



Real People Reviews

by Daniel M. East

Product: Spamfire 1.5.1 Pro

Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer: Matterform Software

MSRP: \$39.95 (lite option avail. for \$24.95 without filter updates)

Review date: May 3, 2004

PULL QUOTE: *If you are getting SPAM, this is your lifesaver...*

DESCRIPTION (What's it do? What's it got?): User initiated server side (in other words, it logs on to your server) SPAM filtering that is completely customizable so you don't miss the important e-mails while filtering the junk that inundates our inboxes. You also have some options on how to deal with those repeat offenders who bombard you with useless information on endless content on things that may be offensive, invasive and/or otherwise inappropriate. Spamfire works with POP and IMAP accounts as well as HotMail and others. Use your own e-mail client (OSX Mail, Eudora, PowerMail, Outlook, Entourage, etc.) and even as a nice addition to other SPAM filters on the user or server side.

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: OS 9.1 or later; or, OS 10.1 or later (with Win98 or other version available if you need such things); any e-mail client application.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: A lot has happened since my last review of Spamfire a few years back. Matterform not only continues to improve the functionality and effectiveness of this products, but they have updated the GUI and overall appearance as well. Add to that their incredible "Revenge" abilities and you have yourself an indispensable application for eliminating nearly all of the SPAM that continues to waste our time.

LIKES : Ok, let's talk about "Revenge." Spamfire gives you the ability to "bounce" (return to the sender appearing as an unknown recipient/bad address), report the item to the Federal Trade Commission, report to SpamCrime and even report marginal items to Matterform for consideration in upcoming updates of the filtering (something you get in the Pro version that is well worth it, in my honest opinion). The time you save when using Spamfire is invaluable.

Having said that, it is now easier to rescue the messages you want (they are sent back to your inbox next time you check mail) and to add mailing lists that you WANT to get to your "friends" list. It is great to be able to double click on a filtered message and see what it might be in case you are waiting for a receipt for an online purchase or info from your ISP, etc..

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Another fine addition is the ability to import your e-mail client's address book to your "friends" list. This, again, saves time and effort. Matterform continues to respond quickly to their end-users' needs and comments with updates and tweaks. Very important given the pace at which the spammers morph their methods. This is especially important as so many virus problems and "spyware" issues may be transmitted via e-mail.

Since most people report having more than one e-mail address (personal, business, ISP, etc.), you'll find that Spamfire is incredible. Now that America Online supports IMAP access for their members, Spamfire is an excellent addition for those who want to keep their AOL accounts even though they have broadband access in their home and/or office (just use any e-mail client and, if you wish to keep your buddy list, use iChat or AIM) but don't want to use the AOL application, itself.

DISLIKES : As someone who travels with my Powerbook, I can't always be online (and it isn't for lack of effort, I assure you). I would love to see an option to be able to leave Spamfire open in an "offline" mode. Beyond that, what's not to love?!

HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE? : Actually, the only real difference between this and the other popular SPAM filtering software, SpamSieve from C-Command, is that the latter is client-side (filters as the mail comes in) and requires a bit more tweaking. SpamSieve is priced the same as Spamfire Lite and, in fact, works well in tandem should you feel the need.

WHO MIGHT ENJOY THIS PRODUCT? If you are getting SPAM and want it to go "bye-bye," this is your lifesaver. Lots of bang for the buck and Matterform does the job really well.

TEST SYSTEM: Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.3

FINAL THOUGHTS: Once you set up Spamfire, it does the rest for you and it does it very effectively. One other consideration is for web designers; Matterform's SpamVaccine does a great job of encrypting e-mail addresses so that spammers simply see gibberish while your site maintains complete functionality and a "normal" appearance. Matterform continues to respond to the rapidly changing needs of its customers and to address the latest technologies working to wipe out these useless messages clogging up our in boxes.

OVERALL RATING: 5 out of 5 EXCELLENT

For more information, visit: <http://www.matterform.com/>

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