

# Exhibit D

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### Who's Trading Your E-mail Addresses?

Posted by [CmdrTaco](#) on Wed May 30, '07 11:49 AM  
from the [checking-the-nasdaq-now](#) dept.

[Bennett Haselton](#) is back with another piece on e-mail privacy. He starts *"On April 14, 2007, I signed up for an AmeriTrade account using an e-mail address consisting of 16 random alphanumeric characters, which I never gave to anyone else. On May 15, I started receiving pump-and-dump stock spams sent to that e-mail address. I was hardly the first person to discover that this happens. Almost all of the top hits in a [Google search for "ameritrade spam"](#) are from people with the same story: they used a unique address for each service that they sign up with, so they could tell if any company ever leaked their address to a spammer, and the address they gave to AmeriTrade started getting stock spam. (I don't actually do that with most companies where I create accounts. But after hearing all the AmeriTrade stories, I created an account with them in April just for the purpose of entering a unique e-mail address and seeing if it would get leaked.)"* Bennett continues on if you're willing to click the link.



What's surprising is that as far as I can tell, AmeriTrade has taken almost no heat in the media for letting this happen. Despite the abundant testimonials from bloggers who had their addresses leaked, the story never crossed over into the "mainstream" Internet press. In a recent Bloomberg News story, the FBI [warned](#) that E\*Trade and AmeriTrade users were vulnerable to spyware installed by criminals in hotels and cybercafes to capture accounts and run pump-and-dump stock spams; no mention of the fact that all AmeriTrade e-mail addresses were apparently already in the hands of spammers anyway (although no one knows if usernames and passwords were leaked to the spammers as well).

This doesn't bode well for anyone who uses any type of online service and wants that service to keep their personal information secure. If AmeriTrade got skewered in the media for leaking customers' personal information to spammers, other companies would see that and learn the lesson. On the other hand, if AmeriTrade gets away with it with barely a whisper in the mainstream news, other companies are going to take note of that, too. Besides, spam and identity theft hurt everyone, not just the victims, because the costs are passed on to all of us in terms of higher ISP charges, higher payment processing fees, and more mail lost due to stringent spam filters.

AmeriTrade [disclosed](#) in April 2005 that a tape containing some customer information might have been stolen in February of that year, and many spam victims who blogged about their AmeriTrade addresses being stolen, referenced that incident as the likely cause. But after [Bill Katz's blog post](#) became a clearinghouse of sorts for complaints about stolen AmeriTrade addresses (probably as a result of being the first match on Google for "ameritrade spam"), several users posted that they had received spam at accounts that were only created with AmeriTrade in summer 2006. And then my e-mail address got leaked between April 14 and May 15, 2007. So it's pretty clear that some attacker has access to the AmeriTrade customer database on an ongoing basis, and the February 2005 tape theft probably had nothing to do with it.

AmeriTrade says that California law required them to notify their California customers of a potential security breach after the tapes were stolen, and that they went further and [notified all of their customers](#) anyway. Since there is now proof that their database is more or less perpetually open to some outside attacker, will they send out another notification letter to customers?

An accidental security breach can happen to any responsible company, especially if they are compromised from the inside. But the trail of blogosphere and UseNet posts indicates that several times AmeriTrade has concealed the full extent of the problem from customers who asked them about it, or has given out information that they already knew was wrong. In one thread in October 2005, a user [reported](#) that they wrote to AmeriTrade asking why their AmeriTrade-only e-mail address was getting spammed, and AmeriTrade replied that the spammer might have guessed the address using a [dictionary attack](#), adding:

We have no reason to believe that any of our systems have been compromised. Ameritrade deploys state of the art firewalls, intrusion detection, anti-virus software as well as employs a full time staff of employee's dedicated strictly to Information Security and protecting Ameritrade's systems from unauthorized access.

But that was long after February 2005, when AmeriTrade [said](#) that tapes containing customer data were stolen. (Even if that turned out not to be the cause of the spam after all, by that point AmeriTrade knew that their customers' addresses had been leaked somehow.)

Then when my friend Art Medlar complained to AmeriTrade this year about the same thing happening, he got a response saying that even if he was getting spammed by an address that he only gave to AmeriTrade, that could be the result of hackers "implanting 'bots' that have the ability to extract e-mail addresses from your computer, even when you have protective spy software engaged". But of course this makes no sense -- if this were the source of the problem, it would affect everyone's e-mail addresses equally, and would not explain why a disproportionate number of complaints were coming from people who created addresses that they gave to AmeriTrade specifically.

When I sent AmeriTrade my own inquiry, I got a response that was identical to a forwarded message that someone else [posted to news.admin.net-abuse.email](#) in April. (To their credit, in this version of the message, AmeriTrade is acknowledging responsibility for the problem instead of attributing it to dictionary attacks or botnets. But the e-mail contains the curious piece of advice: "Please be sure to delete any spam you might receive, then empty your e-mail's trash so that it's no longer kept there, either." Huh? As one reader replied to the UseNet thread: "Cynical Translation: Please don't retain any independent evidence.") At first I didn't realize this was a boilerplate response, so I sent back some more questions, asking, for example, whether they would notify their California customers of the data security breach as required by that state's laws. The second response I got was a copy of the *old* boilerplate that they were [sending out two years ago](#), blaming "dictionary attacks".

Now, compared to the 1,000 spams I already get every day (pre-filtering), the AmeriTrade spams were just a drop in the bucket, and many of their customers are probably in the same boat. And unlike most AmeriTrade customers, at least I can stop all AmeriTrade spam just by de-activating those addresses, since they aren't used for anything else. (Right now I'm keeping them open just to see what else comes in.) But AmeriTrade's database also contains much more valuable information such as names, PIN numbers (do you use the same PIN number everywhere that you sign up?), and Social Security Numbers. When I signed up for my account, informed by dire warnings that federal law required accurate information "to help the government fight the funding of terrorism and money laundering activities", I gave AmeriTrade my real SSN, address, and other personal data, figuring that if I gave them false information, I might get in more trouble than the experiment was worth. But now that the attacker has my e-mail, they might have all of my other information as well. In the coming months I'll probably start checking my credit report more often than I used to.

Probably someone inside AmeriTrade is selling customer data to an outside spammer. (It seems less likely that an attacker would keep breaking into AmeriTrade repeatedly to get updated copies of the customer list. Once you've broken in and gotten the customer database from 2006, why bother breaking in a year later, taking the risk all over again of getting caught and going to jail, just to get the updated 2007 database? Surely the 2006 list would be enough to run any pump-and-dump stock scam that you want!) Two suggestions to AmeriTrade to tighten their security: First, the number of people within the company who *can* access the customer database, is probably a lot larger than the number who actually *need* to access the customer database. Limit access to the e-mail database to people who actually need it. Second, in any cases where different employees really need to have access to the list, try giving them different versions of it, where each version is "seeded" with spamtrap addresses at Hotmail and Yahoo Mail. If the spamtrap addresses that start receiving spam are all ones that were used to seed one particular employee's copy of the list, then you've found the source of the leak. That won't stop the spam being sent to addresses that have already been stolen, but it could prevent further leaks from happening.

The SEC recently announced that they would [suspend trading](#) of companies whose stocks had been the target of spam campaigns to manipulate the price. Perhaps AmeriTrade could do something similar -- once a stock is identified as being promoted in spams sent to AmeriTrade customers, any customer attempting to buy that stock would be presented with a message saying that AmeriTrade was blocking the transaction for security reasons. (If this runs afoul of some SEC regulation that a brokerage has to let you buy any stock you want any time you want, then at least display a big warning when AmeriTrade users try to buy it through their system, saying that the stock has been the subject of a fraudulent promotion scheme and is an extremely high-risk buy.) However, while this would remove the incentive for stock spammers to target AmeriTrade customers, it's also really just covering up a symptom of the problem, rather than addressing the problem itself, which is that a spammer was able to steal the customer information from AmeriTrade's database in the first place.

But whatever they do, AmeriTrade should stop blowing off the people who complain about the spam, with messages about "dictionary attacks" and "botnets". When customers create specialized spamtrap addresses to detect if their e-mails ever get leaked, those are the tech-savvy customers who (a) know what they're doing, and (b) hate spam more than most people, and giving them misleading information is just poking a stick in their eye. Not a smart move when AmeriTrade has been leaking private customer information and is based, as their name indicates, in the most litigious country in the history of the world.

[+] [spam](#), [internet](#), [privacy](#) ([tagging beta](#))

## Related Stories

[+] [How Private Are Sites' Membership Lists?](#) 265 comments

Slashdot contributor [Bennett Haselton](#) has written an essay on a subtle privacy issue affecting many websites (including Slashdot!) He says "*Suppose your girlfriend called up Match.com and said, "I think my boyfriend might be cheating on me. His e-mail address is joeblow - at - aol - dot - com. Can you tell me if he's a member?" And Match.com phone support told her, "Why, yes, he is a member. You'd better have a talk with him." After you had gotten over the guilt of getting caught -- I mean, the guilt of cheating -- would you not feel like Match.com had violated your privacy by telling a third party that you were a member?"* Keep reading to see what he's getting at and to decide if and when it's a problem.

- [Hrm.](#) by grub (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:53AM

◦

### Re:Hrm.

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [rherbert \(565206\)](#) <[slashdot.org&ryan,xar.us](mailto:slashdot.org&ryan,xar.us)> on Wednesday May 30, @12:04PM ([#19322847](#))

(<http://xar.us/>)

If you run your own mail server, set up a subdomain where every address goes to your inbox.... That way, it's fairly obvious when you get spam to ameritrade.com@bills.mydomain.com. I caught EmigrantDirect that way, although I was simply shocked when they never responded to my e-mail about it.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by grub (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:08PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by rherbert (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:22PM
    - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by omeomi (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:23PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by nemesisj (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:54PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by oyenstikker (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @02:21PM

### Re:Hrm.

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [CastrTroy \(595695\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:13PM ([#19322993](#))

(<http://www.kibbee.ca/>)

I used to do that, but found that I got a lot of extra spam from people just sending email to random addresses at my domain. It was too much trouble so, I went back to configuring my addresses individually. That way it's easier to block certain addresses when they get too much spam, and you know who is sending you the spam.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by greed (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @02:51PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by sumdumass (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @06:48PM

### Re:Hrm.

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [bill mcgonigle \(4333\)](#) \* on Wednesday May 30, @03:39PM ([#19326161](#))

(<http://blog.bfccomputing.com/> | Last Journal: [Tuesday February 06, @05:50PM](#))

*I used to do that, but found that I got a lot of extra spam from people just sending email to random addresses at my domain.*

Did you use a subdomain like the GP suggested? I've had plenty of dictionary attacks of the form foo@example.com, but there's no way, other than a harvester, to know about foo@bar.example.com.  
[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by CastrTroy (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:23PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by Captain Splendid (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:37PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by bill\_mcgonigle (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:04PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by Fulcrum of Evil (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:17PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by bill\_mcgonigle (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:26PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by Fulcrum of Evil (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:34PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by bill\_mcgonigle (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:39PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by hysterion (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:26PM
- [Tagged addresses](#) by washholm (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @03:51AM
- [Prefix with initials?](#) by 6Yankee (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @04:22PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by kasperd (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:23PM
  - [The auto-replies are burying me though.](#) by Lanboy (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @06:22PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by Overzeetop (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:12PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by antdude (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:40PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by Mean Variance (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:38PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by DarkAxi0m (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @07:51PM
      - [Re:Hrm.](#) by space\_in\_your\_face (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @02:45AM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by melandy (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:31PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by antdude (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:43PM
    - [Re:Hrm.](#) by melandy (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @07:35PM
      - [Re:Hrm.](#) by mgv (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:25PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by diagonti (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:48PM
- [A slightly less technical solution](#) by mgcarley (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @07:13AM
  - [Re:A slightly less technical solution](#) by mgcarley (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @07:27AM
- **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**

○

**Re:Hrm.**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [spyrochaete \(707033\)](#) <[spyrochaete@hypp...org](mailto:spyrochaete@hypp...org) minus distro> on Wednesday May 30, @12:25PM ([#19323187](#))

(<http://www.demodulated.com/> | Last Journal: [Thursday January 05, @02:38PM](#))

If you create throwaway addresses, don't forget to disable any catchall

address so you don't get bombarded with 50 addresses worth of spam!

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by grub (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:26PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by The MAZZTer (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @09:08PM

○

### **Re:Hrm.**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [It doesn't come easy \(695416\) \\*](#) on Wednesday May 30, @01:11PM  
([#19323899](#))

(Last Journal: [Friday November 11, @09:56AM](#))

On the other hand, I also use TDWaterhouse and I also **always** use a unique email address for every system where I have an account, including for TDWaterhouse. And at the same time TDWaterhouse combined with Ameritrade, I started getting pump & dump stock scams sent to my TDWaterhouse email address (which was the same email address I was using before TDWaterhouse and Ameritrade combined). It seems to me that pretty much confirms that Ameritrade has some kind of **ONGOING** security problem. And since access to my TDWaterhouse (now TD Ameritrade) account means access to my money, I will be moving my accounts ASAP.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- **Re:Hrm.**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [LoadStar \(532607\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @01:37PM ([#19324317](#))

I opened a TD Ameritrade account a couple of months ago, and I too started getting slammed with pump-and-dump spam. The problem for me is that I went IN PERSON to a TD Ameritrade branch and opened the account, so it's not like a "man in the middle" attack, unless this hypothetical man in the middle is actually opening up brick-and-mortar branches.

I was simply using the account to hold the relatively small stock portfolio I have, so I have no problem moving my account elsewhere.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by SRA8 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:57PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by pdboddy (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:57PM
  - [HMMM](#) by hurfy (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:44PM

- **Re:Hrm.**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [NatasRevol \(731260\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @03:57PM  
([#19326481](#))

(Last Journal: [Monday November 21, @01:45PM](#))

Why does everyone assume it's a security problem?

Why can't it be a revenue stream problem? ie they're selling the addresses?

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Definitions and Experimental Method](#) by abb3w (Score:2) Tuesday June 05, @11:40AM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by It doesn't come easy (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @07:54PM
- **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**

- [Re:Hrm.](#) by hedwards (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:04PM
  - [Re:Hrm.](#) by hedwards (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:18PM
  - **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**

- **Spamgourmet is even easier.**

(Score:5, Informative)

by [Kadin2048 \(468275\)](#) \* <[\[kadin2048\]@\[mac.com\]](mailto:[kadin2048]@[mac.com])> on Wednesday May 30, @02:17PM ([#19324909](#))

(Last Journal: [Thursday May 24, @03:31PM](#))

*Protip: if you run your own mail server generate a whack of aliases (ie: bogus000 through bogus999) so you always have a disposable address available.*

Even easier: just go to [Spamgourmet.com](#) [spamgourmet.com] and set up an account there (takes about 15 seconds, seriously), and then you can use all the addresses you want of the form

**[somedword].youremail@spamgourmet.com.**

E.g., if you're signing up for Ameritrade, you could use the address "ameritradesucks.kadin@spamgourmet.com" (or any other of about 10 different domains, it's not just limited to spamgourmet).

After each address has forwarded a set number of emails through to your real, hidden address, it will shut off and all further messages will be "eaten." (You can re-activate emails if you want, or set up whitelists so that all email from ameritrade.com gets through.)

It's a pretty brilliant system, and it's completely free. If you set up an account and use Spamgourmet dummy addresses everywhere, you can almost totally prevent spam arriving directly to your inbox. Also, you can go in later and see which addresses have been flooded with spam (some of mine have received thousands of messages) and see exactly what services are selling out out. Very cool.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Spamgourmet is even easier.](#) by yoyodyne (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:19PM
- [Spamex does this to](#) by george14215 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:42PM
- [Re:Spamgourmet is even easier.](#) by ericferris (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @06:04PM
- [Re:Spamgourmet is even easier.](#) by vic-trail (Score:3) Thursday May 31, @12:31AM
- **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by Bellum Aeternus (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:50PM
- [This isn't new....](#) by queenb\*\*ch (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:36PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by maxume (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @10:45PM
- [Re:Hrm.](#) by MicklePickle (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @12:03AM
- **[5 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.**

- **Phew!**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [CrazyTalk \(662055\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @11:54AM ([#19322687](#))

I'm as guilty as the next person for not always RTFA, but his is the first time I couldn't even make it through the *posting*

- [Re:Phew!](#) by 99BottlesOfBeerInMyF (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:10PM



- [Re:Phew!](#) by snoyberg (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:47PM
- [Re:Phew!](#) by Paradise Pete (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:31PM
  - [Re:Phew!](#) by QuesarVII (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @05:04PM
- [Re:Phew!](#) by Paradoks (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:19PM

- **Re:Phew!**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [Kadin2048 \(468275\) \\*](#) <[\[kadin2048\] \[at\] \[mac.com\]](mailto:[kadin2048] [at] [mac.com])> on Wednesday May 30, @02:23PM ([#19325005](#))

(Last Journal: [Thursday May 24, @03:31PM](#))

This doesn't make a damn bit of sense. Why would customer's email address be sitting out on a server that "other people can see and may gain access to"?

There's a word for that, it's 'incompetence.'

If they're they stupid about handling email addresses, what makes you think that the rest of your personal information is being protected any better? There's *absolutely no reason* why this should be happening. Something is very, very wrong at Ameritrade, and as evidenced by the fact that they haven't done anything, my suspicion is that they either can't, or don't know how to. That's not a good thing.

It's inexcusable.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Phew!](#) by mythar (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:18PM
- [Re:Phew!](#) by David\_W (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @03:08PM
- [3 replies](#) **beneath your current threshold.**

- **Solution?**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [daeg \(828071\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @11:55AM ([#19322691](#))

Drop AmeriTrade. I did and couldn't be happier. I couldn't trust my stock (and thus, some of my savings and part of my future financial well-being) to a company that can't even keep an e-mail address secure.

- [Re:Solution?](#) by dbzero (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:52PM
- [Re:Solution?](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @03:12PM
  - [Re:Solution?](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @03:47AM
- [Re:Solution?](#) by bcrowell (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @09:24PM
  - [Re:Solution?](#) by daeg (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @09:48PM
    - [Re:Solution?](#) by daeg (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @09:51PM
  - [Re:Solution?](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @03:52AM
    - [Re:Solution?](#) by bcrowell (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @08:46PM
      - [Re:Solution?](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Friday June 01, @02:23PM
- [1 reply](#) **beneath your current threshold.**

- **Abusable fix?**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [Ruprecht the Monkeyb \(680597\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @11:55AM ([#19322715](#))

Perhaps AmeriTrade could do something similar -- once a stock is identified as being promoted in spams sent to AmeriTrade customers, any customer attempting to buy that stock would be presented with a message saying that AmeriTrade was blocking the transaction for security reasons. (If this runs afoul of some SEC regulation that a brokerage has to let you buy any stock you want any time you want, then at least display a big warning when AmeriTrade users try to buy it through their system, saying that the stock has been the subject of a fraudulent promotion scheme and is an extremely high-risk buy.)

Wouldn't this also be abusable? Pick a stock, short it, spam the hell out of everybody, watch Ameritrade or whoever blacklist it, and watch the price drop.

○ **Re:Abusable fix?**

(Score:4, Informative)

by [UbuntuDupe \(970646\)](#) \* on Wednesday May 30, @12:05PM ([#19322861](#))  
(Last Journal: [Sunday October 22, @11:27PM](#))

Based on the comments on other threads on this topic, the flaw with such a plan is in "short it". To short-sell a stock, you must borrow it. To borrow it, someone must be willing and able to lend it. To be able to lend stock, you have to be a large institution, which are generally prohibited from buying (and thus holding) thinly-traded penny stocks. And it's exactly the penny stocks that are targeted by pump-and-dump schemes.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [CORRECTION](#) by UbuntuDupe (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:11PM
  - [Re:CORRECTION](#) by Rolgar (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:22PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by RingDev (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:27PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by moderatorater (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:33PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by TheCarp (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:15PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Lockejaw (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:36PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by jmv (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:16PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by FasterthanaWatch (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:17PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by mcrbids (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:40PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by aldousd666 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:00PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Gospodin (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @02:24PM
    - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by jfengel (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:55PM
      - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Gospodin (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:35PM
        - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by jfengel (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:08PM
          - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by ivan256 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:48PM
          - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by onsblu (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @06:32PM
          - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by ivan256 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:14PM
          - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by jfengel (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @12:35AM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by kinzillah (Score:2) Wednesday May 30,

@03:07PM

- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Gospodin (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:44PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by mgv (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:48PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by maxume (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @10:37PM
  - [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Lord Ender (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:09PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Deliveranc3 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:05PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by Alpha830RulZ (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @05:16PM
- [Re:Abusable fix?](#) by ZzzzSleep (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:50PM

## Ameritrade is bunk

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [linzeal \(197905\)](#) <[rakista@gmail.com](mailto:rakista@gmail.com)> on Wednesday May 30, @11:57AM (#19322735)

(<http://astore.amazon.com/srtcr-20/> | Last Journal: [Monday September 05, @03:10PM](#))

As someone who has used both Ameritrade, Etrade and Banc of America for stock trading I would say stick with a company who has more on the line than just a Web 1.0 company. Bricks and mortar Bank of America is not going to fuck over customers to get 10 bucks an email address and their security is run through a group of people who have to protect 100's of billions of dollars. It might cost more but you will sleep better at night.

### Re:Ameritrade is bunk

(Score:5, Funny)

by [arodland \(127775\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:26PM (#19323209)

Yeah, you're right. BoA expects to make a lot more money while they're fucking their customers over.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by f1055man (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:32PM
  - [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by liquidpele (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @01:04PM
  - [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by sogoodsofarsowhat (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:45PM
    - [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by operagost (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:49PM
    - [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by el americano (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:49PM
- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by mpapet (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:40PM
- [BofA's Agressively Anti-Competitive](#) by mpapet (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:48PM

### Re:Ameritrade is bunk

(Score:5, Informative)

by [drinkypoo \(153816\)](#) <[martin.espinoza@gmail.com](mailto:martin.espinoza@gmail.com)> on Wednesday May 30, @12:50PM (#19323577)

(<http://www.hyperlogos.org/> | Last Journal: [Wednesday June 27, @03:43PM](#))

Bricks and mortar Bank of America is not going to fuck over customers to get 10 bucks an email address

Bank of America is *pure, concentrated evil*. Not only do they have some of

the worst customer service on the planet (especially if they feel you are in the wrong) but they were one of the last corporations to pull out of their investments in Apartheid.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- **2 replies** beneath your current threshold.

- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by YrWrstNtmr (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @01:15PM
- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by Nate Fox (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:42PM
- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by uniqueCondition (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:38PM
- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by DogDude (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:25PM
- [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @04:36AM
  - [Re:Ameritrade is bunk](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @04:43AM
- **3 replies** beneath your current threshold.

- **May be related to TD Waterhouse merger**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [hksld99 \(1097707\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:00PM ([#19322795](#))

I have been a long time AmeriTrade customer and, like the author, used a unique email address for my AmeriTrade account. I never received any spam on that email address until a few weeks after the TD Waterhouse merger last year. Suddenly I started getting tons of pump&dump spam on that address.

Checking the "privacy" settings in my account revealed that somehow my account had been changed from "opt-out everything" to "opt-in everything" -- certainly not by me. I changed everything back to opt-out, assigned a new email address and have not received any spam on that new address since then. The old email address keeps getting spam, so I am hard-filtering it on my SMTP server now.

To me it looks like the TD Waterhouse merger triggered a change in their privacy policy or account handling that caused "opt-in" to be set on at least some accounts.

- [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by bugnuts (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:24PM
  - [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by worldcitizen (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @09:00AM
- [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by omeomi (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:31PM
  - [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by blueskies (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:00PM
  - [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by omeomi (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @10:04PM
    - **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.
    - **2 replies** beneath your current threshold.
- [Re: May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by Pooch Bushey (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:55PM
  - [Re: May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by Culture20 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:13PM
- [Re:You're a liar. There are no privacy settings.](#) by hksld99 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:51PM

- [Re:May be related to TD Waterhouse merger](#) by CrazyLegs (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @02:23PM
- [2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.

### In related news

(Score:5, Funny)

by [eebra82 \(907996\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:01PM ([#19322807](#)) (<http://www.insidebet.com/>)

I am shocked to say that after signing up to a news letter on a few porn sites, I am now receiving non-porn content e-mails.

- [Re:In related news](#) by Builder (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:20PM
- [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.

### I doubt email addresses

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [sholden \(12227\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:02PM ([#19322821](#)) (<http://sam.holden.id.au/>)

count as a big enough leak to trigger disclosure laws. If they are just selling email addresses without any other personal details they may be violating there privacy policy but probably not disclosure laws.

### gmail mail tracking trick

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [TheGreatOrangePeel \(618581\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:06PM ([#19322871](#)) (<http://www.dealslab.com/>)

Gmail has got a neat trick you can use to learn who sells your email address...

If your email is xyz@gmail.com and you're registering at site ABC, you can register at that site with the email address xyz+ABC@gmail.com. Gmail still delivers it to you and at the same time allows you to see who sold your email information.

- **Re:gmail mail tracking trick**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [UbuntuDupe \(970646\)](#) \* on Wednesday May 30, @12:13PM ([#19323009](#)) (Last Journal: [Sunday October 22, @11:27PM](#))

Couldn't spammers circumvent this by purging +-type suffixes, (i.e., converting "xyz+ABC@gmail.com" to "xyz@gmail.com") since the email will still get to you?

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by banana fiend (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:59PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by SpeedyBandito (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @01:46PM

### Re:gmail mail tracking trick

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [jfengel \(409917\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @02:58PM ([#19325553](#))



- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by JM78 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:29PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by Tronster (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:16PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by theTrueMikeBrown (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:24PM

### ○ **Re:gmail mail tracking trick**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [horatio \(127595\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:24PM ([#19323181](#))  
You're right, and that works great except for most sites that I've come across use a regex which disallows the use of a '+' sign in the email address.

What I've done instead is to create a catch-all email address in a subdomain and sign up as, ie amazon@subdomain.domain.com. I suppose I could first create a unique 16-character string for each one and add a new address before creating any accounts, but a) that requires additional effort and management and b) when you call, for example, amazon customer support they ask for your email address to identify your account. Good luck communicating 16 random letters and numbers over the phone to level-1 customer support.

Eventually a "dictionary" attack might end up forcing me to shut down the catch-all and be explicit.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by spikedvodka (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:05PM
  - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by Ziwcam (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:32PM
  - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by bill\_mcgonigle (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:27PM
    - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by spikedvodka (Score:2) Friday June 01, @07:58AM
    - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by bill\_mcgonigle (Score:2) Friday June 01, @06:50PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by Proteus (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:10PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by Rambo (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:41PM
  - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by nzhavok (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @03:47AM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by japa (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @12:47AM
- [there is another possibility](#) by SaberTaylor (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:25PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by Ashé Pattern (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:29PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by ReekRend (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:36PM
  - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by nuzak (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:48PM

### ○ **Use dots/periods with gmail addresses**

(Score:4, Informative)

by [dmeranda \(120061\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:50PM ([#19323575](#))

(<http://deron.meranda.us/>)

Another gmail trick that is more friendly to dumb sites that use broken regexes is to just insert extra periods in your mailbox name. Then you can filter based on that. If your gmail address is johndoe@gmail.com, then you can also use things like jo.hnd.oe@gmail.com, joh.n.do.e@gmail.com, etc.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:Use dots/periods with gmail addresses](#) by Yewbert (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:03PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by dagnabit (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:35PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by kalugen (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:40PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by alanjstr (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:06PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by sys\_mast (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:57PM
  - [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by kasperd (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:47PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by ccoder (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @06:22PM
- [Re:gmail mail tracking trick](#) by FuzzyDaddy (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:48PM
- **[3 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.**

## Other explanations

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [Craig Ringer \(302899\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:09PM ([#19322947](#))

(<http://www.postnewspapers.com.au/> | Last Journal: [Saturday August 03, @02:00AM](#))

The test you did is not conclusive by any means. You must also prove that the address was never exposed in any other way (stolen by malware on your machine, leaked through other communications, sold by a corrupt mail server administrator, etc), OR you need to find conclusive evidence that the leaked address came from the company's end.

I've seen addresses turn up in spam that I wouldn't have believed if I hadn't seen it.

Now, if you are able to confirm that several addresses created by different people & never shared get similar scams that addresses not given to the company DO NOT get, then that might be something interesting.

- [MOD PARENT UP](#) by Builder (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:27PM
  - [healthy skepticism, but this is real](#) by HappyEngineer (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:56PM
  - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by blueskies (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:05PM
    - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by Builder (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @05:35PM
    - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by blueskies (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:49PM
    - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by Builder (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @07:49AM
      - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by blueskies (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @01:57PM
      - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by Builder (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @05:05PM
      - [Re:MOD PARENT UP](#) by blueskies (Score:2) Friday June 01, @01:23PM



**Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [TheWoozle \(984500\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:09PM ([#19322949](#))  
 I always assume that any business that I give my e-mail address to will sell it; that's why I don't give it out. Surprisingly enough, I don't get any spam.

This is why many pundits are saying "email is broken"; and it makes sense if you think about it. The setting up of different accounts for each company/person you interact with goes against the whole point of having an e-mail \*address\* (i.e., a not-too-frequently-changing place to find you).

Really, the spam problem is a symptom of human nature (look up "tragedy of the commons"), and if any of you think you have the secret of changing \*that\*, then please share...

- [Re:Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!](#) by UbuntuDupe (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:18PM

- **Re:Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [DavidTC \(10147\)](#) <[slembp.vadiv.vadiv@neverbox.com](mailto:slembp.vadiv.vadiv@neverbox.com)> on Wednesday May 30, @12:23PM ([#19323163](#))  
[\(http://slashdot.org/\)](http://slashdot.org/)

Yes, but the story here is that Ameritrade is not only spamming, they are spamming **stock tips**, or at least they are causing that to happen.

A brokerage firm that randomly gives stock tips with the intent of buying the the stock low beforehand, and selling it after a bunch of people purchase it, thus passing the loss on to their customers, is in violation of half a dozen laws and can be subject to large fines and lose its ability to trade stock, which, considering that's all Ameritrade does, would kill it. A firm that lets someone at that firm do it is, instead of the firm itself, is just as culpable.

Screw involving Ameritrade or the media in this, someone needs to inform the **SEC** of what's going on.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [MOD PARENT UP!](#) by Derling Whirvish (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:46PM
- [Re:Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!](#) by BenSchuarmer (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:24PM
  - [Re:Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!](#) by j-beda (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @04:26AM
  - [Re:Who's trading e-mail addresses? Everyone!](#) by DavidTC (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @12:10PM
- [Use unique, traceable addys that I can ...](#) by whizbowl (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:59PM
- [It's not always the company --](#) by foolinator (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:09PM
  - [Re:It's not always the company --](#) by mulvane (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:22PM
- [A way to kill the competition!](#) by DoohickeyJones (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:11PM
  - [Re:A way to kill the competition!](#) by nelsonal (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @12:44PM
-

## Strangely enough

(Score:4, Informative)

by [zappecs \(820751\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:11PM ([#19322983](#))

(Last Journal: [Friday May 18, @12:07PM](#))

I met someone not long ago that wanted some DB work. They were wanting to organize and sell phone numbers, street addresses, email addresses, and they attempt to collect/gather as much meta information as possible. Various relationships tell them whether you are a good target for any given spam type email or direct mail campaign.

Someone with your address on their list will try to sell it for \$.50 or up to \$5/10 if they can get it providing it is a valid address. There is money in selling such information. THAT is why you get spam. If they could figure out how to make all drivers of any vehicle made before 2000 as they drive down the highway, people would sell that to autodealers... Its all about Ad revenues, and your email address is just another pageview sort of thing for people buying the lists.

There is no method to prevent this. If one person at company X illegally sells a list of clients of that company, it will be out in the wild, nothing to stop it from being resold dozens of times.

- [1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)

- [I almost always do this](#) by Yaksha42 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:12PM

- [1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)

- ### long time customer

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [hb253 \(764272\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:13PM ([#19323001](#))

Lone anecdotal datapoint: I'm a long time TD Ameritrade customer. I don't get any spam to the email address I've registered with them.

- [Re:long time customer](#) by Danny Rathjens (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @04:11AM

- ### There's another possibility

(Score:5, Informative)

by [drgroove \(631550\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:13PM ([#19323007](#))

AmeriTrade is simply selling your information to third parties.

Dell does this. I know this for a fact - I gave Dell my information while setting up a business account for a small consultancy that I was running a few years back out of my house. I hadn't yet formalized the business legally, but gave Dell the name that I was going to use for my business. Within weeks, I began to receive snail-mail spam using the business address that I had only given to Dell. No one within Dell was stealing my information - Dell sells information about their customers to make a buck.

AmeriTrade very likely does the same thing. After you give your email, snail mail, phone, etc info to them, they turn around and earn a buck or two by selling your information to other companies.

- [Re:There's another possibility](#) by CowboyBob500 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:10PM

- [Re:There's another possibility](#) by ikioi (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:59PM

- [Re:There's another possibility](#) by drgroove (Score:2) Wednesday June 13, @05:16PM

- [They're not the only one](#) by Solandri (Score:2) Wednesday May 30,

@10:48PM

- [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.

- **Never attribute to malice...**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [JoeD \(12073\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:15PM ([#19323033](#))

(<http://www.cws.org/~joed>)

...what can be explained by stupidity.

It's possible that Ameritrade itself is selling the email addresses. What's their privacy policy?

In large companies, it's very easy for someone in one division to do something that people in other divisions don't know about.

- [Seems to be a consistent problem](#) by chrisgagne (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:16PM
  - [Good point](#) by paladinwannabe2 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:55PM

- **A fourth option**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [gr8\\_phk \(621180\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @01:26PM ([#19324163](#))

d) your own machine has malware on it that intercepted the address.

Don't assume that because you know about malware and run a couple programs to prevent or eradicate it, that you don't have any. Now if you're not running an MS operating system, the likelihood of this is nearly zero, but no matter what you do it's never actually zero. Just very close.

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:A fourth option](#) by chrisgagne (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:08PM
- [Re:A fourth option](#) by John Jamieson (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:46PM
- [Re:A fourth option](#) by gorbachev (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:44PM
- [Re:A fourth option](#) by 808140 (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @01:22AM
- [Domain.](#) by MoOsEb0y (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:23PM
- [Who's spamming me](#) by genecutl (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:25PM
  - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [As you can see...](#) by BandwidthHog (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:25PM

- **Inside Job**

(Score:5, Informative)

by [interstellar donkey \(200782\)](#) <[pathhighgate@noSPAM.hotmail.com](mailto:pathhighgate@noSPAM.hotmail.com)> on Wednesday May 30, @12:26PM ([#19323213](#))

(<http://slashdot.org/stupidinternet.proboards7.com> | Last Journal: [Friday June 13, @02:57AM](#))

*Probably someone inside AmeriTrade is selling customer data to an outside spammer*

That would be my guess. There's probably not a whole lot Ameritrade (or any company) can do about it other than figure out a way to deeply restrict access to the email addresses. But when you need customer service/marketing/administration departments to have access to customer's email addresses, it can get a little hairy.

I can remember back in '99 going to work for a rather large ISP. My first day there they created an email account for me. After four days of orientation and I

started to actually do work, I checked my email and found it loaded with spam. This account had been on no mass mailings, has had nothing sent out, and had received no communication from within the company. The name wasn't anything close to what you'd find in a dictionary. As far as I could tell, the only way spammers could have gotten their fingers on the address was if someone inside the company was selling the address out.

- [Re:Inside Job](#) by nuzak (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:51PM
- **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Was this a rigorous test?](#) by ReekRend (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:27PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Customers have no recourse](#) by HangingChad (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:31PM
  - [Re:Customers have no recourse](#) by ambrosen (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:34PM
    - [Re:Customers have no recourse](#) by HangingChad (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @06:31AM
- [No](#) by MagicM (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:33PM
- [Somewhat common problem. Dell.com, too.](#) by spazoid12 (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:35PM
  - [Re:Somewhat common problem. Dell.com, too.](#) by Brit\_in\_the\_USA (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:52PM

- **Edited for the time impaired**

(Score:3, Funny)

by [rueger \(210566\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:40PM ([#19323401](#)) (<http://www.threesquirrels.com/>)

1. Signs up for an Ameritrade account using a unique e-mail address.
2. Gets pump and dump spam at that address.
3. Profit!

The balance of the article:

- a) outlines a variety of conspiratorial possibilities
- b) finds that other Ameritrade customers get pump and dump spam
- c) makes repeated reference to a lost customer data tape from 2005.
- d) Ameritrade has poor customer service.

- **I reported this to the SEC, but not much happened**

(Score:4, Informative)

by [JeffL \(5070\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:41PM ([#19323421](#)) (<http://www.lessem.org/>)

The first time I received spam, not ads for "partner" companies, but pump-and-dump image spam, and such, I reported Ameritrade to the SEC. After contacting Ameritrade and receiving a big "so what" from them, I filled in the SEC's online complaint form, detailing the problem. A week or two later I received a letter (on paper) from them asking me to e-mail them more information and any additional evidence. I sent them a detailed explanation of the problem, along with information about why it was extremely unlikely that the e-mail address was stolen from my end (none of my other unique addresses were receiving spam), and a copy of all of the spam messages that had been sent to my ameritrade address.

Since that time I've not heard anything back from the SEC. I didn't really expect to, but I was hoping that if 10-20 people complained about the same thing, and provided evidence, they might actually start an investigation. That was August,

2006, so maybe they really are doing something, and I should just be more patient.

A friend who was also receiving the ameritrade spam convinced ameritrade to waive the account transfer fee, and moved all of his stuff to Scottrade. I changed my ameritrade e-mail address, and haven't received spam to the new address, so I thought perhaps the leak had been fixed. Now that I see the problem is still occurring, I'll take the time to move my accounts.

- [Re:I reported this to the SEC, but not much happen](#) by GISGEOLOGYGEEK (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @04:36AM
  - [Re:I reported this to the SEC, but not much happen](#) by JeffL (Score:2) Tuesday June 12, @01:58AM

### • Assume the worst...

(Score:5, Informative)

by [wowbagger \(69688\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:48PM ([#19323559](#))

(<http://slashdot.org/~wowbagger/journal/87552> | Last Journal: [Monday May 14, @04:26PM](#))

Assume the worst:

- Assume that any business to which you give an email will immediately sell it to every spammer on the planet.
- Assume that any individual to whom you give your email will be trojan'ed and harvested by spammers.
- Assume that any web site to which you give an email will be scraped by spammers.
- Assume that every mailing list to which you sign up will be scraped by spammers.

In other words, for any email address you use, assume that it will at some point fall into the hands of spammers.

So, given these assumptions, what are you to do?

1. Never get too attached to any given email address. Be prepared to drop any address like a hot rock.
2. Thus, try to have one address for each role in your life: one for friends, one for *close* friends, one for work, one for each mailing list, one for each business with which you do business, etc. Use sites like SneakEmail or SpamGourmet as needed.
3. Refuse to give your email where-ever possible. Most places that want it don't need it, but ask for it so that they can spam it. Ask yourself "Do they REALLY need to be able to email me?" If you cannot think of a good reason why they should, refuse.
4. For entities which will NOT allow you to refuse to give your email, give them a disposable email, and revoke it as soon as possible. Alternatively, use an email which has become compromised and is now worthless.
5. Make up a list of disposable emails, print it out, and carry it with you, to deal with those Big Blue Room incidents where you need to fork over an email. Make the print-out have 2 parts — one to tear off and hand to the requester, one to keep for yourself (with a space below the email into which you enter the entity assigned to it.)
6. Use email hosts which have the best possible spam filtering. I suggest setting up an account with Spamcop and using them.
7. Don't use the email assigned by your ISP for anything if at all possible: that way if you need to change ISPs you can do so without any big issue.
8. When creating an email address, don't use your name or any other unique identifying information (e.g. a ham radio call sign) - those are too easy to

guess.

Yes, this may sound paranoid. But unfortunately until the technology is changed to allow tracking spammers down, and the laws are changed to allow dealing with spammers effectively (.30-06 is effective), these are the sorts of measures needed to keep your inbox relatively clean.

- [Re:Assume the worst...](#) by joh (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:28PM
  - [couldn't agree more](#) by ClintJCL (Score:3) Wednesday May 30, @09:03PM
    - [Re:couldn't agree more](#) by ShaunC (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:23PM
      - [But it's not my problem.](#) by ClintJCL (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:32PM
        - [Re:But it's not my problem.](#) by ShaunC (Score:2) Friday June 01, @02:14AM
          - [hehe... unix shell account](#) by ClintJCL (Score:2) Friday June 01, @08:46AM
  - [Re:Assume the worst...](#) by JimB (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @06:49PM
  - [Re:Assume the worst...](#) by bcrowell (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @09:29PM
    - [capital gains? why?](#) by tacokill (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @11:21PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
  - [OT: Retail Stock Trading](#) by asphaltjesus (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:09PM
    - [Re:OT: Retail Stock Trading](#) by Guido von Guido (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:25PM
      - [Re:OT: Retail Stock Trading](#) by russotto (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:44PM
    - [Re:OT: Retail Stock Trading](#) by durdur (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:07PM
  - [Same thing I found out two years ago](#) by Starwanderer (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:10PM
  - <mailto:bennett@peacefire.org> by athloi (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:12PM

### Why are you still a customer?

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Colin Smith \(2679\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @01:15PM ([#19323953](#))

If you want Ameritrade to take notice then dump them.

- [Re:Why are you still a customer?](#) by joelgriffiths (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:37PM

### Re:Why are you still a customer?

(Score:4, Funny)

by [Aerollini \(726211\)](#) <[aerollini@nOSPAM.gmail.com](mailto:aerollini@nOSPAM.gmail.com)> on Wednesday May 30, @06:32PM ([#19329161](#))

Shouldn't we pump them first?

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Same story here...](#) by urlgrey (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @01:44PM
  - [Re:Same story here...](#) by khodsden (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:44PM

## Fighting the pig

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [hysterion \(231229\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @01:53PM ([#19324545](#))

(<http://slashdot.org/>)

Commendable effort, yet is the knowledge gained *worth it*? Somehow it brings to mind [this observation](#) [paulgraham.com]:

"I got addicted to trying to identify spam features myself, as if I were playing some kind of competitive game with the spammers."

"Norbert Wiener said if you compete with slaves you become a slave, and there is something similarly degrading about competing with spammers. To recognize individual spam features you have to try to get into the mind of the spammer, and frankly I want to spend as little time inside the minds of spammers as possible."

- [The key is internal data security](#) by atomic777 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:01PM
- [Security is always a low concern.](#) by Kryai (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:03PM

- **Make it scientific: add a control!**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [noidentity \(188756\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @02:11PM ([#19324805](#))

*"[...] he got a response saying that even if he was getting spammed by an address that he only gave to AmeriTrade, that could be the result of hackers "implanting 'bots' that have the ability to extract e-mail addresses from your computer, even when you have protective spy software engaged". [...] if this were the source of the problem, it would affect everyone's e-mail addresses equally [...]"*

This is why you should have done a *scientific* experiment, where you had at the very least *two* e-mail addresses of similar random makeup, and only made one available to AmeriTrade. The one you didn't give would be the control. Then you compare the SPAM received between the two, rather than between your single submitted address and an imaginary address that receives none. Perhaps you have a third that you submit to a trusted server you know does not share it (like one you set up yourself with a trusted bandwidth provider).

- [Re:Make it scientific: add a controll](#) by joelgriffiths (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:05PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Click 2 Spam](#) by Doc Ruby (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:18PM
  - [Re:Click 2 Spam](#) by DogDude (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:34PM
    - [Re:Click 2 Spam](#) by Doc Ruby (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:43PM
      - [Re:Click 2 Spam](#) by DogDude (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @05:52PM
- [Other Companies](#) by fozzmeister (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:37PM
- [I am chortling darkly](#) by gelfling (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @02:45PM
- [I set up email aliases](#) by youbiquitous (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @03:09PM
- [Naiivete](#) by clang\_jangle (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:11PM
- [Employee theft most likely cause ...](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @03:29PM
- [Definitely happening to me as well](#) by BillBrasky (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @04:05PM
- [Throwaway email addresses](#) by deblau (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @04:25PM
- [For those that actually have an account](#) by phogster (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @05:16PM
- [Big companies, small employees](#) by billcopc (Score:1) Wednesday May 30,

@06:19PM

- [ford sold me out](#) by v1 (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @08:44PM
- [Scams Target Newbies Most](#) by LordWill (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @09:08PM
- [i have been complaining for a few months](#) by emptybody (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @09:30PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Excellent Article](#) by JagsLive (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @10:28PM
- [Same with NetBank](#) by dazza\_2000 (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @02:17AM
- [What risk of getting caught?](#) by LordWill (Score:1) Thursday May 31, @10:46AM
- [Buy a domain](#) by sallgeud (Score:2) Thursday May 31, @11:52AM
- [Another way](#) by pontifier (Score:2) Saturday June 02, @02:16PM
- [My ameritrade email is being spammed too](#) by TheJavaGuy (Score:2) Monday June 04, @10:38AM
- [I too can cofirm this](#) by WhipArtist (Score:1) Monday June 04, @05:52PM
- [I'M GONNA SUE! No, really-in fact I ALREADY HAVE.](#) by elvey (Score:1) Tuesday June 12, @05:37AM

### • **Re:Why is this on the frontpage?**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [Skadet \(528657\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:00PM ([#19322791](#))

(<http://slashdot.org/>)

Are you 12 years old, or just have the attention span of one?

[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Go back to digg...](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @12:39PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:My vote goes to spyware!](#) by lixee (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:08PM
- [Re:My vote goes to spyware!](#) by Billosaur (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:09PM
  - [Re:My vote goes to spyware!](#) by omeomi (Score:2) Wednesday May 30, @12:37PM
  - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**

### • **Re:My vote goes to spyware!**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [JeffL \(5070\)](#) on Wednesday May 30, @12:25PM ([#19323205](#))

(<http://www.lessem.org/>)

A virus and spyware is certainly a possibility for leaking an address, and I know I've had my address leaked when somebody elses computer, who has received an e-mail from me, gets infected with spyware.

In this case though, both a friend and myself started getting spam to our unique Ameritrade addresses at the same time. Both of us use Linux for our primary desktop OS (no e-mail reading from a Windows vmware session, etc.) Neither of us received spam to our many other unique addresses. If it had been spyware infecting one of our machines and stealing our e-mail list, then I would have expected spam to my e-trade, amazon, newegg, etc. unique addresses, but only the ameritrade address received the spam.

It could still be a spyware or virus infection at a machine at Ameritrade. Somebody keeps the full list of e-mail addresses on their laptop, which goes outside all the fancy firewalls and IT oversite and gets infected, and has the data stolen.



[ [Parent](#) ]

- [Re:404 File Not Found](#) by khedron the jester (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @01:57PM
- [Re:My vote goes to spyware!](#) by Radical Moderate (Score:1) Wednesday May 30, @02:48PM
- **[16 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.**

November, n.: The eleventh twelfth of a weariness. -- Ambrose Bierce, "The Devil's Dictionary"

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