

# Re: Idiot spam attack on sci.lang

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2008-02/msg00030.html>

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- *From:* Franz Gnaedinger <frgn@xxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Fri, 1 Feb 2008 06:21:30 -0800 (PST)
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On Feb 1, 1:59 pm, António Marques <m...@xxxxxxx> wrote:

Franz Gnaedinger wrote:

On Jan 31, 8:16 pm, António Marques <m...@xxxxxxx> wrote:

Franz Gnaedinger wrote:

Imagine that a criminal could flood a bank  
with counterfeit money,  
and do so in the name and using the accounts  
of the regular customers  
– that bank would have a real problem.

Imagine that real money didn't have security features to  
distinguish it  
from counterfeit money. That's exactly the situation Google  
is in.  
Google is your bank – but it isn't your Central European  
Bank, it  
doesn't control the currency, it can only store it. There is  
nothing  
Google can do.

Google could discern between Peter T. Daniels the genuine  
and Peter T. Daniels the fake. You saw the fake message  
in his name yesterday, in another thread, even I thought it  
was a message by the real Peter.

No, it couldn't. Computers aren't so intelligent yet so as to be able to  
tell correct content from bogus. And if the fake content tries to mimic  
legitimate content, then they probably never will. Think of it for a  
second – there may just be \*no difference\* between them. If I choose to  
pick a message from yours, change a word, and take care to spoof the  
origin, how can anyone ever tell the difference?

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What computers may be able to do is to filter out messages coming from suspicious servers, or with obviously incorrect content (e.g. "\$%#%&\$#%"), or cross-posted to an unacceptably high number of groups, etc.

Now some providers have anti-spam filters which are able to determine when a message is \*likely\* spam. But those filters are very fallible, both marking as spam messages which are not, and failing to mark messages which are, so they can't be fully depended on.

Keeping away the spam is one thing, separating fake posters from real posters is another thing.

It's the exact same thing – but, if anything, it's easier to spot spam because it conforms to certain patterns.

Google must solve their problem, the steps they took until now are not sufficient. One step they took was closing the account – note well: the free account that runs under the name of profile – of the MI5Vic... spammer.

But they didn't close anything. They just don't offer anymore the possibility to look up MI5Vic's 'profile'. Google doesn't run profiles – when you ask to see someone's profile, it just runs a search for that person's e-mail, and offers you a page with the results. It's just the same as when you look up 'hamburger' in a web search, and it gives you a list of the pages which mention hamburgers.

If you find an old message by the MI5Vic... spammer and look up his profile, Google says the account has been banned (their words, both "account" and "banned"), and there is no profile available.

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That's linguistic sugar for 'We don't do archive searches for mi5vic@...'. They're unintentionally fooling you into thinking they have this sort of mega-profile-engine. They do not.

Posted via a free Usenet account  
from <http://www.teranews.com>

A free Usenet account – so you have an account at teranews?  
what does this mean?

It means I once paid \$3.95 so that teranews would give me a username and password with which I can connect to their news server to read and send messages. Of course, all that matters is 'connect to their news server to read and send messages'. Nothing to do with identities, profiles, or the like. You can mimic my identity anytime you like, teranews have nothing to do with it.

In case you wonder why I use teranews at all, it's because:

1. I can't stand using newsgroups with anything other than a news reader program.
2. My internet provider only allows me to connect to their news server using their own connection, which means only at home.
3. My internet provider's news service is trash, mostly because it's flooded by people who only use binaries.\* newsgroups to download porn and the server administrators don't have the cleverness to separate binaries from text newsgroups. They'd just need to dedicate one single server to text, that would be more than enough, but they can't be bothered. They're stupid. That's the way of monopolies.
4. Third-party news providers usually cater to binary users also, which means they don't have (please someone inform me if they do) pricings for people who just want to use text (in case it wasn't clear before, text uses almost no resources at all when compared to binaries). Their pricings are usually per-month or amount of gigabytes, whichever comes first, which is completely inadequate for me (both in price and number of times I'd have to perform payments). But teranews does have this special offering of (limited but enough for me) service for a one-off fee, and that's what I got.
5. No, I'm not happy with them, but as per (4) I have not yet found an alternative.

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Thanks for the long reply. Please consider that I am a computer moron, and as such I got only a part of it. Maybe I must conjure a drastic example. Also as a user of teranews you got a profile in Google. What would you say if a fake Antonio Marques flooded your profile with fake messages that suggest you, Antonio Marques, are considering Heil Hickup the greatest politician ever, and \_Mein Krampf\_ the Bible of our time? (name and book title slightly altered in order not to attract a certain sort of people via a search engine)

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