

Edward Koch, Jr.

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Gentlemen:

I am old enough and was in the right field of endeavor, aerospace, to have used the ARPANet. It was a great tool for communicating ideas and exchanging data with associates, who were working on a common project, or, who were working in a related field. When Al Gore "invented the Internet" (chuckle), our collective consciousness was expanded in that many more of us were able easily communicate ideas and exchange data, as well as, participate in commerce. As you well know, the Internet has become a "mess". A small group of warped minded individuals, the virus and worm developers, as well as the spyware and adware creators are hindering our ability to use this tool for the collective good.

With specific reference to spyware and adware, I have a corollary story to tell. Junk mail shows up in my snail mailbox almost on a daily basis – sometimes in large quantities. I have requested that the postman not leave it there. He has, however, told me that, by law, he is required to deliver it. OK, I can tell you that it never makes it into my home. I sort the mail on my way to the front door, and, the junk mail – all of it – is deposited in the trash can. QED. The postman does not slip it under my door, nor does he drop it in my bedroom window. Not only that, but the damned stuff does not have a microphone nor a camera attached to track where I go, watch what I do, listen to what I say and to whom I say it. In particular, spyware does these things. It is intrusive, and, I DON'T LIKE IT!

Adware is somewhat different in that a precedent has been set by the junk mail delivered to my snail mailbox every day. As I say, junk mail does not make it into my home or office, but, I do waste my time sorting it out for disposal. One could make the case that, since I have not been diligent about lobbying the government to outlaw that, I have a weak case relative to junk e-mail. So be it. However, Pop Ups are a different matter. Think about this. Suppose you were hard at work at your desk and a mortgage lender came barging into your office with a billboard, which insisted that you should refinance your home immediately, because interest rates are low, but, they may go up at a moment's notice. Or, suppose a Viagra salesman came storming through the door with a big sign demanding that you try his product because he can sell it to you at the lowest price you can get in town. Would you not consider it annoying, intrusive and a waste of your time to show these folks out of your work space? That's a Pop Up. If you won't accept the billboard toting individual coming into your office, why would you accept a Pop Up?

I am not an advocate of large, intrusive government, but I am convinced, because of the misuse of this very valuable tool, the Internet, by a small minority of individuals, that something must be done to constrain their activities.

Gentlemen, please act quickly. More and more time of legitimate Internet users is being wasted in order to deal with this menace.

Yours truly,

Edward Koch, Jr.