

From: Ben Baston
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To: Authentication Summit
Subject: E-mail Authentication Summit-Comments

To: Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, Room 159-H (Annex V), 600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC

My background and occupation is small computer systems consultant. My activities include intense contact with end users of microcomputers and small to medium sized networks. During this calendar year, computer end user complaints have related almost exclusively to exploitation of Microsoft products by successful and increasingly professional spamming support efforts. The following comments are based on my professional role in computers, dating back to mainframes in 1963, and my current exposure to affects on end user systems running Linux and Microsoft operating systems..

Authentications Comment:

Please do not consider authentication solutions which allow any party to even theoretically charge a fee or toll, in any of your recommendations. Such an attempt by Microsoft Corporation has just been rejected by the IETF, and to revive or support Sender ID will certainly serve to detract from benefits from this Summit.

Source Identification Comment:

Input from Internet experts on detecting and tracking Microsoft exploits should be very valuable in terms of detection and tracking sources of spam e-mail.

Legal Deterrent Comment:

All exploited systems I have seen have run Microsoft Windows (95, 98, 98SE, Me, NT, and XP). I am not aware of any spam exploit based on Linux in south Arkansas. In my opinion, Microsoft has been incredibly negligent in marketing a product (the series of Windows operating systems) which has enabled spam e-mail to reach its crippling proportions. During this year, Microsoft has not made its products secure, despite much publicity and "updates" to users.

Considering the negative impact on the users of the Internet, I would be negligent if I did not note that it seems very appropriate to require commercial offenders to be fined based on number of spam e-mails originated by the commercial vendor's end-user products. These fines could be awarded on a grant basis to non-commercial individuals whom, by their authorship of current software, have demonstrated a likely ability to produce sophisticated mixtures of approaches, all under the GPL, which will not impede participation in e-mail as a free public resource.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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