Organizing the Resistance: Fighting Spam Together
by M. E. Kabay, PhD, CISSP
Associate Professor, Computer Information Systems
Norwich University, Northfield VT

There are many organizations dedicated to fighting spam. One of the best known is CAUCE (The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email). This volunteer organization has been lobbying actively since 1997 for extension of the laws covering junk fax (never as big a problem as junk e-mail, but still a problem in the 1980s) to junk e-mail. There are international affiliates of CAUCE for those outside the USA who want to join the fight. Topics on the Web site include

- Latest News
- About the Problem
- Pending Legislation
- How YOU Can Help
- FAQ
- CAUCE In The News!
- Info for Congress
- Info For Media
- Who is CAUCE?
- Other Resources
- Spam Incidents
- True Tales of Spam.

Another useful site is JunkBusters, which has useful links about the problem and about legislative efforts to fight junk.

A particularly controversial organization is the MAPS (Mail Abuse Prevention System LLC) RBL (Realtime Blackhole List) which is dedicated to providing ISPs (mostly) with the information needed to block e-mail from organizations that send spam. In particular, the RBL is used to help ISPs identify open spam relays – SMTP servers that do not require identification and authentication to send e-mail through them from outside their home network. Such unprotected servers are ripe pickings for the criminal spammers who cheerfully send out millions of messages through other people’s equipment without permission. Not everyone likes the RBL, though, since being put on the list means that many ISPs will block all e-mail coming from a compromised system (see the NetSide rant listed in the references). Topics on the home page of the RBL include

- End User information on the RBLSM.
- Our rationale for the MAPS RBLSM.
- Reporting spammers to the MAPS RBLSM team.
- How to get into the MAPS RBLSM.
- How to get out of the MAPS RBLSM.
- How to use the MAPS RBLSM to protect your network.
- Some of the sites that use the MAPS RBLSM.
- Products that incorporate MAPS RBLSM features.
- Look up an entry on the MAPS RBLSM.
Trace the route from the RBLSM server to someplace else.
Why doesn't MAPSSM reply to my e-mail?

* * *
For further reading:

CAUCE <http://www.cauce.org/ >

JunkBusters <http://www.junkbusters.com/ >

MAPS RBL <http://mail-abuse.org/rbl/ >

NetSide Corporation attack on MAPS <http://www.dotcomeon.com/ >

* * *

MSIA:  18-month online Master of Science in Information Assurance offered by Norwich University; see <http://www3.norwich.edu/msia > for full details.

M. E. Kabay, PhD, CISSP is Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Information Systems at Norwich University in Northfield, VT. Mich can be reached by e-mail at <mailto:mkabay@norwich.edu>; Web site at <http://www.mekabay.com/index.htm >.

Copyright © 2003 M. E. Kabay. All rights reserved.

Permission is hereby granted to Network World to distribute this article at will, to post it without limit on any Web site, and to republish it in any way they see fit.