



WAUCtalk

WAUC Wisconsin All-computer Users Club

November 2015

View Black Friday Ads Online Before Black Friday

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

- <http://dealnews.com/black-friday/>
- <http://blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/ads>
- <https://blackfriday.com>
- <http://blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/news>
- <http://blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/deals>
- <http://dealnews.com/features/Amazon-and-Newegg-Will-Offer-the-Best-Black-Friday-Deals-Online/888212.html>
- <http://blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/store-hours>
- <http://dealnews.com/features/Crazy-Deals-That-Could-Actually-Happen-This-Black-Friday/>
- <http://dealnews.com/features/black-friday/predictions/smartphones/>
- <http://dealnews.com/features/Thanksgiving-Day-Will-Top-Black-Friday-for-the-Best-Deals/857586.html>

Some of us look forward to the rancor of shopping on Black Friday, and some of us avoid the crowds at all costs. With the inevitable traffic jams at our favorite locations, those of us planning on shopping on that day may be able to better plan our stops if we happened to know in advance what each store had to offer, such that we could prioritize our search. In past years, it was a family tradition for us to all devour the thick Thanksgiving newspaper, pouring over the myriad sale books weighing down the paper. As if we were in a dream or a trance, we each individually contemplated our plan for that noble day.

While perusing the multitude of sale books in the Thanksgiving newspaper is still one of the pleasures of life, the necessity for that exercise in wishful thinking has diminished over recent years as a variety of "deals" websites are actively compiling so called "leaked" copies of the Black Friday sale books, often weeks before the big day.

I grew up in a "retail" family, working in my dad's department store, learning the inner workings of retailing. What many shoppers may not be aware of is the lead time necessary to compile, create, publish, and distribute the Black Friday (and other major sales events) sale books to the hundreds of local newspapers in time for them to insert the circulars into their

Volume 32 No. 11

November

19 Q&A SIG, Thur., 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton Ave.

19 Tablets Plus SIG, Thur., 7:00
Clement Manor, Rm 107,
9405 W. Howard

25 Investment Tracking SIG, 7:00 PM
Wendy's, 7707 W. Layton Ave.
Topic: Vectorvest

December

3 WAUC General Meeting, Thur., 7:00 PM
Jackson Park Lutheran Church
4535 W. Oklahoma Ave.
Holiday Party

3 Exec. Bd. Meeting, 6:15

9 MacSIG, Wed. 6:30 PM
Clement Manor, Rm 107,
9405 W. Howard

10 Tutorial SIG: Thur., 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton Ave.
**Topic: CDs of the Month Greatest Hits
& Instagram**

**14 WAUC Lunch, Mon., 1 PM, Old Country
Buffet, 4902 S. 74th**
RSVP: rgdurand@yahoo.com

**15 Deadline for submitting articles for
WAUCtalk**

17 Q&A SIG, Thur., 7:00 PM
Speedway Station, 60th & Layton Ave.

23 Investment Tracking SIG, 7:00 PM
Wendy's, 7707 W. Layton Ave.
Topic: Vectorvest

24 Tablets Plus SIG, Thur., 7:00
Clement Manor, Rm 107,
9405 W. Howard (**CANCELLED**)

Future Presentations:

- **December: Holiday party**
- **January: Len Levine on Word Games**

Raffle Items for December

•WAUC sweatshirt in choice of size and color

The available sweatshirts are:

Dark Blue in size Small

Gold in size Medium

Light Grey in size Medium

Red in size Large

•16 Gb USB Flash Drive

•O'Reilly computer book "iWork The Missing Manual"

•Certificate for free O'Reilly computer ebook download

•CD Stomper Pro Labeling System

WAUC

WAUCtalk is a monthly publication of the Wisconsin All-computer Users Club. WAUC is a computer club dedicated to promoting and instructing the use of computers to WAUC members. Membership in WAUC is \$25 per year (\$12.50 if applying after June 1). WAUCtalk is emailed to all WAUC members.

Free advertising is available to WAUC members. We are not responsible for omissions or errors.

WAUC Officers

President: Vacant

Vice-President: Gary Kohler.....949-9307

gdkohler@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Bill Gierach.....421-6827

wdgierach@yahoo.com

Board Meeting Secretary: Richard Reinhard

reinhard@milwpc.com543-7260

General Meeting Sec'y: Richard Durand

rgdurand@yahoo.com873-9339

Program Chairman: Vacant

Staff

Editor: Julia Rice649-9671

ricejulia@hotmail.com

Webmaster: Tom Livermore 839-4189

xyooper@gmail.com

CD Library: Tom Livermore

Thanksgiving editions. In the days before computers, when employees of the advertising department had to physically cut out paper images, prepare copy, and literally paste it all together before sending the sale books to a printer, my dad used to tell us that it was at least a six month process to create, print, and distribute major sale books to be inserted into the newspapers. Typical retail store shoppers are blissfully unaware of all of the work that goes into the preparation of a holiday sale book. Manufacturers and distributors have to be contracted months in advance to coordinate the physical manufacturing of the goods, negotiate pricing, arrange and schedule the distribution of the goods to the stores.

In my dad's department store, they typically had a pretty good idea of what would be in a late November Black Friday sale book by Memorial Day, and had a final version ready for the printers weeks before Labor Day. Sale books would be printed by the pallet load, and shipped to the newspapers in advance of Thanksgiving; newspaper readers are often unaware that the larger editions of the newspapers, such as Sunday and holiday editions, are actually prepared and printed in advance, only waiting for current content such as the front page and sports section to be printed last, and then finally assembled into a newspaper.

While the employees of the advertising departments of the retail stores, the printers of the sale books, and the newspaper stockroom employees are somewhat sworn to secrecy about the contents of the sale books, there are so many people involved in the creation, production, and distribution of these sale books that it is inevitable that they will prematurely leak out. While the individual department stores and retail chains would not want to give a "heads up" to their competitors about their sale plans, pre-released copies of sale books had been known to be sold to competitors, sometimes for substantial sums.

With the speed of the internet along with its universal reach, it would only be a matter of time until these leaked sale books appeared on line well in advance of Black Friday. While there is both historical and contemporary evidence that some retailers jealously (and legally) guard premature release of the content of their holiday sale books, it has also become apparent that some other retailers can actually benefit and welcome the "buzz" created by the early release of lists of what they will have on sale on Black Friday.

As I type this at the beginning of November, almost four weeks before Black Friday, several of my favorite "daily deal" websites have already posted so called "leaked" copies of Black Friday sale books. Stores including Macy's, Belk, Harbor Freight, Walmart's "Wonder of Christmas Toy Book", Big Lots, Dollar General's "Toy Book", and others are already posted online, with others being added on a daily basis before Black Friday. One of my favorite Black Friday deal sites is DealNews (dealnews.com/black-friday), which projects that it will have the sale books for about 75 of the national retailers posted online prior to Black Friday. While DealNews already has the Dell Home, Dell Small Business, Macy's, Belk, Half-Price Books, and Harbor Freight sale books posted, others that DealNews expects to post in the coming days include

Ace Hardware, Bass Pro Shops, BestBuy, Costco, CVS, Fry's, Gander Mountain, Kohl's, Lowes, OfficeDepot/OfficeMax, Petco, Petsmart, Sam's, Sears, Stein Mart, Target, ToysRUs, Tractor Supply, Walmart, and many others.

Another personal favorite deal site which has a reputation for having an accurate and comprehensive selection of advance posting of Black Friday ads is Brad's Deals (blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/ads) which includes many of the same stores as listed by DealNews, but also includes Academy, Beall's, Palais Royal, and several others. Like some of the other websites, many of the same already leaked Black Friday ads are posted online at Brad's Deals.

In recent years, there has been some controversy about major big box retailers opening on Thanksgiving day in order to attract early shoppers; it is expected that more retailers will be open on Thanksgiving day, and their Thanksgiving "doorbuster" ads are also to be posted. Among the "rumored" Thanksgiving day specials are Macy's sales starting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, with some being available until Saturday "while supplies last", which "may" include: "Women's Boots & Booties, Select Styles 50% OFF; Rampage Handbags, Select Items, \$20; Misses' Down & Wool-Blend Coats, \$80; 3/4-TCW Diamond Earrings in 14K White Gold, \$289; Tommy Hilfiger Men's Sweaters, Knit Tops & Outerwear, 50% OFF; and dozens of other items.

The listing of Macy's sale items on DealNews that may be available starting at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving is 30 screens long, including the images of the items. The Macy's listing can be viewed online at dealnews.com/black-friday/s288/Macys. Macy's will be far from alone, being open on Thanksgiving; Sears recently announced its Black Friday sales hours as Thanksgiving Night 6 p.m. to 2 a.m., and on Black Friday Sears will open at 5 a.m.

Other national chains already announcing Thanksgiving Thursday openings (blackfriday.bradsdeals.com/store-hours) include Belk which will be opening at 6 p.m., and some of the major drug store chains such as Rite Aid which will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. These contrast with the recent announcement that the national sporting goods cooperative, REI, will be closed both on Thanksgiving day and on Black

Friday. The "rumored" Black Friday sale will begin at 7 a.m. on Friday at Harbor Freight, and includes items typically found on a good sale from that seller (dealnews.com/black-friday/s1909/Harbor-Freight-Tools).

DealNews, which has an earned reputation for Black Friday deal predictions (dealnews.com/features/Crazy-Deals-That-Could-Actually-Happen-This-Black-Friday) predicts that there will be some "crazy deals" on Black Friday, including a name brand 60" TV for \$549, or about \$350 less than the same or similar model sells for on Amazon.

Consumers should watch for the rumored \$99 basic but fully functional new laptops, with faster and more powerful 15" laptops with the latest CPU and chipsets going for about \$300. Generic ("no name") Android powered 7" tablets will be available for \$20, and the newly released Roku 4 streaming media device (possibly including a prepaid gift card) is expected to be offered for about \$115.

Popular video games should be available for about half-off, along with new video game consoles from Microsoft (Xbox One) and Sony (PS4), selling in the sub-\$300 range, or about the same price that the previous models are currently selling for in the "used" aftermarket. Those interested in top-of-the-line cell phones will likely find deep discounts on high end models; DealNews claims that the HTC One will be on direct sale for \$480, or about \$170 less than the same model is currently sold for by the cell phone carriers. DealNews also predicts that other top-tier cell phones will be available on Black Friday for direct purchase at an average discount of 26% off their regular prices.

Still to be posted, but should be available well before the important day, are some of the most popular Black Friday destinations, including BestBuy, Academy, Fry's, Target, ToysRUs, and Walmart. A few years ago, after evaluating the offers in the Thanksgiving day paper, one of my daughters and her husband left the Thanksgiving dinner that they were hosting in the early evening, stood in the freezing rain for hours waiting for one of the Dallas area big box electronics stores (CompUSA) to open at midnight Friday morning. Both being familiar with the layout of the store, and having reconnoitered the store late Wednesday evening, each had a planned mission and carefully

calculated route to maximize their priority purchases. Shortly after the store opened at midnight, they were the proud owners of a very large screen TV, as well as a new computer, laptop, and other hi-tech items purchased at deeply discounted Black Friday "doorbuster" prices. Now, with the availability of the online sale book postings well in advance of Black Friday, savvy shoppers can even better plan their holiday purchases, both in terms of budgeting, desired products, and shopping times.

For the readers interested in seeing what will be available on Black Friday, as well as on Thanksgiving Thursday, DealNews and Brad's

Deals should be among the first websites visited on a regular basis to view the latest postings. They, along with several other dedicated Black Friday websites, offer a free daily email notification whenever new ads are posted.

For those not willing to put up with the traffic and crowds, many of these same websites will also be posting the Cyber Monday deals, available the Monday following Black Friday. While some economists are predicting that this will be a slow holiday selling season, and with some local stores already offering "Pre Black Friday" deals, retailers will be working hard to separate us smart consumers from our money.

Board Grapples with Dates of Upcoming SIGs, Peripherals

The WAUC Board Meeting for November 5, 2015, was called to order at 6:20 and present were Vice-President Gary Kohler, Treasurer Bill Gierach, General Meeting Secretary Richard Durand, and WAUCtalk Editor Julia Rice. Officers were reminded to sign the registration sheet and create name tags. Julia informed the other Board Officers that the deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of WAUCtalk will be November 10th.

The upcoming schedule of WAUC SIGs was discussed and for the General Meeting, members will be reminded that for November the Mac SIG is cancelled and because of Thanksgiving, the Tablet SIG and the Q & A SIG will be held on the same date, November 19th, each at their own location. This year, the Tablet SIG will fall on Christmas Eve and the Board agreed that this SIG should just be cancelled for December, as it may be too confusing to the members if it is rescheduled. It was noted that a request has been received from a member for instruction about the program or service, Instagram, at a future SIG. None of us was familiar with Instagram either, but we will do our best to learn it together at an upcoming SIG.

About this time we were joined by former WAUC President and invited guest, Bruce Kosbab. The upcoming presentations were under discussion. The presentation for this evening's meeting will be by Peter Lee about running Windows on the Mac. Dr. Levine has agreed to give his customary presentation in January and the topic will be "Word Games." Julia asked if there are plans for another presentation about Windows 10 and Bill replied that Windows 10 is not yet ready for WAUC. Bruce will ask his contact at Cartridge World to give a presentation about ink

cartridges for printers at the February meeting. Richard asked if there would be any interest in a presentation about online sports information and online fantasy sports if a presenter of it can be found, and everyone else thought this acceptable. Another possibility under consideration is a presentation about how to sell things on eBay. Bill reported that the WAUC Brochure and promotional CD are completed and some have been dropped off at local computer stores.

Richard asked if everyone had received the forwarded email from APCUG about their upcoming Virtual Technology Conference which will be held shortly on November 7th, and everyone had. This will be announced at the General Meeting and the information about it on the APCUG website will be projected on the screen so all the members can see it.

The next topic was the upcoming WAUC Holiday Party which will take place at the December General Meeting. Bruce will be out of town at the time of the Party, but he will place the order for the sliced ham and turkey with Bunzel's. One of the other officers or



members will pick up the order on the day of the party. Bill said he can pick up the rolls. He also reported that the WAUC Treasury can afford the expense of the party, and there is no need to require donations from the members but all agreed that voluntary donations will be accepted. Gary stated that he will have the materials ready so that we can enjoy Bingo. WAUC Member Marilyn Schraeder has again agreed to play keyboard and lead the club in singing holiday songs. Bill will set up the holiday computer game, Elf Bowling. The sign-up sheet for the Holiday Party is on the registration table for this evening, and all plans will be announced at this evening's General Meeting.

The Mac SIG needs a connector for connecting a Mac computer with the projector. It was agreed that WAUC would reimburse the purchaser of such a connector, which would become property of WAUC, if the amount is reasonable and if the correct and proper connector can be identified. It was emphasized that it is up to the attendees of the Mac SIG to provide a proper Mac.

On the issue of the raffle prize drawings at each meeting, Richard pointed out that the second drawing was started when we received O'Reilly computer books through APCUG, and he asked that now that the book program has run its course, do we want to continue having two raffle drawings per meeting? The other officers replied that we are not selling very many raffle tickets per meeting and until we sell more, it's all right if we draw only one raffle ticket.

As per the bylaws of WAUC, this evening's meeting of November will be the occasion of the annual

election of WAUC officers, and election procedures were reviewed. Board Meeting Secretary Richard Reinhard had informed Richard Durand that he will not be running again for office. All other serving officers are running again for their respective positions and Julia has prepared ballots reflecting this. Bruce reminded us that during the meeting, nominations for each position have to be called for at least three times. Per the WAUC Bylaws, each nomination has to have two seconds. During the election process, the election Bylaws will be projected on to the screen for all to see and the election will be held at the end of the meeting after all other issues have been addressed.

These were the topics discussed at the WAUC Board Meeting of November 5th, 2015. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Durand
WAUC General Meeting Secretary

Address Change

If you are changing your email or home address, please note:

Email address changes should sent to Richard Durand at rgdurand@yahoo.com and Bill Gierach at wgdgierach@yahoo.com. **Home address changes** should sent to Bill Gierach at wgdgierach@yahoo.com.

Peter Lee Demonstrates Ways to Use Windows on Mac

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Gary Kohler a 7:00 PM. WAUC welcomed a new member, Mr. Tom Martini, and also a guest of Member Gretchen Burt, Alice. Treasurer Bill Gierach was called on to give the Treasurer's Report which had a beginning balance of \$1,449.28, income of \$106.50, expenses of \$36.81, arriving at an ending balance of \$1,518.97. Membership renewals for 2016 are now being accepted.

Next, an announcement was made for the APCUG Online Virtual Technology Conference being held this coming Saturday, November 7th. Since WAUC is a member of APCUG, login by WAUC members is free but pre-registration is required and there are only ten openings remaining. After some effort, the information webpage for this event was projected on to the screen and the listed topics were seen, including using Evernote and "Feebly" to view blogs, using webcams, the iOS 9 iPhone operating system, and email security.

WAUC's plans for presentations were updated. The presentation for this evening will be by Peter Lee and will be about how to run Windows on a Mac. There will be no presentation in December because that is the day of the WAUC Holiday Party. The big news is that WAUC Member Dr. Len Levine is on board to give his traditional January presentation and the topic will be word games.

The plans for the upcoming WAUC Holiday Party at the December Meeting were announced. WAUC will provide sliced ham and turkey with rolls, beverages, and chips. Members attending are asked to bring a dish to pass but those who don't are not required to submit a donation. As always, any donations offered will be accepted. Members can let us know what dish they plan to bring by using the sign-up sheet on the registration table.

The upcoming WAUC schedule was reviewed. After

tonight's meeting, there will be the usual informal get-together at the Wendy's on 43rd and Lincoln. Per Mac SIG organizer, Louise Dahms, last month at the Mac SIG members helped each other with questions and problems. The Mac SIG for November has been canceled but will resume again in future months.

The Tutorial SIG last month reviewed programs on the WAUC CD of the month, which will be continued at the SIG this month. Using the service/program "Instagram" was scheduled for November 12th. Per Richard Durand, at the Q & A SIG last month there was a viewing of a YouTube video about how to take apart and clean the fan of a Hewlett Packard laptop of the type Richard had brought to the SIG to be examined in WAUC's One-on-One computer service. We learn from each other's questions and the next Q & A SIG will be on November 19th.

At the Tablet SIG last month, we were able to meet in two different rooms, one for iPad users and one for Android users. Since the SIG meets at Clement Manor, a number of the residents there attend as guests and per the Bylaws of WAUC, guests may only attend three meetings or SIGs before joining. Because of Thanksgiving, the next Tablet SIG will be a week earlier on November 19th. There was some discussion about changing the evening to hold this SIG to avoid future date conflicts but the members who attend the SIG said they were content to keep the current date, the fourth Thursday of the month, and cancel the SIG if there are conflicts. The Tablet SIG for December would fall on the 24th, Christmas Eve, and so it is being cancelled.

At the Investment SIG last month, Richard Durand reported that the SIG opened with an online game of Deal or No Deal and the members actually selected the suitcase containing the 1,000,000 prize. After the game, members looked up stocks on Vectorvest and learned about the technical indicator, "On Balance Volume." Member Dale Voit said he revealed a stock pick which has been very successful for him and he'll share it with anyone else interested. The WAUC Lunch was also held last month with eleven members attending and will be held again at 1:00 pm on Monday, November 16th, at Old Country Buffet in Greenfield.

After this, the WAUC CD of the Month was described. The raffle prizes were described and one raffle ticket was drawn. The members were informed about the free computer items on the table in the back.

It was finally time for the annual WAUC elections. Of the current WAUC officers, Vice-President Gary Kohler, Treasurer Bill Gierach, and General Meeting Secretary Richard Durand are again running for their positions. Board Meeting Secretary Richard Reinhard is not running again for his position. In accordance with the election rules, Vice-President Kohler asked for nominations for each position but

there were none and therefore, the current officers except for Mr. Reinhard, were re-elected to their positions with a motion approved by voice vote. The elective WAUC positions of President, Board Meeting Secretary, and Program Chairperson are still open. There was not enough time to hold a discussion about computer questions and computer industry news so we went into our mid-meeting break.

After the break, Marcia Zientek informed the members that she had done a search on her tablet for the program to be presented at the APCUG Virtual Conference, and found that it's known as Feedly, not "Feebly." With tablets, lookups are as convenient as can be.

After the drawing for the raffle prize, the members enjoyed a presentation by long-time WAUC member and Mac user, Peter Lee, about how to run Windows and Windows software on a Mac, something also known as "Mac and Cheese." There is now plenty of software available for the Mac but there are still some popular Windows applications, especially computer games, which won't run, and thus there is a need to be able to use both Mac and Windows operating systems on a single machine. Per Peter, the Mac comes with a built-in utility known as Bootcamp, which allows the user to choose between the Mac or Windows OS when starting up, but then requires shut-down and a restart to switch to the other system. The alternative is to purchase software for a virtual machine and a license for a version of Windows. A virtual machine allows one to easily switch between the Mac and Windows systems without shutting down first. Three of the best known virtual machine packages are Parallels, Fusion 8, and Virtual Box. Peter no longer needs Windows programs and so he doesn't have a virtual machine on his Mac in order to demonstrate how these different alternatives work, but he did show an Internet review which compared Bootcamp, Parallels, Fusion 8, and Virtual Box with bar graphs for the various benchmark tests that were done. As with most computer reviews, the comparison can't give an overall best choice but offers information for one to make a choice depending on the features most needed. The return of the Mac to the computer marketplace is in no small part due to its ability to now run Windows software.

That is a brief summary of the presentation and the meeting was able to be adjourned by 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Durand
WAUC General Meeting Secretary



Mysteries of Twitter Dealt With

On Thursday, November 12th, 2015 those attending WAUC's Tutorial SIG were Richard Durand, Bill Gierach, Jim Hempel, Bob and Terry Harvey, Marcia Zientek, and Tom Martini. The first question was, "How does one download an ebook from the library?" Go to: COUNTYCAT.MCFLS.ORG. In the search box, type KILLING REAGAN (the example we used), ENTER, scroll down until you see the book in EBOOK format, click on REQUEST, and enter your library card NUMBER and PASSWORD. A screen will appear telling you your book if the book is available. Since no ebook was available at the time of the SIG, the library will send an email advising when it is available for download. Then open the OVERDRIVE app on one's tablet or phone and download the book simply by clicking on it.

Next we looked at Instagram. It is an app for a tablet or smartphone and it's for sharing photos with friends. First download the INSTAGRAM app and register. We watched a short YouTube video about how to use it. None of the members attending this SIG felt it was something they had use for.

Then we had a short discussion on Twitter. Again the app must be downloaded and you must register. A TWEET is a short, public message limited to 140 characters which may or may not include a photo. We watched a video on YouTube again but this time the topic is Twitter. Here are a few terms one needs to know about Twitter. DM stands for DIRECT MESSAGE. The # symbol stands for HASHTAG and is used before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces) in their Tweet to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in Twitter Search. An example could be #prayforparis. RETWEET means to share someone else's post. FAVORITE is the same thing as thumbs up, or to like. The DISCOVER button will show new categories. TRENDING means extremely popular topics. The maker of the YouTube video we watched stressed the importance of good privacy and security settings. Make sure DO NOT TRACK has a check mark next to it. Also, if you are including a long hyperlink in your tweet, go to bitly.com and it will give you a shortened version of the same hyperlink.

This was a most informative SIG.

Terry Harvey

What to Do When Spoofed

In using email, this has happened to me and I've seen others victimized by it as well. When someone else takes one's email address and uses it to send their own emails, sometimes to send obscene spam, it is known as "spoofing."

At the recent APCUG Online Virtual Technology Conference, there was a presentation about email security, and though it was very interesting, there was no mention of what to do about spoofing. I thought it wouldn't hurt to ask

a question about it, so I typed one in the chat box. In my previous experience, such questions are usually not received or gotten to, so I was pleasantly surprised when it was actually addressed. For those who did not tune in, here's what I found out.

In your email program, especially with webmail such as Yahoo or Gmail, Never Ever check the little box for having your username and password remembered. If it is checked, uncheck it.

When finished with email, don't just close the program out of the browser. Instead, log out properly.

And if you find that you have been spoofed, change your email password.

It's just a beginning, but these are things that everyone who uses email can do. Understand you are vulnerable, but don't let it stop you from using the convenience of email. And when you see it happen to others, be understanding and helpful, because this is something that can happen to anyone.

Richard Durand



Google's New Spam-Fighting Tools

By Bob Rankin, Ask Bob Rankin
 July 23, 2015 Column
http://askbobrankin.com/googles_new_spamfighting_tools.html
 bob (at) rankin.org
 Reprinted with Permission

Google estimates that nearly 60 percent of all email it processes is spam. But like most Gmail users, I rarely see any spam in my inbox. Google claims that Gmail now blocks 99.9 percent of all spam. Read on to learn how you can get near-perfect spam filtering, even if you don't use Gmail...

Machine learning, an application of artificial intelligence, has been part of Gmail's spam filter program since Gmail's inception. On July 9, Google announced three new improvements to Gmail's spam filter.



Every time a user clicks the "Report Spam" or "Not Spam" button on a message, Gmail learns something that helps it filter spam better. But now, Gmail is attempting to learn on its own, without the user's clicks.

The spam filter now uses the same artificial neural network that Google Now and Google Search use to detect and block the "especially sneaky" spam that sometimes slips past users' radar.
 Gmail Spam Filter

What's an "artificial neural network," you ask? The oversimplified answer is, a lot of computers connected to each other in an attempt to simulate the interconnections of human brain cells. It's expensive to build an artificial neural network; most are tiny, with 1 to 10 million connections.

Google has built an ANN with over one billion connections using the processors in its vast and far-flung empire of data centers. That sounds awesome, until you learn that the human brain contains several trillion connections! None the less, Google's ANN is

capable of rudimentary human-like self-learning. That means you don't have to teach it what spam is.

In one experiment, Google's ANN was fed millions of still images of cats culled from YouTube videos. The images were not labeled as "cats" and programmers did not tell the ANN what a "cat" is. The ANN figured it out for itself, learning to recognize cats in virtually any image. If it can do that, it can recognize spam with greater accuracy than most humans can.

You don't have to do anything to use Gmail's spam filtering - it's automatic. But you can add your own filters to funnel messages into folders, forward to another address, and other actions. See my article *Tame Your Email With Filters* for help adding filters to Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook.com, iCloud Mail, or AOL webmail. http://askbobrankin.com/tame_your_email_with_filters.html

But the ANN is still not perfect. Just as humans see UFOs in pictures of streetlights, Google's ANN sometimes sees spam in legitimate messages and mistakenly consigns them to the spam folder. Google claims that only about 0.01 percent (1 in 10,000) of legitimate emails are falsely labeled as spam these days. As the ANN learns more about email, that figure should fall even further.

Take a look in your Gmail spam folder, and see how it's working. If you do find certain messages are being incorrectly flagged as spam, you can create a Gmail filter for them, with a "Never send to Spam" action, so they'll be delivered to your inbox.

How does Gmail's spam filter compare to other free Webmail services, such as Microsoft's Hotmail/Outlook.com and Yahoo? I haven't been able to find any independent, rigorous studies of this question. I'll just note that Microsoft seems to think it's acceptable if less than 3 percent of the messages that reach your inbox are spam.

Another new spam-fighting technique that Gmail is introducing doesn't really tackle spam, in my opinion. Gmail now attempts to learn individual users' reading preferences and filter out even legitimate mail that goes unread.

The company gives the example of email newsletters. One user reads them assiduously while another just lets them pile up unread, or deletes them without reading. Why people don't just unsubscribe from newsletters is one of life's mysteries. Hopefully, Gmail can distinguish between legit opt-in email newsletters and the ones that just arrive without your consent. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook-com/compare/>

Finally, Gmail is providing help for legitimate, large-volume email publishers whose communications are sometimes wrongly condemned as spam. The Gmail

Which of these topics are of interest to you? They are available from APCUG, and we may be able to fit your choice into the next issue. Email with your interest to ricejulia@hotmail.com.

- 7 Short Tips for Word Users, Nancy DeMarte
- Creating Your Own Template in Word 2013, Nancy DeMarte
- Drive for a Change – Installing a Laptop Hybrid Drive, Greg Skalka
- Edge – Microsoft’s New Web Browser, Sandy Berger
- Everything you’ve ever wanted to know about eBay – Book Review of My eBay for Seniors by Chris Johnson
- Fun with Spreadsheets, Jim Cerny
- I Have a Website – Now What? Joe Asling
- Interesting Internet Finds
- My Windows 10 Upgrade Experiences, Frank RamseyNibblers for May 2015, Jeannine Sloan
- Nibblers for June 2015, Jeannine Sloan, Modular Smart Phones, Biometric Scanning, Ransomware Defense, Google Earth Tutorials
- OneNote serves as a computerized memory, John Weigle
- Phone Service without Paying, Tom Kuklinski

- Practice Makes Perfect, Sandy Berger
- Printing Stuff, Bill Crowe, three applications that work with the iPad or iPhone.
- Rescuing Windows with the Trinity Rescue Kit, Dick Maybach
- Restoring Windows with the SystemRescueCD, Dick Maybach
- Saving a File, Jim Cerny
- Scam I Am, Greg Skalka
- Siri for Seniors (or anyone), Larry McJunkin
- So You Want to Write a Book, Dick Maybach
- The Tip Corner – May 2015, Bill Sheff, Scams and viruses, print part of an e-mail or other text?
- Topaz Photography Collection, Part 1 Review, Mark Mattson
- To SSD or Not to SSD? – That is the question, Phil Sorrentino (solid state drive)
- Top 10 Reasons to Upgrade to Windows 10, Sandy Berger

Postmaster Tools will help airlines, banks, credit card companies, and other well-known firms analyze the fate of their emails and improve their delivery and reading rates. <https://gmail.com/postmaster/>

Even if you don't use or like Gmail, you can still use it to filter spam. Here's one technique that some people use to "pre-filter" their incoming emails. Instead of providing your actual email address when asked, give out a Gmail address that you've created. Configure that Gmail account to simply forward everything to your actual address. Gmail does spam-filtering

BEFORE forwarding, so the messages that do get forwarded are virtually spam-free.

Gmail's spam filter is so reliable and accurate that I hardly ever check my spam filter for false positives anymore. I get hundreds of emails daily, and in 2015, I estimate I've clicked on the "Report Spam" or "Not Spam" button less than a dozen times. The spam filter just works.

Do you use Gmail? How is the spam filtering working for you? Your thoughts on this topic are welcome.

WAUC Membership Application Date _____

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ e-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

How did you hear about WAUC? _____

What do you like to use your computer for? _____

What talents do you have that you would like to share? _____

To join WAUC, please send completed form along with check for \$12.50 to cover dues from July 1st through December 31, 2015 to:

Wisconsin All-computers Users Club Paid by: New Member
P.O. Box 340241 Cash Renewal
Milwaukee, WI 53234-0241 Check **Do Not** include me in any special mailings.



WAUC
Wisconsin All-computers Users Club
P.O. Box 340241
Milwaukee, WI 53234-0241

First Class

