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Spam: Facts and Figures

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With recent scams placing UD systems and users' personal information at risk, UDit is working to educate users about spam, phishing and other Internet fraud techniques. Some facts:

- **In April**, UD's IronPort spam filtering system processed 104 million e-mails. Of those, it let 2.2 million through — just 2.1 percent of them.
- **In the past 12 months**, UD has been the target of "spear phishing," which targets senior leaders with professional-looking correspondence that appears to come from the IRS and other agencies.
- **Spam, a processed meat and an early "convenience food,"** made its debut in 1937. By 1959, Hormel had produced its billionth can. In 1971, consumers could buy it with hickory-smoked flavor or cheese chunks. By Spam's 70th anniversary in 2007, the company had sold more than 7 billion cans.
- **In February**, many students received e-mail solicitations for part-time online work; 5 percent replied for more information; at least one provided credit card information.
- **In the summer of 2008**, 100 spam e-mails got through to students from someone pretending to be "PC support" and asking for credentials. Six students responded. Very quickly, those accounts were compromised and used to send spam to more than 60,000 addresses.
- Spam was introduced **nine years after Kraft began selling Velveeta**. Clearly, "nonperishable" was more than a fad.
- **In May**, UD was the target of several relatively unsophisticated scams where the sender, identified only as "IT," asked the recipient to either reply with his or her credentials or go to a Web site and type their credentials into a form. Though many people reported these scams to UDit as suspicious, two users provided their credentials, and their e-mail accounts were used to send tens of thousands of spam messages to other addresses.
- **With the assignment of new credentials**, UD can contain the damage. However, the effects can endure. When UD's domain name is identified as a source of spam, it's blacklisted in spam filters, and any e-mail from UD can't get through to organizations or services with those filters. Undoing that is difficult: "It can take as long as 24 hours for someone like Comcast to release our e-mail," said UDit risk manager Dean Halter. "The more of these incidents we have, the less reputable we become, and the longer the blacklist release periods."
- **Which is older — Spam or Jell-O?** Answer: Jell-O. By 40 years.
- Among Jell-O, Velveeta and Spam, which has the **longest shelf life?** Answer: Spam. According to Hormel, it's safe "indefinitely if the product seal remains intact, unbroken and securely attached to a can that has been well-maintained." However, for maximum flavor, it should be eaten within three years of the manufacturing date.
- "**Manufacturing**" is Hormel's word, not Halter's.