



Spammers using Social Media outlets

Abalinx 28 March 2018 Peter Adamis

Spam attack. In an unprecedented attack on the website, the database of subscribers was corrupted. Mischievous individuals targeted Abalinx.com and flooded the Subscribe2 programme with real and bogus email addresses. The only reason the webmaster and his team became aware of it was when individuals began to query the posts. A search of the database indicated 4500 invalid emails out of a total of approximately 12700 email addresses. A spike in visitors occurred on Sunday afternoon around 3.00 pm.

Spam costs. [Spamming and hacking attempts](#) cost Abalinx ten years of gathering and harvesting of email addresses. These emails were harvested from the following networks: *Military, Politicians, Welfare, Community, Academic, Education, Multicultural communities, Government public websites, Business Cards, Hellenic, Spam, News media, Non-Government Organisations, Personal Networks, Military, Government, Academic, Welfare, Political figures, Industries, Charities, Communities, Employment agencies, Registered Training Organisations, Call centres, Business cards and Non-Government Organisations.* All of these contacts were lost during the corruption phase period 24 to the 27 March 2018. Angst is not even the word to describe the chaos caused by the disruption and destruction caused.

Akismet



Akismet. A search of the website statics indicated that the program Akismet had captured 7562 spam for the past six months with a total of 135,739 since September 2017.

This one of the most effective spam programs to date used by WordPress owners to spam emails. However despite the integrity and power of the program, valid emails are not subject to the Akismet protocols and slip through the cracks.

Top Ten Nations. The USA is still leading the pack regarding visitors hits, followed closely behind China. It is envisaged that within the next twelve months the Chinese search engine Baidu will surpass Western Search engines. This however will depend upon the content and quality of the website. Small market websites such as Abalinx do not attract sufficient customers and are mostly for the domestic market. Thus Australia is coming at third place.

Top 10 Countries			
Rank	Flag	Country	Visitor Count
1		United States	77,844
2		China	46,847
3		Australia	23,277
4		Russian Federation	15,465
5		Ukraine	12,937
6		Germany	12,777
7		France	11,764
8		Switzerland	10,799
9		Netherlands	7,502
10		United Kingdom	6,744

Top Referring Sites	
References	Address
4,322	www.google.com.au
2,872	www.guildwargamers.com
2,477	m.facebook.com
1,134	www.abalinx.com
1,124	www.google.com
615	www.bing.com
551	www.facebook.com
414	yandex.ru
342	cqb-team.com
311	l.facebook.com

Subscribe2. The political article on [Michael Kroger](#) on Sunday 24 March 2018 appears started the avalanche of emails being added via the Subscribe2 program. This program in the form of a widget located on the left hand column of the website has one entry and two buttons, Subscribe and Unsubscribe. Any member of the public wishing to flood and corrupt the data base may do so by entering bogus emails. Although a free and robust program, this Subscribe2 program unfortunate weakness is attractive to spammers and jammers clogging up the networks.

Word Fence security. Twelve months ago, the Russian and Ukrainian nations came in second and their influence waned when the Security program, Word fence was upgraded. It was interest to note that on Monday, Word fence failed and became inactive for reasons unknown. The program was reinstalled on Wednesday 28 March 2018. Word fence security like the other programs above are free and ideal for small market websites and users should only upgrade if they have a high hit rate or volume of potential customers. As Abalinx is only a not for profit network, funds on programs are not considered necessary.

The screenshot shows a security audit interface with the following details:

- Results Found (1)**: DELETED ALL DELETABLE FILES, REPAIR ALL REPAIRABLE FILES
- Summary: Posts, Comments, & Files: 0; Themes & Plugins: 0; Users Checked: 0; URLs Checked: 0; Results Found: 1
- Warning**: The Plugin "Subscribe2 widget" appears to be abandoned (updated 8 June 2011, tested to WP 3.1.4). Type: Plugin Abandoned.
- Plugin Name**: Subscribe2 widget
- Current Plugin Version**: 1.1
- Last Updated**: 8 June 2011
- Details**: It was last updated 6 years 9 months ago and tested up to WordPress 3.1.4. It may have compatibility problems with the current version of WordPress or unknown security issues. [Get more information.](#)
- Plugin URL**: <http://www.mijnpress.nl>
- Repository URL**: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/subscribe2-widget>
- Buttons: MARK AS FIXED, MANAGE PLUGINS, AUDIT MY SITE SECURITY, CLEAN MY HACKED SITE

Flaws in the system. The flaw identified over the past five days was found in Scubscribe2 program. There is no valid method of capturing the names of Subscribers, nor is it able to identify them. Therefore, any individual can enter bogus or real emails into the system without the knowledge of the owner. The program can be tweaked but not enough to capture all of the details necessary to identify who is entering the data. Over a period of time, spammers can attack a system using denial of service attacks by continually hitting the website using continuous looping arrangements with a number of idle computers.

Network. Abalinx and associates is a not for profit organisation that attracts no funds, does not use grants, is self-sustaining and relies on the goodwill of its volunteers throughout the world. It is manned by professionals and non-professionals with one goal in mind. Help, assist, mentor and advise the next generation prepare for the future. Candidates are selected at random and they are supported throughout their early years. Volunteers are not paid, nor do they seek acknowledgement and it is based on trust, friendship, loyalty and honour.

Database integrity and maintenance. It is a great pity that the data base was not maintained, but due to illness by the webmaster, the data base continued to grow without any validation and maintenance being conducted. The data base was reactivated on Saturday, revealing the flaw in the system and the removal of 4500 invalid emails. However for mischievous and unknown reasons the data base was populated on the Sunday after seven articles appeared on Sunday Morning.

Spamming became more concentrated after the [Michael Kroger article](#) and it is believed it was a deliberate attempt to clog up the system causing chaos and mayhem. The [Quick](#), [Mirabella](#), [Bastiaan](#), [Mitchell](#), [Hannan](#) articles also contributed to the acceleration of bogus emails. Suffice to say, it appears that some bright spark (s) found the time and effort to conduct their mischievous and nefarious activities. They must have been organised in teams to be able to achieve what they did. Well whatever their aim was, they achieved in destroying ten years of work and research.

Election Campaign & Hacking. The last time Abalinx and associates website was hacked was during the [2013 Federal Election](#) when new social media techniques were used effectively for the first time. The Scullin Liberal Federal Electorate Campaign Committee had infiltrated Labor and Green networks and thus was able to effectively use their campaign advertisements against them. [Jag Chugha the Scullin Candidate](#) scored higher than any previous candidate other than [Wayne Phillips](#) who had put in a sterling campaign some 28 years ago. Suffice to say, [the 2013 Post-Election Report](#) created by the Scullin FEC went unheeded and the social media techniques were not considered worthwhile.

Social Media as a weapon. During the 2016 Federal Election, the techniques used in 2014 were put into operation but were scaled back on the request of the [State Director, Simon Frost](#) who in his wisdom thought it best to conduct all social media from the main campaign Office. [The 2016 Post election Report](#) identified the importance of Social Media and a subsequent report on [campaign techniques](#) was created. [Social media now plays a huge role in election campaigns](#) and is an effective tool to spread the message to the masses.

Conclusion. As a result of the recent spamming attacks by unknown [keyboard warriors](#), discussions are now in place with the provider to identify a suitable subscribers program that can identify the subscriber, the date/time and the categories selected. However such programs do not stop the unknown keyboard warriors from ringing my home and mobile and pretending to be the Police. He called himself "[Jack](#)". What an idiot, does he not know my telephone and mobile records all calls are recorded for "[quality and training purposes](#)"! A check of my records found out who he was and he worked for two parliamentarians and is a [Young Liberal](#). (**See also Postscript below**). What a real goose. He was a real hero that one, thinking that I was born yesterday. I have been working with computers since 1979 with my first introduction being with the [Australian Defence Force](#). This "[Jack](#)" was reported for [impersonating a Police Officer](#), but requested that no action be taken. I have found that the current ("[Me Me Me](#)" - MMM) generation lacking in many areas, especially maturity, discipline, respect, confidence and self-esteem.

Interesting that only one gentleman was civil to me on the telephone and he was from the Kooyong Electorate. We differed but we both wanted the Liberal party to win. This chap was approximately 55 years old and for reasons of privacy his identity remains confidential. As [Abalinx and Associates website](#) is managed on a tiny budget and manned by volunteers, the Subscribe2 program will remain until a suitable secure Subscribe To system can be found.

Furthermore, every quarter the data base is to be validated for bogus, invalid and spam emails against a known blacklist provided by the host. Unfortunately ten long years of data was lost as a result of mischievous unknown individuals. I hope that they feel smug about it. The day will come when they will get their just deserts.



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POSTSCRIPT.

It has been brought to my attention that by sheer coincidence there is in fact a young Liberal called "Jack" who is employed by two parliamentarians. I would like to make it clear that the chap that rang me did not identify himself as a Liberal and could well have been a youth barely 16 whose language skills left a lot to be desired. It is important to note that although the young bloke who rang me at home identified himself as "Jack" he could well have been using a pseudonym to hide his true identity. Therefore one should not automatically that it is the same Jack identified by other means. I would like to thank the gentleman who brought this matter to my attention.