

[espc-dcrrc] Interesting Deliverability Article on Spamhaus from Magill Report

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## Someone's BSing: Spamhaus Clarifies Data-Services Firm Policy

<http://www.magillreport.com/Someones-BSing-Spamhaus-Clarifies-Data-Services-Firm-Policy/>

4/29/14

By Ken Magill

Four executives from four different companies contacted me in recent months to tell me they had been blocklisted by Spamhaus.

They also asked for advice on what to do. I think they suspected I may have some sway with Spamhaus. I do not.

Spamhaus maintains a list of what it deems to be sources of spam. Many email inbox providers use Spamhaus as part of their spam fighting formula.

A listing on Spamhaus generally results in serious email deliverability troubles.

I dismissed one of the executives who contacted me out of hand because he referred to Spamhaus on his website as "terrorists." I have seen actual terrorism [first hand](#) and don't have much patience for people who throw the word around so casually.

The other three companies, however, were interesting cases. They were all data-services providers who offer some combination of email appending and address validation—services anti-spammers don't generally approve of.

They all claimed not to have been spamming. Yes, people lie to me all the time. I get it.

Still, they were all small shops without the resources to spend on lengthy court proceedings.

"Why is Spamhaus going after these little guys and not the big ones?" I thought. "If they're going after data-services firms shouldn't they go after them all?"

I emailed Spamhaus chief executive Friday and asked him about this. He was kind enough to respond. Company names have been redacted.

Hi Ken,

If a service is selling 'e-pended' address lists, yes we do see that 'business model' as simply spam support and "spam support service" has always fallen under SBL policy. More-so if a firm is actively sending to 'e-pended' address lists it's hard to do that without spamming, which is why the practice itself is becoming illegal and is against MAAWG acceptable practices.

This is not the policy of 'one' of the Spamhaus team but of Spamhaus itself and has been policy for at least 10 years. One cannot guess at email addresses, consider the guesses as somehow "opted-in" and email to them without spamming.

That said, some firms perform what they call 'e-pending' only against "opted-in data" so there's a grey area. The ones you mention, [Two Very Large Data Firms] etc., appear to only use "permission-based e-pending". How exactly they do that is not for us to judge, all we see is that they do not hit our spamtraps. [Small Company] on the other hand was listed by us in the past for actually hitting our spamtraps with 'e-pended' mailings...

Sure, there may be many other firms selling e-pended address lists and operating in the blacker part of that grey area, but we are just too busy to go out looking for them. When they come on our radar, either by spamming, advertising list sales, selling spamware, etc., they get listed and always to well established well-published Spamhaus policy.

Steve Linford

Thing is, executives at all three at the companies claimed not to have been spamming. One of the executives claimed Spamhaus blocked the company's corporate IPs, but not its sending IPs. It stands to reason that if this company were to hit spam traps, it would have done so through its sending IPs where its data-services are performed, not through its corporate IPs.

Maybe all of the executives who contacted me about Spamhaus issues were lying. I do live by the credo: "If your mother says she loves you, check it out."

But maybe one or more of them is telling the truth. Is it possible one or more Spamhaus volunteers are being more zealous than Linford realizes? I have no idea how the listing process works so I don't know if that is even possible.

However, I figured I'd put out a call for sources to see what I get back and if any patterns arise.

If you believe you have been unfairly blocklisted by Spamhaus, I may want to hear from you.

I say "may" because if you routinely refer to Spamhaus volunteers as "terrorists," I don't want to hear from you.

If you think sending unsolicited email is a matter of free speech, I don't want to hear from you.

If you've been buying email lists, I don't want to hear from you.

If you're sending bulk, unsolicited commercial email, I don't want to hear from you.

But if you honestly believe you have hit no spam traps and that a Spamhaus volunteer has blocklisted your servers because he or she disapproves of your business model, please email me at [KenMagill\\_at\\_gmail.com](mailto:KenMagill_at_gmail.com).

You can talk to me off the record. I will reveal your name and company only if you allow it.

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