

# Adbusters

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**There are two unstoppable booms** that are radically changing our industrial economy into a brave new “network society.” The first boom is in the increasing miniaturization and deployment of computer chips. These chips are finding themselves in car doors, refrigerators, and kids games. Industry folks refer to these miniature, dirt-cheap chips as “jellybeans.”

The second boom is the rise of cheap wireless connections. This paves the way for all the “jellybeans” to talk to each other, creating what *Wired* magazine’s editor Kevin Kelly calls “The dumb power of the network economy.” Dumb, because each jellybean is of limited value, with power connecting it all together.

The utopian spin on the network economy is a connected intelligence. It gives the jellybean-sprinkled soil the power to talk to the farmer; the electric car the power to talk to the road; and your musical shoes the power to sing your favorite tune.

But network economists have overlooked the dumb part. Your shoes may decide to blare music during your job interview, your car may decide to go for a ride without you and your diary may decide to share its secrets through your e-mail.

## Spam... Spam... Spam... WHAM!

To: aXle Subject: Girls 4U

To: aXle Subject: Not Your Ordinary Pyramid Scheme

To: aXle Subject: E-mail disruption

**It fills up your inbox**, it insults your intelligence, it causes havoc on the web. It is called unsolicited bulk e-mail, aka Spam. Spam is the creation of crank advertisers who mail out thousands of e-mails a day to unsuspecting netizens, particularly those in the United States. These junk e-mails require a miniscule feedback to pay their costs and grow bulk e-mail lists. And as the numbers of bulk e-mails increase, so does the toll Internet traffic.

Reports of service disruptions from Internet Service Providers — the people who help us log onto the Net — are on the rise. Most recently, Pacific Bell Internet Services experienced a torrent of Spam, originating from multiple points on the web. The result was a four day disruption in e-mail service for Pacific Bell customers. To cope, the company was forced to install a whopping \$500,000 of new gear to absorb the excess junk mail.

Many network administrators who manage e-mail and news group services have begun to take legal action against SPAM.

The biggest victory to date is a recent \$2 million settlement for Earthlink, an Internet Service Provider. The loser was self-proclaimed “Spam King” Sanford Wallace, a man some estimate

sends as many as 25 million bulk e-mails a day.

At the vanguard of the Spam solution are those who are trying to enact meaningful anti-Spam legislation, such as the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail (CAUCE). You too can help by visiting the Coalition at <[www.cauce.org](http://www.cauce.org)>

## Stop Biopeep

**BioPEEP** (Biological Protocol for Enhanced Economic Production) is the project name for a sinister plot that involves the U.S. Military, an unknown multinational and a group of scientists. Its goal is to create human “consumer product junkies” through the distribution of a genetic virus hidden in consumable products such as raisin-supplemented cereal, toothpaste, bottled water, sports drinks and herbal tea.

This plot also includes one Joey Skaggs — the master media hoaxer famous for duping journalists into covering stories “too good to be true.” Skaggs has recently fabricated a web site that exposes the above conspiracy through the files of an ex-BioPEEP researcher. The hoax has already received international news coverage, and the web site has received many visits.

I e-mailed him about BioPEEP. Here’s what he had to say:

*“Over the year and a half that I was working on this hoax, reality got weirder and weirder. First, there was Dolly the sheep clone, which I thought might have been a hoax (and it still might be). Then, genetically engineered Brazilian super tobacco plants which American tobacco companies were using in cigarettes appeared in the news. Then Dr. Richard (Dick) Seed announced he planned to clone a human (which should have been a hoax, but wasn’t). Next, the Hong Kong chicken flu virus reared its head. It was a bit spooky. What I was creating seemed to be materializing. Unfortunately, I believe this hoax will be prophetic.”*

*“The Internet and e-mail have been an integral tool for me. They enable me to communicate with my co-conspirators around the world and enable me to visualize and implement my concepts. But in essence, both the Internet and e-mail are just more avenues for information and disinformation. No one should forget that.”*

For the full scoop on Skaggs’ insightful and hilarious history of hoaxes visit Joey’s site at <[www.joeyskaggs.com](http://www.joeyskaggs.com)> For more information on the sinister BioPEEP project visit <[www.stop-biopeep.com](http://www.stop-biopeep.com)>.

*aXle is an avid follower of culture jamming on the web. He is creative director of Public Technologies Multimedia. Please send cyberjamming tips, sites and news to [editor@adbusters.org](mailto:editor@adbusters.org).*