NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Blocking Unsolicited Bulk E-Mail / "Spam"

Category	**Groupware**
Title	**Blocking Unsolicited Bulk E-Mail / "Spam"**
Number	

Applicability	☑ **State Government Agencies**
	  ☐ All...**Not Applicable**
	  ☑ Excluding <u>Higher Education</u> ....**Guideline**
	☐ **State Funded Entities -** All entities
	  receiving state funding for matters
	  covered by this document.................**Not Applicable**
	☐ **Other:** _____ ....**Not Applicable**
	
	Definitions:
	Standard - Adherence is required. Certain exceptions and conditions
	  may appear in this document, all other deviations from the
	  standard require prior approval of _____.
	Guideline - Adherence is voluntary.

Status	☑ Adopted ☐ Draft ☐ Other:_____
Dates	Date: November 13, 2003 Date Adopted by NITC: November 13, 2003 Other:

1.0 Guideline
Agencies shall be allowed to evaluate and implement methods for blocking Unsolicited Bulk Email (UBE) or spam in relation to their changing e-mail needs, even if some legitimate e-mail is blocked. State Agencies that choose to adopt UBE blocking methods should meet these minimum standards.

1. Agencies should periodically review blocked e-mail statistics to determine its effectiveness and to help reduce the non-delivery of legitimate e-mail.

2. UBE blocking methods should attempt to send notification to legitimate originators of blocked e-mail with the following information:
    a. The e-mail was blocked.
    b. Possible reasons for non-delivery and information on how to restore legitimate communications.
    c. List of alternate methods of communication that maintains reasonable levels of convenience and places no undue hardship on the sending or receiving party.
    d. Links to related state statutes, standards, or guidelines used.

Cost sharing - Where feasible, agencies should work to pool resources to reduce costs to Nebraska. Agencies seeking to purchase UBE-blocking tools should consult with IMServices.

2.0 Purpose and Objectives
This standard addresses the burden on state resources due to UBE and how state agencies may address the issue. Agencies cannot expect to "solve" all problems that arise from UBE, only mitigate them.

UBE creates a significant drain of technical and operational resources. In 2003, the state will receive an estimated 2 million UBE messages for approximately 12,000 employees using e-mail. These numbers will likely continue to rise. UBE needs to be reduced to the extent possible without adding excessive costs or exceptional risks to normal flow of legitimate e-mail.

2.1 Overview
The terms spam and Unsolicited Bulk E-mail (UBE) both refer to the mass receipt of e-mail messages that are usually inappropriate for state operations.

Any automated means of sorting out UBE from e-mail messages sent by the public, vendors, or other state agencies will typically result in the rejection of some valid e-mail. Agencies should take special effort to ensure that the public can conveniently contact state agencies for official business. Blocking legitmate e-mail communication with the state should be minimized.

2.2 Other Resources
The Internet Mail Consortium (IMC) has published several reports on the problem. "Unsolicited Bulk Email: Mechanisms for Control" (http://www.imc.org/ube-sol.html) lists the technical and legal solutions being discussed and how they affect Internet mail users. "Unsolicited Bulk Email: Definitions and Problems"

(http://www.imc.org/ube-def.html) provides precise definitions of UBE and spam issues.

The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (http://www.cauce.org/).

The State of Nebraska UBE resource web site (http://www.ims.state.ne.us/ube/).

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Spam
A common term for UBE is "spam", although that term encompasses a wider range of intrusive transmissions. For instance, the term "spam" originated in the realm of Usenet news, not email. There, individuals cannot request or refuse bulk email, although some newsgroups explicitly permit or encourage its inclusion as a part of the group charter. For further information, see RFC2635 at the Internet Engineering Task Force, http://www.ietf.org.

3.2 UBE
Unsolicited Bulk Email, or UBE, is Internet mail ("email") that is sent to a group of recipients who have not requested it. A mail recipient may have at one time asked a sender for bulk email, but then later asked that sender not to send any more email or otherwise not have indicated a desire for such additional mail; hence any bulk email sent after that request was received is also UBE.

4.0 Applicability
Agencies with their own mail servers can utilize the standard UBE filtering methods provided by the State Internet email gateway. To reduce duplication costs, agencies should consider utilizing the State Internet email gateway before implementing their own.

5.0 Responsibility
Information Management Services Division may investigate and implement UBE filtering methods on the State Internet e-mail gateway, which IMServices supports. Other agencies may elect to share this service.

6.0 Related Documents
Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Individual Use Policy:
http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/tp/workgroups/security/policies/individual_use_policy.pdf

State of Nebraska Acceptable Use Policy of State Data Communications Network,
http://www.doc.state.ne.us/policies/datausage.html