

# Finally - New Spam Prevention Product That Works!

By Lee Traupel

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Businesses and consumers are drowning in a never-ending deluge of Spam (junk mail) - according to reports just released by Quris, Inc. Spam has increased 450% from June of 2001 to now. Furthermore, 70% of respondents indicated they are receiving so much e-mail in the form of Spam that it's negating their acceptance and responsiveness to legitimate opt-in e-mail messages (permission based). The average business user is forced to spend 20-30 minutes a day wading through Spam clogged e-mail in-boxes trying to separate legitimate e-mail from the junk in order to delete the latter.

Many companies have tried to offer Spam solutions that are based primarily on filtering technology. But, most of these products and services have not worked well in practice - the ingenious spammers have learned work arounds by constantly changing their fake e-mail addresses and text to avoid the blocking filters. It's been a war of attrition to date and the spammers have been wining so far!

I am pleased to report that one company has developed an elegant but simple solution that has blocked 100% of the Spam that was sent to me during a test period of five days. The company is DigiPortal Software, Inc. [www.digiportal.com](http://www.digiportal.com) and their Spam killer application is called ChoiceMail. It works extremely well, is easy to setup and only costs \$29.95 (introductory price) and they even offer a fourteen-day trial period for no charge to test drive the product. And, the solution runs on your desktop and does not necessitate your working with a third party server and doesn't require any service charges. Most importantly, it puts the burden of proof on the Spammers, forcing them to have your permission to contact you.

Here is how DigiPortal's clever solution and software work: You download or purchase the software and install it on your PC (sorry PC version only right now) and setup your approval list by exporting your address book. From that point forward ChoiceMail automatically assumes all inbound e-mail is Spam and it blocks any e-mail that is not on an approved list that you have created.

If the e-mail sender is on your approved list it makes it through to your inbox; if not, then ChoiceMail blocks the mail address and adds it to a rejection list and sends the sender a notification that you're on a "permission network" and that he/she has to click through to a web site and send you a message by filling out a form that automatically forwards the person's message to you, so you can elect to receive it or not.

DigiPortal is effectively acting as a trusted middleman in a process that reminds me of PGP ("Pretty Good Privacy") the defacto industry standard e-mail security application that incorporates a similar process via a key held by a trusted third party. You're ostensibly guaranteed never to receive any

Spam based e-mail as spammers will never receive your e-mail, let alone reply to it - most use automated systems that have no human intervention in the process. It's relatively painless for you to manage new contacts - if you're receiving in-bound e-mails from a new a person (contact) that you have no existing relationship with, it's easy to accept his/her request to reach you and the software also automatically updates your permission list.

ChoiceMail is an elegant solution that works well, is easy to use and solves a problem very cost effectively. There are a few hiccups with the software - but, these are minor when you consider the significant benefits of the product and assuming the company will broaden its support for other applications in the near term. At present DigiPortal only works with standard ISPs such as Earthlink, ATT, etc. and with specific desktop clients including Outlook Express and Eudora - no web-based e-mail services (HotMail or Yahoo mail) work with the software yet and there is no support for AOL at present. My biggest complaint is that they don't support a standard Outlook e-mail - you have to manually import your contact list from Outlook, which can be painstaking depending on the number of recipients in your address book. And, their initial focus is on the small business user or consumer, as they offer no support at present for the corporate enterprise.

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