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How do you know . . . if a chain letter is legitimate?

Break the chain!

Chain letters, fake virus warnings, petition letters, and other internet hoaxes sent in e-mail messages, can often mislead, trick or frighten recipients into forwarding the messages on to others.

Chain letters waste time – and bandwidth. Chain letters often supply Spammers with addresses which in turn interfere with receiving legitimate e-mail.

turn for more information on chain letters

There are three basic types of Chain Letters:

1. Those which promise good luck or threaten bad luck;
2. Pyramid-scheme letters that promise to make you lots of money (it is illegal to ask for money or product in a chain letter); and
3. Hoaxes or urban legends related to police incidents, health issues, computer viruses or missing children.

Know that:

- Legitimate warnings and notifications are not issued through e-mail. Reputable organizations use more timely and effective communication like TV, Radio or newspapers to warn the public.

What to do:

- Validate e-mail alerts and messages by checking the “senders” website or contact them using a trusted phone number.
- Use a search engine to conduct an advanced search on the subject of the message.
- Delete chain letters and hoax messages when they appear in your inbox.
- If in doubt, forward the e-mail to your Internet Service Provider, your computer security manager or to an urban legend website to validate the information.



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