

STAMPING OUT JUNK MAIL

This (fairly) short guide explains how to reduce unaddressed and addressed junk mail; how to prevent your name and address are added to junk mail databases; how to cancel the Yellow Pages and other unsolicited directories, and how to deal with scam mail.

UNADDRESSED JUNK MAIL

Putting a **'No Junk Mail' sign** on your door will help reduce unaddressed advertisements from local businesses, such as take-away menus, calling cards from taxi companies, and leaflets from estate agents. If you don't read free newspapers you can get a sign that stops both leaflets and newspapers. Visit stopjunkmail.org.uk for a range of firm but polite letterbox signs.

Leaflets from large companies such as Virgin Media, Sky, BT, Direct Line and Domino's Pizza are usually distributed by Royal Mail. Unfortunately, Royal Mail instructs postmen to ignore 'No Junk Mail' signs. If you want to stop unsolicited leaflets delivered by your postie you need to register with the company's **Door-to-Door Opt-Out**. Doing so is worth the hassle; Royal Mail distributes about 50% of all unaddressed door-drops.

To register with Royal Mail's opt-out scheme for unaddressed mail you first need to request an opt-out form. If you contact optout@royalmail.com you will get the form sent to you via e-mail, which means you will need to print the form yourself. If you rather get an opt-out form in the post you can contact Royal Mail on 01865 796 988.

Please note that it can take up to six weeks before the junk mail stops and that your registration will expire after only two years. Royal Mail will not send you reminder to re-register.



ADDRESSED JUNK MAIL

The **Mailing Preference Service** is an opt-out scheme that can help reduce junk mail that is addressed to you. To register you can either phone 0845 703 4599 (be prepared to talk to a machine), or go to *stayprivate.org*. Via the website you can register with the Telephone Preference Service and a number of other opt-outs for unsolicited marketing at the same time.

! *The Mailing Preference Service will not stop mailings from organisations that are not a member of the Direct Marketing Association. Strangely, registering with the opt-out scheme will also not stop junk mail addressed 'To the Occupier'.*

You can force junk mailers to stop sending you addressed advertisements with a **data protection notice**. Any UK organisation is legally obliged to respect such a notice, provided that it follows a number of guidelines set out by the Information Commissioner's Office. In particular, your notice needs to be dated, include your full name and address, and be in writing.

If possible, send your notice via e-mail - that way you automatically have a copy of your request. The text of your e-mail could be as follows:

F.A.O. the Data Controller / Company Secretary,

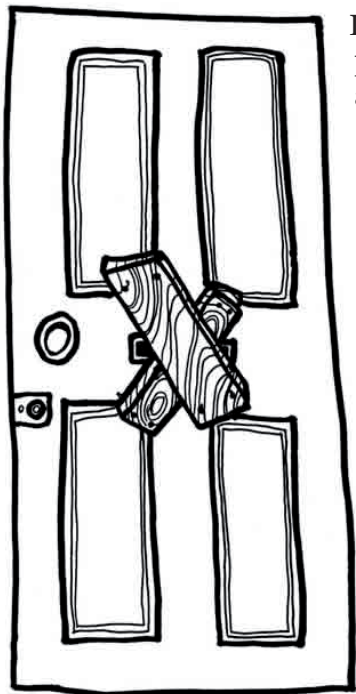
With this notice I, [your full name], of [your full address], require you to cease processing personal data relating to me for the purposes of direct marketing as soon as possible and in any event within 28 days of the date of this notice.

Please note that if you fail to comply with this notice, I can apply to the court for an order against you under Section 11 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

If the junk mailer doesn't stop sending you unsolicited adverts you could next make a formal complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. For more information about how to enforce your right not to receive addressed junk mail, visit *ico.gov.uk* or phone 01625 545745. More information, as well as an example notice letter you can download, can also be found at *stopjunkmail.org.uk/guide/contact_sender.php*.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...

For as long as junk mailers don't know you exist they won't target you with junk mail. So... **be careful who you give your name and address to!** Never respond to cold mailings, including appeals from charities, and don't take part in competitions and surveys unless you are sure your personal details will not be added to a junk mail database.



If you have to give your name and address to a potential junk mailer, for instance when you buy a product or service, make sure you search the small print for **opt-out box(es)** that can prevent your name is added to junk mail lists and/or sold to other junk mailers.

Remarkably, the **electoral register** is also used a junk mail list. By law your local council has to sell an 'edited' version of the electoral roll to anyone prepared to pay a small fee (covering the cost of providing the data only), and the information may be used for any purpose. You can stop your council selling your name and address by opting out of being listed on the **edited electoral register**. If you are not sure if you have opted out, or if you would like to opt out, you can do so by contacting your local elections office at any time of the year (don't wait for the annual canvas).

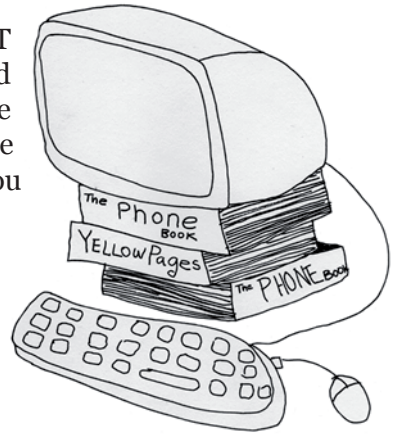
RETURN TO SENDER

An easy way let junk mailers know you are not interested in unsolicited advertisements is by **returning unwanted junk mail** to the sender. You can send back any addressed junk mail with a return address: cross out your name and address; write 'junk mail, return to sender' on the envelope; and drop the item in the nearest pillar box, *unstamped*. Some marketers may need a couple of returns, some may never get the message. Still, it is a good antidote against junk mail frustration, and if everybody would return unwanted junk mail there would soon be a lot less unsolicited mail!

PAPER DIRECTORIES

The Yellow Pages, Thomson Local and BT distribute an estimated 75 million unsolicited directories per year. If you wish to cancel one or more of these books, you can do so via the website junkbuster.org.uk. Alternatively, you can phone these numbers:

- **Yellow Pages:** 0800 671 444
- **Thomson Local:** 01252 555 555
- **British Telecom:** 0800 833 400



SCAMS

If you suspect you or someone you know has been sent **scam mail** you should contact Consumer Direct on telephone number 08454 04 05 06 or via direct.gov.uk. They will be able to give free and professional advice, and they may be able to prevent other people get conned.

QUERIES?

More advice on how to get rid off junk mail can be found on my website at stopjunkmail.org.uk/guide. If you have any queries about anything you read in this guide, you will probably find the answer on the website. If not, feel free to contact me via stopjunkmail.org.uk/contact or on 01603 618185 (please do note that this is my home number and not an official help line).

If you support Stop Junk Mail's cause and are interested in helping with the campaign, please do get in touch. Help is needed with everything from editing texts to doing research and organising campaigns.

There is no copyright on this leaflet... do reproduce it and spread the word! However, none of the illustrations (© by Eloise O'Hare) may be reproduced outside the context of this leaflet.

Robert Rijkhoff, April 2011