



2007 Report to the Membership on MAAWG Activities and Progress

**Issued by the MAAWG Board of Directors
March 2008**

Executive Summary

The global conversation on stopping messaging abuse and spam continued to expand as a record number of companies joined the Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group in 2007. During the year, the organization also completed several initiatives and expanded its collaboration with other international organizations, including joining forces with The London Action Plan and the StopSpamAlliance to challenge cross-border abuse and online fraud.

MAAWG now represents almost one billion mailboxes from some of the largest network operators worldwide. Companies with a strong global presence such as AG Interactive, Hewlett Packard, Google, McAfee, RSA Security and UPC Broadband were among the 48 members that joined last year. At the close of 2007, the dialogue at MAAWG had grown to include 126 member companies. With the number of European members almost doubling over the previous year, the organization also saw a significant increase in representation from companies outside North America.

The organization addressed a number of important technical, collaboration and public policy issues this year. Hundreds of members attended each of the three members-only MAAWG meetings held during the year, with the collaborative efforts continuing through the organization's ongoing committee work. New best practices were published in 2007 outlining recommendations for volume senders, the use of walled gardens and effective abuse desk procedures. Work began in a new subcommittee to identify the best email forwarding practices and in the technical committee to develop an email authentication white paper. A cooperative project with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was undertaken to translate existing MAAWG best practices documents into multiple languages, and the internal MAAWG Abuse Contact Database continued to be developed as a tool for members to communicate one-on-one regarding company policies, spam and reputation issues.

Messaging abuse is more than an inconvenience or customer relations issue. Unfortunately, it has grown into a hotbed of criminal activity. To effectively work against this trend, the industry must come together across borders in a continuing dialogue of best practices and shared learning. Email abuse is not solely the responsibility of any single ISP or vendor. It can only be diminished through cooperative industry efforts.

MAAWG invites members and prospective members to propose work areas and become involved in the MAAWG standing committees. For more information or details on any of the programs described below, contact Jerry Upton, MAAWG Executive Director at jerry.upton@MAAWG.org.

I. COLLABORATION Across the Industry and Industry Participation

Record Growth and International Expansion

Last year was a banner year for MAAWG from many perspectives. The organization grew 56% with a record 48 companies joining the organization. Representing the organization's efforts to reach out internationally, the number of members headquartered outside North America doubled in 2007. This global focus is intended to enhance the industry's communication on important issues and transcend localities. Currently, about 20% of the MAAWG

MAAWG

Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group

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membership is based outside North America, with the organization now home to 26 international member companies compared to just 13 in 2006. A number of companies with an important global presence also joined during the year.

Productive, Energized Meetings

Each of the three MAAWG meetings in 2007 were attended by over 200 members and featured varied multi-day programs of panels, expert presentations and participatory dialogue sessions. In 2007, the gatherings were restricted to members only and were held in San Francisco in February, in Dublin in June, and in Washington, D.C. in October. The London Action Plan (LAP) and the EU Contact Network of Spam Authorities (CSNA) co-located their meetings with the fall MAAWG event.

The MAAWG Program Committee developed a conference with an impressive assortment of topics focusing on timely, vital issues related to messaging abuse. Expert speakers and panelists were featured, along with interactive committee sessions designed to initiate change in the industry. The 2007 meetings also highlighted the work of public policy and technology research agencies with presentations from these organizations:

- Anti-Phishing Working Group, Chairman
- Asia Pacific Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (APCAUCE)
- Bank of America, Senior Vice President, E-mail Infrastructure and Secure Messaging
- Center for Democracy & Technology, Program Associate
- CERT.br (Computer Emergency Response Team Brazil), General Manager
- David Dagon, College of Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Electronic Commerce Branch, Spectrum, Information Technologies and Telecommunications Sector (SITT), Director General
- ESPC (Email Senders and Providers Coalition), Assistant Director
- Incident Responder KISA (Korea Information Security Agency), Security Analyst
- Internet Initiative Japan Inc., Japan Email Anti-Abuse Group, Senior Program Manager
- U.S. Federal Trade Commission, Chair
- U.S. Federal Trade Commission, representative on the London Action Plan and US WEB SAFE Act
- U.S. Federal Trade Commission, Investigator

II. BEST PRACTICES and Committee Initiatives

MAAWG committees are driven by members' concerns and market needs. New sub-committees and cross-committee special interest groups are often created to tackle controversial and difficult issues or topics best served by a smaller group. In 2007, MAAWG issued three best practices documents that are available to the general industry and the organization also continued to develop its own internal channel to improve communications between members:

- **MAAWG Best Practices for the Use of a Walled Garden:**

Criteria for Exit and Entry, Remediation and Subscriber Education

MAAWG issued the first list of best practices developed cooperatively by major Internet and email service providers for managing infected subscribers. It provides recommendations for directing customers to a safe online environment where downloadable self-remediation tools can help users remove malicious code installed on their computers. For more information, see the [news release](#) or read the [best practices](#).

- **Abuse Desk Common Practices**

A collaborative effort of MAAWG service providers, this summary of ISPs' experiences describes the most effective abuse desk practices. It offers insight into the processes that have proven successful in educating customers, reducing email abuse problems, and developing knowledgeable abuse desk employees. For more information, see the [news release](#) or read the [best practices](#).

- **MAAWG Sender Best Communications Practices - Version 1.1**

Based on collaborative input from both volume senders and Internet Service Providers, MAAWG issued recommendations outlining how senders can distinguish their legitimate high-volume email from unsolicited spam. The document's Executive Summary explains some of the technical recommendations to improve email deliverability and provides a questionnaire marketers can use to determine if their Email Sender Providers are operating within industry best practices. The full document addresses obtaining consent from users, recommended unsubscribe options, sender accountability and reputation, list maintenance, and resolving messaging disruption issues. For more information, see the [news release](#) or read the [best practices](#).

- **MAAWG Abuse Contact Database**

Launched in 2006, the members-only database continued to be propagated with expanded contact information during the year. It offers member companies a secure and private channel for communicating directly with other MAAWG companies as they work to resolve filtering, reputation and abuse issues. For more information, read the [news release](#). The database can be accessed from the MAAWG Members-Only Web site.

Work in progress that originated in 2007 includes:

- **Email Authentication White Paper**

An important technology to reduce abusive email, this paper will provide a basic introduction to email authentication for management staff and then discuss technical concepts and choices in more details for software developers and network engineers.

- **Forwarding Subcommittee**

Formed in the fall of 2007, this group is creating a best practices document with recommendations and guidelines for filtering, authentication and reputation policies to increase the quality of mail delivered to the end recipient.

- **Defining Reputation Management Terminology**

The goal is to create a framework for an industry-wide dialogue on measuring the reputation of any sending entity, not merely marketing senders. One likely follow-up project will be to discuss ways to reduce the likelihood of miscategorization, or "false positive" emails within the context of a reputation-based filtering system.

III. PUBLIC POLICY and Outreach

The MAAWG committee responsible for collaborative engagement with government agencies and public policy continued its highly-effective efforts to expand the organization's network globally. It also continued to manage and promote the quarterly MAAWG Email Metrics Reports and was responsible for inviting many of the government and Internet agency executives who spoke at MAAWG meetings in 2007 (see "Collaboration" above). By forging close ties with other international anti-spam organizations, the committee has created opportunities for MAAWG members to dialogue with representatives of important enforcement and industry entities.

Collaborative Engagement

MAAWG works to build strong relationships with international organizations instrumental in fighting online crime and abuse. In 2007, MAAWG was invited to join two prestigious organizations:

- **StopSpamAlliance Membership**

The StopSpamAlliance is a trusted communications channel of organizations working to preserve the integrity of

the online community. It was founded by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the European Contact Network of Spam Authorities (CNSA), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the London Action Plan International Spam Enforcement Network (LAP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Seoul-Melbourne MoU, which includes the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Korea Information Security Agency (KISA). MAAWG was accepted into this network that works to improve international coordination of anti-spam initiatives and foster exchange of information and best practices between the public and private sectors.

- **The London Action Plan (LAP) Membership**

At the end of the year, LAP, a coalition of public and private entities from 27 countries cooperating on international spam law enforcement, invited MAAWG to join their alliance. LAP members cooperate on cross-border spam-related matters, as permitted within the laws of their respective countries. MAAWG will work within LAP to share and improve on techniques to combat online abuse, spam and fraud.

Email Metrics Report

MAAWG initiated this program at the request of public and policy agencies that were searching for an independent, unbiased perspective on the problem of abusive email. The first in the series of reports “MAAWG Email Metrics Program: The Network Operators’ Perspective” provided data for the fourth quarter of 2005 and covered 127 million mailboxes. The latest publicly available report, for the second quarter of 2007, covers more than 240 million mailboxes. These reports estimate both the quantity of abusive emails moving across networks and the percentage that is eliminated through various tools and procedures. This is a voluntary program that collects aggregated data from MAAWG network operators and email providers while protecting users’ privacy. The reports have proven to be an important service to the industry and MAAWG is committed to continuing this program.

Industry Outreach

Through its public policy committee, MAAWG was invited to share its expertise and help educate the industry on best practices. MAAWG representatives spoke at several industry events during the year, strengthening industry cooperation against online abuse around the world.

- **APCAUCE/APRICOT**

Bali, Indonesia, Q1 2007 - J.D. Falk represented MAAWG on a panel about spam and abuse alongside representatives of other international organizations working to protect the Internet.

- **FTC Summit: The Next Generation of Threats and Solutions Summit on Spam**

Washington D.C., Q3 2007 - This is the second full-day summit the U.S. Federal Trade Commission has convened on the issue of spam. Charles Stiles, 2007 MAAWG Chairman, represented the organization on a panel focused on defining the problem.

- **Internet Government Forum (IGF)**

Brazil, Q4 2007 - IGF is one of the world’s premier events where key stakeholders discuss Internet security issues. MAAWG Vice Chair Jonathan Curtis represented the organization on the StopSpamAlliance panel and the OCED malware panel.

- **Joint meetings with LAP and the EU Contact Network of Spam Authorities (CSNA)**

Washington, D.C., Q4 2007 - Shared sessions at the October meetings included a keynote by U.S. Federal Trade Commission Chair and discussions on common problems. Both MAAWG and the other organizations also held separate tracks.

IV. 2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

These companies contributed to the leadership of MAAWG in 2007:

- 1&1 Internet
- AOL
- A T & T
- Bell Canada
- Cablevision
- Charter Communications
- Cloudmark, Inc.
- Comcast
- Cox Communications
- Earthlink
- France Telecom
- Goodmail Systems
- Google, Inc.
- Openwave Systems
- Time Warner Cable
- Verizon Communications
- Yahoo! Inc

MAAWG also recognizes and appreciates the investment of time and resources from CheetahMail, Ironport-Cisco, MXLogic, ReturnPath, Inc. and StrongMail Systems, Inc. for their volunteers who chaired committees and subcommittees during the past year.

New 2008 officers for the Board of Directors elected at the February 2008 meeting are Michael O'Reirdan (Comcast), Chair; Jonathan Curtis (Bell Canada) and Charles Stiles (Goodmail Systems) as Vice Chairs. Laurie Jill Wood (Charter Communications) was elected Treasurer.

IV. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VITAL IN 2008

Now in its fifth year, MAAWG is flourishing because of the participation and commitment of its members. The three members-only meetings MAAWG organizes annually have grown into industry events where influential policy advisors, technical experts and member companies come together to collaborate on important new work, network and exchange ideas.

Your company benefits, you grow personally and the industry advances when you participate in the Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group. The MAAWG Board strongly encourages you to become involved in 2008 by attending meetings, joining committees and participating on committee mailing lists, adopting MAAWG Best Practices when applicable, and submitting proposals for new work. All upcoming meeting dates and locations are available at <http://www.maawg.org/news/events>.

All of the documents noted in this report are available at the MAAWG Web site, www.MAAWG.org. Presentations from past meetings, committee information and the MAAWG Abuse Contact Database are accessible through the MAAWG Members-Only site. We urge you to use these resources to your best advantage.

MAAWG was founded on the principle that we all gain when users trust and have confidence in the online experience. MAAWG brings the industry together in this endeavor. Your participation is an important contribution to the experience for all of our online users.