

What Shall I Do With \$650,000?



We live in an age of instant communication. Computers, the internet and mobile, wireless technology mean we can communicate instantly with almost any part of the world at the press of a touchpad or click of a mouse. Satellite wizardry has changed the world and made it a much smaller place. But naturally there has to be a down side to all this. I received this email a few days ago. *Dear E-mail User, The Office of the President Dr. Boni Yayi, of the Republic of Benin and the African Union President respectively, has awarded you the sum of Six Hundred and Fifty Thousand United States Dollars – \$650,000 U.S. Dollars Only as a Compensation Fund because your email is included in the list of victim(s) who lost their fund to unidentified fraudsters in Africa or victim(s) of Unpaid Inheritance or Contract Award Fund.*

This is an instant payment exercise and no fees required. Meanwhile, several emails has been sent to you from this office in this regards, but you don't care to reply. This is to notify you that your 'Compensation Fund' is ready for payment to you. The fund will be paid immediately you contact the 'Compensation Fund Award Department'. Note that the no amount will be deducted from the 'Compensation Fund' due to the insurance policy bond on the fund.

Hmm. What shall I do with \$650,000?

Spam. Unsolicited e-mails from all parts of the globe (although mainly, it has to be said, the USA) It's a blight of the communication age and a constant irritant. Why don't you fit a spam filter I hear computer experts cry? I have – through those bastions (no, that's not a spelling mistake) of

communications, BT. I pay the princely sum of £1.50 per month for the chaps and chapesses at BT to divert rogue and sometimes malicious e-mails from my in-box to the bulk mail box. And to be fair to BT it usually works with as many as 60 junk e-mails heading my way every day. But occasionally, e-mails that aren't spam are read as such by BT and are deposited in said bulk mail box. Which is as much as an irritant as having to deal with the damn spammers in the first place. Sometimes the BT filter gets suspicious and diverts important e-mails in the same direction as dubious messages offering everything from Viagra to Valium. Which means I have to check the bulk mail to ensure there isn't anything of value there. I made the mistake of just emptying the bulk mail folder the other week without checking and thereby deleted an important e-mail from Heart of Midlothian FC about season ticket prices for the next campaign.

So, I have to wade through reams of rubbish just in case something has slipped through. At this time of the year I'm receiving dozens of junk e-mails about what I ought to do for Father's Day which, apparently, is less than three weeks away (if my daughters are reading this, that's 21 June...) Given my father has been dead for more than 18 years it's not something high on my priorities but this is a stark example of my privacy being invaded by unscrupulous companies who show no consideration for the feelings of others.

As for the companies constantly screaming at me to buy Viagra, I have considered taking legal action against them. But then someone who I believed was a good friend of mine and shall remain nameless, told me it would never stand up in court..