CyberSmart!®

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# Smart E-mailing

One day, Yukio gets this E-mail. Assuming it's a message from a friend, he opens it. Without much thought, Yukio clicks on the hyperlink. It takes him to a Web site showing photos that startle him. Not wanting his parents to see the pictures, Yukio tries to exit the site. However, new pages keep popping up. Finally, he quits his browser program and deletes the E-mail. Upset, he wonders if he did something wrong.

Yukio did not check the "From" address. What could this have told him?

**Subject:** It's party time!

**Date:** Sept. 17

**To:** YF3344@anymail.net

**From:** jerrymoore@thecommons.com

Dear Yukio,
Want to party with us? Click here!

_____

_____

_____

Yukio also wonders where the sender got his E-mail address. What do you think?

_____

_____

_____

How should Yukio handle E-mails from unknown senders in the future?

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## We've Got Spam for You

Thinking the E-mail must be from a schoolmate, Yukio was excited to get a party invitation. In his haste, he ended up at a site that would have upset his parents. Had he checked the "From" line, he might have realized that the E-mail was from an address he did not recognize.

The "From" line might not have told Yukio much more. That's because the sender was trying to trick him into opening the E-mail. The E-mail was from a company trying to sell things by sending out thousands of E-mails at a time. Such E-mail is called **spam.** Many spam offers sound too good to be true ("Make $10,000 a day from home!") and, usually, they are! Others may contain messages, pictures, or links to Web sites that are offensive. (Commercial messages sent by IM are called spim.)

These companies ("spammers" or "spimmers") don't know if you're an adult or a kid —everyone gets the same messages.They collect E-mail addresses and screen names from many sources, including chat rooms, message boards, and personal Web sites.Sometimes they just guess at E-mail addresses—and screen names too—and often, they're correct.

## Don't Reply to Spam

Don't reply to spam (or spim)—even if it includes your name. When you click to open a message, the computer knows your address is "live." This only encourages the company to send more messages. A more effective strategy is simply not to respond. Then you'll eventually be dropped from their "live list."

## Contact from Strangers

You might also get a message from a stranger. As you know, you can never tell if a stranger's intentions are good or bad. If a stranger contacts you, NEVER reply. It is safer to use E-mail and IM only with friends and family. If you want to exchange E-mail or screen nameswith someone you met in cyberspace, first ask your parents for permission.

**Be CyberSmart!®**

Prevent spammers and strangers from finding you:

- Don't include your real name in your E-mail address.
- Get a separate address just for chat and message boards.
- Use a chat screen name different from your E-mail address.


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## Spreading Viruses

Viruses are computer instructions that can damage your computer files. They're often spread by E-mail. Virus creators may make the E-mail look like it's coming from a friend or a real company. So, NEVER download a file unless you were expecting one from someone you know and trust. And never pass along funny E-mails or chain letters with attached files to your friends unless you know exactly what you're sending them.

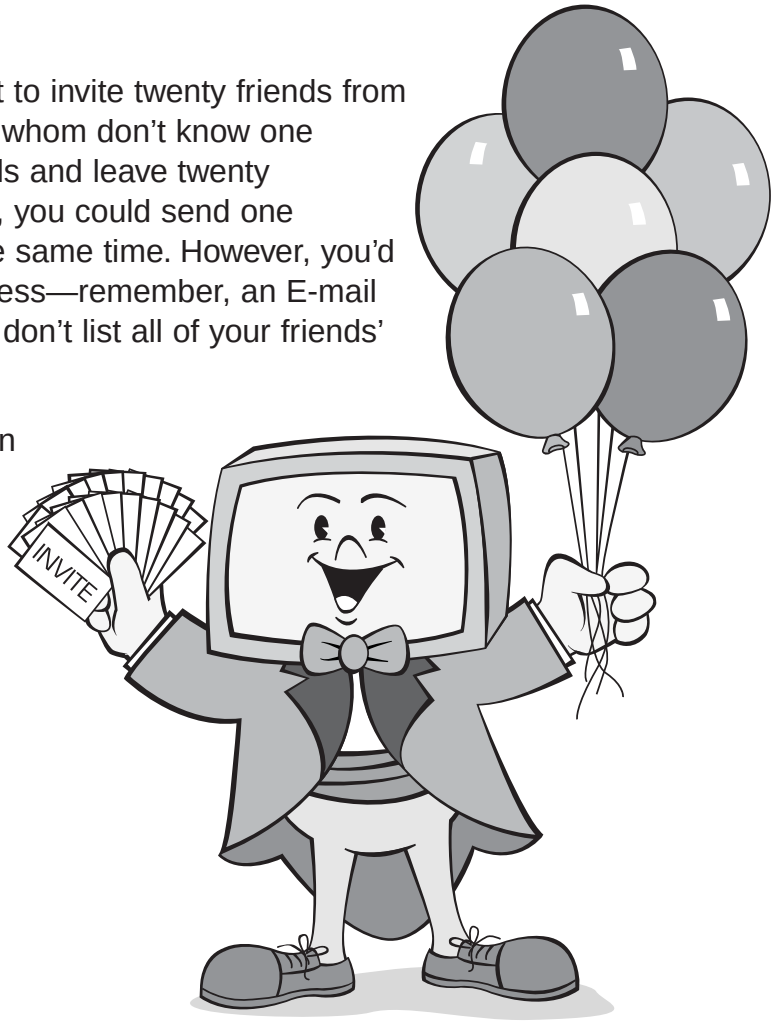
## The Person You Know

Sometimes even people you know can act pretty strange. Never reply to any E-mail that makes you uncomfortable. Print the message and show it to a parent or guardian.

## Party Time!

You're having a last-minute party and want to invite twenty friends from school, camp, and music school—most of whom don't know one another. You could make twenty phone calls and leave twenty messages with little brothers or sisters. Or, you could send one E-mail message to all twenty people at the same time. However, you'd need to protect each person's E-mail address—remember, an E-mail address is private identity information. So, don't list all of your friends' addresses in the "TO:" line.

Instead, address the letter to yourself. Then put the addresses of the friends you wish to send to under "Bcc" (blind carbon copy). This way, your friends' addresses will be invisible and protected from strangers and spammers.




**Be CyberSmart!®**

Some E-mail software automatically adds your real name to the "From" line. Change the settings so your name does not appear.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