

# **Making the Most of the Internet**

**And the Other Less/More Important Things in Life**

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## The Cover

The images on the cover of this book are a collection of pictures that I have mainly taken myself.

From the top they are; the PACE 231R analog computer at ICI Plastics in Welwyn Garden City (taken by Colin Aaby), Lucy the basset, the City of London, the author at the Temple of Artemis in Delos, the BBC's web site, the second best car in the world, George on a trike, the monument to Peter the Great in Moscow, the Daisy MI home page and the Roman amphitheatre at Verona.



## Preamble

Over the years, I have noticed that a lot of my clients and friends do not use the Internet to its full capability. They can send and receive e-mails, browse web pages, perhaps do a bit of shopping, but many have not fully embraced the technology. Many too have not added the protection to their computers to stop spam, offensive e-mails and criminal frauds.

So I started a series of notes that allowed clients, friends and family to understand the Internet better.

These notes have now grown into a book.

This has been designed to help you navigate the shark-infested swamp that the Internet has become, so that your business and personal life is made much simpler, less stressful and is considerably improved.

In the book, I have also deliberately avoided expensive solutions and methods, as there are enough people selling you this type of wasteful solution. A lot of the methods chosen are not only very good but free!

The book is arranged in three main sections :-

- A simple narrative that explains the various functions of the Internet and how you can use them to advantage. I also attempt to predict how the Internet will affect us all in the next few years.
- A series of appendices describing hardware, useful web sites and other major topics.
- An A-Z index of more detailed techniques, problems and explanations of all that jargon.

Although it is intended to be simple and understandable to all, the book is not aimed at idiots or dummies. It is aimed at those who feel that for the health of their business or the improvement of their personal life, they need to understand and embrace the wonderful technology of the Internet.

The first incarnation of the book is published on Lulu, which is a self-publishing Internet site at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).

As I believe in these new technologies, could I publish it anywhere else?

**James Miller**  
1st June 2006

## How to Read This Book

This may seem rather a daft section in a book, but I realise that not everyone has time to sit down and read it from cover to cover.

I intended that the first part of the book be read almost as one would read any non-fiction book. Then as required you would dip into the Index and Glossary for more information.

But some won't have that amount of time. So I suggest you do or not do the following :-

- You should at least read the first two Sections; Introduction and The Basic Internet, so that you know what the book is about.
- If you suffer badly from spam, then you must read Sections 3 and 4; Spam and Spam and How to Fight It.
- Especially read the comments about Outlook 2003 in Section 4.13.
- Section 5 describes some of the more serious problems of the Internet and can be ignored by those in larger organisations and other companies, where others look after the endless scams and threats. But ignore this section at your peril!
- E-Mail and Searching the Internet are important and both Sections 6 and 7 should be read. 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.5 are the most important.
- If you want to integrate text or SMS messages to your e-mail, then read Section 6.9.
- Marketing, discussed in Section 10, is most important, if you are selling something.
- I would also suggest you read Section 11, The Future, and especially where it impacts with your business or home life.
- And if nothing else look at the Golden Rules in Section 12.

I would also suggest that you dip into the Index and Glossary.

If you don't find something that you think is important then please send an e-mail to me at [james@MakeMostInternet.com](mailto:james@MakeMostInternet.com).



## 1. Introduction

*“The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware.”*

*Henry Miller*

Judging by this quotation by one the America’s greatest writers, I suspect he would have enjoyed the Internet. He certainly enjoyed all of the pleasures of life.

But, most people’s Internet use is limited to browsing web pages and sending and receiving the occasional e-mails. Some may shop and others join groups and forums, but most restrict their use to the basic functions.

This is like using an expensive and sophisticated 4x4 for just doing the shopping at Tesco!

People are missing one of the simplest and most powerful ways of broadening their business and personal life.

## 1.1. What Is the Internet For?

I'll start by looking at what the Internet is for and at what it is good :-

- Access to boundless information.

A lot is very useful, but frankly of all the billions of pages that have been uploaded, many are complete or very opinionated rubbish or even downright pornography.

- The ability to easily and quickly add more information to this resource to make it even more comprehensive.
- Being able to communicate quickly and virtually free with anyone who has an e-mail address, anywhere in the world.
- Distribution of software, such as computer programs, music and games electronically.
- The Internet has lots of special interest forums. If you have an interest, there will be a forum! These are typically called groups, when they are hosted by Yahoo and MSN.
- Purchasing and selling of goods and services from groceries, clothing and lingerie through hotels to airline and theatre tickets.
- Don't forget eBay, who created a whole new market with on-line auctions.
- One of the latest fads is blogs or weblogs. These are best described as on-line personal diaries.
- The Internet is now dipping its rather heavy big toe into voice and telephony.
- You can also use the Internet to create global networks of computers. As a very simple example, you can use your home computer to access your work network.
- You can also add some of the more unusual and sometimes dubious services such as gaming and gambling, pornography and internet dating.

I should also add publishing. This book is being published using an on-line web site called Lulu.

How many of these things do you actually use the Internet for?

See: *Blog; Downloading; eBay; Group; MSN; Shopping; Yahoo*

Web: *<http://www.lulu.com>*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.2. What are the Drawbacks?

Sadly with all good things, there are some drawbacks :-

- Web sites that you probably don't want to know about.
- Spam or unwanted e-mails, selling everything from dodgy bank loans and spurious share tips to illegal copies of films and everything you really won't ever need.
- Hackers who try to login to your computers, in order to read your files and confidential information.
- Criminals who try to get you to part with your money through a variety of methods like fake lotteries, dead dictators bank accounts, appeals for non-existent charities and the so-called "phishing" scams.
- There is also the fact, that many people don't trust the Internet, won't use it or don't embrace it properly. So you get frustrated trying to contact people and companies who should move to the Internet age.

All of these are avoidable. Except possibly the last!

Providing you take a few simple precautions, hopefully you will not get into trouble.

I would expect that your life will be enriched and more fun!

*See: Hacker; Phishing; Spam*

### 1.3. This Book

This book has been designed to help you navigate the shark-infested swamp that the Internet has become, so that your business and personal life is made much simpler, less stressful and is considerably improved.

I have also deliberately avoided expensive solutions and methods, as there are enough people selling you this type of wasteful solution. A lot of the methods chosen are not only very good but free!

The book is arranged in three main sections :-

- A simple narrative that explains the various functions of the Internet and how you can use them to advantage.
- A series of appendices describing hardware, useful web sites and other major topics.
- An A-Z index of more detailed techniques, problems and explanations of all that jargon.

## Making the Most of the Internet

But above all when you are dealing with the Internet, be sceptical on the one hand and adventurous on the other.

My father, Wilfred Ewart Miller (Jimmy to everybody), was a printer and book-binder, and his strong views on how information should be shown are imprinted on my mind and used in this book.

He would have liked the fact that the book is intended to be spiral bound or in a ring binder, so that you can lay it flat by the computer and still be able to type with both hands. The Internet version on Lulu will be spiral bound.

All manuals and 'How To Do It' books should be that way!

Note that the main part of the book was written in Word, with the cover being designed using PowerPoint.

*See: Lulu; PowerPoint; Wilfred Ewart Miller; Word*

### 1.4. The Web Site

This book is paired with a web site, which will be updated as and when new techniques are found, and web sites move and change.

The home page of the site is at :-

<http://www.MakeMostInternet.com>

The Web Sites page in the site contains links to all web pages mentioned in both the main text and the index.

*Web: <http://www.MakeMostInternet.com>*

### 1.5. The Blog or Weblog

Updates to the book, tips and useful links, will be posted on the web site from time to time in the form of a blog or weblog.

Go to the web site and select Blog from the menu.

*Web: <http://www.MakeMostInternet.com>*



## 1.6. At Whom Is the Book Aimed?

The book has been made deliberately simple and I have tried to avoid jargon as much as possible. If a word, such as font or server, is introduced then you should look it up in the index.

It is aimed at various groups and classes of people :-

- **Small Businessman or Lone Professional**

Many of my friends fall into these two categories and many of them are extremely frightened of the Internet. They have a right to be, as if they don't embrace it, much of their business will be destroyed.

Hopefully, this book will help them avoid this and actually expand what they do and improve their productivity.

- **Senior Managers**

Many senior managers have a blinkered view of the Internet, as their access to it is often controlled and limited by so-called IT (computer) professionals, who believe in strong nannying.

Remember too, that most DP professionals love spending company money on expensive solutions, when a simple low-cost or free solution would be more than adequate and might even be very much better.

You will always be a better manager by thinking laterally and very differently and not rejecting those radical solutions that are anathema to the more conservative.

- **Home Users**

These are fast becoming the biggest group of computer users in the United Kingdom. They are also the most alone and unsupported.

They are also the ones at whom most of insidious Internet scams are aimed. Many have suffered quite a lot financially.

If I can save some of these people, many of whom are on limited means, from these criminals, writing this book will have been worthwhile.

- **The Stressed**

This includes many of us.

But how many of us are that way, because we don't work in a smart way, that fits properly into the jigsaw of life?

## Making the Most of the Internet

As an example, can you read and reply to your e-mails from any computer anywhere in the world?

Just think, how if you could, this might enable you to change your work pattern, to travel to work outside the rush-hour and avoid unnecessary trips to the office to pick up important documents.

- **The Computer Semi-Literate**

Many have only reached a basic level in computer usage. They can write documents, process spreadsheets, send e-mails and browse the Internet.

This book has been designed to open their eyes to the next level, so that they can improve their business and/or personal lifestyle.

But above all, I've written this book, so that instead of seeing the Internet as some fiend to be frightened of, you will regard it as a very powerful friend.

### 1.7. Freedom

This book is also about freedom.

My father was born in 1904 and told me how he was there when Oswald Mosley tried to take his fascists through the East End of London. Mosley failed and the story has been hijacked by the Left as their victory. But it was a victory for all those correct-thinking people who were there from all shades of political opinion.

Like my father, I'm slightly to the right of centre and believe in free enterprise, light government, free trade and even a certain amount of free movement of people from one country to another. (I can't object to the latter as my family tree is littered with displaced Jews and Huguenots!) But above all I believe in freedom for all people, to think the way they want and say what they want, provided that they don't preach violent, racist, sexist, homophobic and other views that the vast proportion of us find objectionable.

The more freedom we have to think and ultimately do what we want to better ourselves and others, the more the world will develop to the benefit of all.

How many dictatorships have been successful at anything other than repressing, starving, torturing and executing their people and making war?

Look at the list of countries that don't allow free access to the Internet, such as Burma, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, China and Iran to name but five of the worst offenders.

Do you think of them as free societies? Or ones where you would like to live?

The Internet used properly and without hindrance, will become the driving force of that freedom.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.8. The Author

I was born and brought up at Cockfosters in North London, just after the Second World War. Despite a conventional education at the very good Minchenden Grammar School in Southgate, I probably learnt much more in my father's printing works in Wood Green. (Few woods and certainly not green!)

I started programming and being fascinated by computers in 1965, when I went to Liverpool University to read Control Engineering. (As an aside, if politicians followed a few of the rules I learnt then, the world would be a much better place! But how many have any training in anything useful!)

Since 1972, I've been independent and have developed several large computer systems both for specific applications and companies. The jewel is Artemis, which I wrote in 1976 and completely redefined project management. It is still going strong today after many changes of ownership.

According to the current web site, Artemis now has over 600,000 users.

Not bad for something that was once described as ephemeral and unlikely to last more than a few years, by a local politician.

I now work with the verification, analysis and visualisation of databases, using a family of software products called Daisy. I also use my extensive knowledge of computers and especially the Internet to help companies and individuals come to terms with the changes that are happening to their businesses and lifestyle.

My wife, Celia, who is a practising barrister, and I, live on our thoroughbred stud in Newmarket.

**Warning** – I can be dogmatic and bloody-minded.

*See: Artemis; Control Engineer; Daisy; Minchenden Grammar School*



## 2. The Basic Internet

*“To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong  
about other countries.”*

*Aldous Huxley*

Aldous Huxley is right!

I've travelled a great deal and the various preconceptions you have before visiting somewhere are always wrong. Now I always travel using the Internet first, so that I don't miss the unusual, the spectacular and the different.

I will start this section by going through the myriad functions and places of the Internet in more detail.

Starting with connecting to the Internet, I'll show you web pages, news, groups, lists, chat rooms and all of the everyday features of the Internet.

Many of you will already be competent users of the Internet, so feel free to skip parts or all of this section.

## 2.1. Connecting to the Internet

There are two basic ways of connecting to the Internet :-

- Dial-up where you use a normal phone line and a simple modem to dial an access number for connection.
- Broadband where you use a special connection over a phone line or cable network to connect to the Internet. Broadband is usually permanently connected.

There are other methods, such as permanent high-speed lines, satellite connections and wireless (wi-fi), but they are outside the main scope of this book.

They are discussed in the index.

Sadly in many areas of the UK, broadband is not readily available. However, within a couple of years, except for some very remote areas, this will be rectified.

Broadband is to be recommended for several reasons :-

- It is many times faster than basic dial-up.

The typical dial-up speed is about 56Kb/sec, whereas BT and many others offer typically 1Mb/sec and in many areas 2 Mb/sec. These figures will be out of date very soon!

This speed makes so many applications faster and more feasible. If you take the case of browsing web pages, this can be up to ten times faster, which may in itself save you a considerable amount of time in your home or business life.

- Broadband is much more secure and resistant to nearly all dialling scams. The latter scams can often cost you a fortune if you are still using a dial-up connection.

Often the broadband connection comes with a built-in firewall and other security measures.

- Broadband also has a fixed cost, which is typically around £15-20/month. For dial-up you pay as you go and often a lot more than that!
- Ignore permanent high-speed lines and satellite connections as these can be very expensive, unless you have a very large amount of Internet traffic.
- Broadband is always permanently on, which means that it is only a few moments to check e-mails or look up something you've just heard on the radio or seen on the television.

## 2. The Basic Internet

- If you need to connect to your work network from your home computer, then you will need broadband.

**Tip** – I would advise you get broadband, if it is available in your area.

**Tip** – Note that if you are upgrading from dial-up to broadband, it is often a good idea to speak to your current dial-up supplier first. In many cases all you will do is just change the hardware that connects you to your phone line.

See: *Broadband; Dial-Up; Firewall*

### 2.2. Browsing Billions of Web Pages

As I write this on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2005, Google says that it is searching 8,058,044,651 web pages. This number will be out of date by the time you read it. That is over eight billion of which they know. How many billions more are out there, that they don't know about?

The amount of information, that is now being searched, processed and catalogued by Google, MSN Search and many other search engines, is the greatest information resource in the history of mankind.

Remember that information is power. Why is it, that in the Middle Ages, it was only ever in the hands of the Church and a few selected scholars?

I bet Gutenberg, Caxton and the other printers, who were at the forefront of the first information revolution, got a lot of opposition. One thing that printing did was to fuel the opposition to the Catholic Church, by disseminating the works of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

Just as today the Internet is seen by many as a conduit for opposition to the established order! Would Martin Luther be a terrorist in the eyes of the Catholic Church today, if it still had a monopoly on Christianity?

So treat what you read on the Internet with caution.

Look at the web site where it is displayed. Do you trust the organisation or company who put up the information? Do you know of and trust the author?

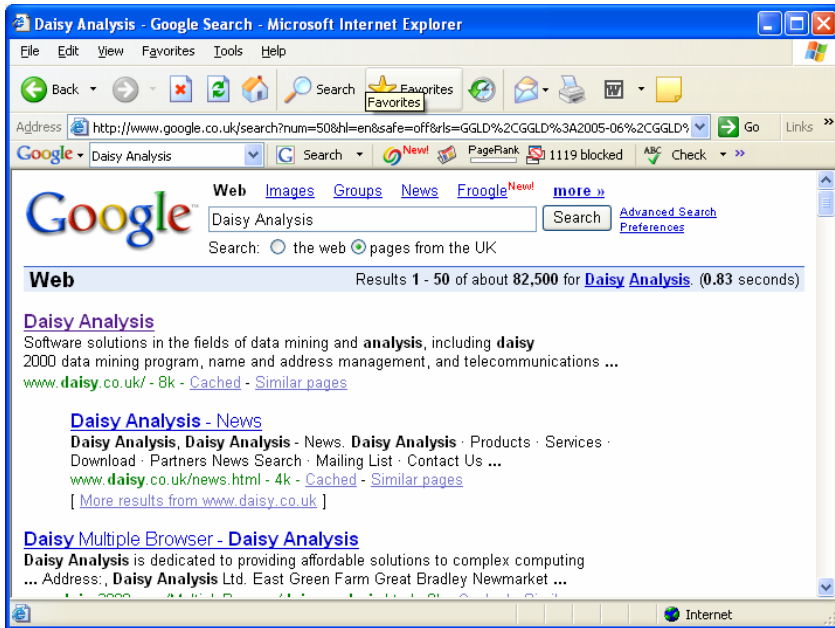
But never shy away from that great wealth of knowledge that will change and enrich your life.

See: *Google; MSN Search; Search Engines*

Web: *<http://www.google.com>; <http://search.msn.com>*

## 2.3. Search Engines and Searching

You probably know how to use a search engine, such as Google, to search for the information you want.



This is a search for my company Daisy Analysis.

Note how I have a Google toolbar installed to make searches easier. It also has other functions and uses, such as blocking pop-up windows and filling in Internet forms, with my details, such as name and e-mail address.

Google is my preferred search engine and also the most dominant. For these reasons, most of the examples in this book use Google. The techniques work just as well with other search engines such as MSN Search, Yahoo and AltaVista.

As with many things, the search engine you use is just a matter of personal taste.

As searching is so important it is described in detail in Section 7.

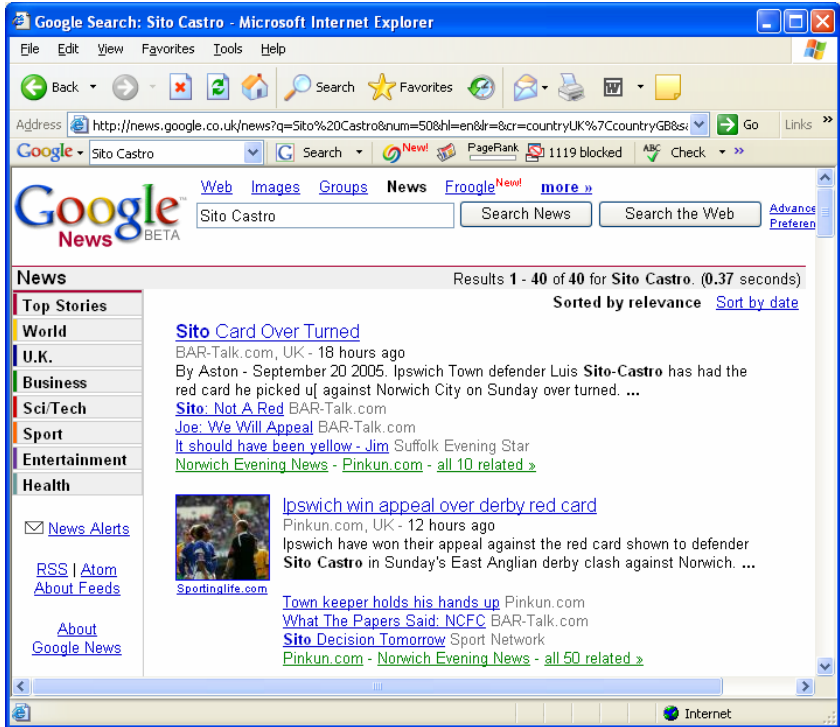
See: *AltaVista; Google; Google Toolbar; MSN Search; Search Engines; Yahoo*  
Web: *http://www.altavista.com; http://www.google.com; http://search.msn.com*



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### 2.4. News

The Internet is a rich source of news and all search engines can search the latest news so that you can track a story.



Here I've searched Google News for Sito Castro, who was one of Ipswich's defenders in 2005-6. He was sent off in the East Anglian Derby with Norwich for a foul, which didn't happen. The red card was later overturned on appeal.

Note that stories generally appear in Google News in a few hours, so the site is quicker than a newspaper.

You also get a wide range of views from a variety of different angles, which often put stories into a real perspective. So perhaps news on the Internet is not for the narrow-minded of this world.

There are also a lot of good free news sites. Some are run by reputable newspapers, such as The Times, Telegraph and Guardian, and others by broadcasting organisations like the BBC and ITN. I use the BBC to track stories, especially when atrocities, such as the London tube bombings, are unfolding.

See: *BBC; Google News; News, Range of Views*

Web: *http://news.bbc.co.uk; http://news.google.com*

## 2.5. E-Mail - True World-Wide Communication

E-mail is the first affordable world-wide communication system.

It also has many other advantages over mail and telephones :-

- Generally it is very reliable and can reach the most inaccessible places.
- E-mail is the best way of having a conversation with someone, who is in a very different time zone. How many times have you been woken in the middle of the night, by a phone call from a friend in America or Australia?
- As many people always check their e-mail first thing in the morning and last thing at night, it is often the quickest way of getting in touch.
- E-mail is generally free once you have a subscription to the Internet, so it is a strong cost saver in communication.
- As e-mail can be used to send any file as an attachment, it is the simplest way of sending pictures, music and computer documents.
- E-mail can also be anonymous and very difficult to trace. This leads to all sorts of uses concerned with intrigue, gossip, affairs of the heart, crime and terrorism.

Stick to the first five!

But above all, e-mail does not cost anything above the cost of your subscription to the Internet.

**Warning** – Don't underestimate the power of e-mail or be distracted by Luddites and the obvious and annoying pitfalls.

The golden rule of e-mail is to use it professionally and how you would any more traditional communication. Make sure the words are good, understandable and spelt correctly, the recipient knows who you are and they can reply easily to your message.

**Tip** – Think of an e-mail as a letter without the paper.

Later in Section 6, I will show you how by expanding and improving your use of e-mail, you can make a great difference to your personal or business life.

### 2.6. Buying and Downloading Software

For the last few years, all of the software I write has been distributed electronically.

The advantages to me as a software developer are :-

- Electronic distribution is much cheaper as there are no boxes, packaging and CD to make.
- I can sell on a world-wide basis without any distribution network.
- Any savings can be passed on to customers as lower prices, which make my software more competitive.
- I actually believe that I lose less software to theft, as I have a rigorous security code procedure. But also as no-one has a nice, friendly box, they can't copy it!
- Updates are so much easier to control, as anybody who has a registered copy of the software, can download a new one at any time.

The latest software installation systems actually tell you when your software is out of date and load a new copy if requested.

- I can also allow customers to access the next version of software before release, so they can help with the testing.

Many of these also mean that my customers benefit from lower prices, instant access and timely updates. We mustn't underestimate the environmental benefits of minimal packaging either.

**Important Note** - If a company sells a million copies of a piece of software, which is packaged with 0.1 Kg of paper, then this will require 120 trees.

It should also be noted, that operating systems, virus protection software and other programs, that need to be updated on almost a daily basis, are almost useless if that updating is not done automatically over the Internet.

I set both my Windows XP and virus protection to update in this way.

So we all win at all levels from electronic software delivery.

In a couple of years, no software will ever be delivered in any other way.

See: *Conservatree; Software, Downloading*

Web: *<http://www.conservatree.com>*

## 2.7. Music Downloading

Music is a tricky one.

As with software, music delivery can be totally electronic especially to the new generation of players, such as iPods.



Electronic downloading should be the saviour of the music industry, but it may not be, as the computer company, Apple, has hijacked it with the iPod and the music site, iTunes. Apple has no music of its own but they do have one of the best players.

On the other hand, downloading does have some perceived disadvantages, which discourage people :-

- Many people like to have a CD so they can play it in any number of locations.
- They also like music to fit their existing stereo systems at home and in the car.
- We're all used to having something tangible for music. A CD or to some a vinyl LP are one thing, but a file on a computer disc?
- Not everyone knows how to burn a CD or transfer files to their iPod or MP3 player.

## 2. The Basic Internet

- Others like the whole package of the music and like an album to have sleeve notes.

But the biggest disadvantage has been the slowness and downright opposition of the music industry to embrace the downloading of music.

This encouraged the creation of all sorts of illegal services to allow file sharing between users, which completely bypassed payments and copyrights.

In the traditional area, Amazon and others have moved into the selling of CDs and DVDs. You have access to an immense catalogue, can order easily on-line and don't have to suffer the extraordinary décor and noise of the typical store.

The stores have totally managed to alienate everybody over twenty-five.

**Warning** – Music is not the only case, where the computing industry and the Internet have combined to completely force restructuring.

There will be many other cases in the future.

Look for instance at the low-cost airline business.

Airlines, like Go, Ryanair and easyJet, have rewritten the rules and cut out the travel agents.

*See: Amazon; Apple; easyJet; Go; iPod; iTunes;  
MP3; Music, Downloading; Ryanair  
Web: <http://www.itunes.com>*

### 2.8. Games

I know nothing of computer games, never having played a one in my life.

But the principles are the same as for software and music.

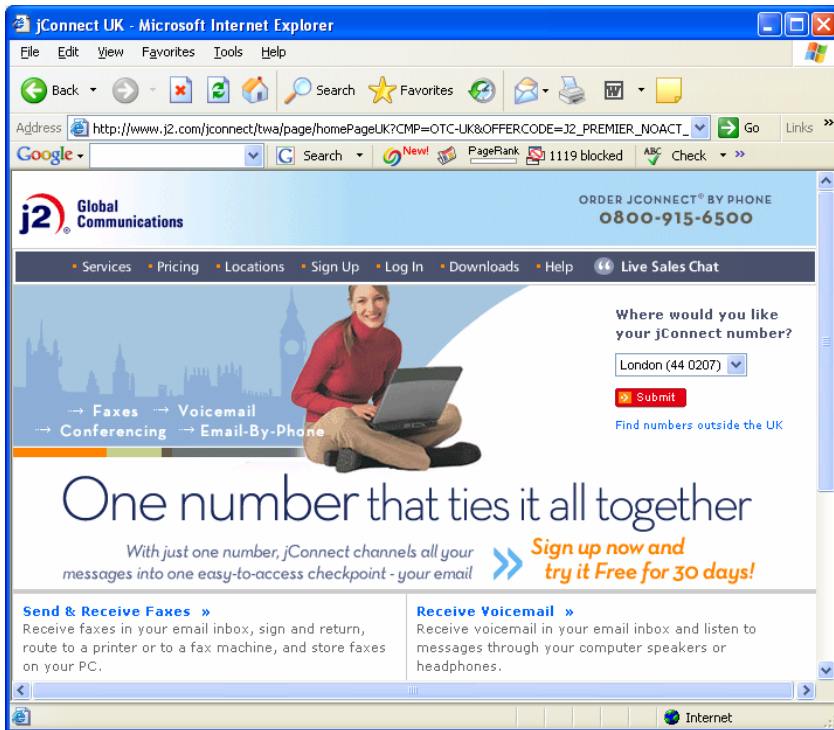
The Internet also gives the opportunity for multi-player games. Hence the emergence in the last few years of poker rooms and on-line bridge!

## 2.9. Fax Replacement

Why do you still have a fax?

It is very easy to sign up to services, like J2, which deliver faxes to your e-mail as documents you can view and print. Costs for services are often free and others where you can send faxes are just a few pounds a month.

Compare this with a typical dedicated fax line that costs upwards of ten pounds a month, just for the connection. Don't forget the cost of ink used to print unwanted faxes.



The cheapest and easiest solution is to use a free electronic fax to receive calls and send your faxes using your old fax machine on your normal voice phone line.

For those who can't be bothered to use e-mail to receive faxes an interesting alternative is starting to emerge from companies like Vonage. In their system, your standard fax machine is connected to a phone line which runs over broadband. You should see no difference in the use of the fax, except that you won't see any charges for the phone line.

See: J2; Vonage

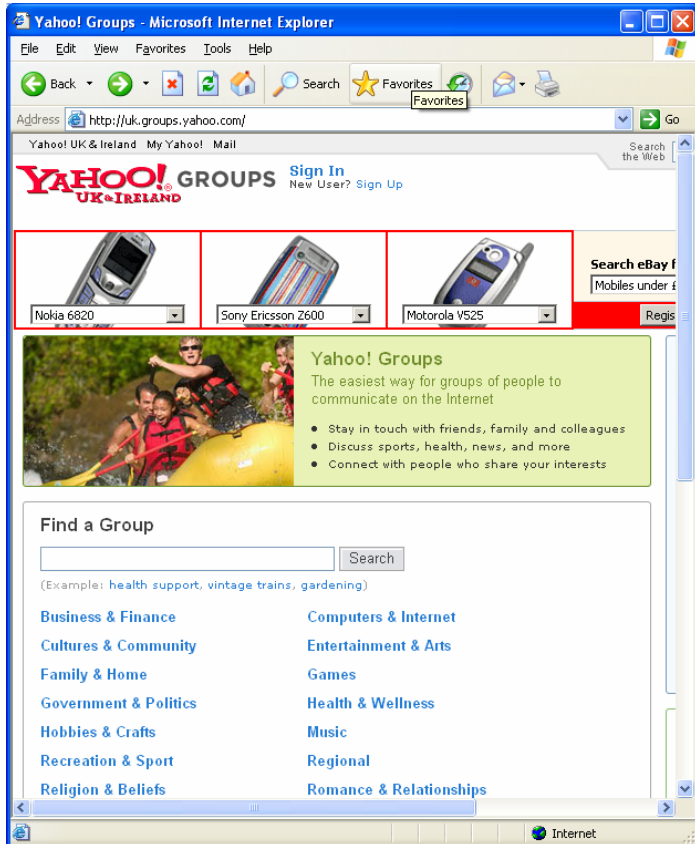
Web: <http://www.j2.com>; <http://www.vonage.com>

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### 2.10. Groups and Lists

Most of us have lots of interests, except perhaps those who want to be miserable.

Groups, such as those hosted by Yahoo and MSN, are the ideal place to find like-minded individuals who share those interests.



Lists are similar but use older technology and are server based. They are gradually being changed to groups.

I belong to several groups and lists :-

- I am a coeliac, which means that I have an intolerance to gluten found in wheat, barley and rye. Basically, I can't drink beer and eat bread and pasta. But I can drink wine, cider and whisky!

I have joined two Yahoo groups, one in the UK and one in Australia that are for people who suffer from the disease. I have found these invaluable for advice about how to cope with my problems.

## Making the Most of the Internet

- I abhor the death penalty.

So I belong to a list that distributes information on how to fight this cruel relic of the past.

Join and you will realise what an injustice is performed on the poor, the illiterate and the disadvantaged in countries, such as China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

- I have formed a group on Yahoo for fans of the influential singer-songwriter Dory Previn.
- Another group is also for previous employees, users or just hangers-on for Artemis. This was the project management system that I wrote in the 1970's.

I should say that most groups are pretty small and fairly inconsequential.

But others, such as those connected with coping with disease, have many members and play an important part in the lives of their members.

If you wonder, then there are actually groups in Yahoo for the seriously miserable.

So no-one is left out!

**Tip** – Join a group for your hobby, passion, profession, phobia or illness.

*See: Artemis; Coeliac Disease; Group; List; MSN; Yahoo*

### 2.11. Book Publishing

I have to declare some vested interests in this one. My father was a printer and I always love the look, feel and even smell of the printed page.

A web site called Lulu has now been created, which allows anybody to publish any book they want. Some may think that this just appeals to the vane and the egotistical. But it seems to be the ideal way to publish short runs books or those that appeal to a select group of people, either in a very local area or worldwide.

Lulu will be one of the routes, or more possibly the only route, to be used to publish this book.

*See: Lulu*

*Web: <http://www.lulu.com>*



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### 2.12. On-Line Auctions

This is the classic example of what the Internet is good at.

In 1995, eBay created an on-line auction site, where you could buy and sell virtually anything for only a small commission. It now has millions of buyers and sellers world-wide.

**Tip** – Learn how to use eBay to get rid of all that surplus you have lying around the house, attic and garage.

You will be very surprised what sells and the price for which it sells! You will also be surprised at what doesn't!

An interesting aside is that the provisional copies of this book were printed on a fairly ancient Hewlett-Packard 4500 colour laser printer. It is a very good printer, but the cartridges can be expensive at about eighty pounds each. I now buy them on eBay at about half-price, as many people have spares they will never use, as their printer has passed away.

All the cartridges I have purchased have been brand new and in an unopened box. So no complaints either!

See: *eBay*

Web: *<http://www.ebay.com>*

### 2.13. Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging

Thought of as very much one of the interests of teenagers and perhaps some of the not-so-nice parts of the Internet, but in fact they can be a useful part of your business or pleasure.

Both Yahoo and MSN have an extensive series of chat rooms and they are very much linked to the groups hosted by those companies.

In a chat room, you login and can then type in messages, which others in the room can read. In some you can chat on a one to one personal basis with other people in the room.

I've used them to chat about horse racing and football and others are there for any subject you can think of. As with groups there are also a lot of subjects of which you've never heard.

Instant messaging is a sort of cross between a chat room and e-mail. You can tell when anyone on your private list is on-line and then initiate a chat with them. Think of it as a private text-based telephone system.

As with chat rooms, instant messaging has rather a bad reputation in some quarters. It has been involved in cases of child abduction and suicide pacts, but again if used properly it can be a very valid Internet technique.

As an example, I've used instant messaging to help someone setup my software in the United States. A long phone call would have been much more expensive.

As I write this, I'm having a three-way conversation with a friend who's in an Internet café in Nairobi and a mutual friend in South Africa. I'm also trying to arrange a meeting with my son, George, and one of his clients.

*See: Chat Room; Instant Messaging; MSN; Yahoo*

### 2.14. Shopping

Shopping is becoming one of the most important uses of the Internet.

I have just bought a new long-reach hedge-cutter.

I didn't buy it over the Internet, as I wanted to make sure I bought it from someone who would service it if it went wrong. But I did do all the research on what I needed on the Internet and found what the best price should be.

I was able to buy it at a very keen price from my normal supplier, partly because, I didn't waste his time on the purchase.

On the other hand, my wife and I buy a tremendous amount directly from the Internet :-

- Bed-Linen
- Books
- Car Parts
- Dog and Cat Food
- Childs Clothing
- Computer Hardware and Software
- Fridges and Washing Machines
- Furniture
- Groceries, Meat, Fish
- Light Bulbs
- Music
- Shirts, Skirts and Trousers
- Shoes
- Swimwear
- Underwear and Lingerie

In most cases we've got better prices and a lot more convenience. We've not had any problems with delivery, service or fraud.

I would suspect that sixty percent of the purchases we make are now on-line.

## 2. The Basic Internet

The things we don't buy on-line are those where you need to make a choice; fresh vegetables, fruit, fish and meat, clothes for work or a special occasion, beds and other furnishings etc.

But as with the hedge-trimmer, the Internet is increasingly becoming the place of research for the goods we need.

**Tip** – Use the Internet before you make a major purchase to research prices, availability, quality and reliability.

*See: Shopping*

### 2.15. Holidays, Flights, Hotels and Car Hire

The Internet is revolutionising travel.

Who would want to be a travel agent these days, when you can create your own package holiday on the Internet, for less than you can buy it in a shop?

My wife and I have bought our holidays for the last few years, virtually exclusively on the Internet. The exceptions have been those that are very long haul and specialised.

Any problems?

No! In fact, quite the reverse!

In summer 2005 we went to Greece and booked a hotel in Skiathos. Not only did we get better value than those in the same hotel who had booked a package, but we got a free room upgrade. I suspect that the reason was that we were actually paying the hotel more for our room, than the tour company.

We also booked everything in an hour on one wet Sunday afternoon.

The only problem with booking hotels is the large number of consolidation sites that are trying to get your business.

**Tip** – With hotels, why pay commission, when you can talk to the hotel directly?

**Tip** – With flights, check the refund and transfer conditions and all those hidden charges beloved of certain airlines.

## Making the Most of the Internet

One of the most useful holiday web sites is Trip Advisor. We always use it to check out resorts and hotels before we book. It is surprising how often that wonderful four-star hotel by the beach is in reality a two-star separated from the beach by a motorway and a building site.

*See: Car Hire; Ferries; Flights; Hotels; Trip Advisor*

*Web: <http://www.tripadvisor.com>*

### 2.16. Theatre Tickets

If there is one blot on Internet shopping, then it's theatre tickets.

At the time of writing, I wouldn't bother!

If I want to see a popular show in London, often the Internet sites will say that no tickets are available. But go to the theatre box-office and you can usually get returns for the show you want.

That is not good enough! Especially, as they always charge a booking fee!

### 2.17. Gambling and Gaming

This is becoming one of the largest and most important sections of the Internet. Just look at how many football teams are sponsored by on-line gambling companies!

Some of the sites are also some of the most pointless.

For instance, what sane person would spend hours playing fruit machines on the Internet. We all know that there can only be one winner.

But on the other hand, I do bet on horses using a betting exchange on the Internet. Here you can play punter or bookmaker as you want and you test your judgement against others.

We will see tremendous growth in Internet gambling and gaming over the next few years.

Some like the Americans will try and stop it, mainly to protect their own gambling industry in places like Las Vegas and Atlantic City. They will fail!

**Warning** – All gambling can be addictive, but nowhere more so than in the privacy of your own home after a few drinks.

*See: Betting Exchange; Gambling*

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### 2.18. Genealogy and Family History

The success of Friends and Genes Reunited show how the Internet can actually create and promote an application or pastime.

I've found two sets of cousins, that I didn't know I had.

I've also found some interesting cases of living in sin! And we're always told things were so demure in Victorian times.

*See: Friends Reunited; Genes Reunited*

*Web: <http://www.friendsreunited.co.uk>; <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk>*

### 2.19. Blogs or Weblogs

A blog or weblog is best described as an on-line journal or diary, that the creator updates periodically.

Many are complete rubbish.

But in every pile of rock, there are always a few nuggets.

The classic blog is Belle du Jour which describes itself as the diary of a London call girl, which has now been published as a book. Whether it is fact or fiction is a subject for discussion in the British press, from The Times down to The Star.

It's quite well written, but like most blogs it is very boring.

My blog is boring too! And it doesn't have any sex!

There is also a blog for this book on the web site for the book. Just Click Blog on the Making the Most of the Internet web site.

**Tip** – Write yourself a blog! You'll learn a lot about Internet publishing. It is also a good way to publicise what you do. They are very easy to create.

*See: Belle du Jour; Blog; Blog, Creating*

*Web: <http://www.MakeMostInternet.com/mtmblog.html>*

### 2.20. Pornography

No review of the Internet is complete without a mention about pornography. But it is not compulsory to look at it!

Note too that almost everything that is worse than what you'd get in W. H. Smith or any other reputable store usually has to be paid for.

So if you don't get your credit card out, it is unlikely you'll see anything that you can't see on a beach, a cinema or in a tabloid newspaper.

There is a lot of spam trying to sell access to pornographic web sites, but the amount of this nature seems to be decreasing, even if spam as a whole is increasing.

**Tip** – If you keep your spam and virus protection up to date, you can avoid most of the excesses of the Internet.

## 2.21. Viruses, Spyware, Malware and Ransomware

Whatever you call them, they are nasty programs, written by vile individuals that either make your life hell or cost you money in any number of insidious ways :-

- Generally, a virus is a program that infects your computer, does malicious harm and tries to replicate itself on other computers with whom you communicate.
- Spyware tends to be much more passive, but it reports your actions to a third party.
- Malware is a contraction of malicious software.
- Ransomware is a new phenomenon, which encodes files on your computer, so that you can't read them and then blackmails you for the key to unlock them.

Many assume that the only method of getting infected with these programs is through e-mail.

Never underestimate the methods that can be used :-

- Pop-up windows for some very dubious gambling and pornographic sites are often designed to download viruses.
- Free screensavers are another route used to get you infected.
- Even some web sites have their methods of downloading viruses and spyware.

They all illustrate the need for virus and spyware protection that is fully enabled and updated every day.

See: *Malware; Ransomware; Spyware; Virus*

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### 2.22. Spammers, Hackers and Other Criminals

These crooks are the curse of the Internet. Protection against them is a matter of having the right software installed and also applying common sense.

The golden rules of protection are :-

- Install a reputable virus protection system. You should also keep it updated.

I prefer McAfee. However, I've recently changed to AVG as for virus protection alone, they are more affordable.

- Install software to look for spyware.

I use Windows Defender from Microsoft. It's free at present, too!

- Make sure your firewall is enabled.

Later versions of Windows have a built-in firewall, as do many broadband modems and routers.

- Be very wary about any e-mail that asks you to login to your PayPal or bank account. Many are fake sites that are there to steal your money.

- Back up all your important files to a secure backup device or a CD-ROM.

The next three sections describe protection in greater detail. You must get this right, before you expand your use of the Internet.

**Warning** – There will be worse scams and threats in the future, so always keep your protection up to date. Your protection company, such as McAfee, will also keep you informed of these new and sinister developments.

*See: AVG; Backup Device; Firewall; Hacker; McAfee; Modem; PayPal; Router; Spam; Spyware; Virus; Windows Defender*

*Web: <http://www.grisoft.com>; <http://www.mcafee.com>; <http://www.paypal.com>; <http://www.microsoft.com>*

### 2.23. Internet Banking

It may surprise many that I don't trust on-line banking, when I'm so in favour of all the other features of the Internet.

I am very wary of this type of banking and other than PayPal; I only have one on-line bank account. The reason I use that bank is that it uses a security system, which I believe is an order of magnitude better than others I have seen.

## Making the Most of the Internet

Many may trust Internet banking! But I don't!

The reason is that in general I don't believe banks do enough to protect accounts.

For instance, there are always stories about how money has been removed from accounts at ATMs or cash-points without the holder's knowledge. The banks also have a reputation for never paying out in such cases.

I may take another look at Internet banking, when they put in extra security to combat the so-called "phishing" scams. Incidentally, I have never had such a scam for the bank that I use. Perhaps, that says something about their security.

In these scams you are sent an e-mail, which asks you to click on a link to login to your account. Usually, it says something about changing your password or checking security. The link takes you to a fake site, which is designed to collect your user name and password.

Once you enter it into the fake site, all of your money will probably be removed immediately from your on-line bank account.

**Warning** – If you use a bank that has a simple login system that enables you to be easily fooled, then you should change your bank account.

Banks could do several things to improve security :-

- Every time you go to your banking site, it should welcome you with a phrase that you have entered into your profile at the bank.

Many sites, like PayPal, store a small file called a cookie on your site, so that they know you have accessed the home page. The next step of displaying the entered phrase is very simple for a web site to be programmed to do.

It should do this before you login, so that you know that it is a fake site, as this will not have access to the current information.

Every time you changed this phrase, you would be increasing your security.

- I have just looked at the home page of several of the UK's most well-known banks. Not one mentioned the cut in base rate that happened the day before I wrote this.

A financial news area updated every day would help identify the fake sites.

- When you login, you should again be greeted by a phrase that you have entered.



## 2. The Basic Internet

- Similarly, every time you enter, you should be given a visit number and details of the last time you visited the site.

If you kept these in a diary or other document, you would immediately know whether someone had interfered with your account.

- Banks should also identify themselves better in e-mails that they send to you.

Perhaps, your phrase should be returned and every e-mail should be numbered.

These precautions or others like them are not difficult to implement.

So why aren't banks thinking seriously about security?

When they think seriously about it, then I'll think seriously about moving completely to Internet banking.

You may well ask why I'm happy to shop on the Internet, but not bank.

The reason is simple.

If someone uses my credit card fraudulently, then the issuer has to get to the bottom of every complaint, otherwise they won't get paid by me. I'm also insured.

But if the money has been removed from my bank account, the banks aren't suffering a loss. I am!

*See: Banking; Cookie; PayPal; Phishing*

*Web: <http://www.paypal.com>*

### **2.24. Financial Products and Services**

Financial products and services, such as insurance, pensions, share dealing and many others, can all be purchased and managed on-line.

This will increasingly be the norm for those simple purchases such as travel, car and term insurances and also for the management of pensions and share portfolios.

One of the advantages of shopping on-line for such things as insurance is that it is very easy to compare prices, terms and conditions before purchase.

*See: Car Insurance; Insurance; Stocks and Shares; Term Insurance; Travel Insurance*

## **2.25. Internet Telephony**

This will be one of the big growth areas of the next few years and I will return to it later.

The trouble is that with most systems you can only phone someone, who has the right equipment. But the call is free!

I am fairly sure that technology will evolve that will completely merge the Internet and telephony. Some solutions, such as BT Fusion, which is a mobile phone that can also use a landline, are going very much that way.

*See: BT Fusion*

## **2.26. Webcams**

On-line cameras or webcams are not new and have been around since 1994, when some computer scientists at Cambridge connected up a camera to watch their coffee pot.

The BBC web site has a guide to webcams all over the UK.

*Web: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/webcams>*

## **2.27. Conclusion**

This has only been a brief tour of some of the basic functions of the Internet.

Many people only ever surf the information and send the occasional e-mail. That is fine, but it is often worthwhile joining a group concerning your business or hobby. And it's certainly a good idea to use the Internet to go shopping and book a holiday.

In the next three sections, I'll talk about spam and the other problems of the Internet.

Then I will talk about how you can make the most of the Internet.

### 3. Spam

*“Like almost everyone who uses e-mail, I receive a ton of spam every day. Much of it offers to help me get out of debt or get rich quick. It would be funny if it weren't so exciting.”*

*Bill Gates*

Spam is the real curse of the Internet and that is why I'm dealing with it first.

Unlike Bill Gates, I don't find it exciting. I find it a complete pain! He can have mine any time he likes.

Spam is flooding the Internet with many copies of the same message, in an attempt to force the message on people who would not otherwise choose to receive it. Most spam is commercial advertising, often for dubious products, ridiculously over-egged stocks and shares, get-rich-quick schemes, or quasi-legal services. Spam costs the sender very little to send -- most of the costs are paid for by the recipient or the carriers rather than by the sender.

The best estimates say that there are fifteen billion spam e-mail messages a day. In a year, this is about 5,475,000,000,000 messages a year. If they were all printed on single sheets of paper, they would stretch for 547,500 kilometres or about fourteen times round the earth.

This section discusses why you get spam and what it is.

How you eliminate it from your computer is described in the next section.

### 3.1. Categories of Spam

Spam comes in a lot of forms.

Some spam e-mails are completely innocuous, others are annoying, some are disgusting and a small proportion is insidiously dangerous.

Some of the most common categories of harmless spam e-mails include the following :-

- **Fake Home Loans and Mortgage Offers**

I get about twenty offers of home loans every day. All in dollars! And all from the States or at least aimed at that market!

Don't they have laws against this sort of thing? But at least they're harmless.

- **Prescription and Other Medicinal Drugs**

Or should I say mainly one class of drug! Most of these e-mails are aimed solidly at the States.

Again they're harmless, but some might find them embarrassing.

One interesting point is that a large minority are selling pharmaceuticals from Canada, at a lower price than that available in the US. Does that say something about the greed of the healthcare industry?

- **Share Pushing and "Pump and Dump"**

There is always someone pushing some worthless stock. Again all aimed at the States!

I thought that this "Pump and Dump" scam was illegal according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Again they're harmless, unless of course you make a large investment.

- **Fake Qualifications**

These seemed to have almost stopped, although I still get an occasional one suggesting I get an MA or be ordained from some obscure college of which no-one has ever heard.

A pity they've stopped as I always wanted to enrol one of our basset hounds as a preacher!

## Spam

- **Fake Products**

When I was young in the 1960s it was all snide Omegas. Nothing changes, except that now it's fake Rolex. And everything else you think you might want!

You obviously get what you pay for!

- **Gift Cards**

I used to get a lot of offers of free gift cards to places like Wal-Mart, Starbucks and McDonalds. Numbers have dwindled in the past few months.

I doubt that these are promoted by the companies, as they come from very obscure e-mail addresses.

**Tip** – If these spam e-mails annoy you, then don't buy products from the companies mentioned.

- **Cheap Software**

I get lots of offers for cheap software.

Nearly all is unlicensed and I suspect a lot may not work or actually get delivered.

- **One-Off E-Mails**

The last group are one-off e-mails that I get asking me to use their web services, graphic design and other services. They obviously come from a purchased e-mail list that was created by a spammer, as the sending e-mail address bears little resemblance to a real one.

At least they're being fairly prudent with the number of e-mails they are sending.

There are also two main groups of spam that can be described as mild to seriously offensive :-

- **Political Spam**

Recently, I've started getting political spam. Most seems to come from the far right with quite a racist bias, but I've also had spam protesting about the war in Iraq, by sending images of bombings and atrocities.

There are a lot of quite frankly offensive political web sites across the whole political spectrum from outside the far left to well beyond the far

## Making the Most of the Internet

right. There are also a lot of fundamentalist religious web sites, which seem no matter what the barmy philosophy being espoused, have the same objective of world domination. Or world annihilation!

Didn't Adolf Hitler have the first goal? And he might have had the second!

But at least I don't have to visit the web sites! Whereas with spam, as it's often well disguised, I have to at least check it.

- **Pornography**

About fifteen percent of all spam e-mails I get are peddling pornography.

Two trends seem to be happening; worst forms of pornography seem to be declining rapidly and many now just appear to be a simple link to the web site.

So although they are offensive, they actually cause less trouble and offence than they did a couple of years ago.

If something really offends, then report it to the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation).

Lastly there are the dangerous ones that can get you into trouble or remove money from your bank account :-

- **Nigerian (419) Scams**

These have been around for years, but they still manage to extract millions of pounds, dollars and euros from mugs all over the world.

They usually ask you to help transfer money from the bank account of a dead dictator's wife, brother or son, oil company executive or corrupt civil servant out of the country.

They always ask you to send money up front.

Don't even think about! And certainly don't ever do it!

If you feel you must report it, then tell the police. But don't even bother to report it to the country where it came from. No action will be taken!

**Tip** – Never contact these people in any way! Ever!

Note that this type of scam is called a 419 scam after the relevant Nigerian criminal code.

## Spam

- **Phishing**

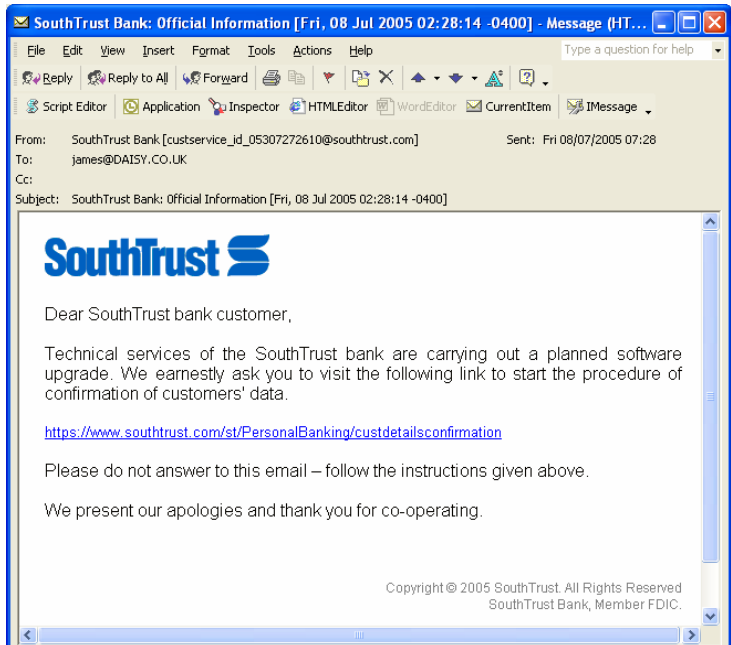
This is the process of trying to get users to enter their banking or other financial details into a look-alike web site, so that a criminal can obtain them.

If you give this important information to the web site, then you will find that all your money will quickly disappear.

One interesting point about this type of scam is that the e-mails tend to come in batches. For two months, I had nothing but e-mails purporting to come from one UK bank and now this has stopped, but I'm getting similar messages supposedly from another.

That to me, says that there are generally only a small group of these scammers, but they are highly sophisticated and very dangerous. If there were more than one group targeting a particular bank, then the e-mails wouldn't stop and start so suddenly. And why should they stop on one bank and then start immediately on another?

A typical scam aimed at a US Bank called South Trust is shown.



In some ways, "phishing" scams are their own worst enemy, as we now all get quite a few from banks we don't use. So hopefully we are alert.

But the best policy is to read any e-mails you get from your on-line bank, but never ever click the link in them! If you are worried, always phone the bank before logging in to the web site. If enough of us phone, then they might do more to catch the scammers.

- **PayPal Scams**

The most targeted bank or financial web site used to be PayPal. They have now tightened everything severely and I get few e-mails intended to break into my PayPal account. It just shows how, if you increase security the criminals go elsewhere.

They never send e-mails with a login link and always instruct you to login by typing [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com) into a clean browser.

It is good advice.

**Tip** – As a further protection, I only keep a few pounds in my PayPal account, always transferring the surplus to my High Street bank.

Which is NOT on-line!

- **eBay Scams**

eBay scams fall into two categories; those that are after your login and password and others where they try and defraud you by saying you haven't paid for or sent goods.

Remember that all genuine e-mails from eBay include your login name, which is not the same as your e-mail address, so if it doesn't contain both or they aren't correct, then the e-mail is probably fraud.

Valid e-mails can also be found in the Messages section on eBay. If they aren't there, it's fraud.

If you are still unsure of the validity of an e-mail from eBay, then forward it to [spoof@eBay.com](mailto:spoof@eBay.com) or [spoof@eBay.co.uk](mailto:spoof@eBay.co.uk). eBay will tell you if it is acceptable or not.

**Tip** – Assign a different e-mail address to PayPal and eBay for when they communicate with you. So if it's not that e-mail address it's fraud.



## Spam

- **Lottery Scams**

This is a variant on the Nigerian scam and says that you have won a prize in a lottery. It's funny, but I've never won any contest without entering it!

Some are quite clever and even send you a cheque that looks good but of course bounces.

**Tip** – So as with the Nigerian scams don't do anything about them!

- **Purchase Scams**

This one can be quite a difficult one to spot and it was tried on me when I wanted to sell a car through Auto Trader.

A guy from outside of the UK says he wants to buy the car and will send his agent in the UK round with the payment.

He may or may not be genuine, but there is a simple procedure that sorts the honest buyer from the crook.

Just say you want a complete address and you will not release the goods until the payment has cleared your bank. Don't even accept a bankers draft without confirmation from the issuing bank!

The guy, who tried it on me, never replied to my last e-mail, so I suspect he was not a genuine purchaser. The e-mail address was at Yahoo, which is often in cases like this, a simple indication of the buyer's intentions.

Some of the scams in this last group are very dangerous.

**Warning** – This list of dangerous scams will grow. So be aware!

If you need to know more, I would suggest you visit Internet Scambusters at [www.scambusters.org](http://www.scambusters.org) or Stop Badware at [www.stopbadware.org](http://www.stopbadware.org). Both have an on-line newsletter which can keep you up to date with the latest and most dangerous scams.

**See:** *Auto Trader; Bankers Draft; Drugs; eBay; Internet Scambusters; IWF; Nigerian Scam; PayPal; Phishing; Pornography; Pump and Dump; Securities and Exchange Commission; Stop Badware*

**Web:** *<http://www.iwf.org.uk>; <http://www.sec.gov>; <http://www.scambusters.org>; <http://www.stopbadware.org>*

### 3.2. Thoughts on Spam

Here are just a few thoughts about all of these scams and the fifteen million unwanted spam messages.

According to the US Census Bureau there are nearly 6.5 billion people on this planet. So we get two and a half messages sent every day for everyone there is! If we assume about a billion Internet users, then everyone gets an average of fifteen messages :-

- Now if every one of these messages takes an average of ten seconds to deal with and this costs just a penny in terms of time and extra hardware and software, then the world-wide cost is about £55 billion every year.

This estimate is probably on the low side as a lot of spam messages are destructive and cause severe computer problems and hence are much more expensive to fix.

How far would this money go in fixing the world's problems?

- It is a good idea to check out the Zolob virus to see how destructive viruses can be!
- Consider too the affect of spam on the fight against terrorism.

If spam were eliminated or even seriously reduced, then the number of messages would drop by perhaps seventy or even eighty per cent.

Wouldn't this make it a lot easier to find e-mail messages that had a criminal or terrorist connection?

- Many companies and individuals refuse to have anything to do with the Internet because they do not want to deal over an insecure medium that propagates filth, fraud and other scams. Eliminate spam and many more people will embrace the good parts of the Internet.

Would there also be environmental advantages in using e-mail instead of a letter?

You can also see that if we all fight spam and eventually reduce it, then this will help everyone in a lot of positive ways.

**Important Note** – Ninety-nine percent of all e-mails I get are spam. Admittedly, I log everything and have in the past tried to attract spam, but it is just too much!

See: *Zolob*

### 3.3. The Anti-Spam Manifesto

So we must all be vigilant about spam. We must detect it, fight it, report it and above all never respond to it!

We must also make sure we don't send out messages that could be construed as spam!

### 3.4. Bush, Blair, Putin and Zemin

What are these worthies doing to fight spam?

I remember Blair's launch of the first e-Czar. Huh! What happened to him? He went back fairly quickly to Australia. Why?

Could it be that these leaders of the world don't really like e-mail?

After all, the Hutton Inquiry showed that e-mails get recorded, whereas conversations do not. Now if they used e-mail all the time and were averagely proficient, they might start to think seriously about stopping this curse of spam.

Or could it be that George Bush doesn't want to curb the excesses of the spammers in his own country, as this is against free speech? Or did they give him a big campaign contribution?

What about my freedom not to receive unwanted rubbish from the States?

For my point, I will not visit the United States until they get serious about curbing global warming, abolishing the death penalty and stopping spam.

As an aside here, perhaps if enough of us wrote to the various Embassies complaining about the rubbish that emanates from their countries something might be done to curb it.

After all, if the US Embassy got say 200,000 letters a week complaining of spam, the only beneficiary would be the Royal Mail.

And I wonder how long it would be before the US clamped down on their own criminal spammers!

See: *Blair; Bush; Hutton Inquiry; Putin; Spammer; US Embassy; Zemin*

### 3.5. Why Me?

Having got that rant out of the way, let's find out why we get spam.

Remember in order for you to receive a spam message, spammers must first get hold of your e-mail address.

They do this in several ways :-

- Special programs called harvesters search every page on the Internet for e-mail addresses.
- If you post to a legitimate group on the Internet, you may often find your e-mail address posted in their archives.

Again these get harvested.

- When you register a domain name, some spammers detect this and send e-mails to obvious addresses for the domain, like info, webmaster and support.

Note that some companies who handle registrations have been accused of passing new domains to spammers. So beware, if the registration company doesn't seem quite right.

- Some viruses are designed so that your e-mail address and all the others in your address book are sent to a spammer.

This also means that if one of your friends or correspondents gets infected, then the spammer gets your e-mail address.

- Spammers also generate e-mail addresses for domains that may have a sequence of account names.

Thus, you might get e-mails to a102, a103, a104 etc. at the same domain.

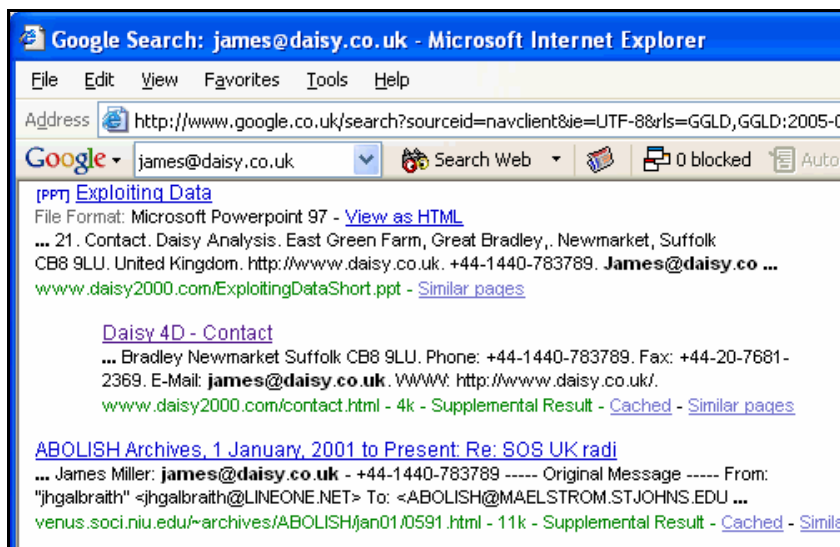
- Sometimes they even do it semi-legitimately by buying a list from a company, who decides to sell on your name, address and e-mail address.

They probably shouldn't, but just think why do you get all that junk mail from the postman?

See: *Domain; E-Mail Address; Group; Harvester; Spammer; Virus*

### 3.6. Looking for Spam Causes

As a simple test to show, that even I have got it wrong myself, I did a search using Google for my e-mail address, james@daisy.co.uk.



Oh! Dear!

The first was found in a PowerPoint presentation, the second in a web page and the third on a group against the Death Penalty that I belong to.

Not good at all!

But it does show how easy it is to propagate your e-mail address all round the Internet, so that it can be harvested by spammers.

Note :-

- You can also search for all e-mail addresses on a domain, by using "@daisy.co.uk" in Google. The quotation marks are used to tell Google to look for the whole string.
- My wife, Celia's, e-mail address has not been compromised and harvested. She doesn't get any spam!

I would suggest that you check out your e-mail address in this way.

See: *E-Mail Address; Google; PowerPoint; Searching, E-Mail Addresses*

### **3.7. Conclusion**

In this section I've shown what spam is, what types of spam there are, and how we get it.

In the next section, I'll show how to take precaution.

## **Web Site Index**

This book is paired with a web site, which will be updated as and when new techniques are found, and web sites move and change.

The home pages of the site is at :-

<http://www.MakeMostInternet.com>

The Web Sites page contains links to all pages mentioned in both the main text and the index.

If there are any updates to the book, these will be posted on the web site.

Watch the blog on the web site too!





## **Notes**

My father hated people writing on the books and catalogues he printed, so he always put a section for notes at the end.

I agree with him!



## Notes



## Notes

## Tailpiece

Every book should have a happy ending.

I found this picture on the Internet at [www.jdhodges.com](http://www.jdhodges.com). I believe that it was taken on a beach in Hawaii.

It is shown in full colour at <http://www.jdhodges.com/photos/8586>.



It is reproduced by kind permission of the photographer, J. D. Hodges.

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I hope you enjoyed the book!

**James Miller**