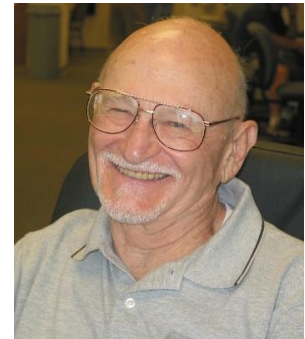


NOBODY ASKED ME BUT.....



.....I think that sometimes we are our own worst enemies. For example, we tend to judge others by ourselves. So when we are touted on to free apps and programs by magazine articles, well meaning friends and search engine links, we happily download them to our computer to use and enjoy - with the added premium that they are FREE!!!! Hey - I was as gullible as you so don't think I carry a natural immunity to these things. And I've learned my lessons the hard way. The whole purpose of this labor of love is hopefully to save you from some of the negative experiences I went through. So listen up.

What I learned is that you can't be too careful out there, which brings me to Schwartz's first law: TRUST NO ONE. With some very few stellar exceptions the internet is riddled with examples of the truism, "There's no free lunch". So if you are plagued with spam mail every day, know that you've been victimized by ignoring that law. It takes time, effort, energy and invariably some money to set up free offers that purportedly will enhance your computer's operations and free programs that will make your life more pleasurable on the electronic highway.

If labor and operational costs don't come directly from you and me they probably come from us indirectly and unknowingly. Are you being spammed mercilessly more and more? Odds are heavy that one or more of the freebies you installed sold your (and thousands of others') email address to the spammers. Has your trusty and faithful computer suddenly begun to act strangely, refusing to do certain things and/or doing things it has never done before? Odds are that one or more of those innocent downloads has corrupted your operating system. Sure, no OS is perfect and time does take its toll on the computer but if you've been adding those freebies....

My spam became so chaotic that I tried several anti-spam programs - to no avail. In fact, some of them were so involved that the cure was worse than the disease. Finally I gave them all up and did the only thing I had left in my arsenal and it WORKED! The miracle? I changed my email address. But that was just the beginning. I then severely and ruthlessly limited to whom I gave the new address: those in my personal address book; Web sites such as financial institutions, venerable businesses with secure sites and one or two more. Gone are the free greeting cards, games, casinos, newsletters, speed up your computer, enhance your whatever, Web sites, banned from my address book and FAVORITES folder forever.

I changed my email address in Nov. '03 and have resisted all temptations to give that address to the dozens of others to whom I had in the past. Number of spams I have received since then? ZERO - ZILCH-NADA - not ONE!!! And I eliminated all those buggy apps and programs by biting the bullet and reformatting my hard drive. No more strange behavior!

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