From: Daniel Wyand
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To: Authentication Summit
Subject: Privately Held Authentication Schemes

At the upcoming Email Authentication Summit, there will no doubt be a strong push by many vendors for the FTC to stand behind their product. However, any product that relies on privately held intellectual property is destined to fail.

A solution that contains private intellectual property will enable the IP owner to essentially hold major email hosts (such as yahoo, hotmail, and gmail) for ransom. Even if the IP owner were to enter agreements before ratification with current email hosts, it would freeze out new public email hosts and stifle innovation and competition.

Furthermore, the already large and rapidly expanding segment of email users who operate free and alternate operating systems will likely be left out in the cold. In addition, many users who insist (right or wrong) that software must be free will also refure or be unable to adopt a standard involving privately held IP. These non-adopters will still present a large target for mass emailings, preventing an authentication system from effectively wiping out spam.

Even with moderate adoption, while some end users are protected, the greater problem of massive wasted bandwidth is not addressed. The only effective solution is one that could be adopted by the vast majority of email users, regardless of country, language, or operating system.

At the upcoming summit, please pay close attention to the negative effects of privately owned IP on a standard intended to have almost global implementation. Authenticated email will solve countless headaches, as well as save millions of dollars worth of bandwidth. Please do not ratify a standard crippled with privately owned intellectual property.

Thank you,
Dan Wyand