhelming to many users, however it can be easily customized to suit your needs.

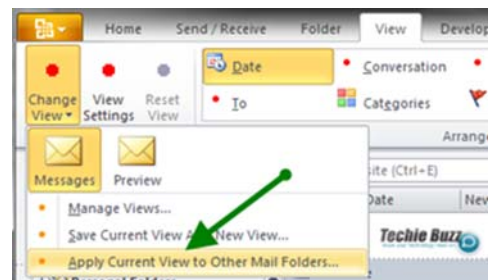
Changing Views Back to Show Messages By Date



Outlook 2010 has a new conversation view enabled by default, though not many people will be comfortable with it, if you are not comfortable with the conversation view, you can easily change it back to the default date view. To do that just click on the View tab in the Outlook Window and select Date from the available options.

Apply Current View To All Folders

By default different folders will have different views in Outlook 2010, however you can apply a single view to all the folders in a single step, without the need to customize each and every folder. To apply a current view to all the folders, go to View tab and click on Change View, from the dropdown list click on "Apply Current View to Other Mail Folders". A new window will popup, just select all the folders you want to apply the current view to and save it.



Edit and Manage Views

Views provides users with several options, you can modify them to change which fields are displayed, the type of view and so on. To edit or manage views, click on View tab and select Manage Views or to directly modify settings for the current view click on the View Settings. This should pop up a new window which has several options. You can modify the columns that are displayed, what options should the message be grouped by, sorting order of messages, filtering, conditional formatting and more. Once you have modified the options click on Ok to save them.

Save Views For Future Usage



Once you have customize the views it may be good practice to save it somewhere, Outlook 2010 offers users with an option to save views. To save your views, go to View tab and click on Save Current View as New View, in the window that pops up, enter a name for the view and save it. Once you have save the view it will appear in the change view options, you can easily click on it to apply your view.

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Did you know...

Seven Hints to Stay Safe Online

Source: Tony Bradley, [PCWorld](#)

There have been a number of attacks recently against high-profile social networking accounts--French President Sarkozy, teen pop star Selena Gomez, and even social network wunderkind and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg have all fallen prey. Web surfing and social networking are here to stay, so the trick is figuring out how to protect your computer and your personal information while you're online. Here is an overview of seven steps you can take to secure your online activities:



- 1. Update your browser.** Newer browsers have better security controls and protection than older browsers. Make sure you are using the latest version of your Web browser of choice to take advantage of features like phishing filters that can protect you from attacks.
- 2. Do it in private.** Public Wi-Fi hotspots like those at McDonald's or Starbucks are very convenient, but they are also--in a nutshell--insecure. There is typically no security or encryption enabled which means that anyone within range of your wireless connection can potentially intercept your data, including any account numbers or passwords you might type in. In general, you should stick to reading the news and weather at public hotspots, and avoid ever typing any username, password, or other account data that should be kept private. If you absolutely must log in to Facebook, at least use the new security setting that uses HTTPS to set up a secure, encrypted connection with the social networking site.
- 3. Keep 'em guessing.** Your username and password should be different for each site. Yes, that is more tedious and cumbersome for you to try and remember what your credentials are for each site, but it means that an attacker who compromises your Twitter account will only compromise your Twitter account, rather than having the master key that grants access to every site and service you use on the Web.
- 4. Double-check the domain.** Before you start typing in sensitive information like your password or account number, take a peek at the address bar just to make sure that the site you are logging into is the legitimate site, hosted from the correct domain. While you might think you are logging in to facebook.com, attackers will often create a realistic-looking malicious spoof site with a domain like facebook.hacker.com, or facebook_login.hacker.com. The bottom line is that the end is the only part that matters. If it says facebook.twitter.google.hacker.org, the real domain is simply "hacker.org" and the rest are simply subdomains created to distract and confuse you.
- 5. Suspicious messages are suspicious for a reason.** Have you ever received an e-mail, or a private Facebook message from someone you know--but who almost never contacts you? Did it seem odd that after months or years or no communication, this person sent you a message out of the blue simply saying "Is this you in this video? LOL.", accompanied by a URL-shortened link to some unknown destination? Did it seem suspicious and make you think twice about clicking the link? It should have. If it seems suspicious--at all--assume that it is malicious and just delete it. If you are concerned that it might be important, then contact the alleged sender directly to make sure it is legitimate.
- 6. Clear history and log out.** If you use a public PC, like at a library or a hotel lobby, to do any Web surfing, make sure you erase your tracks before you leave. You should use the anonymous or private browsing mode of the browser if there is one available. When you are done, you should go into the properties for the Web browser and erase the history and cache to remove traces of your Web-surfing activities. You also need to make sure you manually log out of sites you log into. Just because you shut down the browser window doesn't necessarily mean you are logged out of the site. Whether intentional or pure accident, the next user of that same PC may find that your account is still actively logged in, granting complete access to a stranger.
- 7. Protect your PC.** It wouldn't be a list of recommended security best practices without a reminder to properly protect the PC. You should have some sort of security suite, or collection of tools, providing personal firewall security and protection against viruses, spyware, phishing attacks, and other malware. As important as installing the protection is, it is more important to make sure the tools are frequently updated. Security software is typically only as secure as its last update. As new threats emerge, security software may be unable to detect or defend against them without the current update data.

There you have it. None of it is rocket science. In fact, most of it is simple, common sense. The dirty secret about PC and online security is that it is 90 percent common sense and healthy skepticism. The security software just helps guard against the other 10 percent.

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Question of the Month



Question: I have a meeting scheduled in my calendar, is there a way to send an reminder to meeting attendees?

Answer: Yes, open the original meeting request, click the Actions menu and then click New Message to Attendees



**“Dear Andy: How have you been?
Your mother and I are fine. We miss you.
Please sign off your computer and come
downstairs for something to eat. Love, Dad.”**

Quote of the Month

A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Product of the Month

MFC-7840W Laser Multi-Function Center



OVERVIEW: MFC-7840W

The MFC-7840W is ideal for any desktop or small office. It can fit in any workspace due to its compact, space-saving design. In addition to its crisp, razor-sharp printing, it can also be used to make a quick copy or send/receive faxes without the use of a computer. Enjoy the convenience of having a high-quality colour scanner, too. Scan multiple pages using the 35-page auto document feeder or use the document glass for scanning a single document. It has extensive compatibility through PCL® 6 and BR-Script3 emulations. Plus, with its built-in 802.11b/g wireless network interface you can easily share the MFC-7840W with others in your office too.



FEATURES: MFC-7840W

- 5-in-1 monochrome laser printer, scanner, copier, fax & PC-Fax
- Built-in wireless networking to easily share the unit among many users
- Fast black and white laser printing
- High quality output even at top speed
- Extensive compatibility with PCL®6, BR-Script3 (Postscript®3) emulations
- High quality flatbed colour scanning
- Full-featured fax capability with a 33.6Kbps modem fax with broadcasting and auto-dialing
- Compact, fits almost anywhere
- User-friendly software with easy installation
- Interactive help software
- Easy-to-read backlit LCD screen
- Cost effective, with high-capacity replacement toner cartridges
- Machine-lifetime toll-free technical support

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