

comp.security.unix: Re: "proving" a user received an email (good gosh)

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Source: <http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.security.unix/2002-06/0216.html>

From: Chronos Tachyon (chronos@chronos.dyndns.org.no.spam.please.example.com)

Date: 06/26/02

From: Chronos Tachyon <chronos@chronos.dyndns.org.no.spam.please.example.com>

Date: Tue, 25 Jun 2002 23:16:46 -0500

-----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----

Hash: SHA1

On Tue 25 Jun 2002 06:19 pm, Faux_Pseudo wrote:

>
> --(Once upon a time, in comp.security.unix)--
> --(Bruno Wolff III said it like only they can.)--
>> *It someone really needs a confirmation that the message was read by a*
>> *human, it should ask for a confirmation in the body of the message.*
>
>
> *Bad idea. Any user where confirmation is an issue is a user who knows*
> *enough to not confirm delivery of the message. What would be better*
> *is a "X-Lieing-User: yes" header that the mail client or MTA can check*
> *and find out if the message did get properly routed and then the mail*
> *client can look for the header and at the top of the email put a*
> *little "In opening this mail a notification was sent to the sender"*
>

Spam, spam, spam, spam, Spam, spam, spam, spam, ...

Any sort of automatic use of Delivery Status Notification would be exploited by spammers in all of about 5 minutes to confirm the existence of valid e-mail addresses, thus making them more valuable when selling them to other spammers. It would be worse than 1x1 transparent GIFs pointing to a script on a remote HTTP server, since while no valid message **requires** that remote image loading be turned on, any sort of mandatory DSN **couldn't** distinguish between spammers and legitimate use.

And, although an "X-Lieing-User: yes" header (in the fine spelling tradition of HTTP's "Referer:", perhaps?) might be somewhat useful, there are MANY legitimate situations where you don't want e-mail being sent to the same provider as your outgoing mail server -- for instance, when I occasionally post from my Earthlink account at home, I use the e-mail address of my

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broadband connection as the From: header because my Earthlink account burned to the ground and sank into the swamp under the weight of the spammers. This doesn't even TOUCH on situations (like mine) where I run my own SMTP server with its own domain, which could be easily configured to claim that any mail sent through it was being truthful about its origin. If you decide to combat this by having the recipient's SMTP server compare the envelope address with the domain that it came from, then you will have thrown out one of the principles that has made the Internet so successful where commercial networks failed, since it requires that people only use ISP-Approved Mail Servers (unless, of course, they have enough cash to bribe^Wbuy a static IP range from a local mobster^W^W^Wan incumbent ISP that will show up in ARIN/RIPE/APNIC whois). Does the world really need more MySmallBusiness@aol.com's?

To make a long story short, lots of other people have given it a lot of thought and already considered (and rejected) the ideas you mentioned. And you didn't even address the real intent from the Subject: line, which would be "How can I prove (in a court of law, for instance) that a human being read the contents of an e-mail and didn't, e.g., think it was spam and hit Delete a little too quickly?", to which the only valid answer is, "Request that the recipient reply to it manually."

Chronos Tachyon

<http://chronos.dyndns.org/> -- WWED?

Guardian of Eristic Paraphernalia

Gatekeeper of the Region of Thud

10:46pm up 2 days, 23:50, 0 users, load average: 0.14, 0.11, 0.09

-----BEGIN PGP SIGNATURE-----

Version: GnuPG v1.0.6 (GNU/Linux)

Comment: For info see <http://www.gnupg.org>

iD8DBQE9GUAuPGpxVErWvSoRAkSfAJ9laQmrPKOC1+xKmLwImiTf1fGBAQCeOkWI
3P0sz0/GYJjH9EsBf0ckb2g=
=lgL1

-----END PGP SIGNATURE-----

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- *Next message:* [Andrew S.: "Re: Microsoft's Jihad – Palladium"](#)
 - *Previous message:* [Bruno Wolff III: "Re: "proving" a user received an email \(good gosh\)"](#)
 - *In reply to:* [Faux Pseudo: "Re: "proving" a user received an email \(good gosh\)"](#)
 - *Next in thread:* [Rich Gibbs: "Re: "proving" a user received an email \(good gosh\)"](#)
 - *Messages sorted by:* [\[date \] \[thread \] \[subject \] \[author \] \[attachment \]](#)