

# Attorney general talks about 'spam' that makes people sick

Dear Attorney General Kline:  
I'm a small business owner whose daily task has been to battle the daily influx of junk e-mail. I also realize that my employees spend a large majority of their time handling these issues, as well. Would you offer some suggestions for individuals and small business owners like me to help us deal with this growing annoyance?

Dear Kansas Consumer:  
The use of Spam, to which you're referring, is a common marketing practice used to pitch a company's products or services to mass groups

of consumers. Among other things, junk e-mail has become a daily obstacle for nearly everyone with access to a computer.

Though junk mail is burdensome, unknown senders can also put your technology at risk for viruses and can put you at risk of becoming a victim of fraudulent activity if you are not careful. Spoofing, a form of Spam, has also become a common tool for virtual marketers. Spoofed messages appear to come from a sender other than the true composer, an illegal practice in Kansas and most other states. Whether or not

you are able to identify who is sending the messages, education is often the surest form of prevention.

Examples of spoofed e-mail include:

- "Phishing" Scams. One example of this particular type of e-mail fraud includes an e-mail which claims to be from a system administrator and requests a user to change his or her password or other sensitive information or face the suspension of that account. Many fall victim to this scheme.

- Advanced Fee Loan Scams. Another form of spoofed e-mail in-

cludes the Nigerian Scam in which users receive, via e-mail or snail mail, a message indicating that they have received an official, confidential letter in which they must pay to receive funds from African royalty.

- Chain letters. These e-mails claim quick cash with the click of a mouse. The illegitimate e-mail typically states that you send between \$5-20 to the names on a small list, then replace one of those names with your own. This scam was initiated offline and recently moved online due to the mass distribution and accessibility of e-mail.

You may also be alerted to spoofed e-mail attempts by reports from your users or by investigating bounced e-mail error messages. Ensuring a secure, junk-free network is dependent upon prevention, including education. Other methods of prevention that could prevent "technology" headache include:

- Backing up your computer data on a regular basis, at least monthly. Small amounts of data can be backed up on floppy disks and

larger amounts on CDs.

- Educating yourself, and/or your employees. Obvious enforcement policies include not opening e-mail from unknown sources, deleting suspicious e-mails if the origin is suspect, and disconnecting from the Internet when not online.

- Regularly checking for suspicious activity. Almost all firewalls, encryption programs and password schemes include an auditing function that records activities on the network. Businesses should regularly check logging data and audit trails to look for unusual or suspicious activity.

Marketers, scammers, and the like, find your e-mail address, often by purchasing national or mass lists from advertisers. To opt-out and reduce the number of marketing e-mails you receive, you can remove your address from the commercial list by registering up to three e-mail addresses at the Direct Marketing Association's web site at [http://www.dmaconsumers.org/optout-form\\_emps.shtml/](http://www.dmaconsumers.org/optout-form_emps.shtml/).

Considering all the unwanted e-mail we receive, count yourself lucky if you or your business have not been hit with a virus - Spam is known to contain all kinds of unsafe attachments. Viruses and Spam often go hand-in-hand. Viruses are conceptually comparable to human viruses. They need a warm body to grow or sustain life. If you, as the user, take preventative measures to avoid transmitting a computer virus through taking active measures against Spam, a virus is not likely to survive.

Editor's note: Attorney General Phill Kline offers this public service to help people avoid becoming victims of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For information or to file a complaint, write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612 or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310.

## Governor signs bill to require some voters to show identification

TOPEKA (AP)—Some Kansas voters will have to show a driver's license or other form of identification to ensure that their ballots are counted under a bill Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed into law earlier this week.

The new law, which takes effect July 1, will apply to Kansans who are voting for the first time in a county.

They must show identification either when they register, go to a polling place to vote or seek an advance ballot. If they refuse, they still may cast a provisional ballot, but election officials could declare it invalid later.

Sebelius, a Democrat, and Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, a Republican, had disagreed over how far Kansas should go in requiring ID, and the measure contains a compromise they drafted.

The legislation is aimed at bringing Kansas into compliance with the federal "Help America Vote Act of 2002," which promised states \$3.9 billion to replace outdated voting machines, train election workers, educate voters and make polling places accessible.

Kansas will receive \$26.2 mil-

lion, according to the legislation.

Sebelius also had made her signing the voter ID bill conditional upon the Legislature approving another measure intended to make polling places accessible to the disabled.

Lawmakers did so Friday. "She felt it was important to have both pieces going hand-in-hand," Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran said Monday. "We're pleased."

Kansas already has received \$5 million in federal funds. However, the remaining \$21.2 million could have been jeopardized had a voter identification bill not passed or Sebelius had not signed one.

"I'm thrilled that we can now go to the feds and say Kansas is in line and Kansas is ready to comply with the federal law," Thornburgh said.

Under the bill, an affected voter can show a driver's license or a non-driver's identification card, or provide the last four digits of his or her Social Security number.

Acceptable forms of ID also include a utility bill, bank statement, pay stub, government check or other government document, if they show a voter's name and address.

Last year, legislators passed a bill to require all voters to provide ID.

Thornburgh said that measure would be most simple to administer.

However, the federal act mandates some form of identification only when someone registers to vote by mail.

Sebelius vetoed last year's Thornburgh-backed bill, saying it would suppress turnout.

The accessibility bill, backed by advocates for the disabled, rewrites a 1977 state law allowing for inaccessible polling places if there are plans to improve them "in the foreseeable future" and if county election officials report the problem to county commissioners.

The measure would require that all polling places be accessible on Election Day and would allow so-called curbside voting, with a ballot carried to a disabled person who is outside a polling place. Kansas has 2,400 polling places.

Legislative negotiators drafted the final version. The House approved it, 117-3 and the Senate passed it, 38-2.

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