

Legal aspects and implications of e-mail marketing and related spam laws

Ecommerce can be best described as a marketplace on the internet, which comprises distributing, marketing, buying, selling, and servicing of products or services through electronic systems such as internet or other computer networks. It can be also viewed as an electronic business application targeted at commercial transactions involving electronic funds transfer, e-marketing, supply chain management, online marketing, online transaction processing, automated inventory management, electronic data interchange, and automated data collection systems.

Ecommerce is indeed the most efficient and convenient mode of transactions nowadays, but this business needs strict compliance with laws and related legalities, particularly dealing with marketing, because you are dealing with others' money.

If you in the ecommerce business, then strictly avoid fraudulent promotions, otherwise you could be charged for spamming under the new CAN-SPAM Act, which was signed by President George W. Bush on December 16; the Act is a federal initiative designed to regulate the most harmful and annoying practices of spammers. Violation of the Act can result in the following consequences:

- Revenue losses and damage of reputation
- Major e-mail service providers such as AOL, Hotmail, and Yahoo! filtering your messages to block them
- ISP may shut down your e-mail account
- Web host may shut down your web site
- Under the new federal CAN-SPAM Act, you can be fined (up to \$2 million) or sentenced to jail (up to five years)

Therefore honestly promote a legitimate business to sell real and valuable products or services.

Operate a legitimate business

Do not use falsifying headers to force your way into peoples' inboxes. Avoid using deceptive subject lines, hijacking other peoples' e-mail accounts or computers to send spam, creating e-mail or IP addresses specifically to send spam, and sending unsolicited e-mail with sexual content and emails to people who have requested to be removed from your list. These are malicious ways of forcing messages into the inboxes of people who don't want them, which are not only annoying but are illegal and unprofitable.

Plan responsible e-mail promotions

Always obtain permission from the target users before sending them emails. A user must never get a mail that he is not expecting. Avoid buying or renting email lists as they do not promise validity and at times you end up paying for the addresses that are invalid. If you buy email lists, find out how those addresses were collected. If people in your purchased list have not agreed to receive email related to promotion or advertisements, you might land into the troubled waters.

Be very careful while choosing a subject line; it should be self-explanatory about the content within the email. Mention the real return address and place a functional 'unsubscribe' link in all the emails. If you have an exhaustive list of emails you will have to seek professional help to install an ASP or any other suitable program to manage 'opt-ins' and 'unsubscribe' requests. You must send commercial or promotional emails/ newsletters through you're your company's official email address.

Finally, stay educated about e-mail marketing and spam laws. Laws and their definitions are changing; therefore obtain regular updates on the related laws.

About the Author

William King is the director of Wholesale Pages: <http://www.wholesalepages.co.uk> , Aid and Trade Wholesale Dropshippers Directory: <http://www.aidandtrade.com> , Australia Wholesalers: <http://www.australiawholesalers.com> , Daily Trader: <http://www.dailytrader.com> . He has 18 years of experience in the marketing and trading industries and has been helping retailers, entrepreneurs and startups with their product sourcing, promotion, marketing and supply chain requirements.

Source: <http://www.articlemint.com>