

Unwanted Faxes and SPAM

NEW SPAM LAW TAKES EFFECT, BUT YOUR FAX NUMBER IS STILL BEING SOLD!

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As amazing as it may sound, at least one company is still selling your fax number to other companies. While the number of unwanted faxes has been greatly reduced, Access Response is still offering fax numbers of U.S. doctors of chiropractic to whomever will pay the price.

With reportedly more than 20,000 chiropractic office fax numbers, there is approximately a 40 percent chance that Access Response has yours. If you are still getting unwanted faxes from companies you haven't given permission to fax you, they probably got your fax number from this company or someone else who sells it.

For the record, *Dynamic Chiropractic* does not sell, rent or provide your fax number to anyone. If you have given us that information, it is held in confidence.

The same is true for your e-mail address. This, too, is held in confidence. We have been asked by numerous companies for your e-mail, but the answer is always the same. We don't offer your e-mail address to anyone.

You may think it strange that I would dedicate an entire column to the issue of confidentiality, but it is something about which I feel very strongly. We have almost eliminated the unwanted faxes here at the office and have installed special software to screen out 95 percent of SPAM e-mails.

The war against SPAM e-mails just got a little easier. The CAN-SPAM Act went into effect on Jan. 1, 2004. This law requires e-mail marketers to include a "From" line on their e-mails; use truthful and accurate subject lines; provide an "opt out" procedure; include a physical postal address in their e-mail; label their e-mails as ads; and display warning labels on sexually oriented e-mails.

This doesn't mean you will get any less SPAM, but it does mean most of it will be much easier to sort out and delete. This will be especially true for anti-SPAM software. We use Matador from Mail Frontier (mailfrontier.com) and have found both the individual PC and "enterprise" versions extremely effective. You can download a test version and try it out for free. It's only \$30 if you decide to buy it.

If you feel the same way I do about unwanted faxes and SPAM e-mail, you'll want to cut them off at the source. For faxes, this means contacting the list brokers who sell your fax number to other companies and getting your name off their list.

You can call Access Response toll-free at (800) 458-0990 or e-mail them at access@accessresponse.com. Provide your name and tell the company you want your fax number taken off its list. Let Access Response know that this is a formal request and that they are required to comply according to federal laws.

In addition, you should be aware of several resources that can be used to stop unwanted telephone marketing calls and faxes:

1. The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) sponsors the Telephone Preference Service, which maintains a national do-not-call list. All members of the DMA are required to use this service. To be added to the list, visit www.dmaconsumers.org and follow the appropriate steps. Once you register, your name will be kept on file for five years.
2. Last year, the Federal Communications Commission revised the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and established a federal do-not-call registry. Nationwide in scope, the registry applies to nearly all types of telemarketers, and covers both interstate and intrastate telemarketing calls. Millions of people have already signed up for the registry. To add your phone number, call (888) 382-1222, or visit www.donotcall.gov.
3. Additionally, many states have statewide "no-call" lists for their residents. This is a little-known but quite-useful resource. Contact your state's consumer protection office or public utilities commission to see if your state has such a list.

Eventually, there will be federal laws to protect the use of your e-mail address. In fact, based on the response to the national do-not-call registry, a "no e-mail" registry for e-mail addresses is already being reviewed by the FTC. Most companies will comply with these laws, but a few will continue to sell your e-mail address to others. When that happens, we will strive to let you know who they are and how you can force them to take your name off their lists.

Until that time, let's end the broadcasting of unwanted faxes to the chiropractic profession.

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