

## **E-mail Backscatter**

Many years ago, when I was part of the A/V department, now CTES, I did a weekly e-mail tip. It was generally well received and I've thought of doing something similar related to my current work supporting desktop computers. I'm not ready to commit to such a thing at the moment but I thought I'd share something I heard on this week's NY Times Techtalk podcast.

Have you ever gotten an e-mail telling you your message couldn't be delivered to someone you don't know and have never written to? I have. It's called "backscatter", among other terms. The message you receive is a DSN (delivery status notification) from you ISP (internet service provider). This is a result of a spammer obtaining your e-mail address and using it to send spam to others.

This does not mean your computer has been hacked or that you have a virus. E-mail addresses are very easy to obtain. It may be an annoyance, as anything related to spam is, but most likely you need give it no more thought than the effort to press the delete key.

And, needless to say, NEVER, EVER respond to spam. It may never go away but you shouldn't encourage it.