

## Redistributing the wealth of e-mail ads

I've been busy collecting fliers from local Tempe/Mesa businesses recently.

As a matter of fact, I sort of filled up the passenger seat of my car one day with advertising sheets, doorknob adverts and what-all. I say "sort of" because it just seems like the seat is filled up, but obviously, I couldn't fill up the entire passenger area in one day. It actually took two days.

Soon, I will be redistributing some of these fliers.

What I'm thinking of doing, see, is returning the annoying little things they like to stick on the doors of my apartment complex. There's a Chinese restaurant on Dobson Road that is slated to be my prime beneficiary.

Then there's a mortgage consultant in Mesa who wants to offer me "\$0.00 DOWN" if I refinance my apartment "NOW!!!" I'm wondering why a mortgage guy would waste his time on a renter like me, but my friend who's in the real estate biz says that knowing the amount of doodads and tchotchkes I accumulate, I probably need to buy a home. Then I turn the little door hanger thingy over and I see



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"STOP RENTING!" (again for as little as "\$0.00 DOWN!") and I wonder what my apartment complex managers think of these thingies. Turns out Mr. Mortgage Guy is not very choosy about his clientele since he goes on to say "Repos/charge offs: OK" and "Bad credit/BKs: OK" too. Sounds like my kind of financier. I'm still trying to figure out where I can get a "BK."

Maybe I'm just feeling extra crotchety today (my friends say I'm a little crotchety every day), but I'm really tired of all this clutter.

I actually don't mind the bulk rate postal junk mail I get. I figure I'm going to go to the mailbox once a day anyway. And, frankly, it's a little depressing to hike across the complex and find my mail cube empty. Besides, those advertisers are helping to subsidize the postal system.

But for real clutter, there's

nothing like e-mail "Spam" ... it's the scourge of my online existence. Spams — unsolicited commercial mass e-mailings — are like nasty festering pustules secreted out of some bizarro marketing world where someone thinks that cheap Viagra, repairing bad credit, Britney Spears porno pix and making fabulous money by working-at-home are my life's main issues. You can complain till your fingers chap, but they'll keep oozing into your computer's inbox.

All right, so the fliers and what-all aren't quite so obnoxious as the e-mail, but it's time to take action. And, speaking of oozing, I don't mean hiring a Glendale lawyer to get me out of summer school.

First order of business: what to call this "stuff." I was tired of complaining to friends (who, believe me, are just as tired of hearing me drone on) and having to refer to "the adverts and what-all that they stick on your doorknob."

Hence ... doorknob spam.

It fits all the criteria: it's unsolicited, it's commercial, it's a mass audience thing and it takes time to dispose of. May-

be not big chunks of time, but, like taking out the garbage or flossing, it all adds up to some serious person-hours. And unlike garbaging or flossing, there's no personal benefit to the activity. It simply takes up time. (And don't get me started on "car windshield spam.")

So I went around last week and collected some of this doorknob spam from my neighbors' doors.

Call me a modern-day Robin Hood. Maybe I'm not exactly stealing from the rich. Maybe I'm not exactly giving to the poor. Other than that though, the analogy holds up pretty well, I think. I'm just redistributing the wealth back to its original owners.

I suppose I won't really make a midnight delivery to the Chinese take-out joint or the mortgage guy. I guess it's one of those "I'll do it when I get around to it" things.

Like getting the new Cardinals stadium built.

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