

Why spam emails might make a comeback in the UK

At some point during the time we've spent on the internet, all of us have been annoyed by spam emails.

There's nothing more frustrating than waiting on an important email coming through, receiving a notification, and finding out that it's yet another unsolicited message asking you to buy something.

Spam emails were annoying enough when we only received a few of them each week. When that number reached dozens every day, all of us suddenly decided that we needed to learn how to manage email filters.

Many people wonder why people bother sending spam emails at all. We all ignore them, and many of us delete them without even reading them first. If nobody can make money out of spam, why does it even exist? The answer is the obvious one – there is money to be made.

The businesses that send out spam are playing a version of online slots by email. There's no guaranteed way to make money out of any of the games on an online slots website – you just have to take a chance on them and hope your luck is in. That's the same way spammers feel about sending emails.



Example of a scam email

They only need to make one or two sales for every million emails they send out and, to use an [UK Online Slots](#) parlance, they've hit the jackpot. So long as those one or two people in

every million are still out there buying from spam emailers, the practice will continue.

For many Europeans, it's been a while since spam reared its ugly head. That's because of the General Data Protection Regulation introduced by the European Union in 2016 and made enforceable in 2018.

Under the terms of that regulation, any company sending an email to an individual must first demonstrate that it has permission to send that email. If no such permission exists, the company responsible for sending the email can expect to receive a large fine.

There was a sudden rush of emails in EU countries as the 2018 deadline approached, and marketing companies tried to persuade people to opt-in to their emails. Unsurprisingly, very few people decided to keep hearing from spammers. Since then, inboxes in European Union member states have been more peaceful places.

One of the countries that benefited from the regulation was the United Kingdom, but it may stop doing so in the very near future. In case it's somehow escaped your attention despite being one of the top subjects in newscasts for much of the last three years, the United Kingdom has decided to leave the European Union and seek a more independent future existence.

After a prolonged period of wrangling and delay, it has now formally left the Union as of the end of January 2020. It will continue to be subject to all existing European Union laws for the rest of the year – but what happens after that point is unclear, and will remain unclear until new agreements are made between the UK and the EU with regard to their future trade and legal relationship.

If you're following this story, you may already have formed the opinion that UK citizens will shortly start receiving spam emails again on the grounds that the General Data Protection

Regulation no longer applies there.

That would be a logical conclusion, but it's unlikely to be the case. GDPR is likely to be one of the rules that the UK decides to keep – but that may not help the millions of people within the country who currently have a Gmail account and use Gmail for their day to day correspondence.

That's because Google has decided to move all the data pertaining to its British users to the US – and out of the reach and jurisdiction of European (and British) regulators. While Brexit may not have directly caused British users to lose their GDPR protections, the knock-on effects of Brexit have.

Google is blaming the Brexit process for the decision to move the data.

The move is a strange one – especially because Google has a European headquarters in Ireland. Ireland is independent from the United Kingdom and is staying in the European Union.

That means that GDPR will still apply in Ireland. Ireland is also where the data of British users was stored until now, and so, in theory, there shouldn't have been an issue. Google, however, says that without knowledge of what new rules Britain may introduce with regard to the transfer of data between the UK and EU, it could no longer confidently say that British authorities would be able to recover data for use in criminal investigations without an issue.



The situation in the United States of America is different. Thanks to the Cloud Act, it's now easier than ever before for British and American law enforcement agencies and authorities to communicate data to each other.

It's also expected that there will be a formalized data-sharing agreement signed in the near future as part of the

first UK-US trade deal signed following the departure of the UK from the European Union. Google is effectively framing the issue by saying that the data has been taken out of Ireland and away from the protection of the General Data Protection Regulation because it's a better deal from the point of view of law enforcement agencies.

While Gmail users are likely to be affected the most by the changes, the amount of data that Google has stored on millions of private UK citizens cannot be overstated. Data relating to every Google Chrome user, as well as every user of every Google digital product, is included in the transfer from Ireland to the USA.

The data is now under the scope of American surveillance programs, with little-to-no protection available to the British data subjects when it comes to who looks at that information, or how it's used. It's possible that other large technology companies will be considering similar options in the near future, and may reach similar conclusions.

If you're one of our UK-based readers, don't be surprised if you start receiving emails from Google regarding changes to their terms of service in the days or weeks to come. You also shouldn't be surprised if you begin to receive a lot more marketing emails than you're used to – especially marketing emails from American companies.

It might be time to familiarise yourself with manual email filters all over again!

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