

I. Outgoing Spam

Advanced Business Group (ABG) continuously reviews the feedback emailed to our Security & Abuse Team regarding the amount of spam generated by computers on our network. Based on review of this feedback, ABG determined it necessary to implement new procedures to prevent outgoing spam so that ABG could avoid being blacklisted by other ISPs.

To reduce unsolicited bulk email sent on our ABG network, ABG will be instituting outbound **SMTP traffic filtering (port 25 filtering)**. Currently ABG also filters all inbound SMTP traffic in an effort to reduce the volume of incoming spam and viruses. SMTP traffic filtering will become effective **June 1, 2006**.

The outbound SMTP traffic blocking security measure is designed to protect Internet users and the ABG network. The vast majority of customers will not be affected by this practice in any way. During the last year, "Commercial Viruses" have infected hundreds of thousands of computers. Commercial viruses are relatively new. They do not disrupt your computer operations or do anything "bad" to your computer. Many people do not even know their computers are infected with these viruses.

Commercial Viruses let spammers connect up to the infected computer and send spam messages out using the infected computer. These infected computers are referred to as "Zombies" in the industry. Zombies have an "smtp engine" like the spammer programs and send out spam the same way, by connecting directly to the recipient's mail server.

The current Zombie programs can not send out spam if Port 25 is blocked. If Zombie operators update their programming to use the ISP's outbound mail server, then operating the Zombies will be more difficult and the Zombie machines will be easier to identify and block.

Outbound SMTP traffic blocking is quickly becoming an industry standard. Other ISPs who block port 25 include AT&T, Bellsouth, CableOne, Charter, Comcast ATTBI, Cox, Earthlink, Flashnet, Mediaone, Mindspring, MSN, NetZero, People PC, Sprynet, Sympatico.ca, Verio, and Verizon.

By blocking port 25 ABG will be able to better control the impact that viruses cause by polluting the network with emails and help to prevent the spread of such viruses as well.

II. Outgoing Spam FAQs:

1: Which ports does ABG currently block or filter?

ABG will start to block outbound Port 25 on June 1, 2006.

2: Does ABG block or filter port 25?

Yes, ABG blocks all outbound traffic on port 25 (SMTP) at our routers, unless it is being sent from an ABG SMTP server, or registered SMTP server.

3: Who will be affected?

All e-mail sent via the Internet is routed through the port 25, the channel used for communication between an e-mail client and an e-mail server. Any ABG customer who is using another third-party email services, hosting an unregistered email server, or software that sends out emails on SMTP port 25.

- Customers that have corporate email servers that exist outside of ABG's network.
- Customers using software applications that generate and send email with built in SMTP engines.
- Customers that have private home email accounts through other ISP providers.

4. Does the outbound blocking of port 25 mean that ABG's customers have to use ABG for email services?

No. Customers can use any valid e-mail address, but the email sent from their ABG connection must come from an email system registered with ABG personnel, or from one of ABG's SMTP servers.

5. How do I know if my email server is an Registered Email Server?

Please contact ABG at support@abgnetwork.net to make sure.

6. What are the correct SMTP server settings to use with the ABG Service?

ABG is providing outbound SMTP services free of charge, along with configuration assistance to ABG customers. ABG customers must request correct outbound SMTP server settings for your location. Please contact ABG at support@abgnetwork.net .

7. Why does ABG block outgoing mail from use of port 25?

The filter of port 25 drastically reduces the number of spam and virus emails originating from within the ABG network. ABG has to take this action in order to ensure that a few bulk e-mailers or virus-infected PCs do not result in the entire ABG network being blacklisted by other Internet Service Providers.

8. Other ISPs don't block outbound use of port 25, why does ABG?

Although some ISPs may currently allow the use of third party outgoing mail servers, it is important to note that other providers such as MSN, Earthlink, Mindspring, Verizon, and BellSouth do block outbound use of port 25. This is quickly becoming an industry standard among ISPs to help control the volume of

outgoing spam and the dissemination of viruses. As the problem of spam continues to proliferate, we believe that other ISPs will implement this and similar blocks.

9. How does the filter of port 25 help with the problem of spam?

Typically, when a customer sends an email, it is routed to an ABG mail server and the ABG server relays it to the recipient's server. Spammers and modern mass mailer viruses commonly bypass the ABG mail servers. They send mail directly from their computer to others' mail servers without routing it through a ABG mail server. The filtering of port 25 prevents spammers from bypassing ABG mail servers and delivering spam directly to Internet users. Also, this filter can prevent some viruses from propagating at all.

10. Does the filter of port 25 hinder customers' ability to send email?

The filter of port 25 does not impact the vast majority of ABG customers, only the small percentage of customers who use third party mail servers. Any software configured to use an SMTP server that is not an registered ABG server to deliver email directly to a recipient's server will not work. An indication of this problem may be a message similar to this in the customer's mail client.

A time-out occurred while communicating with the server. Account: 'otheraccount.othersisp.com', Server: 'othersmtp.com', Protocol: SMTP, Port 25, Secure (SSL): No, error Number: 0x800CCC19

Customers using third party email services must configure their email clients to use an ABG outbound smtp server in order to send outbound email.

11. Some ABG customers use a laptop at both home and office. The port 25 filter forces some of these customers to change email settings when checking work email from home. What is ABG's solution for this?

Many customers in this situation have been able to use a VPN (virtual private network) connection to access their email without having to change settings. Another solution may be to use web-based email applications where applicable. A third option is to simply adjust the setting when working from home; this is typically a one-line entry within the e-mail client on the computer.

12. Does the filter of port 25 affect web-based email services?

No, customers may continue to use ABG High Speed Internet WebMail, or services like HotMail and Yahoo mail as they always have.

13. Does the filtering of Port 25 outbound affect the receipt of inbound email?

No. This does not affect retrieval of inbound email from any service.