

To: uem@citb.gov.hk

cc:

Subject: Feedback to Consultation Paper on Unsolicited Electronic Messages

23/01/2006 22:33

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to applaud the Government's decision to act on this thorny issue of unsolicited electronic messages.

I myself have sent two written complaints to the OFTA on this subject in 2005. I believe my views reflect not just my own, but also many of my friends and acquaintances who unwillingly fall victim to this kind of unwelcome spams.

Apart from a show of support, I would also like to make the following comments:

1. The key to successful implementation is a clear and succinct communication of consumers' rights to the public, and to be fair, also to the e-marketers as well. Given the usual efficiency of the government, I am sure this could be achieved through mass media (for the public) and an informative website (for the e-marketers).

2. Standardized and hopefully more specific instructions to e-marketers on how they have to incorporate the "opt-out" function in their spams. Using voice-calls as an example, ideally, this "opt-out" function should be placed at the BEGINNING of the call, not after 3 minute of gibberish.

3. Excellent idea, therefore, on point 8 of the executive summary - having a "universal" opt-out register (if I understand you correctly). This function should be made easily accessible to the public (I cannot think of a better way other than through the internet). This is a fantastic idea and personally I will be the first to register my phone/email addresse on this register. Any marketers desperate enough to resort to this type of intrusive marketing is not worthy of my patronage.

I fully understand the difficulty in controlling email spam - the internet is a globally open arena and any attempt to impose restrictions could lead to complications on many fronts. Taking one step at a time by initiating the said legislation is already a big leap forward. I really cannot see there is any valid grounds for opposing this proposal, even from the e-marketers themselves. They are still free to broadcast their messages to the willing recipients. Setting up the "opt-out" function hardly add any cost to the production of the spams. Perhaps the mobile phone companies might lose some revenue in air-time and sms, but I doubt any of them would take a high-profile opposition view on this issue, and risk upsetting the many long-suffering consumers like myself. Also, I believe many of them routinely receive complaints from their customers, wrongly thinking that the networks might be involved in sending the spams.

Thank you for taking this very constructive and indeed commendable first step, and I look forward to seeing a speedy implementation of the legislation.

Yours truly,
H.Y. So (Miss)