

Memo

To: Susan Mattern-Parkes, Chair
University Council Executive Committee

From: Janet Frick, Professor of Psychology

Re: Concerns regarding the new spam filter used by EITS, which seems to be vaporizing some important email

Date: February 23, 2007

EITS sent out an ArchNews listserv announcement on February 22, 2007 explaining the way that its new spam filters are working. What may not have been apparent, without a careful reading of that email, is that there are known cases (particularly since early December, 2006) of legitimate professional emails being blocked and discarded by the spam filters without either the sender or recipient being aware. EITS takes this situation seriously but the campus community also needs to be aware of what types of email exchanges seem to be most prone to this error.

I will briefly summarize my own personal research on this topic as one of the faculty who has been affected by the problem, and I recommend that EITS develop a set of policies that will help to reduce spam in UGAMail, such that the number of false positives can be reduced. (For example, recommendations about the use of personal email accounts, recommendations that UGA email addresses not be listed on departmental websites, etc - in other words, if EITS can provide guidance on how to prevent the spam-bots from obtaining uga.edu <<http://uga.edu>> email addresses in the first place, then perhaps less stringent spam filters will be needed).

Immediate take home messages, which are currently somewhat buried in the information on the UGAMail website but which are critically important:

1. Everyone needs to check junk mail daily. Legitimate messages are delivered there on occasion, and all junk mail is discarded after 9 days.
2. Messages from international collaborators, messages with attachments, and some messages from AOL, Yahoo or Hotmail may be blocked by spam filters and thus may not be delivered to uga.edu <<http://uga.edu>> email addresses. There are known cases where this has occurred. Consider having, and listing, a backup contact method on your website.
3. People who forward their uga.edu <<http://uga.edu>> email to another email account, such as a GMail or Yahoo account, need to read the information on forwarding **carefully.** UGAMail will not forward any message that is believed to be spam, **even if** it's delivered to the UGAMail inbox. If you are forwarding your uga.edu <<http://uga.edu>> emails, you still probably need to have them delivered to UGAMail as well as forwarded, and skim through your UGAMail account regularly to make sure that no messages were missed and incorrectly marked as spam.