Internet Topics: Council for Promotion of Anti-Spam Measures

One of the anti-spam measures in place in Japan is the "Act on Regulation of Transmission of Specified Electronic Mail"[*1]. This law was established and enacted in 2002, and was revised in both 2005 and 2008 due to the inclusion of a provision that it be revised within a three year period.

Before each revision to the act, an Unsolicited Mail Measure Committee was held to evaluate current anti-spam measures and examine possible future directions.

The most recent committee was held in July 2007, and a final report of the results of these discussions was published in August 2008[*2].

This final report stated the need for a system for promoting comprehensive anti-spam measures, and a supplementary resolution covering this was made during Diet deliberations for the Act on Regulation of Transmission of Specified Electronic Mail.

As a result, the Council for Promotion of Anti-Spam Measures was established on November 27, 2008[*3].

As can be gleaned from the goals of establishment and participating members that are published on the website for the Japan Data Communications Association that administers the council, a wide range of experts from academia, industry, and government take part.

At the first assembly of the council a "spam eradication declaration" was adopted, detailing resolutions towards the eradication of spam and specific measures to be taken.

An administrative group whose role is to examine practical issues and solutions regarding anti-spam measures was also formed from part of the membership when the council was inaugurated.

While engaging in a variety of discussions, members of the administrative group were principally responsible for authoring an Anti-Spam Measure Handbook as a comprehensive summary of the current state of spam and the various countermeasures that exist. This handbook was approved at the second assembly of the council on October 2, 2009, and the 2009 Anti-Spam Measure Handbook was released on October 9[*4]. This handbook is an all-encompassing overview that covers the current state of spam as well as activities related to systematic and technological countermeasures that are implemented by a variety of organizations.

At the second assembly the establishment of a Sender Authentication Technology Workgroup was also approved, with the goal of promoting the adoption of sender authentication technologies that serve as an infrastructure for anti-spam measures.

Sender authentication technologies have been covered in the Messaging Technology section of this IIR a number of times in the past. While it maintains compatibility with existing email distribution systems, there are a number of points regarding its utilization and effect that may be misinterpreted if they are not understood correctly.
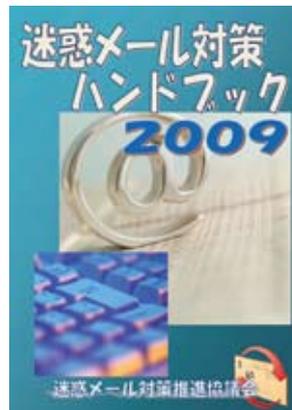
For this reason, the council's Sender Authentication Technology Workgroup is first preparing materials to help users understand the technology before deploying it, in addition to holding information sessions for deployment beginning with members of the council.

The workgroup is examining policies for encouraging further widespread adoption based on the information gathered through these activities.

I am contributing to the activities of the Council for Promotion of Anti-Spam Measures as a member of both the council and its administrative group.

I was given the responsibility of facilitating the Sender Authentication Technology Workgroup upon its establishment. As detailed in this IIR, several varieties of sender authentication technologies exist, each with a number of differences with regard to advantages and disadvantages and cost of deployment. This means there is no one technology that can easily fulfill all requirements. We are evaluating the best uses for each technology, and examining practicalities such as the use of staggered deployment to promote adoption and methods for utilizing authentication results.

IIJ will continue to take a leadership role both in the promotion of anti-spam measures and in the industry as a whole.

Author:

Shuji Sakuraba

Shuji Sakuraba is a Senior Program Manager in the Service Promotion Section of the Messaging Service Division in IIJ Network Service Department. He is engaged in the research and development of messaging systems. He is involved in various activities in collaboration with external related organizations for securing a comfortable messaging environment. He is a MAAWG member and JEAG board member. He is a member of the Council for Promotion of Anti-Spam Measures and administrative group, as well as chief examiner for the Sender Authentication Technology Workgroup. He is also a member of Internet Association Japan's Anti-Spam Measures Committee.

*1   Act on Regulation of Transmission of Specified Electronic Mail: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/d_syohi/m_mail.html#ordinance.

*2   Unsolicited Mail Measure Committee Final Report: http://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/2008/080828_8.html.

*3   Council for Promotion of Anti-Spam Measures: http://www.dekyo.or.jp/soudan/anti_spam/index.html.

*4   Regarding the release of the 2009 Anti-Spam Measure Handbook: http://www.dekyo.or.jp/soudan/anti_spam/image/200910press1.pdf.