

11b Spam

Simon Clarke

1 Complete the text below with the following words. Then answer the questions.

headache work adopt receive carried unlikely guess spend wage
harmless colleagues hoax dealing set

Looking back over the e-mails I have received in the last couple of weeks, I can see there is at least one message a day from someone I don't know, offering some service or product I am (1) _____ to want. In some cases I can (2) _____ where they got my e-mail address from, but in others I have no idea. For me, this unsolicited junk e-mail is not a problem, I can just erase it from my computer. However, in a recent survey, (3) _____ out for the company Novell Inc. in the UK, 75% of those who were questioned claimed to receive as many as five junk e-mails a day, and 15% calculated that they (4) _____ at least an hour a day dealing with unsolicited spam.

Apart from spam which tries to sell products or services, there is also the problem of (5) _____ virus warnings, chain letters (where terrible things will happen to you if you don't pass on the message to fifteen other people) and jokes from friends and (6) _____. Although sometimes the content involved can be offensive and contain racist or sexist language, most of it is relatively (7) _____. On the other

hand, in terms of wasting employees' time, it's a real (8) _____ for many businesses.

There are various strategies you can (9) _____ with spam. The easiest remedy is just to delete any messages which come from an unknown sender or look suspicious. To deal with nuisance mail which comes from a regular source, one solution is to (10) _____ up your e-mail program to ignore mail from that particular address. More legitimate spammers often give you the option to 'unsubscribe' so you don't (11) _____ any more of their messages, although in my experience this often doesn't seem to make any difference. Even so, while you are (12) _____ with spam you are not doing the work you were hired to do. If the data analysed in the survey is correct, 1.4% of the national (13) _____ force is unproductive for this reason at any time during a working day. With a national UK (14) _____ bill of £368bn a year, this means that for UK businesses spam represents an annual cost of around £5bn.

- a What are the different types of spam?
- b Why does it cost companies money?
- c How much spam do you receive? What do you do about it? Is it a big problem for your company?

2 You work in the marketing department of a fast-food chain. You and your partner are working on a project to promote a new line of pizzas which people can order by phone or over the Internet. You are considering various methods of promotion. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these ideas:

- cold calling to selected telephone numbers
- flyers delivered by hand to people's homes
- direct mailing by post
- spamming to e-mail addresses on a database you have obtained

For each method consider the efficiency, cost and effect on your company's image. As you discuss your ideas, try to use the following phrases:

I (really don't) think that we should ... In my opinion ... I'm not so sure about ...
I (don't) agree with your point ... That's an interesting idea, ... I suppose we should ...
The advantage of ... The problem with ... You have to remember that ...