

Re: -- Google, the spam monster, a summary

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math/2008-03/msg00064.html>

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 - *Date:* Sat, 01 Mar 2008 11:07:34 +0000
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quasi wrote:

> [..]
>

But more importantly, my proposal for a G³ was not fully serious. After all, who would implement such a program? I was just batting around a hypothetical solution.

In any case, I want no part of this moronic thread.

For once I can't agree with you, quasi. Discussing ways to improve Google Groups seems very interesting, although interesting needn't imply non-moronic.

Although post formatting issues are a vexing problem for many, including myself, I'll focus on what seems the most serious issue namely spam.

So let's put ourselves in the position of Google (wouldn't that be nice – all that lovely lolly ;-). But seriously, I'm curious to know how people think even Google could solve the usenet spam problem. Not trying to defend them, mind, or insinuating that the problem can't be solved or at least ameliorated. But no obvious approach springs to mind.

For a start there are so many ways in to usenet. So if for example Google began using captchas to prevent robo-posts, the spammers would simply start posting via other news servers.

If they introduced a spam alert system it would inevitably be misused on non-spam posts, by idiots seeking to suppress dissent, and might become a legal minefield centering round freedom of speech and so forth.

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(People using Google Groups will have seen the disclaimer about "legal complaints" beneath the sci.math screen, and those I think are for actionable posts. So imagine the fuss posters would make if their lawful posts were suppressed on no grounds other than lack of topicality. Also, although no one in their right mind is likely to object to spam posts being suppressed, the very act does set a precedent which some might then want extended to other "objectionable" posts.)

Also, assuming a spam alerts had to be vetted by Google, someone would have to be paid to sit there deciding which alerts were justified. Perhaps a penalty, such as Google Groups account suspension, would be appropriate for people making false allegations, like that ancient Greek system whereby anyone who proposed a law which was then voted down by the assembly would get the chop!

On the plus side, it's well known that the vast majority
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