

BEST IN NEWSPAPER DESIGN IN ASIA

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The Straits Times INTERACTIVE

JUNE 25, 2004

Opt out of proposed law

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However, this approach may not be a foolproof method of getting rid of spam. Many would have realised by now that a request to unsubscribe from a list just confirms the validity of an e-mail address and may lead to further spamming.

Singaporeans appear to be largely silent on the subject of the proposed legislation. But the deadline for sending in comments on the legislation is noon tomorrow.

To find out more about the proposed control of e-mail spam or to give feedback on the issue, readers can visit these websites:

- www.ida.gov.sg (Or e-mail anti_spam@ida.gov.sg)
- zdnet.com.com

EDMOND NG CHOON CHAI

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The Straits Times INTERACTIVE

JUNE 26, 2004

Give feedback on anti-spam law

I REFER to the letters, 'Spam not the way to boost e-commerce' and 'Opt out of proposed law' (ST, June 25), by Mr Alvin Lim Soo Yong and Mr Edmond Ng Choon Chai respectively on the proposed anti-spam legislative framework.

We welcome and will consider comments from members of the public in the consultation exercise.

However, we would like to clarify that this consultation exercise will close at noon on July 26, not today.

Also, the correct e-mail address to submit feedback on the legislative framework is antispam_submissions@ida.gov.sg

DULCIE CHAN (MS)
Assistant Director
Corporate Communications
Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore

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The Straits Times INTERACTIVE

JULY 10, 2004

Consumer watchdog blasts opt-out tactics

It is unacceptable to impose opt-out plan on consumers where consent hasn't been given, says Case, citing an instance by insurance firm

By [Natalie Soh](#)

THE consumer watchdog body here has hit out at companies employing 'opt-out' marketing methods, where customers are charged unless they explicitly say 'no'.

'Enough is enough,' said the Consumers Association of Singapore's (Case) executive director Seah Seng Choon.

'It's getting ridiculous. Consumers should not be made liable for any transaction which they have not expressly agreed to,' he said.

'Can you imagine: To every marketer who calls, you have to say explicitly, 'No, don't charge me for this.' Otherwise you get charged!

'We think its time to make a stand.'

In a strongly-worded statement signed by its president Yeo Guat Kwang and released to the press yesterday, Case said it was 'shocked' at the situation of DBS Bank customer Yap Ee Hoe.

According to media reports, Mr Yap found an unauthorised Giro deduction from his account for an insurance policy he never agreed to buy.

Apparently, because he did not reply and reject an offer from insurance company Aviva, the policy was considered 'sold'.

Said Case: 'Insurance companies must not construe consumer interest in a product as confirmation of product purchase.

'It is equally unacceptable for them to impose an opt-out plan on consumers where no consent has been given.'

While in Mr Yap's case, his money has been refunded, Case called on Aviva to 'make refunds to all similarly affected consumers'.

Case also called on consumers to cancel the Giro arrangements with banks 'that do not respect their right to consent to deductions made from their accounts.'

Attempts to contact Aviva were unsuccessful, while a DBS Bank spokesman said it was investigating the matter.

This is not the first time Case has spoken up about such marketing tactics.

Earlier this year, Case had run-ins with telcos SingTel and M1 over their missed-call alerts for subscribers of their roaming services.

Unless the subscribers had explicitly opted out after a free trial period, they were to be charged.

Since then the telcos have changed their charging methods.

More fuel was added to the fire recently when the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) proposed an opt-out scheme for new legislation to curb spamming.

This means that businesses can send e-mail - no matter what the nature of the e-mail is - to users, unless they specifically reply and say 'no' to the mailing list.

The IDA had previously defended the idea, saying that it protected business interests, but users have been up in arms.

They say that replying to junk mail would only make them more vulnerable as marketers would know that they have hit an 'active account'.

For consumers like Mr Edmond Ng, 41, who are fed up with receiving unsolicited messages from marketers on his mobile phone and computer, 'opt-out', is not an option.

'It will only lead to more spam, mobile or e-mail,' he told The Straits Times.

Miss Emily Tan Swee Lin, 33, said: 'We have been told not to reply to junk e-mail for as long as we can remember to stop the scourge. Now you want a whole generation of people to start clicking reply again? Can you imagine how happy junk e-mailers would be?'

Yesterday, Case also took a swipe at the proposed legislation, saying that it was a 'less than ideal' solution to spam for consumers.

Case's Mr Seah said: 'We shouldn't even be receiving that junk mail in the first place.'

The IDA could not be reached yesterday evening.

At issue in these instances, explained Mr Seah, was the fact that the consumer did not give any sort of 'okay' in the first place.

Case urged businesses and organisations here to rethink their methods: 'Adopting an opt-in business approach is an important element in putting priority on the consumer.'

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FORUM

Opt out of proposed law

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◆ <http://www.ida.gov.sg/idaweb/pnr/infopage.jsp?infopagecategory=infoecon:pnr&versionid=1&infopageid=12883>
(Or e-mail anti_spam@ida.gov.sg)

◆ http://zdnet.com.com/2102-1104_2-5219707.html

EDMOND NG CHOON CHAI

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THE STRAITS TIMES : Saturday, June 26, 2004

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DULCIE CHAN (MS)
Assistant Director
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Infocomm Development
Authority of Singapore

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By NATALIE SOH

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"Enough is enough," said the Consumers Association of Singapore's (Case) executive director Seah Seng Choon.

"It's getting ridiculous. Consumers should not be made liable for any transaction which they have not expressly agreed to," he said.

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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

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Case urged businesses and organisations here to rethink their methods: "Adopting an opt-in business approach is an important element in putting priority on the consumer."

To: stforum@sph.com.sg
From: Edmond Ng
Subject: New policy may promote spam
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

For ST Forum

<Title> New policy may promote spam

<Author> Edmond Ng

Many Singaporeans are probably unaware that a new policy being proposed for control of e-mail spam suggests an opt-out regime, which allows marketers to legally send unsolicited e-mails without prior consent.

The opt-out regime means that marketers will be allowed to legally send promotional e-mails or subscribe anyone to its mailing list without first seeking consent from the Internet user so long as they provide an option for removal from the list or to unsubscribe. This approach however may not necessarily be a full proof method in getting rid of spam, as many would have realised by now that a request to unsubscribe may result in confirming the validity of the email address for further spamming.

Singaporeans up till now appear to be silent on the subject of the new proposed legislation, but this is probably because not much has been mentioned about the new policy in the media. The dateline for counter proposal for or against the legislative framework will soon end on 26 July 2004, and I hope this article will spark off a public discussion on the topic.

To know more about the proposed control of e-mail spam and to provide feedback to the legislators, please visit the following web sites:

<http://www.ida.gov.sg/idaweb/pnr/infopage.jsp?infopagecategory=infoecon:pnr&versionid=1&infopageid=12883>

http://zdnet.com.com/2102-1104_2-5219707.html

NG CHOON CHAI EDMOND

From: "Edmond Ng"
To: stforum@sph.com.sg
Subject: Error in content of Forum article today - June 25, 2004
Date: Fri, 25 Jun 2004 10:06:49 +0800

Dear Editor, Forum - The Straits Times

I noted my feedback has been published in the Forum page today under the headlines 'Opt out of proposed law'.

Please note the error in content pertaining to 'the deadline for sending in comments on the legislation is noon tomorrow'. The deadline is 26 JULY, not June.

Please refer my original email for unedited details. For your information.

Regards
EDMOND NG CHOON CHAI

To: dulcie_chan@ida.gov.sg
From: Edmond Ng
Subject: ST Forum on Anti-Spam
Cc: stforum@sph.com.sg
Bcc:
Attached:

Dear Dulcie

I am the person who wrote the letter to the Straits Times forum on "Opt out of proposed law" (ST, June 25).

I wish to thank you for your quick response in informing the public of the incorrect e-mail address to submit the feedback on the legislative framework and the correct date for the closure of the consultation exercise on 26 July.

Just for your information, my original e-mail letter to the Straits Times provided the correct deadline for closure of the exercise, and did not include the e-mail address for feedback. I have since early morning yesterday sent an e-mail to inform them of the incorrect information upon reading the published letter, to which they have chosen to publish your response instead.

Regards
EDMOND NG



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[IDA Home](#) > [Policy & Regulation](#) > Proposed Legislative Framework for the Control of E-mail Spam

Proposed Legislative Framework for the Control of E-mail Spam

Joint IDA-AGC Consultation Paper

Title (in Pdf)
Proposed Legislative Framework for the Control of E-mail Spam [PDF](#)

All views and comments should be submitted to the Policy and Competition Development Group of the IDA on or before **12 noon, 26 July 2004**. Respondents are required to include their personal/company particulars as well as the correspondence address in their submissions to the above Consultation Paper. Comments and views should be addressed to:

Policy and Competition Development Group, marked "Re: Anti-spam law public consultation"

- via e-mail, at antispam_submissions@ida.gov.sg;
- via fax, at 6211 2207; or
- by post (a diskette containing a soft copy would be appreciated) to

Policy and Competition Development Group
Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore
8 Temasek Boulevard
#14-00 Suntec Tower Three
Singapore 038988

Responses received at closing date

| Title | (in Pdf) |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Alan Francis | Pdf |
| 2. Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) | Pdf |
| CASE - supplementary | Pdf |
| 3. Cecil Chua | Pdf |
| 4. Cedric Leong | Pdf |
| 5. Chan Huimin | Pdf |
| 6. Chew Ann Liang | Pdf |
| 7. Choo Christopher | Pdf |
| 8. Chris Low | Pdf |
| 9. Chris Stevens | Pdf |
| 10. Chui Jian Wei | Pdf |
| 11. Cindy Soh | Pdf |
| 12. Direct Marketing Association of Singapore (DMAS) | Pdf |
| 13. Dr Kim Ong-Giger | Pdf |
| 14. Dr Ng Swee Ching | Pdf |
| → 15. <u>Edmond Ng</u> | Pdf |
| 16. Elizabeth Hunter | Pdf |
| 17. Eric Tai | Pdf |
| 18. Gary Denson | Pdf |
| 19. Gerald Giam | Pdf |
| 20. Gerald Tan | Pdf |
| 21. Gomez Aloysius | Pdf |
| 22. Grace Ang | Pdf |
| 23. Ian Nicholls | Pdf |
| 24. Ivan Png | Pdf |
| 25. Janice Tay | Pdf |
| 26. Jasmine Yeo | Pdf |
| 27. Jason Yip | Pdf |
| 28. Joel Tsi | Pdf |
| 29. Julinda Chia Siew Hong | Pdf |
| 30. justlogin Pte Ltd | Pdf |
| 31. Kan Su Fen | Pdf |
| 32. Kok Chee Chiong | Pdf |
| 33. Lau Yeong Shoon | Pdf |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| 34. Leong Chun Yu et al | Pdf |
| 35. Lim Koon Hock | Pdf |
| 36. Lim Siew Ying | Pdf |
| 37. Lorraine Choo | Pdf |
| 38. Michael Tan | Pdf |
| 39. Microsoft Singapore | Pdf |
| 40. Mohd Wari Bin Wahab | Pdf |
| 41. Pacific Internet Ltd | Pdf |
| 42. Patrick Leow | Pdf |
| 43. Phua Kok Heng | Pdf |
| 44. Rosalind Tan | Pdf |
| 45. Roy New | Pdf |
| 46. Samuel Wong | Pdf |
| 47. Sherman Tan | Pdf |
| 48. Silversum ConsuMetrix | Pdf |
| 49. SingTel group | Pdf |
| 50. Soh Eng Kiau | Pdf |
| 51. StarHub group | Pdf |
| 52. Steven Sim | Pdf |
| 53. Tan & Tan Partnership | Pdf |
| 54. Tan Khoon Whatt | Pdf |
| 55. Ting Meng Yean | Pdf |
| 56. Tralvex Yeap | Pdf |
| 57. Victor Liew | Pdf |
| 58. Vinz Lee | Pdf |
| 59. William Tan | Pdf |
| 60. Yahoo! South East Asia - cover letter | Pdf |
| Yahoo! South East Asia | Pdf |

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Dear Sirs

I have read through the 'Proposed Legislative Framework for the Control of E-mail Spam' and feels that as a citizen, I is necessary that I voice out my concerns on the policy of *opt-out regime*.

As of now I receive about 50 unsolicited emails every day. Not all junk emails provide option to unsubscribe but even when the option is available, it doesn't guarantee termination of unsolicited email. In fact it sometimes act as a confirmation to the validity of the email address for more spam!

I do not believe the practice of opt-out regime is the way to go. Marketers should be required to get prior consent BEFORE they send any unsolicited materials. The requirement to ask for consent, I believe, should be the way to go, similar to regulations in Australia and the UK (<http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1104-5219707.html>).

To enforce an opt-out regime policy is equivalent to the intruding someone's privacy and then apologise after it has already happend. Intrusion of privacy is an area I thought MDA has always tried to enforce quite effectively, but with this new policy, it may mean the demise of privacy or the liberalisation of policies on privacy intrusion, and this may lead to other problems in the future. I understand the need to give businesses greater flexibility, but to do this means to deem citizens as a little less important than businesses.

It is probable that not many feedback on this subject may have reached iDA from the public, and it is for this reason that I am writing to provide the views that I believe many Internet users feel. The silence from the public does not really mean acceptance. It is because not many people are aware of this new framework, as not much have been said in the news or the general media. My suggestion therefore is to hold public forums and media publicity on this matter as it is critical and important to many and iDA should not right away make any decision after the given dateline - 26 July 2004 prior to consensus vote of general public is made.

Regards

EDMOND NG