

VERBATIM[®] THE LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

Vol. XXVI, No. 4 Autumn 2001

Editor: Erin McKean

Founding Editor: Laurence Urdang





Bogus E-mail Subject Lines

Jim Veihdeffer
Tempe, Arizona

The following are actual subject lines from e-mails that are come-ons for pornographic web sites. The lines are given verbatim, exactly as received, punctuation and all. The sender's intention is, apparently, to somehow trick you into thinking you have an actual note from a friend or long-lost relative. (Note that the senders are not typically very fussy about matters of punctuation and often the same line, by different . . . er . . . vendors, will show up with slight variations.) I'm especially fond of subject lines relating to "personal finance" since people who use credit cards or have mortgages are apparently, in the worldview of these folks, likely to be heavy users of pornographic web sites. The effrontery, the sheer cheekiness of lying outright, of creating a subject line that bears no resemblance whatsoever to the content is awe-inspiring. (My commentary in italics.)

And now, the...um...winners.

Hey there

RE: your line of credit

Like animals

(Ok . . . this might be obvious once you're in on the joke but just imagine you're receiving it without any prior tip-off.)

Here Are The PICs Of Me Naked That You Wanted

(Yes, it's obvious, but note the indication that this is a response to a prior note.)

Bought a computer, drop me a line

Guess who, bought a puter.

(Gotta love that punctuation.)

Guess who, bought a computer.

Guess who, bought a computer :-)

(Note the addition of the smiley face.)

been trying to reach you . . .

Not today

So what should I . . .

Are we there yet?

(Almost diabolical in its metaphysical simplicity.)

Re: Hey

(Much better than a simple "Hey.")

Lots of pink!!

(Should have seen this one coming.)

Re: your mortgage

(Re: your annoying message.)

How was I supposed to know

Did you send this?

You tell me what I should do

IMPORTANT NEWS!!!!

(I guess one exclamation point wasn't enough!)

What happened to my letter?

See you next week

Been hacked, under a new screen name

been trying to reach you . . .

(Ellipsis seems to be a popular tool.)

RE: Your mail

Something happened with your . . .

OPEN, why did you say that about me . . .

(Note: two hooks for the price of one.)

Try again

Here are the settings.

How does "Dinner & a Movie" sound?

(How does a smack upside the face with a pig's bladder sound?)

I need that list from you

Does it still hurt?

I don't want to go, sorry

(Wait . . . has someone been reading my e-mail?)

(Romantic Music)

(Yes . . . that's just how it appears on the subject line.)

Whats wrong with your email?

(What's wrong with your punctuation?)

You have to keep this a secret.

(No problemo!)

I still have feelings for you!!!...

(Feelings for my gullibility, you mean.)

Is your phone broke?

You are giving me a complex

(Sorry about that.)

hey :#@\$

(The Beetle Bailey school of cursing to get your attention.)

i hate college so much!

New pics I found of flowers

(Ya just have to roll yer eyes at this one.)

[Jim Veihdeffer is a freelance technology writer, the founder of Save the Virgules! and has not worn a full-body chicken costume for more than two years.]