

HOW TO HIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS FROM SPAMBOTS

By Hal Goodtree, Senior Writer

Let's say you have a website. Naturally, you want potential clients, visitors and fans to be able to contact you. The problem:

*If you post your email address on your website,
you are guaranteed an avalanche of spam email forever.*

But you can fight spam, protect yourself and post your contact info with this free, easy tip.

HOW SPAMBOTS WORK

The first thing to understand is how spambots work. They scour the internet looking for the "@" symbol and for the names of popular email clients like "gmail" and "hotmail." If the nasty crawlers find either (or both) of those things, your email address is harvested and sold like a Roman slave. Your info will be passed from hand to hand in perpetuity.

Once the spambots get hold of your email address, you can expect an ever-growing number of junk emails. Eventually, the email address may become completely useless.

HOW TO BEAT THE SPAMBOTS SIMPLE AND FREE

There are quite a few methods for hiding an email address from web crawlers. The one we will describe is simple, free and requires no advanced web skills.

EMAIL OBFUSCATORS

Email obfuscators are handy little programs that turn your plain text email address into hexadecimal or ISO text. HEX and ISO are incomprehensible to most spambots. For example, take this email address:

hacker@spambot.com

Here's the same address in HEX:

mailto:hacker@spambot.com

Browsers can read ISO and HEX, but spambots can't. Your email address appears as plain text to your viewers, but as gibberish to spambots.

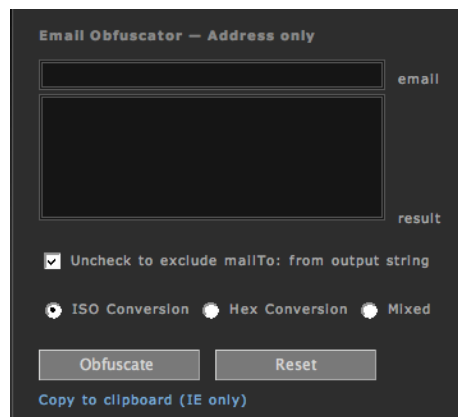
Why can't spambots translate your address from Hex and ISO? Well, spambots are simple creatures. They're looking for "@" and the name of a mass-market email host. Scanning the web and translating all the HEX, then rescanning for email addresses - it's a generational leap for spambots in sophistication and computing.

Maybe someday an ambitious hacker will create something that can penetrate the HEX and ISO cloaking. But, for now, there are plenty of easy pickings on the web for the spambots, so no one has bothered.

OUR FAVORITE, FREE OBFUSCATOR

Several companies offer fancy, for-pay obfuscators. But, it's a pretty simple program and several free sites exist on the web. All generate the same results, but we like [Enigma's email obfuscator](#) for its elegance and ease of use.

Try it for your self – go [here](#) and enter your email address (or any text) and click on *Obfuscate*. You'll see the resulting HEX and/or ISO displayed in the box.



Enigma's Email Obfuscator

Copy and paste the code into your website html where you had your plain text email address. Check it out in a browser. Simple!

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

DISPOSABLE EMAIL ADDRESS

As an extra precaution against the detrimental effects of spam, we also use a disposable email address on our website. This is an email address we created specially for our website but not of any particular intrinsic importance. If this address gets sold into spammy, we can dump it with impunity and replace it on our website in just a few keystrokes.

ADVANCED METHODOLOGIES

You can also use javascript to obscure your email address, encryption/decryption schemes and server side obfuscation as well.

SUMMARY

For most businesses with a website, Email Obfuscation provides a simple, easy way to hide email addresses from spambots. We recommend [Enigma's Online Email Obfuscator](#).

Sources:

http://www.codehouse.com/webmaster_tools/email_obfuscator/
http://www.seowebpromotion.com/obfuscate_email.asp
<http://www.diplo.co.uk/design/encode.php>
<http://javascript.about.com/library/blemail1.htm>