

# DESPITE GROWTH OF SPAM, CANADIANS CONTINUE TO SHOW INTEREST IN PERMISSION-BASED EMAIL



Public Release Date:  
June 11, 2003, 6:00 am EST

*Ipsos-Reid is Canada's leading marketing research and public affairs company in Canada, both in terms of size and reputation. It operates in seven cities and employs more than 300 researchers and support staff in Canada. It has the biggest network of telephone call centres, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and on-line panels in Canada. Its Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada, including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country. Ipsos-Reid is a member of the Ipsos Group, the second largest survey-based marketing research company in the world. To learn more, visit [www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com).*

*For copies of other news releases, please visit*  
[http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE\\_REL.cfm](http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm)

---

© Ipsos-Reid

*New York • Washington D.C. • Minneapolis • San Francisco  
Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montréal*



## **SPAM HAS DOUBLED IN PAST YEAR, AND ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN HALF OF ALL EMAILS RECEIVED**

**Vancouver, BC** – Canadian Internet users<sup>1</sup> are increasingly being inundated by unsolicited commercial e-mail, or spam, according to a new jointly conducted study from Ipsos-Reid and Forge Marketing. The “Email Marketing: What the Future Holds” report found that on average Canadian Internet users receive 123 emails per week, with half of these emails (52%) being spam – double what it was this time last year.

However, despite the increased volume of spam, Canadians continue to register at websites to receive permission-based emails. More than four-in-five Canadian Internet users (83%) have registered to receive emails from at least one website, with the average user registering at 7.1 websites, a 39% increase from December 2001. The most popular sites include News and information sites, entertainment, travel, and health and fitness. (See Figure 1 below.)

---

<sup>1</sup> Defined as a Canadian adult with Internet access who uses the Internet for at least one hour per week. Three-in-four Canadian adults have Internet access, and 84% of those use the Internet for at least one hour per week, which is equivalent to 63% of all Canadian adults.

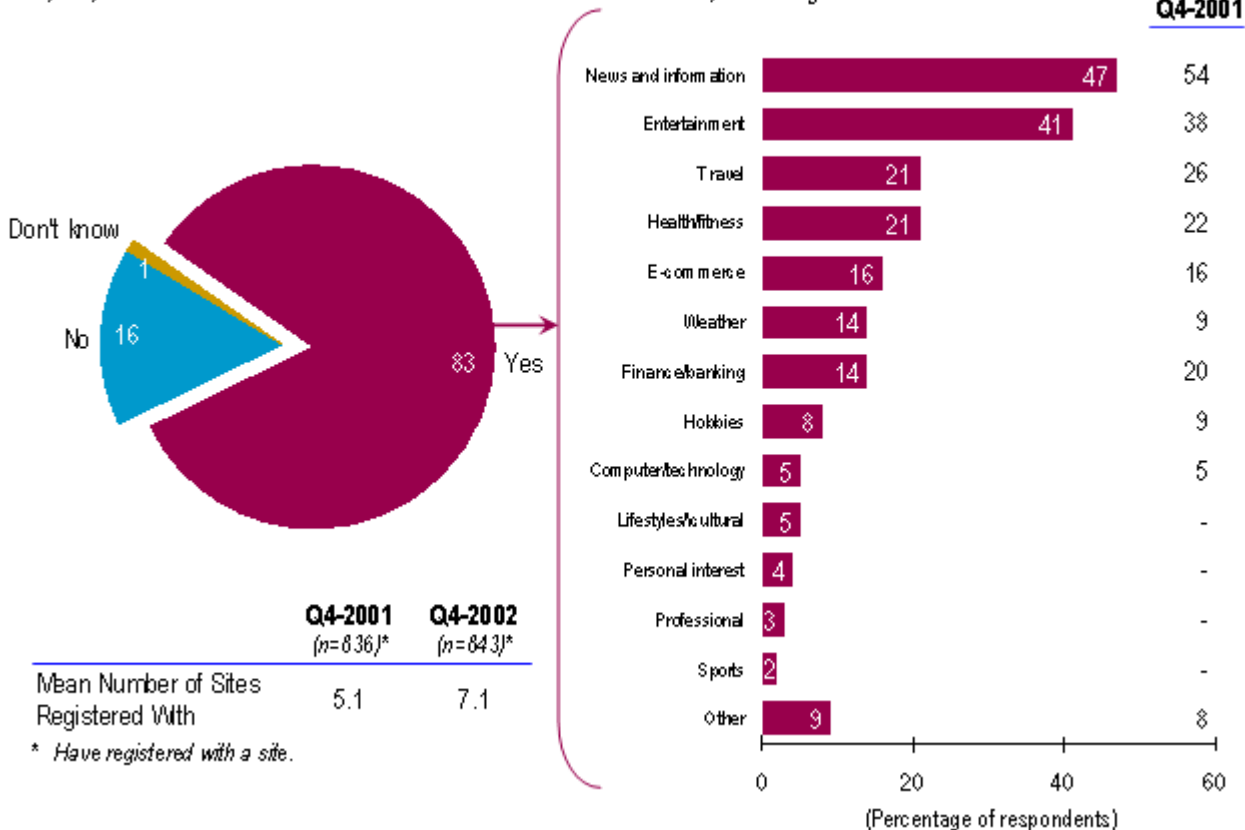
## Registering to Receive Email / Types of Sites Registered

Figure 1

*n*=1,000, Canadian Internet Users

*n*=843, Ever Registered to Receive Email

**Q4-2001**





"Canadians clearly have a love-hate relationship with their email," says Steve Mossop, Senior Vice-President with Ipsos-Reid. "On the one hand we are receiving more spam than ever before, which is consistently the main complaint with the Internet. On the other hand, we continue to register at more and more sites indicating that we want to receive regular communication from our favourite sites. In fact, more than half (57%) of Canadian Internet users say they are willing to provide their e-mail address to retailers, websites and other companies when requested."

Among those unwilling to provide their email address when requested, fear of receiving spam is the reason most commonly cited (70%), indicating a once bitten twice shy mentality among many Canadian Internet users.

According to Carrie Harrison, Director of Sales for Forge Marketing in Vancouver, "Aside from acquiring permission from potential email subscribers, there is another challenge faced by permission email marketers: holding subscribers' interests. Once permission is acquired, marketers have one chance to impress their readers with relevant and intriguing content, or they risk losing them altogether. Marketers cannot ignore this point. If 51% of Canadians have de-registered from a website (per this report), marketers must take the time to ensure their content is non-generic, and that it stands out from the rest."

### ***Spam Accounts for Half of All Emails Received***

Concern with spam is well warranted. Almost nine-in-ten Canadian Internet users (86%) say they have received at least one unsolicited email advertisement. This is up significantly from three years ago when 62% of Internet users had received an unsolicited email. Not only are more Canadians receiving unsolicited email, but they are receiving increasing amounts. The typical Canadian Internet user who receives spam is receiving an average of 64 spam



messages per week, which is more than double the amount from the same time period last year.

Although 67% of Canadian Internet users say they do not want to receive unsolicited email under any circumstances, and 60% didn't open any spam messages in the past week, there is a significant minority who is open to receiving spam, and the average Internet user who has ever received spam opens an average of five messages per week.

### ***Dislike of Spam Leading to Increased Use of Filtering Software***

The increased prevalence of spam is frustrating Canadian Internet users. Two-thirds (67%) say that they do not want to receive spam under any circumstances. Accordingly, four-in-ten Canadian Internet users (41%) report using filtering software to screen out unsolicited commercial email. In addition, 72% say they would use filtering software if it was available for free.

"The increased volume of spam means permission-based email marketers have to work harder and smarter," says Carrie Harrison of Forge Marketing. "Marketers must become familiar with spam filters. They must understand how to minimize the number of warning bells they set off when writing, designing and deploying permission-based emails to avoid their emails being dismissed as spam."

*The "Canadian Inter@ctive Reid Report" is the largest, most comprehensive and authoritative source of its kind about quarterly Internet trends in Canada. The results are based on two separate data collection instruments. In the first, 1,000 web users from Ipsos-Reid's Canadian Internet Panel are surveyed online. Panelists are chosen through random telephone surveys conducted on an ongoing basis across Canada. Results are complemented by a further 1,000 interviews via telephone with Canadian adults in order to verify results of the panel, and track issues among non-Internet users. Telephone interviews for this release were conducted between December 27th, 2002 and January 7th, 2003 while the online data was collected between January 3rd and 8th, 2003. These data are statistically weighted to reflect the population proportions of regular online users by online expertise*

---

© Ipsos-Reid

***New York • Washington D.C. • Minneapolis • San Francisco  
Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montréal***



and regional distribution. Our panelists represent approximately 15.2 million Canadian adult Internet users who are online for one hour a week or more (there are a total of 18.3 million adults who have Internet access).

With a national sample of 1,000 (for each component), one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results are within a maximum of  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire population of Canada's regular online users been surveyed. The margin of error will be larger for sub-groupings of the survey population.

-30-

*For more information on this news release, please contact:*

**Steve Mossop**  
**Senior Vice President**  
**Ipsos-Reid**  
**(604) 257-3200**

**Carrie Harrison**  
**Director of Sales**  
**Forge Marketing**  
**(604) 691-6519**

*For full tabular results of the news release, please visit our website at [www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com).*

*News Releases are available at [http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE\\_REL.cfm](http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm)*