

## **How E Mail Tracker Programs work, Junk mail etc**

This information is from a computer tech who spends a lot of time clearing the junk off computers for people and listens to complaints about speed. All forwards are not bad, just some. Be sure you read the very last paragraph!

By now, I suspect everyone is familiar with snopes.com and similar sites for determining whether information received via email is valid.

### **Validation is VERY IMPORTANT!!**

1) Any time you see an email that says "*forward this on to 'X' people*", "*sign this petition*", "*you'll get bad luck or good luck*", "*you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it*" or whatever, **DO NOT SEND IT ON!!!** it probably has an email tracker program attached to it.

This program tracks all of the email addresses that the message is sent to and reports them back to the person who originated it who is then able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails or sell to other spammers.

Even when you get emails that demand you send the email on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus it is email tracking, and they are playing on your conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses just as long as they get them.

Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease "*how would you feel if that was your child*" email tracking. Ignore them and don't participate!

2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. This type of email are **NEVER** valid, they are only sent for one reason! To get names and email addresses for telemarketers and spammers to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes.

You can do your Friends and Family members a **GREAT** favor by sending this information to them. You will be providing a service to your friends. And you will be rewarded by not getting thousands of spam emails in the future!

Do yourself a favor and STOP adding your name(s) to those types of listing regardless how inviting they might sound! Or make you feel guilty if you don't! It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more.

You may think you are supporting a GREAT cause, but you are NOT!

Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later and very possibly a virus attached! Plus, we are helping the spammers get rich! Let's not make it easy for them!

ALSO: Email petitions are NOT acceptable to congress or any other organization - i.e. social security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "signed signature" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers.

USE BLIND COPY (BCC) instead of TO when sending multiple recipients emails. BCC does not create a header. (All those email addresses you see at the top of an email message sent to multiple addresses)

Please consider using BCC for all your outgoing email to protect your friends' privacy (by denying the scammers and hackers access). Thanks.

If enough people follow these tips, it will work I have been doing this for years, and I get very little junk mail anymore

Here is a top ten list of sites where you can validate information you get that I found on [techrepublic.com](http://techrepublic.com) . However, from over a decade of experience my rule of thumb is just don't do it. You'll rarely if ever see me forwarding anything. I refuse to be part of the problem.

1. [Snopes](#)- Who hasn't heard of Snopes? This is the grand-daddy of all fact-checking sites. Some of the worst chain spams even quote Snopes with an embedded link to give their e-mail an added level of authenticity. Of course, Snopes has been known to be wrong and has changed their listings on several occasions. They've also become very commercialized and include lots of pop-ups over the years - very annoying - but it is a very complete site.

2. [About Urban Legends](#)- This about.com subsite has been hosted for ten years by David Emery and frankly, he has done a great job. He is passionate about finding and debunking all those rumors, myths, pranks and odd stories. I have found lately that I am referring more people to his

site than Snopes because I like the format better. The site also shows up in more Google searches than the others indicating that the content is well linked and used.

3. [Break The Chain](#)- In 1999, John Ratliff was annoyed that he kept receiving the same chain spams forwarded to him over and over. I have been just as annoyed for just as long but he did something about it. Like most of these sites, John has plenty of healthy advertisements but no pop-ups. His site is getting more professional looking all the time. He is also frequently cited by the media when looking for an authoritative source on these stupid chain mails.

4. [Hoaxbusters](#)- The site has been around a long time (since 1995) and has a good archive but doesn't seem to be as current as it once was. It is a part of the US Department of Energy - Computer Incident Advisory Capacity (CAIC). Chances are that if you cannot find details of a hoax on one of the other sites, you may be able to find it here. Because it has been around so long there are some dead links. Hoaxbusters also contains a page of links to other hoax sites.

5. [Sophos](#) - This anti-virus company keeps a small list of hoaxes and urban legends but it is not nearly as complete as the sites at the top of this list. Their focus is more on virus hoaxes -you know, the ones that scream that you will wipe your hard drive and melt the motherboard if you open the suspect e-mail.

6. [F-Secure](#) - They claim that their list is comprehensive and the industry standard source for all things hoax related. Don't believe it. If you click on their list of latest hoaxes you'll see that it hasn't been updated for a few years. However, it is still a good list to search if you don't find what you're looking for elsewhere.

7. [VMyths](#)- Well referenced by specialists in the computer security field, VMyths takes Internet hoaxes and chain letters to a new level. If you want to read what the real experts have to say about Internet hoaxes, virus scares, myths and legends, get it from Rob Rosenberger at VMyths. Unfortunately, their lists are not comprehensive.

8. [Symantec](#)- I have a love-hate affair with Symantec. I use their products but I've been burned by them several times lately. That's a story for another

post. Their hoax list is pretty good but seems a little dated. Maybe that's because most hoaxes today are really recycled from earlier hoaxes.

9. [Trend Micro](#) - They have improved their list lately with some good updates. I like their style and formatting. Obviously a company that sells AV solutions has a vested interest in keeping their hoax list up to date. Check out their complete list of urban legends. It has some entries that I have not seen elsewhere.

10. [Virus Busters](#) - A short list from the University of Michigan of hoaxes and legends that keep coming back. Like the U of M, I have not seen a lot of new hoaxes lately they are almost all repackaged oldies. The list is not intended to be comprehensive but is a good reference point for what you will see on a regular basis.